



# Student/Family Handbook

## 2025-2026

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*Approved by VES School Board on August 19, 2025*

## *Welcome*

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Welcome to Voyageurs Expeditionary School for the 2025-2026 school year! Whether you are new to the Voyageurs Expeditionary School (VES) family or returning we are excited to have you as a part of our school community. The VES staff is excited to work collaboratively with you and your student/s to ensure the 2025-2026 school year is a huge success!

Our mission is to provide your student with opportunities that encourage hands-on learning, service to others, and environmental stewardship. The team at VES is committed to building on the strengths and interests of all of our students. The staff values building positive working relationships with students and families. The educational programming includes real-world experiences, experiential education, and cross-curricular activities. As an expeditionary school, we believe learning extends well beyond the classroom and will provide ample opportunities for students to explore the outside world. Our small class sizes allow students to make strong connections with our dedicated staff. Voyageurs' students have found success by exploring the world, learning through experiences, and following their individual passions.

*One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world. ~ Malala Yousafzai*

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## Mission Statement

The mission of Voyageurs Expeditionary School is to provide students with the necessary tools to lead meaningful and productive lives through hands-on learning, service to others, and environmental stewardship.

## Vision Statement

Starting at a level much deeper than just curriculum, the design of VES addresses the origins of learning and the fundamental well-being of students. The foundation necessary to achieve the mission of our school is the establishment of a community of learners composed of students, families, teachers, and staff who share the conviction that the best education takes place in an intentionally developed environment that nurtures, protects, challenges, and values every member of that community.

## Our Character Values

Character values are personal qualities that are shared by all members of our school community. They form the basis for how we interact with each other and with the larger community. We expect students to model these traits both in and outside of school. Our character values are:

- Safety
- Lifelong Learning
- Integrity
- Respect
- Balance



## Climate Vision Statement

Voyageurs Expeditionary School is a welcoming and encouraging learning community.

- **Welcoming** - We greet our visitors, students and fellow staff with acceptance, courtesy, friendliness, inclusivity and a smile.
- **Encouraging** - All VES stakeholders' voices are heard and respected. We strive to instill hope for the future, risk taking, and growth through failure.
- **Community**- We strive to create a sense of belonging and unity between all stakeholders of our school.

## Voyagers Expeditionary School's Shared Responsibilities

At VES, the safety and security of all students are our highest priorities. In order to maintain a positive learning environment, all stakeholders (students, families, and Voyagers staff) have an important role.

<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>FAMILIES</b>	<b>VOYAGEURS STAFF</b>
Believe that you have the capacity to be your best self and achieve your hopes and dreams.	Believe your student has the capacity to be their best self and achieve their hopes and dreams.	Believe students are capable of being their best selves and achieving their hopes and dreams.
Build and maintain positive relationships with all staff and other students.	Build and maintain positive relationships with staff at the school.	Build and maintain positive relationships with all students and their families.
Respect yourself, the learning environment, other students, their families and all staff.	Respect and support the learning environment and emphasize the importance of being prepared to learn in school.	Develop a respectful learning community and environment that supports social-emotional and academic success.
Ask for and accept help when you need assistance.	Ask for help when you need assistance. Advocate for your student through regular communication with school staff.	Regularly communicate with students and families. Offer support when they ask for assistance.
Arrive at school every day on time, prepared to learn, and give your best effort.	Ensure your student arrives at school every day on time and prepared to learn.	Create a welcoming environment. Maintain high expectations for all students.
Learn and follow school expectations and procedures.	Learn, and speak with your student about the expectations and procedures at school.	Teach, model and reinforce school expectations and procedures. Follow the school's discipline plan.
Use technology and equipment in a responsible way.	Review the technology agreement with your student.	Tailor instruction to teach students how to appropriately use technology in an educational setting.
Personalize your learning by bringing your creativity to your assignments	Encourage your child's passion to learn and grow around their own post-secondary goals.	Provide engaging and academically appropriate instruction, including culturally-responsive teaching which represents and invites students' individual identities.
Conduct yourself in a manner that ensures your safety and the safety of others.	Contact the school if you observe or are aware of potentially unsafe activities or conditions.	Create and monitor safe conditions in the school environment.

## **Application Process**

Voyageurs Expeditionary School (VES) is a public charter school. Parents/Guardians of students in grades 6-12 may apply for enrollment online at [www.voyageursschool.org](http://www.voyageursschool.org) or complete an inquiry form available from the school office. New students are accepted prior to the start of the school year, or during the school year as spaces become available under director discretion. When the number of applicants exceeds the number of openings in a particular grade, VES will conduct a lottery by March 1 to determine the waiting list order for each grade level in accordance with MN State Charter School Law. The VES Admissions/Lottery Procedure Policy is available on the school website. A school tour is encouraged prior to application to address any questions/concerns and to assist in making the best academic choice for each student.

### **Once enrolled**

Please ask the office if you are unsure of what is required. Once records are received from the prior school, an intake meeting will be scheduled. **All students and parents/guardians must attend an intake meeting with their advisor prior to the student's start date.** The purpose of the intake meeting is to introduce the advisor, complete required paperwork, choose courses and answer any questions the family may have. **Per state law, all students must have all required immunizations before starting school.**

## **Academic Programing**

At Voyageurs, we provide a variety of educational opportunities to meet the individual needs of each student by using a learner-centered approach. We start by getting to know each student and developing a Personal Learning Plan (PLP), building on their strengths and interests. Students are able to explore a variety of topics through project-based learning, E-Weeks (Experiential Weeks), expeditions, and classes.

### **What is Project-Based Learning?**

Project-based learning (PBL) at Voyageurs is an educational approach integrated throughout our classes, as well as student-led projects during our advisory and PBL seminars. Coursework includes in-depth studies of topics that explore guiding questions, incorporate standards, involve fieldwork, service and adventure, and culminate in a project. Projects are an in-depth study of a topic that explores important guiding questions and incorporates standards. Projects demonstrate the knowledge acquired by the student and integrate the conventional knowledge and required skills of the academic disciplines. Projects require students to develop critical thinking skills and work ethic that lead to effective reading, writing, problem solving and discussion. Projects are designed to organize and engage student learning by requiring concrete products or actions that address authentic problems.

### **E-Weeks (Experiential Weeks)**

E-Weeks (Experiential Weeks) are offered three times throughout the 2025-26 school year. These allow students to sign up for three day intensive experience-based courses. Students choose from a variety of topics to deepen their understanding, try new activities, and learn new skills.

### **Expeditions**

A core belief at VES is that our students grow exponentially when given the opportunity to explore the outside world, participate in new opportunities, and learn from real-world experiences. Expeditions are an opportunity for students to learn outside the classroom by traveling to new places and experiencing new things. VES provides a variety of trip options throughout the school year.

### **Academics and Real World Learning**

A goal of VES is to prepare students to do their best, become world citizens and develop life-long learning skills that will help them excel in post-secondary education and career readiness. The curriculum promotes a high level of individualized student engagement through real-world learning focused on issues of concern or topics of interest to young people.

### **Advisory**

Advisory is an important component of VES. During advisory time, students will participate in team building activities, grade checks, environmental education, current events, and community service. Every week students will participate in community building circles.

## **Code of Academic Integrity**

Students at VES will be held to the highest standards of academic integrity. Plagiarism is using someone else's work or ideas as though they were your own. Cheating includes copying another student's work or allowing someone else to copy yours. If a student is caught plagiarizing or cheating, no credit will be given for the work involved. Incidents of cheating or plagiarism will become part of the student's discipline record.

## **Make-Up work**

Students are solely responsible for any work missed due to absences. Students will be given two school days for each excused absence to make up their work, unless otherwise indicated in an IEP. ***It is the student's responsibility to ask for missing work.*** Students who are aware of planned absences should discuss make-up work with each teacher prior to the absence.

## **Post-secondary Preparation**

A goal of VES is for all students to meet college entrance requirements by graduation and be proficient in the core subject areas of English, math, science and social studies. Staff assist students in exploring post-secondary options through completing interest inventories, attending college and career fairs, scheduling college visits and helping with the college application and financial aid processes.

## **Service Work**

Service is an integral part of VES, both as an important element of academic work and as a value that fosters respect and support among all members of the school community. Each student is required to earn 20 service hours per year. VES provides service opportunities throughout the school year. As part of the students' service hours requirement, they will assist in serving and cleaning up lunch. Students are able to complete a form to record outside service hours earned.

## **Hours of Operation**

The school day goes from 8:05 am to 3:05 pm. The building is open from **7:45 am to 4:00 pm** each school day.

## **Attendance Policy**

**At VES, we believe that consistent, daily attendance is incredibly important and is directly related to students' academic success and graduation rates. Our contract with students/families requires an attendance rate of 90% (see the signature page), or no more than 17 absences throughout the school year.** If a student is dropped because of 15 days of consecutive absences, re-enrollment procedures and alternative educational delivery may be required.

Absences may be excused for the following reasons: **student illness (more than 3 consecutive days requires a doctor's note), serious illness or death in immediate family, medical or dental appointments, counseling appointments, court appearances, family vacations, personal emergencies or suspension.** Families must notify the office one week prior to any extended planned absences (family trips, medical issues, etc.) in order for those absences to be excused. Director discretion may be used as needed. Once a student reaches 17 absences, medical documentation is required for additional absences to be excused.

### **REPORTING AN ABSENCE**

To report an absence, contact the office:

Email: [attendance@voyageursschool.org](mailto:attendance@voyageursschool.org)

Call: 218-444-3130

Absences will be considered unexcused for the following reasons: **no call to the front office/no show, skipping, arriving late/leaving early without a valid reason, or any other absence deemed unexcused by the director.**

**Students with excessive absences or chronic tardiness may be required to have an attendance contract and meeting with administration. Families will be notified by letter or email** when a student reaches **3 and 5** unexcused absences. **Truancy** may be filed for students with excessive absences. Staff will work with families/students to help overcome attendance issues.

## **Tardies**

Students are considered tardy if they arrive late up to 10:30 am. After 10:30 am, students will be given a half day unexcused absence. Students with habitual tardies may be required to meet with administration to develop an improvement plan.

## **VES Graduation Requirements**

### **For Students Graduating in 2026 or earlier:**

Demonstrate "Proficient" or "Mastery" level performance in all essential competencies across required academic areas:

English (ELA)	4	Elective Credits	5
Math - Intermediate Algebra - Geometry - Algebra 2 Or equivalent to meet all MN Math Standards	3	VES Core - Environmental Science (0.5) - Social Studies Elective (0.5) - Personal Finance (0.5) - Senior Project (0.5)	2
Science - Physical Science - Life Science - Chemistry Or equivalent to meet all MN Science Standards	3	Social Studies - Geography - Civics - World History - US History - Economics	3.5
Fine Arts	1	Total Credits for Graduation	21.5

### **For Students Graduating in 2027:**

Demonstrate "Proficient" or "Mastery" level performance in all essential competencies across required academic areas:

Academic Area	Credits	Academic Area	Credits
English (ELA)	4	Elective Credits	4.5
Math - Intermediate Algebra - Geometry - Algebra 2 Or equivalent to meet all MN Math Standards	3	VES Core - Environmental Science (0.5) - Personal Finance (0.5) - Senior Project (0.5) - Health Portfolio (0.5) - Physical Education (0.5)	2
Science - Physical Science - Life Science - Chemistry Or equivalent to meet all MN Science Standards	3	Social Studies - Geography - Civics - World History - US History - Economics	3.5
Fine Arts	1	Total Credits for Graduation	21.5

### **For Students Graduating in 2028 and beyond:**

Demonstrate "Proficient" or "Mastery" level performance in all essential competencies across required academic areas:

Academic Area	Credits	Academic Area	Credits
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English (ELA)	4	Elective Credits	4.5
Math - Intermediate Algebra - Geometry - Algebra 2 Or equivalent to meet all MN Math Standards	3	VES Core - Environmental Science (0.5) - Personal Finance (0.5) - Senior Project (0.5) - Health Portfolio (0.5) - Physical Education (0.5)	2
Science - Earth & Space Science - Life Science - Chemistry and/or Physics Or equivalent to meet all MN Science Standards	3	Social Studies - Geography - Civics - World History - US History - Economics	3.5
Fine Arts	1	Total Credits for Graduation	21.5

**Graduation:** All graduating seniors must have completed or be able to show evidence that they will be within 1 credit of graduation by the end of the final grading block of their graduation year in order to participate in graduation ceremonies.

## Grading Policy

### **GRADES 6-8 GRADING POLICY**

**A. Policy Statement** Voyageurs Expeditionary School maintains high expectations of our students. We want students to experience success in their academic pursuits and expect all of our students to commit to doing their best in all classes. Students need to complete a minimum of 60% of the assigned coursework at an acceptable standard in order to receive a passing grade. The grading scale is as follows:

- 90-100% = A
- 80-89% = B
- 70-79% = C
- 60-69% = D

**B. Academic and Assessment Process** Voyageurs Expeditionary School staff will communicate regularly with families about student progress. Students not making adequate progress in their academics will have a meeting scheduled to include parents/guardians and Voyageurs Expeditionary School staff.

**C. Grade Reporting** Voyageurs Expeditionary School will prepare and distribute progress reports (report cards) during twice scheduled student conferences, and will be mailed home at the end of school year.

### **GRADES 9-12 COMPETENCY-BASED GRADING AND GRADUATION**

**A. Policy Statement** Voyageurs Expeditionary School maintains high expectations for all high school students through a competency-based approach to learning and assessment. Students must demonstrate proficiency or mastery in all essential competencies within an academic area to receive credit for that area. Additionally, students must complete phase checklist requirements to progress through their educational journey toward graduation.

#### **B. Competency-Based Credit Requirements**

1. **Academic Competency Proficiency Standards** Students must achieve a proficiency level of "Proficient" or "Mastery" in all essential competencies within an academic area to receive credit. The proficiency levels are defined as:

- **Mastery (M):** Student consistently demonstrates deep understanding and can apply learning independently in new and complex situations
- **Proficient (P):** Student demonstrates solid understanding of essential concepts and skills and can apply them with minimal support

- **Developing (D):** Student shows partial understanding and is making progress toward proficiency; **credit not awarded**
- **Beginning (B):** Student is starting to develop understanding; **credit not awarded**
- **Incomplete (I):** Insufficient evidence to determine proficiency level; **credit not awarded**

2. **Credit Determination** Academic credit is awarded when a student demonstrates "Proficient" or "Mastery" level performance in **all essential competencies** within that academic area. Students who achieve "Developing," "Beginning," or "Incomplete" levels in any essential competency within an academic area will not receive credit until proficiency is demonstrated.
3. **Multiple Opportunities for Demonstration** Students will have multiple and varied opportunities to demonstrate competency proficiency, including but not limited to projects, presentations, assessments, portfolios, and authentic applications of learning.

### C. Phase Progression Requirements

1. **Phase Checklist Completion** In addition to achieving academic competency proficiency, students must complete all items on their current phase checklist to progress to the next educational phase. Phase checklists include:
  - Required academic competency demonstrations
  - Career and college readiness activities
  - Community service and civic engagement requirements
  - Personal Learning Plan (PLP) development and review
  - Portfolio documentation and reflection
  - Other phase-specific requirements as determined by the school
2. **Phase Advancement** Students advance to the next phase only when they have: a. Achieved "Proficient" or "Mastery" in all required academic competencies for their current phase b. Completed **all items** on their current phase checklist

### D. Graduation Requirements

Students must meet both competency and phase requirements for graduation:

1. **Academic Competency Requirements**
  - Demonstrate "Proficient" or "Mastery" level performance in all essential competencies across required academic areas
  - Meet minimum credit requirements through competency-based achievement
2. **Phase Completion Requirements**
  - Successfully complete all phase checklists from initial enrollment through final graduation phase
  - Demonstrate career and college readiness through Personal Learning Plan accomplishments
  - Complete capstone requirements and final graduation phase checklist items
3. **Credit Requirements** All graduating seniors must complete the required credits as determined by the school's academic competency framework and phase progression system.

### Testing

VES administers multiple assessments throughout the year. Following is a list of the assessments and the grades tested:

- ACT (College entrance) - offered to students in grades 11 and 12
- Accuplacer (College placement) - offered to students in grades 11 and 12
- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) - offered to students in grades 11 and 12
- Fastbridge testing - Reading (grades 6-11) / Math (grades 6-11)
- Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) - Reading (grades 6-8 and 10) / Math (grades 6-8 and 11) / Science (grades 8 and 10) - see office for Parent/Guardian Guide and Refusal for Student Participation in Statewide Testing form

### High School Credit Recovery

All high school students (9-12) must complete the 21.5 required credits (listed above) for graduation. Students lacking credits must participate in the credit recovery program to earn missing credits and be on track to graduate.

### College/Career Exploration Programs

#### **Mechatronics**

Mechatronics is the combination of mechanics, electronics, control systems theory and computers into a single discipline. The skills and knowledge a person learns in Mechatronics provides the foundation for going to work in technical fields such as production and manufacturing. The Mechatronics program is offered onsite at Northwest Technical College. Juniors and Seniors meeting the eligibility requirements and interested in furthering their mechanical and technical skills are encouraged to apply.

### **Online College in the High School (OCHS)**

OCHS is a program that offers college transfer, career and technical courses to high school students through a distance-learning format. Students do not have to travel to campus, as the colleges serve them online in their high school setting. Courses are offered through Alexandria Technical and Community College, Northland Community and Technical College and Northwest Technical College. To be eligible, students must meet the following criteria:

- **Seniors** - Students who will participate as 12th graders must meet minimum ACCUPLACER\*, ACT\* or MCA\* scores and have at least a 2.8 cumulative GPA.
- **Juniors** - Students who will participate as 11th graders must meet minimum ACCUPLACER\*, ACT\* or MCA\* scores and have at least a 3.2 cumulative GPA.

\*An ACCUPLACER Reading Comprehension score of 250; an ACT Reading subscore of 21; a 10th grade MCA Reading score of 1047

### **Post Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO)**

PSEO allows 11th and 12th graders to earn high school and college credit while still in high school, through enrollment in and successful completion of college-level, nonsectarian courses at eligible participating postsecondary institutions. Most PSEO courses are offered on the campus of the postsecondary institution while some are offered online. Each participating college or university sets its own requirements for PSEO enrollment. Students may take PSEO courses on a full or part-time basis. There is no charge to PSEO students for tuition, books or fees for items that are required for a course. Students must meet the PSEO residency and eligibility requirements and abide by participation limits specified in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09. Funds are available to help pay transportation expenses for qualifying students participating in PSEO courses on college campuses. Schools must provide information annually to all students in grades 8-11 and their families by March 1. Students must notify VES by May 30 if they want to participate in PSEO for the following school year. Visit the Minnesota Department of Education's PSEO webpage for details. VES students enrolled in PSEO attend Bemidji State University and/or Northwest Technical College.

## **General Information**

### **Address Change**

Please notify VES if you have a change of name, address and/or telephone number during the year.

### **Food Service**

VES provides a free hot lunch each day. All students are eligible for free breakfast and lunch.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

Minnesota state law requires any person employed by a school who suspects maltreatment of a child to file a child protection report. Maltreatment includes physical abuse, sexual abuse and/or neglect.

### **Medication**

VES does not provide over-the-counter medications. If over-the-counter medications are needed, students may carry them and self-administer, or, the medication can be administered by the office if provided in the original container by the family and a signed authorization is received.

If prescription medications must be given during the school day, a completed VES medical form must be on file in the office. The medical form will include parent/guardian consent and the medication must be in the original pharmacy labeled container. Diabetic students may carry insulin. Epi-pens may also be carried by students with documentation from their physician. Access to prescription medications will be restricted to office personnel.

### **Sports and Co-curricular Programs**

VES offers E-sports, MAAP STARS, Biking, MMA, Art, and other after school activities and clubs based on student interest.

Students who participate in extracurricular activities are expected to maintain passing grades, exemplify positive behavior, and follow VES attendance policy.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

### **Crisis Plan**

VES will be partnering with the Department of Homeland Security, I Love You Guys Foundation, and local law enforcement for all aspects of our school's safety plan.

#### **Standard Response Protocols for Parents/Guardians**

The following are the Standard Response Protocols utilized in case of a school safety issue.

- [Standard Response Protocol Information for Parents and Guardians \(PAGE 1\)](#)
- [Standard Response Protocol Parental Guidance \(PAGE 2\)](#)

#### **Standard Reunification Method:**

Circumstances may occur at VES that require parents to pick up their students in a formalized, controlled release. This process is called a Reunification and may be necessary due to weather, a power outage, hazmat or a crisis at the school.

- [Standard Reunification Method](#)

### **Emergency Drills**

Drills, including fire, tornado, and lockdowns, will be conducted so that every person in the building knows the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.

### **Weather Closings and Emergency Notices**

If the Bemidji school district closes, VES will also close. When school is canceled due to weather or other emergency, the announcement will be included on the VES website and Facebook page. Guardians will also receive a JMC text message. In addition, the announcement will be made on the following radio stations: KB101-FM, 95.5-FM, 103.7-FM.

## **Student Expectations of Behavior**

### **Behavioral Philosophy and Discipline Guidelines**

Following guidance from the Minnesota Department of Education, VES uses a restorative approach to student discipline by utilizing best practice guidelines. With restorative practice implementation, we will focus on classroom engagement, impact of choices, and meeting student needs. Aspects of implementation will engage students, families, and caregivers in this continuous process through family nights, community circles, and more.

Restorative practices are not a curriculum or a program, *but a way of being* in the world that puts *relationships first*. Seeking to repair relationships when harm happens is a choice and can be challenging, whether you have been harmed or are the person who caused harm. Restorative practices in education prioritize justice and equity where: the vulnerable are cared for, the marginalized are included, the dignity and humanity of each person matters, and everyone's needs are met.

Formal *Circles to Repair Harm* (Restorative Practice Conferences) will be utilized at VES in compliance with VES's restorative practices. Students, staff, and families are strongly encouraged to participate in circles to repair harm based on specific situations or by request of school administrators. In some cases, suspensions will be required based on level of severity of behaviors as determined by school administration. Choice and collaboration between individuals, staff, and families are important aspects of restorative practices. In cases of suspension, a re-entry circle will be **mandatory** in order to return to school. Re-entry circles will be scheduled the day before the student re-enters the school community.

Scan the QR code or visit <https://qrco.de/VESRP> to watch a video example of what a Circle to Repair Harm could look like. For more information on restorative practices, please visit the [Minnesota Department of Education's Restorative Practices website](#).

Teaching and modeling positive behaviors are the primary approaches to discipline at VES. All school policies and student behavior expectations are in effect from the time a student leaves home in the morning until the student arrives home after school. This includes during bus trips, lunch hours and service time.



**VES promotes a culture of learning and expects students to accept responsibility for their actions.** This model teaches many of the character values on a daily basis through countless interactions among students and between students and teachers. Students not meeting behavior expectations may lose privileges and/or have consequences for their behavior and choices.

**VES firmly resolves that all students have the right to learn in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe and free from unnecessary distractions.** Students are expected to respect themselves, respect others and respect school property.

Restorative practices are crucial in maintaining a positive climate at school. Aggressive or disruptive behavior will be handled in a variety of ways, integrating the needs of the student while teaching and modeling the desired outcome. Whenever possible, those involved will be invited to actively participate in the restorative process. Our goals are to protect each person's rights, and to help each person learn to make better choices while ensuring a safe, supportive learning environment for all students.

### **VES Positive Behavior Practices**

VES staff will develop classroom expectations, which may be co-written by students and teachers. These expectations will explain how all members of the classroom will behave to ensure comfort, safety, and success by all and are publicly displayed in each classroom. Staff teaches and models expected schoolwide and classroom behavior during the first weeks of school. These expectations are revisited with individuals and large groups as needed throughout the year. VES staff support the use of restorative practices.

If restorative practices are exhausted, disciplinary action or consequences for behavior offenses may include, but are not limited to:

1. Student conference
2. Loss of privileges
3. Parental contact
4. Parent conference
5. In-school suspension
6. Restitution
7. Referral to in-school support services
8. Detention/community service
9. Removal from class
10. Suspension from extracurricular activities
11. Physical restraint
12. Suspension from school
13. Referral to community service or outside agency services
14. Expulsion or exclusion from school
15. Referral to police or other law enforcement agencies

The Director (or the Director's designee) will determine the appropriate disciplinary action. When making such a determination, the Director will consider the level of disruption to the learning environment and/or the safety concerns for individuals and groups that occurred because of the offense. CPI trained staff have the resources to safely restrain any student that may be a harm to them self or others. Restraints are always used as a last resort, and appropriate documentation is filed.

### **Referrals**

If a student is disruptive in any manner during the school day, the supervising staff member may elect to refer the student to the administration. Referrals will be entered into the computer system and tracked by administration.

### **Searches**

Pursuant to Minnesota statutes, school lockers, and computers are the property of the school. At no time does the school relinquish its exclusive control of lockers, and storage units provided for the convenience of students. Staff members may conduct an inspection of the interior of these items at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

Students' personal possessions including, but not limited to, purses, backpacks, personal computers, clothing and vehicles, may be

searched only when staff members have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. VES will provide students a notice of personal property searches unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school staff. VES reserves the right to use a canine team or other drug investigators at any time, unannounced.

## **Weapons**

The school maintains a “No Tolerance” policy in regards to the possession, use or distribution of weapons by students and non-students, including staff and visitors. The consequence for students possessing, using, or distributing weapons may include:

- Confiscation of the weapon
- Immediate notification of police
- Immediate out-of-school suspension
- Parent or guardian notification
- Recommendation to the Board Chairperson for expulsion

The purpose of this policy is to assure a safe school environment for students, staff, and the public. A weapon is defined as any object classified as a weapon or any object used with the intent to cause harm. This policy is not meant to interfere with instruction or the use of appropriate equipment and tools by students. Such equipment when properly possessed, used, and stored shall not be considered in violation of this policy.

Pursuant to Minnesota law, a student who brings a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school will be expelled for a minimum of one year.

## **Assaultive Behavior/Physical Altercation**

Any student who assaults or attempts to assault another person, or engages in a mutual, physical altercation will be automatically suspended from school for up to four days for the first offense, with a reentry circle prior to reentering the building. Students encouraging the assault by instigating, promoting, or videotaping/recording/sharing/posting the assault may be suspended from school for up to four days for the first offense. A second offense will result in a seven-day suspension. A third offense will result in a ten-day suspension with a recommendation for an expulsion hearing before the VES School Board. Law enforcement may be contacted, depending on the severity of the incident. Students involved in assaultive behavior and/or physical altercations will be expected to participate in a restorative action plan.

## **Insubordination**

Insubordination is defined as failure to comply with a reasonable request by any staff member. Any student who refuses to comply, fails to follow the rules or whose behavior interferes with students’ rights to learn or teachers’ rights to teach, will participate in a restorative practice. Once all restorative practices are exhausted, additional disciplinary actions will follow, which may include suspension.

## **Alcohol or Drug Use**

Students known to be using or possessing alcohol or other drugs on campus or off campus during school functions will be automatically suspended from school for up to four days for the first offense. A second offense will result in a seven-day suspension. A third offense will result in a ten-day suspension with a recommendation for an expulsion hearing before the VES School Board. Students coming to school under the influence or suspected influence of alcohol or drugs will receive the same consequences. Law enforcement will be contacted.

## **Tobacco/Smoking/Vaping**

The use of tobacco, tobacco-related devices, imitation tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, vape pens, oils/wax/juice, and/or possession of tobacco (smoking and/or chewing) is not permitted anywhere on school grounds. VES uses vape detectors and video surveillance to enforce this policy. School grounds include all school property, school parking lot, and all sidewalks surrounding the school property, school sponsored activities, and on school vehicles. As of August 1, 2020 MN Tobacco 21 law of Minnesota raised the age for residents to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21. The change to state law includes electronic delivery devices and other nicotine products. Students are not permitted to use or possess tobacco, e-cigarettes, paraphernalia, vapes, pens and/or oils/wax/juice on school premises, at school activities, or on school vans. Such items are against the law and will be confiscated by

school authorities. Students found in violation of these laws and school policies may be subject to any or all of the following consequences:

- Notification to parent/guardian
- Restorative conference
- Suspension or sent home for the day
- Recommended for chemical assessment
- Removal from all school activities during suspension
- Reported to local law enforcement

In addition to the above, students who use, buy, sell, or give away any prohibited substance defined by law as a drug or narcotic may face expulsion from school. VES utilizes vape detectors in all student bathrooms.

### **Vandalism**

Vandalism and destruction of property will be addressed immediately and may result in loss of privileges, monetary compensation and disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

### **Profanity**

Profanity is disruptive and not appropriate in school. Those who continue to curse/swear after warning and redirection will receive a consequence for insubordination.

### **Electronics**

**\*New for the 2025-2026 school, personal electronics and ear buds are not allowed at all during the school day, including during lunch times.** Cell phones, earbuds, portable speakers, or any other use of electronic devices that disrupt the educational process are not allowed. Students may use electronics, including cell phones, headphones/earbuds and gaming devices, **before and after school**, as long as they follow appropriate use guidelines. For the benefit of the entire school community, electronics are **to be powered off and in a secure location (cell phone lockers are provided), not on their person, between 8:30 and 3:05.**

Students using electronics inappropriately will be asked to bring the electronics to the office. Taking photos, audio, or video of students and staff without administrative permission is a violation of school policy. Electronic devices may be confiscated by administration, and/or parents/guardians will be contacted if these policies are not followed. If a device is confiscated, the student's parent or guardian may pick up the device at the end of the school day. **Failure to comply will result in restorative practices and/or disciplinary actions for insubordination.** The VES cell phone policy is available on our website, <https://www.voyageursschool.org/documents-policies/>.

### **Technology Expectations**

Students are responsible for the choices they make when using technology whether it is a personal device or the property of VES. Students are expected to follow the guidelines of:

- Keep personal and school devices secure
- Be responsible for what is done on devices when in school
- Understand that online privacy is important for self but others
- Respect the guidance of staff of when, where and how these devices are used
- Respect the expectations regarding electronics

### **Dress Code**

Appropriate clothing includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Clothing appropriate for the weather.
2. Clothing that does not create a health or safety hazard.
3. Clothing appropriate for the activity (i.e. outdoors or the classroom).

Inappropriate clothing includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Clothing that shows intimate parts.
2. Clothing bearing a lewd, vulgar or obscene message.

3. Apparel promoting products or activities that are illegal for use by minors.
4. Objectionable emblems, badges, symbols, signs, words, objects or pictures on clothing or jewelry communicating a message that is racist, sexist or otherwise derogatory to a protected minority group, evidences gang membership or affiliation, or approves or advances any form of religious, racial, or sexual harassment and/or violence against other individuals as defined in Board Policy 4.5.1: Harassment
5. Any apparel or footwear that would damage school property.
6. Masks, face paint, or clothing limiting or preventing identification of a student.
7. Clothing worn in a manner that displays undergarments.

### **Public Displays of Affection**

Unnecessary displays of affection between students (hugging, kissing, embracing, inappropriate touching, etc.) have no place in an educational setting. These activities are not permitted at school or school sponsored events. Students who violate this guideline will be directed to stop. Repeat offenders and/or severe offenses are subject to disciplinary consequences.

### **Closed Campus**

VES is a closed campus and students are only allowed to leave campus if signed out by a parent/guardian or parent/guardian designee. Students who are off-campus without permission will be subject to disciplinary consequences or loss of privileges. Students may receive food deliveries from parents/guardians during their scheduled lunch period only. Items delivered outside of scheduled lunch period will be kept in the office until lunch or end of the day.

## **School Board Policies**

### **Harassment and Violence Policy**

It is the policy of the VES Board of Education to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment or violence including, but not limited to: religious, racial, sexual, or chronic/continual. It shall be a violation for any student or staff member of the District to harass or inflict violence upon a student or staff member through conduct or communication as defined by this policy. Harassment constitutes any action that makes another person uncomfortable. A student will be warned to discontinue behaviors that cause others discomfort; if they should choose to continue they will face suspension.

VES will investigate all complaints of harassment, either formal or informal, verbal or written, and will discipline any student or staff member who harasses a student or staff member of VES. [A complete copy of the Harassment and Violence policy](#) is on file at VES.

**Hazing Prohibition Policy** “Hazing” means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student to commit an act, that creates a substantial risk of harm to another person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose. The term hazing includes, but is not limited to:

1. Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking or placing a harmful substance on the body
2. Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, exposure to weather, confinement in a restricted area, calisthenics or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student
3. Any activity involving the consumption of any alcoholic beverage, drug, tobacco product or any other food, liquid or substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student
4. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects a student to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in the school
5. Any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task that involves a violation of state or federal law or of school district policies or regulations

Any person who believes he or she has been a victim of hazing or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall report the alleged acts immediately to an advisor, who is the appropriate school district official designated by this policy. Upon receipt of a complaint or report of hazing, VES shall investigate the report and take proper action. Such action

may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, or discharge. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. School district action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable statutory authority, including the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, school district policies and regulations.

ISD 4107 will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or any other employee who retaliates against any person who makes a report of alleged hazing or testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation or hearing related to such hazing.

### **Bullying Prohibition Policy Including Cyberbullying**

Bullying is not tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. Bullying behavior consists of intentional, negative actions that include, but are not limited to, exclusion, stalking, shoving, hitting, beating, remarks about sexual orientation, spreading rumors, physical and verbal harassment or intimidation, racial or ethnic slurs, and remarks about body, mind, family language, religion and socioeconomic status.

#### **I. PURPOSE**

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Bullying, like other violent or disruptive behavior, is conduct that interferes with students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to educate students in a safe environment. To the extent such conduct affects the educational environment of district schools and the rights and welfare of its students and is within the control of the district in its normal operations, it is the district's intent to prevent bullying and to take action to investigate, respond, remediate, and discipline those acts of bullying which have not been successfully prevented. Appropriate administrative and staff follow-up will be provided for targets and offenders of bullying. While VES cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under the direct supervision of school personnel, the purpose of this policy is to assist the district in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, and other similar disruptive behavior.

#### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

- A. An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on district property, at school related functions, or in electronic form otherwise known as cyberbullying. This policy applies to all of the academic and nonacademic (for example, athletic and extracurricular) programs of the district and will be enforced before, during, or after school hours on all school property, including the school bus, school functions, or events held at other locations. The policy also applies to any off-campus conduct that causes or threatens to cause a substantial and material disruption at school, or interferes with the rights of students or employees to be free from a hostile school environment taking into consideration the totality of the circumstances on and off campus. This policy applies not only to students who directly engage in an act of bullying but also to students who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another student's act of bullying.
- B. No district employee shall permit, condone, or tolerate bullying. Any district employee who observes an act of bullying shall intervene to attempt to stop the act and shall report it to the appropriate person. Likewise, any person who receives a report of an act of bullying shall report it to the appropriate person.
- C. Apparent permission or consent by a student being bullied does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.
- D. Retaliation against a target, good faith reporter, or a witness of bullying is prohibited.
- E. False accusations or reports of bullying against another student are prohibited.
- F. A person who engages directly or indirectly in an act of bullying, reprisal, or intentional false reporting of bullying or permits, condones, or tolerates bullying may be subject to discipline for that act in accordance with the district's policies and procedures. The district may take into account the following factors:
  - 1. The age, developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved
  - 2. The levels of harm, surrounding circumstances, and nature and severity of the behavior
  - 3. Past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior
  - 4. The relationship between the parties involved
  - 5. The context in which the alleged incidents occurred

Consequences for students who commit prohibited acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. Consequences for district employees who permit, condone, or tolerate

bullying or engage in an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of bullying may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge. Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of bullying may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from district property and events and/or termination of services and/or contracts.

G. The district will act to investigate all complaints of bullying and will take appropriate action against any student or district employee who is found to have violated this policy.

### III. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the definitions included in this section apply.

A. Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. There are three types of bullying:

1. Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

2. Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

3. Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:

- Spitting
- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures

4. Cyberbullying involves the misuse of technology in any form, including sending or posting e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, blog or social media postings, digital pictures or images, or other electronic postings, regardless of whether such acts are committed on or off district property and/or with or without the use of district resources.

Bullying based on a protected classification set forth in the district's Equal Educational Opportunity Policy (race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or age) may also constitute a violation of the district's Harassment, Violence, and Discrimination Policy.

B. "District employee" for purposes of this policy includes school board members, district employees, agents, volunteers, contractors/vendors, or persons subject to the supervision and control of the district.

C. "Immediately" or "immediate" means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 24 hours.

D. "On district property, at school-related functions, or in electronic form" means all district buildings, school grounds, and school property or property immediately adjacent to school grounds, school bus stops, school buses, school vehicles, school contracted vehicles, or any other vehicles approved for district purposes, the area of entrance or departure from school grounds, premises, or events, all school-related functions, school-sponsored activities, events, or trips, the use of any district technology equipment or system on or off-campus, the use of a personal digital device on campus, or off-campus electronic communication that causes or threatens to cause a substantial and material disruption at school or interference with the rights of students or employees to be secure. District property also may mean a student's walking route to or from school for purposes of attending school or school-related functions, activities, or events. While prohibiting bullying at these locations or events or through use of district technology resources, the district does not represent that it will provide supervision or assume liability at these locations or events, or through use of district technology resources.

### IV. REPORTING PROCEDURE

- A. Any person who believes he or she has been the target of bullying or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying shall report the alleged acts immediately to an administrator, counselor, or student services advocate in that school. A student may report bullying anonymously. However, the district's ability to take action against an alleged offender based solely on an anonymous report may be limited.
- B. A report (verbal or written) should be made immediately, or as soon after the incident as possible; delays between the date of the alleged incident and the reporting date may make investigations more difficult.
- C. The district encourages the target or other reporting party to use a report form; oral and electronic reports shall be considered complaints as well. The report form is available in the office of the school, or on the district's website at: [www.voyageursschool.org](http://www.voyageursschool.org). Upon request for qualified persons with a disability, alternative means of filing a complaint, such as through a personal interview or by tape recording, will be made available.
- D. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting harassment, violence, or discrimination directly to the Title IX Coordinator/Equity Coordinator or to the Director.
- E. Title IX Coordinator/Equity Coordinator or Director: 3724 Bemidji Avenue North, Bemidji, MN 56601 - 218-444-3130.
- F. District employees shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events that might include bullying. Any such person who receives a report of, observes, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying shall inform the building principal or designee immediately.
- G. Reports of bullying are classified as private educational and/or personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as permitted by law.
- H. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying will not affect the target's or reporter's future employment, grades, work assignments, or educational or work environment.
- I. The district will respect the privacy of the target, the reporter, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the district's obligation to investigate, take appropriate action, and comply with any legal disclosure obligations.

#### V. DISTRICT ACTION

- A. Upon receipt of a complaint or report of bullying, the district shall undertake or authorize an investigation by District officials or a third party designated by the district, consistent with the Harassment, Violence and Discrimination Policy.
- B. The district shall take immediate steps to protect the target, reporter, students, or others as necessary pending completion of an investigation of bullying, consistent with applicable law.
- C. Upon completion of the investigation, the district will take appropriate action pursuant to the School Discipline Policy as outlined in the (Student/Family Handbook for students; Employee Handbook for staff). Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning; loss of privilege; restitution; suspension, exclusion or expulsion for students; remediation; leave of absence or termination for staff. The district may also contact law enforcement if the behavior is criminal in nature. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. District action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable statutory authority, including the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act; district policies; and regulations.
- D. Appropriate administrative and staff follow-up will be provided for targets and offenders of bullying.
- E. The district is not authorized to disclose to a target or reporter private educational or personnel data regarding an alleged offender who is a student or district employee.
- F. School officials will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students involved in a bullying incident and the remedial action taken, to the extent permitted by law, based on a confirmed report.
- G. The district shall monitor all incidents of bullying as fully set forth in Section IX of the Harassment, Violence and Discrimination Policy.

#### VI. APPEAL

If the report has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the target, s/he may appeal to the Title IX/Equity Coordinator within ten (10) school days of receipt (verbal or written) of the findings of the district investigation. The Title IX/Equity Coordinator will conduct a review of the appeal and, within ten (10) school days of receipt of the appeal, will affirm, reverse, or modify the findings of the report. The decision of the Title IX/Equity Coordinator is final.

#### VII. REPRISAL

The district will discipline or take appropriate action against any student or district employee who retaliates against any person

who makes a good faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment.

#### VIII. PROGRAMMING

The district shall implement annual bullying prevention and character development education programs for students to prevent and reduce policy violations. Such programs may offer instruction on character education including, but not limited to, character qualities such as attentiveness, truthfulness, respect for authority, diligence, gratefulness, self discipline, patience, forgiveness, respect for others, peacemaking, and resourcefulness.

#### IX. NOTICE

The district will give annual notice of this policy to students, parents/guardians, and staff, and this policy shall appear in the student handbook.

#### X. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This policy will be reviewed by the Board or its designee on an annual basis and, if necessary, will be revised to conform to applicable state and federal law.

### **Instructional Services-Special Education Policy**

#### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the position of the school board on the need for special educational services on the part of some students in the school district.

#### II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The school board recognizes that some students need special education and further recognizes the importance of providing a free appropriate public education and delivery system for students in need of special education.

#### III. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The school board accepts its responsibility to identify, evaluate and provide special instruction and services for disabled children who are properly the responsibility of the school district and who meet the criteria to qualify for special education and related services as set forth in Minnesota and federal law.
- B. The school district shall ensure that all qualified disabled children are provided the special education and related services which are appropriate to their educational needs.
- C. When such services require or result from interagency cooperation, the school district shall participate in such interagency activities in compliance with applicable federal and state law.

### **Problem Solving Procedures**

Step 1: Direct Resolution: If staff/community members/parents/guardians have a question or concern, they are encouraged to go directly to the person(s) involved. If no appropriate resolution is agreed upon by the staff members, you must complete the Problem-Solving form, located in the office to move the issue to an Administrative Resolution (Step 2): If the issue involves the director, proceed to step 3.

Step 2: Administrative Resolution: The administrative resolution process consists of a meeting between the parties involved with the director in attendance. An attempt at administrative resolution is to be made prior to requesting a formal resolution

Step 3. Formal Resolution: Formal resolution consists of the submission of the problem-solving report to the VES Problem Solving Committee. The Problem Solving Committee is a standing committee consisting of 3 current board members, and is selected annually at the August board meeting. Members of this committee will offer unbiased consideration on the issues brought before them within 10 working days of the administrative resolution meeting or referral to the school board, if the issue involves the Director. The Problem Solving Committee will then take one of the following actions within 10 working days of receiving the report.

- A. Determine that the issue calls for a change in board policy or procedures or that current policy have not been adequately followed. The committee will recommend a plan of corrective action to the director, the complainant, and/or board.
- B. Conclude that the issue is a personal opinion by an individual or small group of individuals and that changing policy or

taking action based upon this opinion would not be in the best interest of the school community.

C. Seek further mediation on the issue

### **Protection and Privacy of Student Records**

ISD 4107 gives notice to parents/guardians of students currently in attendance at VES, of their rights regarding pupil records.

A. Parents/guardians and eligible students are hereby informed that they have the following rights:

- That parent or eligible student has a right to inspect and review the student's education records
- That the parent or eligible student has a right to request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that those records are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights
- That the parent or eligible student has a right to deny consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that federal and state law and the regulations promulgated there under authorize disclosures without consent
- That the parent or eligible student has a right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education regarding an alleged failure by the school district to comply with the requirements of 20 U.S.C.1232g, and the rules promulgated there under
- That the parent or eligible student has a right to obtain a copy of the school's policy regarding the protection and privacy of pupil records
- That copies of the school's policy regarding the protection and privacy of school records are located at the school.

B. ISD 4107 has adopted a school board policy in order to comply with state and federal laws regarding education records. The policy does the following:

- It classifies records as public, private or confidential
- It establishes procedures and regulations to permit parents/guardians or students to inspect and review a student's education records. These procedures include the method of determining fees for copies, a listing of the locations of these education records, and the identity of the individuals in charge of the records
- It establishes procedures and regulations to allow parents/guardians or students to request the amendment of a student's education records to ensure that the records are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights
- It establishes procedures and regulations for access to and disclosure of education records
- It establishes procedures and regulations for safeguarding the privacy of education records and for obtaining prior written consent of the parent or student when required prior to disclosure

"Directory information" will be included in a student directory and will include the following information relating to a student: the student's name; address; telephone number; date and place of birth; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; dates of attendance; degrees and awards received; the most recent educational agency or institution attended by the student; and other similar information. "Directory information" does not include identifying information on a student's religion, race, color, social position or nationality.

The information listed above shall be public information that the school may disclose from the education records of a student. Should the parent of a student or the student so desire, any or all of the listed information will not be disclosed without the parent's or eligible student's prior written consent, except to school officials as provided under federal law. In order to make any or all of the directory information listed above "private," the parent or eligible student must make a written request to the student's advisor within thirty (30) days of receiving this information.

### **Discrimination Policy**

Rights under Title IX - Equal Educational Opportunity

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that equal educational opportunity is provided for all students of VES.

### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

A. It is the school district's policy to provide equal educational opportunity for all students. The school district does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, parental status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation or age. The school district also makes reasonable accommodations for disabled students.

B. The school district prohibits the harassment of any individual for any of the categories listed above. For information about the

types of conduct that constitute violation of the school district's policy on harassment and violence and the school district's procedures for addressing such complaints, refer to policy Prohibition of Harassment and Violence.

- C. This policy applies to all areas of education including academics, coursework, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, or other rights or privileges of enrollment.
- D. It is the responsibility of every school district employee to comply with this policy conscientiously.
- E. Any student, parent or guardian having any questions regarding this policy should discuss it with an appropriate school official. In addition, an inquiry or complaint should be referred to the Department of Human Resources or the Superintendent.

### **Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

Students may be disabled under Section 504 even though the students do not require special education services. It is the intention of ISD 4107 to ensure that all students who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 are identified, evaluated, and provided appropriate educational services.

The district staff will consider the existence of a disability and possible Section 504 protection in the following circumstances:

- When a student shows a pattern of not benefiting from the instruction being provided;
- When a student returns to school after a serious illness or injury;
- When a student exhibits a chronic health condition (lasting 6 months or longer);
- When substance abuse is an issue; or
- When a disability of any kind is suspected.

Referral, identification, planning, and review: The designated Section 504 building coordinator (Ryan Haasch, Director) will utilize the following Section 504 process:

Step 1. Referral: Student, parent, or staff member who believe they are observing in another student substantially limited performance in one or more major life activities may refer the student by completing the Section 504 referral form and submitting it. The Section 504 committee will convene, review the referral, and based upon review of the student records, including academic, social, medical, and behavioral, will make a decision regarding the need to evaluate.

Step 2. Does the student appear to have a disability under Section 504? If yes: The coordinator will proceed with the evaluation upon receipt of parent written permission. All evaluation activities deemed appropriate will be employed. The 504 committee will review the results of the evaluation. No final determination of whether the student will or will not be identified as a handicapped individual, within the meaning of Section 504, will be made by the committee without first inviting the parent/guardian to participate in a meeting considering such a determination. After initial evaluation activities have been completed, the coordinator will invite the parent to a final evaluation meeting.

Step 3. Develop accommodation plan: If the student qualifies as disabled under Section 504, the team will develop an accommodation plan for the student. The educational services shall be implemented as outlined in the Student Accommodation Plan. One individual will be designated as the case manager to monitor the implementation of the plan and the progress of the student.

Step 4. Periodic review: Each student accommodation plan will be reviewed periodically and at a minimum, the accommodation plan shall be reviewed every other year.

### **Expulsion from School**

Students who commit serious violations will be suspended for up to 10 consecutive days and recommended for expulsion to an independent hearing officer.

#### **Examples of offenses for which students may be recommended for expulsion include:**

- Harming or attempting to harm another person with a weapon
- Possessing a gun or a gun replica on school grounds, including on the bus\*
- Possessing, selling, or distributing controlled substances
- Assaulting another person resulting in injury to the victim
- Using a mock gun in a threatening manner
- Damaging or stealing private or school property
- Sexually harassing; hazing or chronically bullying of another person

- Chronic, repeated disruption to the learning environment of the school

\*A student who accidentally finds themselves in possession of a weapon and turns it in immediately to the Director's office shall not be considered to possess a weapon.

### **Procedures for Hearings**

In compliance with Due Process accorded in the Minnesota Student Disciplinary Code a particular process must be followed in severe disciplinary cases such a long-term suspension or expulsion. Until this process is followed, a student can only be suspended due to alleged misconduct for less than 10 school days. If a student is recommended for expulsion for an offense, a hearing must take place within 10 days before a majority of the school board or an impartial hearing officer.

### **Parental Notification of a Hearing**

A letter must be mailed or hand delivered to the parents/guardians of the student in question and a formal hearing must be scheduled 5-10 days after the parents/guardians receive the letter. The letter must include the following.

1. A description of the disruptive behavior, a concise statement of alleged act on which charges are based and statement of possible penalty:
2. Hearing Date and Time: both the student and the parents/guardians are encouraged to attend.
3. Delays/Waivers/Failure to appear: the hearing will take place as scheduled unless the hearing authority grants a delay, or the student and parents/guardians agree to waive the hearing and comply voluntarily with the proposed disciplinary action or with a negotiated penalty. Warning: A failure to appear will not delay the hearing and may lead to imposition of the imposed penalty by default.
4. Right to Representation: The student has the right to be represented at the hearing by legal counsel, a parent or some other representative. This representative must be designated in a written notice, filed at least 72 hours before the hearing, with the director.
5. Description of the procedures of the hearing: The formal hearing is not a trial. It is an administrative hearing designed to ensure calm, orderly determination by an impartial hearing authority of the facts of a case of alleged misconduct. Technical rules of evidence and procedure do not apply. For further information regarding the procedure of the hearing, please see attached.
6. Contact Person: Ryan Haasch, Director, Voyageurs Expeditionary School, 3724 Bemidji Ave. North, Bemidji, MN 56601. Student and family may request a delay, assign a representative to speak, discuss the evidence to be presented, or seek further information from this contact person.

### **Specifics of the Hearing Process**

**Waiver of Hearing: Voluntary Compliance or Negotiated Penalty:** a student and his or her parents/guardians may elect to waive the formal hearing and review procedures and comply voluntarily with the proposed penalty, or may waive the hearing and review and negotiate a mutually acceptable penalty with the designated disciplinarian. Such a waiver and compliance agreement shall be made voluntarily, with knowledge of the rights being relinquished, and shall be evidenced by a written document signed by the student, the parents/guardian and the appropriate school official.

**Right of Review:** A student or parent aggrieved by Hearing Authority's decision after a formal hearing shall have the right to have the decision reviewed by the VES School Board the penalty imposed was at least as severe as long-term suspension or expulsion, as an in-school suspension exceeding one semester, or a denial or restriction of student privileges for one semester or longer.

**Conduct of Review:** The School board shall be bound by the Hearing Authority's factual determination unless the student persuades the Review Authority (VES School Board) that a finding of fact was arbitrary, capricious, or unsupported by substantial evidence or that new evidence which has come to light since the hearing and which could not be reasonable have been discovered in time for the hearing would manifestly change the factual determination. Upon such finding, the Review Authority shall have discretion to receive new evidence or conduct a de novo hearing.

### **Effect of Review Authority's Decision:**

The VES School Board's decision shall be the final administrative action to which the student is entitled.

**Rules Governing the Conduct of the Hearing:**

1. The school board shall have the burden of proof of misconduct. The school's representative shall be a VES administrator or an

appropriate individual enlisted by the VES School Board.

2. The student and his or her parents/guardian shall have the following rights: The right to be represented by legal counsel or other designated representative, however, the school is not required to provide representation; the right to present evidence, subject to reasonable requirements of substantiation at the discretion of the hearing authority and subject to exclusion of evidence deemed irrelevant or redundant; the right to confront and cross examine adverse witnesses, subject to reasonable limitation by the hearing authority; the right to have a decision based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing and the applicable legal rules, including the governing rules of student conduct.
3. The hearing authority shall determine whether the alleged act(s) of misconduct have been proved by a preponderance of the evidence presented at a hearing at which the student and/or a designated representative have appeared. The hearing authority will be designated by the chief administrator of VES, and may be one or more persons. Persons qualified to serve in the position of hearing authority include the chief administrator of VES, individual VES board members, or appropriate third parties enlisted by the VES School Board. Any individual board member serving as hearing authority in a hearing cannot serve with the rest of the board as a hearing authority in a subsequent review of the same case.
4. If no one has appeared on the student's behalf within a reasonable time after the announced time for the hearing, the hearing authority shall determine whether the parent, through the student, received notice of the hearing. If so, the hearing authority shall review the school's evidence to determine whether it is sufficient to support the charge(s) of misconduct.
5. The disciplinarian shall be the VES director or a designated staff member. A hearing authority who is also a disciplinarian shall impose an appropriate sanction if (s)he finds the allegations of misconduct have been proved.
6. Arrangements to make a tape recording or keep minutes of the proceedings shall be made by the administrative authority who scheduled the hearing and prepared the written notice. A verbatim written transcript is not required, but any minutes or other written record shall fairly reflect the substance of the evidence presented.
7. The hearing authority may announce a decision on the question of whether the allegation(s) of misconduct have been proven at the close of the hearing. A hearing authority who is also a disciplinarian may impose a penalty at the close of the hearing.
8. In any event, the hearing authority shall prepare and mail or deliver to the student, through the parent, a written decision within five (5) working days after the hearing. The decision shall include a concise summary of the evidence upon which the hearing authority based its factual determination. A hearing authority who is not a disciplinarian shall forward a copy of his or her written decision to the disciplinarian forthwith. The disciplinarian shall prepare a written decision, including reasons for choosing any penalty imposed, and mail or deliver it to the student, through the parent/guardian, within five (5) working days of receipt of the hearing authority's report.
9. The hearing authority's decision shall take effect immediately upon notification to the parent, either at the close of the hearing or upon receipt of the written decision. If notification is by mail, the parent shall be presumed to have received the notice on the fifth calendar day after the date of mailing.

### **Routine Building Procedures**

VES non-crisis building security plan/practice is as follows:

- During the instructional day, all exterior doors will remain locked. The front door will be locked and individuals must be buzzed into the building.
- Parents/guardians are required to notify the office and come in to sign students out for appointments, etc., that occur during the school day.
- All visitors are required to report to the office to sign in and receive a nametag to be allowed in the building. Upon completion of the visit, the individual must sign out.
- Students from another school wishing to shadow a VES student, must be pre-approved by the director. No visitors will be allowed to stay at school for the day without prior approval from the director. Visitor approval forms are available in the office.
- All staff and school groups utilizing building space after hours and on weekends are responsible for securing doors, limiting access to the use of areas, and assuring that the building is clear and locked prior to leaving the building.
- No one is authorized to wedge a door open at any time to allow individuals to enter the building for practices, school activities, meetings, etc.

### **Criminal Background Checks**

VES is dedicated to maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment in order to promote the physical, social, and

psychological well-being of its students. All employees and board members at Voyageurs Expeditionary School are subject to yearly criminal background checks, at the school's expense, as a condition of employment or service. All volunteers, and any other person who may work with students, are also required to pass an annual background check at their own expense. The complete Criminal Background Check policy is available on our website at <https://www.voyageursschool.org/documents-policies/>.

### **Lead Testing and Remediation**

VES is dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of students, staff, and visitors by minimizing exposure to lead in the school environment. Our policy outlines the procedures and guidelines for testing lead levels in school facilities and the actions to be taken in case of elevated lead levels, and can be accessed on our website, or by request, at <https://www.voyageursschool.org/documents-policies/>.

## Statewide Assessments: Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information

Your student's participation in statewide assessments is important as it allows your school and district to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education. In the past, students with disabilities and English learners were often excluded from statewide assessments. By requiring that all students take statewide assessments, schools and teachers have more information to see how all students are doing. This helps schools to continuously improve the education they provide and to identify groups, grades, or subjects that may need additional support.

### Assessments Connect to Standards

Statewide assessments are based on the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) or the [WIDA English Language Development Standards](#). These standards define the knowledge and skills students should be learning in K–12 public and charter schools. Minnesota prioritizes high-quality education, and statewide assessments gives educators and leaders an opportunity to evaluate student and school success.

#### Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)

MCA and MTAS are the annual assessments in reading, mathematics and science that measure a snapshot of student learning of the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards.

#### ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

The ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS are the annual assessments for English learners that provide information about their progress in learning academic English based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

### Statewide Assessments Help Families and Students

Participating in statewide assessments helps families see a snapshot of their student's learning so they can advocate for their success in school. High school students can use MCA results:

- For course placement at a Minnesota State college or university. If students receive a college-ready score, they may not need to take a remedial, noncredit course for that subject.
- For Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) and College in the Schools programs.

English learners who take the ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS and meet certain requirements have the opportunity to exit from English learner programs.

### Taking Statewide Assessments Helps Your Student's School

Statewide assessments provide information to your school and district about how all students are engaging with the content they learn in school. This information helps:

- Educators evaluate their instructional materials.
- Schools and districts identify inequities between groups, explore root causes and implement supports.
- School and district leaders make decisions about how to use money and resources to support all students.

### Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

Student participation in state and locally required assessments is a parent/guardian choice. If you choose to have your student not participate in a statewide assessment, please provide a reason for your decision on the form. Contact your student's school to learn more about locally required assessments.

## Consequences of Not Participating in Statewide Assessments

- The student will not receive an individual score. For ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS, the student would not have the opportunity to exit their English learner program.
- School and district assessment results will be incomplete, making it more difficult to have an accurate picture of student learning.
- Since all eligible students are included in some calculations even when they do not participate, school and district accountability results are impacted. This may affect the school's ability to be identified for support or recognized for success.



[education.mn.gov > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing](https://education.mn.gov/Students-and-Families/Programs-and-Initiatives/Statewide-Testing)

Check with your local school or district to see if there are any other consequences for not participating.

### Additional Information

- On average, students spend less than 1 percent of instructional time taking statewide assessments each year.
- Minnesota statutes limit the total amount of time students can spend taking other district- or school-wide assessments to 11 hours or less each school year, depending on the grade.
- School districts and charter schools are required to publish an assessment calendar on their website by the beginning of each school year. Refer to your district or charter school's website for more information on assessments.

(Note: This form is only applicable for the 20\_\_\_\_ to 20\_\_\_\_ school year.)



By completing this form, you are acknowledging that your student will not participate in statewide assessments and will not receive individual assessment results. This form must be returned to your student's school before the applicable test administration.

## Statewide Assessment: Parent/Guardian Decision Not to Participate

### Student Information

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Refusal: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the statewide assessment(s) you are opting the student out of this school year:

MCA/MTAS Reading

MCA/MTAS Science

MCA/MTAS Mathematics

ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS

Contact your school or district for more information on how to opt out of local assessments.

**Student Handbook Signature Page  
Parent & Guardian Expectations and Agreement**

VES encourages parents/guardians to participate in and be actively involved in the educational experience of students.

**Therefore, we have established the following parent/guardian expectations:**

I want my student to be successful in school and I agree to:

\_\_\_\_\_ ensure my student is punctual and attends school regularly (90% attendance).

\_\_\_\_\_ support the VES rules and guidelines outlined in the Student/Family Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ be an active participant in my child's educational journey by attending conferences, school functions, and any restorative processes.

\_\_\_\_\_ establish and provide a quiet time and place for homework, monitor my student's progress, and communicate with my student the expectation that all assignments are done in a timely manner.

\_\_\_\_\_ support the VES Restorative Practices behavior and discipline plan. I understand that severe behaviors may result in serious consequences including suspension or expulsion.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will comply with the student cell phone policy and will contact the office if I need to get a message to my student.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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**Student Expectations and Agreement**

VES goals are for every student to succeed academically and socially and to have expanded opportunities, including college, upon graduation from VES. **Therefore, we have established the following student expectations:**

I want to be successful in school and I agree to:

\_\_\_\_\_ be on time to school and class and attend school regularly (minimum 90% attendance).

\_\_\_\_\_ support the VES rules and guidelines outlined in the Student/Family Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ come to school, classes and advisory prepared with pens, pencils, paper and other necessary tools for learning.

\_\_\_\_\_ meet assignment expectations for all classes.

\_\_\_\_\_ participate in the VES Restorative Practices behavior and discipline plan. I understand that severe behaviors may result in serious consequences including suspension or expulsion.

\_\_\_\_\_ fully participate in restorative processes.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will comply with the student cell phone policy and will report to the office if I need to contact my parent/guardian.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date