2015–2016 Vidor Middle School Student Handbook

Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook

My child and I have been offered the option of receiving a paper copy of or to electronically access the 2015-2016 Vidor Middle School Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct at www.vidorisd.org.

I have chosen to:

☐ Receive a paper copy of the Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct.

☐ Accept responsibility for accessing the Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct at the Web address listed above.

I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to disciplinary consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. If I have any questions regarding this handbook or the Student Code of Conduct, I should direct those questions to the principal at 409-951-8880.

Printed name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

V.I.S.D. Administration

Dr. Jay Killgo…….…...…… Superintendent

David Croak...……..……Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Sheila Schoen……..…Director of Finance

Johnny Ross…….……...…Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum

D'Lana Barbay……...……..Director of Elementary Education

Suzanne Wojtowich……..Director of Secondary Curriculum & Instruction

Jami Potett ……Director of Special Education

V.I.S.D. School Board

Rollie Burr …...……....President

Michael Helms ..……..Vice President

Carrie Vincent ……...Secretary

David Camp ……..Member

Kimberly Crossley……...…….Member

Gina Vandevender…… ……..…Member

Mike Marion ……Member

Vidor Middle School Staff

Jason Yeaman…….……Principal

Pamela Patterson……...……...Assistant Principal

Cheryl Lamey...……...Assistant Principal

Cindy Overman……Counselor

Emily Allen…..……..... Educational Diagnostician

Theresa Howell……..... Principal's Secretary

Suzann Herring…...……....…….…….. Registrar

Terri Ardis……...…….……..…….. Secretary - Attendance and Grades

Debbie Brack .....Librarian

Sharla Cormier…….....Nurse

Rose Pipps ……....Head Custodian

Erinn Fowler……..... Cafeteria Supervisor

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PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2015–2016! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

The Vidor Middle School Student Handbook is designed to provide basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. The handbook is divided into two sections:

Section I—PARENTAL RIGHTS— information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook.

Section II—OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS— organized alphabetically by topic, and where possible further divided by applicability to ages and/or grade levels for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware that the term "parent" unless otherwise noted, is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, any person granted some other type of lawful control of the student, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the Vidor Student Code of Conduct, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found on the district's website at www.vidorisd.org, and is available in hard copy upon request.

The Student Handbook is a general reference guide only and is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the Student Code of Conduct. Please be aware that it is not a complete statement of all policies, procedures, or rules that may be applicable in a given circumstance. In case of conflict between board policy (including the Student Code of Conduct) and any provisions of the Student Handbook, the current provisions of board policy and the Student Code of Conduct are to be followed.

In case of conflict between board policy (including the Student Code of Conduct) and any provisions of the Student Handbook, the current provisions of board policy and the Student Code of Conduct are to be followed.

Also, please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. The district encourages parents to stay informed of policy changes by attending board meetings. Changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters or other communications. The district reserves the right to modify provisions of the Student Handbook at any time, whenever it is deemed necessary. Notice of any revision or modification will be given as is reasonably practical under the circumstances.

Although the Student Handbook may refer to rights established through law or district policy, the Student Handbook does not create any additional rights for students and parents. It does not, nor is it intended to, create contractual or legal rights between any student or parent and the district.

If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact a teacher, the school counselor, or campus administrator at 409-951-8880.

Also, please complete and return to your child's campus the following forms provided in the forms packet distributed at the beginning of the year or upon the student's enrollment.

1. Acknowledgement of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook form
2. Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information form
3. Corporal Punishment Form

[See **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights** on page 4 and **Directory Information** on page 11, **Prohibiting Corporal Punishment** on page 7 for more information.]

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district's official policy manual is available for review in the district administration office or an unofficial electronic copy is available online at www.vidorisd.org.

SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS

This section of the Vidor Middle School Student Handbook includes information related to certain rights of parents as specified in state or federal law.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Working Together

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. Your involvement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress through Skyward's Parent Access and/or contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 22]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office at 409-951-8880 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 47]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: PTO (parent teacher organization) at Vidor Middle School, coordinator Debbie Brack.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. [For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact the office at 409-951-8880]
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction and other wellness issues. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in the handbook at **School Health Advisory Council** on page 37]
- Serving on a committee to determine criteria to be used to evaluate the overall performance of the district and each campus in community and student engagement. For further information, please contact the campus principal.
- Being aware of the school's ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.

- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child's emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. Board meeting schedule can be accessed on the district website www.vidorisd.org

Parent Involvement Coordinator

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs is D'Lana Barbay and may be contacted at 409-951-8736.

Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For further information, see policy EF(LEGAL).]

"Opting Out" of Participation in other Types of Surveys or Screening and the Disclosure of Personal Information

As a parent, you have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for your child's participation in:

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing, selling, or otherwise disclosing that information. Note that this does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions.

- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA.]

As a parent, you may inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.

Teacher and Staff Professional Qualifications

You may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teachers, including whether a teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.

Instructional Materials

As a parent, you have a right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.

Consent to Display a Student's Original Work and Personal Information

Teachers may display students' work, which may include personally identifiable student information, in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement.

However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying students' artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, original videos or voice recordings, and other original works on the district's website, or website affiliated with or sponsored by the district, such as any campus or classroom website, and in-district publications which may include printed material, video, or any other method of mass communication.

Accessing Student Records

You may review your child's student records. These records include:

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,
- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,

- Other medical records,
- Teacher and school counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child, and
- Teaching materials and tests used in your child's classroom

Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student When not Otherwise Permitted by Law

State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

- When it is to be used for school safety;
- When it relates to classroom instruction or a co-curricular or extracurricular activity; or
- When it relates to media coverage of the school.

The district will seek parental consent through a written request before making any video or voice recording of your child not otherwise allowed by law.

Religious or Moral Beliefs

You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by state law.

Tutoring or Test Preparation Purposes

Based on informal observations, evaluative data such as grades earned on assignments or tests, or results from diagnostic assessments, a teacher may determine that a student is in need of additional targeted assistance in order for the student to achieve mastery in state-developed essential knowledge and skills. The school will always attempt to provide tutoring and strategies for test-taking in ways that prevent removal from other instruction as much as possible. In accordance with state law and policy EC, the school will not remove a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than ten percent of the school days on which the class is offered, unless the student's parent consents to this removal. The school may also offer tutorial services, which students whose grades are below 70 will be required to attend.
[Also refer to policies EC and EHBC, and contact your student's teacher with questions about any tutoring programs provided by the school].

Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from

participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. [See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 48 section and policy EC(LEGAL).]

Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK(LEGAL).]

Limiting Electronic Communications with Students by District Employees

Teachers and other approved employees are permitted by the district to communicate with students through the use of electronic media within the scope of the individual's professional responsibilities. For example, a teacher may set up a social networking page for his or her class that has information related to class work, homework, and tests. As a parent, you are welcome to join or become a member of such a page.

An employee described above may also contact a student individually through electronic media to communicate about items such as homework or upcoming tests.

However, instant or text messages sent to an individual student are only allowed if a district employee with responsibility for an extracurricular activity needs to communicate with a student participating in the extracurricular activity.

If you prefer that your child not receive any one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee or if you have questions related to the use of electronic media by district employee, please contact the campus principal.

Notices of Certain Student Misconduct to Noncustodial Parent

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to his or her child's misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO(LEGAL) and the **Student Code of Conduct**.]

Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment-spanking or paddling a student-may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and policy FO(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual.

If you do not want corporal punishment to be administered to your child as a method of student discipline, please return the form included in the forms packet OR submit a written statement to the campus principal stating this decision. A signed statement must be provided each year if you do not want corporal punishment to be administered to your child.

You may choose to revoke this prohibition at any time during the year by providing a signed statement to the campus principal. However, district personnel may choose to use discipline

methods other than corporal punishment even if the parent requests that this method be used on the student.

Please note that if the district is made aware that a student is in temporary or permanent conservatorship (custody) of the state, through foster care, kinship care, or other arrangements, corporal punishment shall not be administered, even when a signed statement prohibiting its use has not been submitted by the student's caregiver or caseworker.

Safety Transfers/ Assignments

As a parent, you may:

- Request the transfer of your child to another classroom if your child has been determined by the district to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 37.0832. See the campus principal for information.

  [See **Bullying** on page 17, policy FDB, and policy FFI.]

- To request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDE(LOCAL).]

- Request the transfer of your child to a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. If the victim does not wish to transfer, the district will transfer the assailant in accordance with policy FDE.

Multiple Birth Siblings

As a parent, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets, etc.) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14th day after the enrollment of your children. [See policy FDB(LEGAL).]

Students Who Receive Special Education Services with Other School-Aged Children in the Home

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, the parent or guardian may request that any other student residing in the household be transferred to the same campus, if the appropriate grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus.

However, the district is not required to provide transportation to the other children in the household. The parent or guardian should speak with the principal of the school regarding any transportation needs prior to requesting a transfer for any other children in the home. [See policy FDB(LOCAL).]

Service/Assistance Animal Use by Students

A parent of a student who uses a service/assistance animal because of the student's disability must submit a request in writing to the principal at least ten district business days before bringing the service/assistance animal on campus.

Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education Services

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If the evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide informed written consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within the timeline prescribed by law once the district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the evaluation report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with prior written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of their rights if they disagree with the district. This district is required to give parents the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*.

Additional information regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is available from the school district in a companion document, *A Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*. The following Web sites provide information to those who are seeking information and resources specific to students with disabilities and their families:

- Texas Project First, at http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/
- Partners Resource Network, at http://www.partnerstx.org

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education services is counselor, Cindy Overman at 409-951-8880 or diagnostician, Emily Allen at 409-951-8880.

Students With Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504

A child determined to have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law, and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services, may qualify for protection under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be formed to determine if the child is in need of services and supports under Section 504 to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as this is defined in federal law. The designated person to contact regarding a referral for evaluation applicable to Section 504 is Cindy Overman, school counselor, at 409-951-8880. [Also see policy FB.]

Students who speak a Primary Language Other than English

A student may be eligible to receive specialized support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English. If the student qualifies for these extra services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

Children of Military Families

Children of military families will be provided flexibility regarding certain district requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements.
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement.
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities.

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent including a stepparent or legal guardian, who has been to called to active duty for, is on leave from, or is returning from deployment of at least four month be excused by the district. The district will permit no more than five excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

Additional information can be obtained at http://www.tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=7995.

Student Records

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy. Before disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records, is considered confidential educational records. Release is restricted to:

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records.

  Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18, is emancipated by a court, or enrolls in a postsecondary institution, control of the records goes to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and under limited circumstances when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

- District school officials who have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom the district has contracted

or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. "Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.

- Various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers, or other child welfare representatives in certain cases.
- Individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

Release of student records to any other person or agency requires parental consent. The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The principal is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated. Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs my obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student or review these records. The address of the superintendent's office is 120 East Bolivar, Vidor Texas, 77662. The address of the principal is 2500 Hwy 12, Vidor, Texas 77662.

A parent or eligible student may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the principal. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course or on an examination is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading policy. [See FINALITY OF GRADES at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 49, for an overview of the process.]

The district's policy regarding student records found at policy FL is available from the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's website at www.vidorisd.org

The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered education records-such as teacher's personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher-do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

Please note:

Parents or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with federal law regarding student records. The complaint may be mailed to:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Objecting to the Release of Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or FERPA permits the district to disclose appropriately designated "directory information." from a child's education records without written consent. "Directory information" is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. This "directory information" will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, a parent or eligible student may object to the release of a student's directory information. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year. [See the "Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information" included in the online registration section.]

This district often needs to use student information for the following school-sponsored purposes: **yearbook publication**.

For these specific school-sponsored purposes, the district has designated the following as directory information: **yearbook publication**. If you do not object to the use of your child's information for these limited school-sponsored purposes, the school will not need to ask your permission each time the district wishes to use the information for the school-sponsored purposes listed above.

SECTION II: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Where possible, the topics are also organized to alert you to the applicability of each topic based on a student's age or grade level. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact your campus principal at 409-951-8880.

ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day's, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws—one dealing with the required presence of school-aged children in school, e.g., compulsory attendance, the other with how a child's attendance affects the award of a student's final grade or course credit—are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below.

Compulsory Attendance

State law requires that a student between the ages of six and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A student will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program, which may occur before or after school or during the summer, if the student does not meet the passing standards on the state assessment for his or her grade level and/or applicable subject area.

Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up all work. These include the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, if the student comes to school or returns to school on the same day as the appointment. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus, and
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state
- An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
- Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

As listed in Section I at Accommodations for Children of Military Families, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments. Please see page 9 for that section.

Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction, termed "accelerated instruction" by the state; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

When a student between ages 6 and 19 incurs unexcused absences for three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the school will send a notice to the student's parent, as required by law, to remind the parent that it is the parent's duty to monitor his or her child's attendance and to require the student to come to school. The notice will also inform the parent that the district will initiate truancy prevention measures and request a conference between school administrators and the parent. These measures will include a behavior improvement plan, school-based community service, or referrals to either in-school or out-of-school counseling or other social services. Any other measures considered appropriate by the district will also be initiated.

A court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student is absent without excuse from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.

If a student ages 12 through age 18 incurs unexcused absences on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court.

[See policy FEA(LEGAL)]

Vidor Middle School uses the following steps:

- When a student is absent, it is entered as an "unexcused absence" in the computer until a note from his/her parent or guardian or a note from a health care provider is given to the attendance office.
- For attendance purposes, students who are not present at 10:00 a.m. are counted absent for that day.
- Students arriving at school after 10:00 a.m. with a health care provider note verifying an appointment for that day will not be marked absent.
- When returning to school after an absence, a student must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence in order to be eligible for an excused absence. Reasons for absences must meet local policy (see below) to be excused.
- The student must turn in the note to the front office. Failure to turn in absent notes within three (3) days will result in an unexcused absence.

In case of a long period of absences due to extended illness or injury, the school should be contacted immediately so that arrangements may be made for continuance of academic work. By calling the front office at 409-951-8880, arrangements can be made for homework assignments to be collected for the student who will be out of school for a period of three (3) days or more.

Definition of Excused/Unexcused Absence

Excused: A student who has been absent from school and provides written documentation that meets the Vidor ISD attendance policy.

Unexcused: A student who has been absent from school and does not provide written documentation or if the documented reason does not meet the Vidor ISD attendance policy.

Procedure to collect absence notes and mark excused or unexcused*:*

- After a student has accrued six (6) absences (both excused and unexcused), all future absences will have to be accompanied by written documentation from a doctor or other health care official. (The parent of a student cannot serve as both parent and health care official.)
- Documentation to excuse an absence must be provided within three (3) school days from the last consecutive absence
- All absences are coded unexcused until acceptable documentation is provided that meets district guidelines for the absence to be excused
- Student submits note to the front office
- Attendance office personnel use the district policy for a guideline to determine if an absence is excused or unexcused
- All excused absences will be keyed in by attendance office personnel on the day they are submitted

Parent/Student Notification of Absences

- After three (3) Unexcused Absences: Letter mailed to parents
- After six (6) Total Absences: Letter mailed to parents notifying them all future absences will require a note from a doctor or other health care official.
- Report cards denote the number of excused and unexcused absences
- One (1) documented conference or attempt to conference by the campus administrator responsible for attendance

Unexcused Absence Appeals

- Parents and/or students may appeal any unexcused absence to the campus or grade level administrator in charge of attendance within five (5) school days from the date of the absence. The parent/guardian or student is responsible for providing documentation to support the appeal. Documentation should include permits, notes, etc. The campus or grade level administrator in charge of attendance will use the following procedure:
    - Will evaluate the absence reason and determine if it should be excused even though the reason is outside the district's excused boundaries
    - Will submit to the principal for final approval all absence notes that are outside the excused district boundaries
    - Attendance personnel are to ensure both the campus or grade level administrator in charge of attendance and principal have approved the absence be changed from unexcused to excused
- Situations or reasons outside the district guidelines should be classified as "unique" and caution is to be exercised when approving any reason as excused if it falls outside district boundaries

Attendance for Credit or Final Grade

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student in kindergarten–grade 12 must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit or a final grade for the class. If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed the plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences. [See policy FEC.]

All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered extenuating circumstances for purpose of attendance for credit or the award of a final grade.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- In reaching a decision about the student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of the documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parents could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board by following policy FNG(LOCAL).

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive credit, or a final grade, will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

Official Attendance Taking Time

The district must submit attendance of its students to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) reflecting attendance at a specific time each day. Official attendance is taken every day on the middle school campus at 10 a.m. A student absent for any portion of the day, including at the

official attendance-taking time, should follow the Vidor Middle School procedures on pages 13-14.

Documentation after an Absence
When a student is absent from school, the student-upon arrival or return-must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the district reserves the right to require a written note.
The campus will document in its attendance record, whether the absence is considered excused or unexcused by the district's policy. Please note that, unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence.

Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness
Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school in order to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused.
[See policy FEC(LOCAL)

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Accelerated Learning Lab (ALL)

The primary purpose of the ALL class is to help prevent and/or reduce the number student failures in the at-risk population. The ALL class is based on the assumption that the social, emotional and educational needs of qualifying at-risk students are best served in an environment that allows for additional assistance and support to the regular classroom instructional program. This class allows qualifying at-risk students to reach their learning potential and provides a smaller "least restrictive environment".
The ALL class provides instruction, remediation, and tutoring services in coordination with the regular classroom instructional program to meet the needs of the qualifying at-risk students in reading and/or mathematics. Students who qualify, attend the ALL class on a scheduled basis.

ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW (All Grade Levels)

Vidor ISD and each of its campuses are held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of the accountability requirements is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, which include:

■ The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by TEA, the state agency that oversees public education, based on academic factors and ratings;

■ A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district compiled by TEA based on academic factors and ratings;

■ The district's financial management report, which will include the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA;

■ The performance ratings of the district's evaluation of community and student engagement using the indicators required by law; and

■ Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by the No Child Left Behind Act.

Information about all of these can be found on the district's website at www.vidorisd.org. Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

TEA also maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at http://www.texasschoolaccountabilitydashboard.org and http://www.tea.texas.gov.

AWARDS AND HONORS

"A" Honor Roll – All grades 90+ with no grade lower than a 90 in any class for any six weeks.

"A/B" Honor Roll - All grades 80+ with no grade lower than an 80 in any class for any six weeks.

Perfect Attendance – A student must be in attendance each day and have no excused or unexcused absences.

BULLYING

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic methods, or physical conduct against another student on school property, at a school-sponsored or –related activity, or in a district operated vehicle, and the behavior:

- Results in harm to the student or the student's property
- Places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or of damage to the student's property, or
- Is so severe, persistent, and pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

This conduct is considered bullying if it exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator(s) and the student victim and if it interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of the school.

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, or ostracism. In some cases, bullying can occur through electronic methods, called "cyberbullying."

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying, or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. The district will also contact the parents of the victim and of the student who was found to have engaged in the bullying. Available counseling options will be

provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

The principal may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. The parent of a student who has been determined by the district to be a victim of bullying may request that his or her child be transferred to another classroom at the campus.

A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's Web site www.vidorisd.org

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL).

[Also see **Safety Transfer/ Assignment** on page 8, **Hazing** on page 34, and policy FFI, and the district's improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office]

CELEBRATIONS

Although a parent or grandparent is not prohibited from providing food for a school-designated function or for children in the child's or grandchild's classroom for his or her birthday at the end of the school day, please be aware that children in the school may have severe allergies to certain food products. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss this with the child's teacher prior to bringing any food in this circumstance. Occasionally, the school or a class may host certain functions or celebrations tied to the curriculum that will involve food. The school or teacher will notify students and parents of any known food allergies when soliciting potential volunteers for bringing food products.
Also see **Food Allergies** on page 36.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at www.vidorisd.org. As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused, abused or neglected. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches. Behavioral indicators may include verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior. Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

A child who has experienced sexual abuse or any other type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that

disclosures of sexual abuse may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse, and it is important to be calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

As a parent, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp.

The following websites might help you become more aware of child abuse and neglect:

https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan.pdf

http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/childabuse.html

http://www.taasa.org/resources-2/

http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml

http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml

Reports of abuse or neglect may be made to:

The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400 or on the web at http://www.txabusehotline.org).

CLASS SCHEDULES

All students are expected to attend school for the entire day and maintain a class/course schedule to fulfill each period of the day.

6th Grade Students may make schedule changes in Choir or Band at mid-term only as space allows in other elective courses. To change a schedule a student should:

- Provide a written request from the parent or guardian requesting a schedule change to the office.
- The office will then provide the student with an add/drop form to be completed by the teachers. This form must be placed in the attendance clerk's box when completed.
- The principal or her designee must approve all changes.

COMMUNICATION

Good communication between home and school regarding a student's education is more than a "plus"; it is essential for the student to make the most of the opportunities provided. School communication starts with information documents such as this handbook, progress reports and report cards, student work for parents to review and sign, weekly teacher conduct sheets and continues into interaction: messages and phone calls from teachers, school open houses, and back-to-school nights.

Communication might also include requests for conferences, initiated by the school or the parent, to discuss student progress to find out more about the curriculum and how the parent can support

learning to head off or resolve problems, etc. A parent who wants to schedule a phone or in person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal should call the school office at 951-8880 for an appointment, or send a note with your child addressed to his or her teacher. Generally a teacher will be able to meet with parents or return calls during his or her conference period. We encourage you to come and visit with us about your child's progress.

Infosnap

Parents now have the option to register their student online with the district's program, *Infosnap.* This new feature will enable families to enter and update biographical data anytime using secure, customized online registration forms and is automatically delivered to the VISD student information system.

Skylert Communication System

Skylert is a rapid communication service that allows the school to contact parents very quickly and keep them up-to-date with current and accurate information. The instant communication alert system will provide parents with school announcements, closings and emergency alerts by telephone. Therefore, it is important that the school has correct telephone contact information at all times.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Usually parent complaints or concerns can be addressed informally by a phone call or conference with the teachers. In most cases, problems can be resolved quickly and efficiently using this method. However, in rare cases that cannot be so easily handled, the board has adopted a standard complaint policy. Should a parent or student feel a need to file a formal complaint, the parent or student should file a district complaint form within the timelines established in policy FNG(LOCAL). In general, a parent or student should first raise the complaint with the assistant principal or counselor. If the assistant-principal or counselor cannot help you resolve the matter, you may schedule a conference with the principal.

If the above measures have not been successful, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees. [See policy FNG(LOCAL).]

CONDUCT

Applicability of School Rules

As required by law, the board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus as well as on district vehicles—and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules. During any periods of instruction during the summer months, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purpose of summer instruction.

Campus Behavior Coordinator

By law, each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as provide a point of contact for student misconduct.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal Punishment is limited to paddling the student. It is governed by the following guidelines:

- The student is told the reason for the corporal punishment.
- The instrument to be used will be approved by the principal.
- Corporal punishment will be administered in the presence of one other district professional employee and out of view of other students.
- A record will be maintained of each instance of corporal punishment.
- Parental request not to use corporal punishment will be honored.
- Parent notification prior to corporal punishment will be attempted

Disruptions of School Operations

Disruptions of school operations are not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district.

Social Events

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

COUNSELING

Academic Counseling

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings. Each spring, students in sixth grade will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic opportunities.

Personal Counseling

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or mental health issues, or substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor must obtain permission from their teacher. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak to the school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance.

[Also see **Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention** and **Suicide Awareness** on page 52]

DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

The district believes that all students learn best in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect, to avoid behaviors known to be offensive, and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. [See policy FFH.]

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that negatively affects the student.

Harassment

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office or on the district website www.vidorisd.org.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Two types of prohibited harassment are described below.

Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment

Sexual harassment and gender-based harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student is prohibited.

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Gender-based harassment included harassment based on a student's gender, expression by the student of stereotypical characteristics associated with the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical behavior related to gender. Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's accrual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Retaliation against a student might occur when a student receives threats from another student or an employee or when an employee imposes an unjustified punishment or unwarranted grade reduction. Retaliation does not include petty slights and annoyances from other students or negative comments from a teacher that are justified by a student's poor academic performance in the classroom.

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, school counselor, principal or other district employee. Reports can also be filed with David Croak, the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. The report may be made by the student's parent.
Upon receiving a report of prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by that policy. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law and that policy. If the alleged prohibited conduct, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct and would also be considered bullying as defined by law and policy FFI, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted.
The district will promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district. In the event alleged prohibited

conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy FFH.

Investigation of Report

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated.

If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies the district that it is investigating the matter and requests that the district delay its investigation, the district will resume the investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

During the course of an investigation, and when appropriate, the district will take interim action to address the alleged prohibited conduct.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action, and in some cases, corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the district investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE, PUBLISHED MATERIALS, OR OTHER DOCUMENTS

School Materials

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc.

The school yearbook is available to students.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

Nonschool Materials

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by policy GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any nonschool material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to Nancy Smith, Executive Director of Human Resources for prior review. The Executive Director of Human Resources will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a

rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies at DGBA, or GF.]

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a noncurriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All nonschool materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

DRESS AND GROOMING

The school expects and even requires students to dress in a neat and orderly fashion. While dress code regulations apply to the regular school day only, the school has an obligation regarding dress and personal appearance which must not cause distraction, confusion, and/or possibly bring harm to the individual when the student is in regular attendance or at a school-sponsored function.

When extremes in dress and/or personal appearance cause any of the aforementioned, the school will ask that the individual change into more appropriate attire and/or conform to acceptable personal grooming standards for the normal functioning of the school. The final decision regarding school attire and proper school grooming standards is left to the discretion of the school personnel. The following guidelines are offered and are subject to revision throughout the school year:

- Sleeveless shirts/blouses, tank tops, halters, see-through blouses, or tops with low-neck lines are not permitted. All shirts/blouses must have sleeves, short or long. Midriffs and backs must not be exposed; tops must be long enough to tuck into pants when arms are raised.
- Jeans or other apparel should not be deliberately mutilated. Any holes should be patched and pants should be properly hemmed.
- Jeans or pants should fit and should be worn at the waist. They should not be wider than the foot at the cuff and should not be longer than the bottom of the heel.
- Inappropriate patches, pictures, symbols, writing, slogans, or quotes-either attached to or painted on clothing are not to be worn.
- Pants should not have excessive pockets, buckles, or straps down the pant leg. (Carpenter style is acceptable.
- Shorts and skorts will not be permitted during the school day. Exceptions will be made for physical education classes and extra-curricular practices and activities. Capri style pants must come to mid calf.
- Jeggings and/or leggings are not considered a pant. They may be worn under an appropriate length dress/skirt.

- Dresses and skirts should be at or below the kneecap. Exceptions will be made for extra-curricular activities.
- Trench coats will not be allowed.
- Hair should be neat, clean, and well groomed. Students will not be allowed to wear un-natural hair colors such as purple, green, orange, etc.
- Extremes in make-up and face paint are not permitted. Black lipstick will not be allowed.
- Shirts shall be neat, clean, and buttoned except for the top button.
- Boys should be clean-shaven. Beards are not permitted, and mustaches and sideburns must be clean and well groomed.
- Sideburns should be no longer than the bottom of the ear.
- Boys will not be permitted to wear earrings. No other visible body piercing will be permitted for any student, including tongue rings and spacers.
- Tattoos should be covered at school.
- Clothing which desecrates the flag; advertises narcotic, alcoholic, or tobacco products; or contains sexual references or innuendos is prohibited.
- Caps or hats are not allowed in the buildings. Caps when allowed should be worn in an appropriate manner. Caps/hats worn in the building are subject to being confiscated.
- Billfold chains are prohibited.
- No excessive makeup, jewelry, or accessories is allowed.
- Shoes must be worn at all times-no slippers.
- No pajamas or "pajama-like" pants and sleepwear are allowed.

Violations of the dress code will not be accepted. Parents will be called to bring acceptable attire on each dress code violation. If parents cannot bring acceptable attire, the student may be placed in ISS for the remainder of the day. Habitual violations of dress/appearance code may result in further disciplinary action taking place.

P. E. Dress Code

- Put your name on everything you bring to school.
- You are required to dress out. Only a written note from your doctor will excuse you from dressing out.
- A note from your parents may excuse you for up to 3 days, according to the teacher's discretion.
- Shorts – Boys and girls shorts must be knee length.
- You must wear court or running shoes. Cleats are not allowed in physical education class. We recommend sports shoes with light colored soles.
- Pants - Boys and girls are allowed to wear wind pants or sweat pants.
- Two points a day are deducted for not dressing out.
- You have five minutes to dress and report for roll call.
- You are not permitted to return to the dressing room after roll call.
- Do not bring valuables to the gym or dressing room.
- Shirts – Boys and girls must wear shirts long enough to raise arms above head and side bend with no skin visible.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess personal mobile telephones; however, these devices must remain turned off during school hours, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes.
The use of mobile telephones, or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in dressing rooms or restroom areas at any time, while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event.

A student who uses a telecommunications device during the school day will have the device confiscated. After a three day waiting period, the student/parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the campus office for a fee of $15.

Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or student's parents will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE.]

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 50, and policy FNF]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen telecommunications devices.

Possession and Use of Other Personal Electronic Devices

Except as described below, students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices such as MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, games, e-readers, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** and policy FNF.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district is not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device.

Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Electronic Devices

Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT)

In some cases, students may find it beneficial or be encouraged to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must obtain prior approval before using personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional use. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook). When students are not using the devices for approved instructional purposes, all devices must be turned off during the instructional day. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in the use of district-owned technology resources for instructional purposes; specific resources may be issued individually to students. Use of these technological resources, which include the district's network systems and use of district equipment, is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is district-owned or personally owned, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may be required to complete an education program related to dangers of this type of behavior, and in certain circumstances may be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, as well as possibly impede future endeavors of a student, we encourage you to review with your child http://beforeyoutext.com, a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of engaging in inappropriate behavior using technology.

In addition, any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of the district's computer security will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, and, in some cases, the consequence may rise to the level of expulsion

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Participation in school-sponsored activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. Students involved in UIL athletic activities and their parents can access the UIL Parent Information Manual at https://www.uiltexas.org/athletics/manuals; a hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity on request. To report a complaint of alleged noncompliance with required safety training or an alleged violation of safety rules required by law and the UIL, please contact the curriculum division of the Texas Education Agency at (512) 463-9581 or curriculum@tea.texas.gov.
[See http://www.uiltexas.org for additional information on all UIL governed activities.]

The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student who receives special educational services and who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

Standards of Behavior

Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior.

Offices and Elections

Certain clubs, organizations, and performing groups will hold elections for student officers. These groups include: Mr. & Miss VMS (Homecoming) and Pirate Council.

Homecoming Election – Mr. & Miss V.M.S.
Each English class will select one boy and one girl to represent their class on the ballot. The students must meet the following criteria before their name can be placed in nomination for Mr. and Miss VMS:

- Good Attendance – No more than 3 absences in the first six weeks, unless due to extenuating circumstances.
- Good Behavior/Citizenship – "S" or above in conduct in all subjects.
- No grade below "75" on first six weeks report card, when appropriate.
- Attended Vidor ISD the entire last semester of their fifth grade year.

Once elected as Mr. and Miss Vidor Middle School, these two students are to exhibit good attendance, behavior, and grades. If a discipline infraction warrants In-School Suspension or a more severe consequence before one of these students serve in their elected capacity, their title will be removed and the runner-up will serve as the middle school representative for the Vidor Homecoming.

Pirate Council

The purpose of this organization is to provide students with opportunities to develop their leadership potential and decision-making skills, good citizenship and compassion through participation in school and community-related projects.

In the beginning of May, each 5th grader will receive a form to be completed, signed by parent/guardian, and returned to the Pirate Council sponsors. A grade and discipline check will be conducted to verify eligibility. Qualifications are as follows:

- S in conduct in all subjects
- 80 or higher in all subject areas
- No in-school suspension (ISS) or out-of school suspension, corporal punishment, or DAEP
- No ticket issued by a law enforcement officer

After meeting the qualifications, students will be voted on by their 5th grade peers to become members of the VMS Pirate Council.

To remain in Pirate Council, a discipline and grade check will be conducted each six week period.

****Probation will occur when:**	**Dismissal will occur when:**
Grades fall below 70 for a six week period	Grades fall below 70 for two consecutive grading periods
Conduct falls below an S for a six week period	Conduct falls below an S for two consecutive grading periods
One referral to the office resulting in lunch detention.	Two or more office referrals resulting in lunch detention.
	30 points have not been reached by December 18
	60 points have not been reached by the date of the end of year party

Immediate dismissal from Pirate Council will occur if an office referral results in ISS, OSS, DAEP, or corporal punishment.

****Probation**: a period of three weeks following a grading period.

Pirate Council members must attend meetings and are expected to help with various activities to obtain points. A minimum of 30 points by December18 must be met in order to remain in Pirate Council, and 60 total points by the date of the party in order to attend the end of year reward party. If you have not earned a minimum of 30 points by December18, 2015 you will no longer be a member of VMS Pirate Council.

Qualifications for end of year party:

- Student cannot be dismissed from Pirate Council
- Student cannot have been on probation for any reason more than two times in the year.
- Student must participate in service activities throughout the year.
- Student must have earned 60 points by the date of the party.

Yearbook Staff

The purpose of this organization is to provide a quality, memory triggering yearbook for the students at Vidor Middle School. This organization will provide its staff members with opportunities to develop their leadership potential and strengthen their creative writing and design skills through participation in the development of the yearbook.

In the beginning of May, each 5th grader who is interested will receive an application to be filled out, signed by parent/guardian and returned to the Yearbook sponsor. Students are required to have **two** teacher recommendations; one recommendation should come from the student's ELA/Reading teacher. A grade and discipline check will be conducted to verify eligibility. Qualifications are as follows:

- S in conduct in all subjects
- 80 or higher in all subject areas
- No in-school suspension (ISS) or out-of school suspension, corporal punishment, or DAEP

After meeting the qualifications, students will be selected by their writing samples and the technology based element of the application to become members of the Vidor Middle School Yearbook Staff. There will be at least 6 students selected.

To remain on the Yearbook staff, a discipline and grade check will be conducted each six week period.

****Probation will occur when:**	**Dismissal will occur when:**
Grades fall below 70 for a six week period	Grades fall below 70 for two consecutive grading periods
Conduct falls below an S for a six week period	Conduct falls below an S for two consecutive grading periods
One referral to the office results in ISS, OSS, or corporal punishment.	Two or more office referrals result in ISS, OSS, or corporal punishment.

Immediate dismissal from the Yearbook staff will occur if an office referral results in DAEP.

****Probation:** a period of three weeks following a grading period.

Band and Choir

The directors hold all band and choir members at Vidor Middle School to high standards of discipline. The actions of each member reflect upon the entirety of our programs. You are responsible for your own actions. The following consequences will occur if needed:

1. Verbal warning
2. Student conference
3. Parent conference
4. Office referral

Any band/choir incident resulting in ISS placement is immediate removal from the program

*If a student is in ISS during a scheduled band/choir event, he/she may not participate in the performance.
*Referrals from classes outside of the band/choir class that result in ISS placement exceeding a total of 5 days for the year will result in loss of additional activities (parties, fieldtrips, etc.)

FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, yearbooks, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental maintenance.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.

FOODS OF MINIMAL NUTRITIONAL VALUE (FMNV) POLICY

Elementary school campuses may not serve or provide access for students to FMNV and all other forms of candy at any time anywhere on school premises until the end of the last scheduled class.

Elementary classrooms may allow one nutritious snack per day under the teacher's supervision. The snack may be in the morning or afternoon but may not be at the same time as the regular meal periods for that class. The snack may be provided by the school food service, the teacher, parents or other groups and should be at no cost to the students.

The snack must comply with the fat and sugar limits of the Public School Nutrition Policy and may not contain any FMNV or consist of candy or dessert type items (cookies, cakes, cupcakes, pudding, ice cream, or frozen desserts, etc.) Chewing gum is a FMNV and is strictly prohibited on campus.

FMNV Policy Exemptions:
Students may be given FMNV, candy items or other restricted foods during the school day for up to three different events each school year to be determined by campus. During these events FMNV may not be given during meal times in the areas where school meals are being served or consumed, and regular meal service (breakfast and lunch) must continue to be available to all students in accordance with federal regulations.
The three exempted days for Vidor Middle School are:

Halloween **Valentine's Day** **Field Day**

FUND RAISING

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the principal's office. (See policies FJ and GE)

GANG-FREE ZONES

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

GRADING GUIDELINES

Grading guidelines for each grade level will be communicated and distributed to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines have been reviewed by each curriculum department and have been approved by the campus principal. These guidelines establish the minimum number of assignments, projects, and examinations required for each grading period. In addition, these guidelines establish how the student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (i.e., letter grades, numerical averages, checklists of skills, etc.) Grading guidelines also outline in what circumstances a student will be allowed to redo an assignment or retake an examination for which the student originally made a failing grade. Procedures for a student to follow after an absence will also be addressed.

[See also **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 47 for additional information of grading guidelines.]

Grading Policy

The grading system for VISD is as follows:

90-100 = A 80-89 = B 75-79 = C 70-74 = D 69-below = F

Grades will be computed by the following method:

70% Daily work 30% Test grades

Examples of daily grades may include: homework, daily work, quizzes, notebooks, and worksheets. Examples of test grades may include: weekly, chapter and unit tests, research papers, compositions, notebooks, book reports, special projects or six-week tests. Each six weeks report card grade will be an average of at least 6 daily grades and 3 test grades.

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal.

Late Work

Assignments are due on the due date. If an assignment is not turned in by the due date it is considered late. Penalties for late work are:

First day: minus 10 points from the student's earned grade

Second day: minus 20 points from the student's earned grade

Third day: minus 30 points from the student's earned grade

After three days (excluding weekends and holidays) the grade is 0

Reteach and Retest for Mastery of Skills
Vidor Middle School teachers will teach the skill. Students will practice the skill. This is done through daily class work or an assignment completed at home. Students will be assessed or tested over the new skill.

Academic skills will be retaught by the teacher when the student(s) has not shown mastery on a daily assignment. A new assignment may be given to check for understanding, but the original grade will remain.

Retest for Assessment of Mastery of Skills
A test grade below a 70 indicates that the student has not mastered the objectives or skills. The student will receive additional instruction in the form of individual instruction, peer tutoring, tutorials, additional practice, etc. A retest will be given to any student who fails to demonstrate the necessary 70% mastery.

The average of the failing grade and the retest grade will become the new grade not to exceed 70. For example, if the failing grade is 50 and the retest grade is 100, the average of the two grades is 75, but a 70 is the recorded grade.

HARASSMENT

[See **Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 22]

HAZING

Hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act occurring on or off campus directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or the safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated to, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include other students.

Hazing will not be tolerated by the district. If an incident of hazing occurs, disciplinary consequences will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal or superintendent.

[Also see **Bullying** on page 17 and policies FFI and FNCC.]

HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS

The main purpose of the health office is to work with parents and faculty in identifying potential health problems that may interfere with student's optimal health and potentially hinder education.

Screening programs to detect certain problems are conducted at predetermined intervals in the students' school progress. These include vision screening, hearing screening, and spinal screening. Parents will be notified if problems are discovered.

Student Illness

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she won't be attending that day. It is important to remember that schools **are required to** exclude students with certain illnesses from school for periods of time as identified in state rules. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. In addition, students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea free without diarrhea-suppressing medications for at least 24 hours. A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school nurse.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. If the nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent.

The district is also required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from TDSHS on these notifiable conditions. Contact the school nurse if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether or not your child should stay home.

Emergency Care Cards

This is the most important record parents or guardians will be asked to complete. It is the link between school and home. Without a properly completed emergency care card, the school will be unable to get help for a child in case of an emergency. The school makes no provision to neither take students home nor provide all-day health care, nor will school personnel transport students to a physician or hospital except in serious emergencies. It is most important, therefore, that parent/guardians plan for any health emergencies by filling out and returning this card. Fill in all blanks requested on the card. Under "emergency" you may list friends, neighbors or relatives. Please discuss with them the fact you have listed their numbers and that they may be called. Confidential information given on the card will be protected. ***Notify the health office immediately if any of the information changes.***

Bacterial Meningitis

State law specifically requires the district to provide the following information:

- What is meningitis?

  Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

- What are the symptoms?

  Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

  Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and

drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

  If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

  Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

  The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

  Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

  While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

- What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?

  You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

  Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov, and the Department of State Health Services, http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/.

Food Allergies

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, which addresses employee training, dealing with common food allergens, and specific strategies for

dealing with students diagnosed with severe food allergies. When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed at www.vidorisd.org.

[Also see policy FFAF and **Celebration**s page 18]

Head Lice

Head lice, although not an illness or disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports or when children share things like brushes, combs, hats or headphones.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will call the child's parent to determine whether the child will need to be picked up from school and to discuss a plan of treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return. More information on head lice can be obtained from the TDSHS Web site at: http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/ schoolhealth/lice.shtm

Physical Activity Requirements

In accordance with policies at EHAB, AHAC, AHBG and [FFA], the district will ensure that students in middle school will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters for at least 225 minutes within each two-week period. Please encourage your child to participate daily. For additional information on the district's requirements and programs regarding middle school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

P.E. Conduct and Expectations

- Sit quietly in roll call location or bleachers and keep your hands to yourself.
- When you hear a whistle blow, STOP and listen for instructions.
- Tumbling stunts, unnecessary running, shoving, hitting and teasing are not allowed.
- Gum, candy, and food are not allowed in the gym.
- The dressing room is to be kept neat and clean at all times.
- Equipment and school property are to be respected and used properly.
- Recorders, radios, tape players, cameras, cell phones, video games, or band instruments should not be brought into the gym.
- Do not dress in bathroom.
- Do not come to our office unless it is an emergency.

School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held several meetings. Additional information regarding the district's SHAC is available from the district Web site www.vidorisd.org

The duties of the SHAC range from recommending curriculum to developing strategies for integrating curriculum into a coordinated school health program encompassing issues such as school health services, counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, recess recommendations, improving student fitness, mental health concerns and employee wellness.

Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan

Vidor ISD is committed to encouraging healthy students and therefore has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement the policy. You are encouraged to contact the administration office with questions about the content or implementation of the district's wellness policy and plan.

Other Health-Related Matters

Physical Fitness Assessment

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3–12 who are enrolled in a physical education course in which credit is awarded. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to their child's physical education teacher to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of all tobacco products, electronic cigarettes (E-Cigarettes), or any other electronic vaporizing device, by students and all others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the **Student Code of Conduct** and policies at FNCD and GKA.]

Asbestos Management Plan

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district Asbestos Management Plan is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact Robert Godeaux at 409-951-8770.

Pest Management Plan

The district is required to follow integrated pest management (IPM) procedures to control pests on school grounds. Although the district strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non-chemical control measures, pesticide use is sometimes necessary to maintain adequate pest control and ensure a safe, pest-free school environment. All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area. Parents who have further questions or who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact the districts IPM coordinator Ed Prochaska at 121 University, Vidor, Texas or by calling 409-951-8740.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's homeless education liaison, D'Lana Barbay, at 200 South Archie Street, Vidor, Texas 77662 or 409-951-8736.

IMMUNIZATION

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the TDSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at https://corequest.dshs.texas.gov/. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, rubeola (measles), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis (polio), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, varicella (chicken pox), and meningococcal. The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the TDSHS. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. registered and licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required is medically contradicted or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or a member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition. [For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the TDSHS Web site: http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm.]

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION CLASS - (ISS)

Since punishment is a part of being in ISS, very strict discipline must be enforced. Violation of ISS rules and regulations may result in additional days added to ISS assignment or further discipline action.

Attendance and General ISS Procedures:

- Students arriving before 7:30 a.m. will report directly to the top level of cafeteria and sit in designated seating. Students arriving after 7:30 will report to the ISS classroom. Students will not eat breakfast first.
- Absences are reported to the registrar's office each day. When a student is in ISS, they are reported absent by the classroom teacher which results in an automated phone call informing the parent of an absence. Once the registrar receives the attendance report for ISS, the attendance is adjusted accordingly. Students assigned to ISS are required to attend full days. Arriving late or leaving before dismissal time will result in additional days in ISS.

- Students will have lunch at their desks each day. They may bring a lunch or select from the cafeteria menu. Students may not bring drinks with their lunch other than milk or water.
- During assignment to ISS students are not allowed to go to the library, band, music, art, P.E., or any extracurricular activities including class trips, plays and parties.
- Assignment to ISS will be for a minimum of two days and a maximum of ten days, or until assignments are completed to the satisfaction of ISS personnel.
- If circumstances warrant immediate placement of a student in ISS, an assistant principal or principal will notify parents as soon as possible.

Assignments and Materials

- Teachers (including the ISS teacher) provide assignments for each student and provide instruction to the students as needed. The student is responsible for completion of these assignments. Assignments must be completed in ISS. Assistant principals, ISS personnel, or teachers make determinations of acceptable completion of assignments.
- Students must bring all materials (books, pencils, paper, and any other required materials) each day. Failure to do so may result in assignment of additional ISS days for the student. No ink pens will be allowed in ISS.
- Students may leave their materials in the ISS classroom overnight, but are personally responsible for all items.
- No backpacks, large bags, or purses will be allowed at the student desk area. This is for the safety of all students.

Rules for Behavior

Since students have been assigned to ISS as a consequence of inappropriate behavior, very strict discipline must be enforced. Violation of ISS rules and regulations may result in additional ISS days being assigned, or student being sent home.

- All school district rules and policies will be strictly enforced.
- Students may not talk without permission, make any unnecessary noise, or write notes.
- Students may not sleep and must maintain an upright position at all times. There will be no leaning back in chairs or leaving seats without permission.
- Students who refuse to do their work or who refuse to follow ISS rules will be sent home by the principal or an assistant principal as soon as possible.
- Damage to study carrel will result in extra ISS days or possible suspension.

Release from ISS

- The morning after the last assigned ISS day, students are to report to the ISS room for a release.
- The student will then report to the assistant principal, who will make final determination of release and sign to approve the release.
- The student will give the signed release to the classroom teacher.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Questioning of Students

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

Students Taken Into Custody

State law requires the district to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been taken into custody, arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.

- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who is thought to have committed certain offenses or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.
- All appropriate district personnel in regards to a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

[For further information, see policies FL(LEGAL) and GRAA(LEGAL).]

LEAVING CAMPUS

Please remember that student attendance is crucial to learning. We ask that appointments be scheduled outside of school hours as much as reasonably possible. Also note that picking up a child early on a regular basis results in missed opportunities for learning. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

State rules require that parental consent be obtained before any student is allowed to leave campus for any part of the school day. The district has put the following procedures in place in order to document parental consent:

■ For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.
■ If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school. Unless directed by the parent to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures as listed above. If a student is allowed to leave campus by himself or herself, as permitted by the student's parent, or if the student is age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released. Under no circumstances will a child in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied by a parent or adult authorized by the parent.
Students are not authorized to leave campus during regular school hours for any other reason, except with the permission of the principal.
Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

A student with limited English proficiency (LEP) is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both district personnel and at least one parent representative. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for a LEP student. However, pending the receipt of parental consent or denial of services, an eligible student will receive the services to which the student is entitled and eligible.

In order to determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will then designate instructional accommodations or additional special programs the student will require to eventually become proficient at grade level work in English. Ongoing assessments will be conducted to determine a student's continued eligibility for the program.

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR-L, as mentioned at Standardized Testing, below, may be administered to a LEP student, or, for a student up to grade 5, a Spanish version of STAAR. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to LEP students who qualify for services.

If a student is considered LEP and receives special education services because of a qualifying disability, the student's ARD committee will make instructional and assessment decisions in conjunction with the LPAC.

LOST AND FOUND

A "lost and found" collection area is located near the front office on campus. Please encourage your child to check this area for an item lost. The district discourages students from bringing personal items of high monetary value as the district is not responsible for items lost or stolen. The campus will dispose of unclaimed lost and found items at the end of each semester.

MAKEUP WORK

Makeup Work Because of Absence

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.
A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.
A student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time, including absences for extracurricular activities, so that the teacher and student may plan any work that can be completed before or shortly after the absence. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold in regards to the state laws surrounding "attendance for credit **or final grade**."
[See also **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade** on page 16]

A student is allowed **one (1)** day to make up work for *each day* he/she is absent. Any work assigned prior to the absence is due upon return to school or the regularly scheduled due date with the exception of lengthy illnesses. Work that is not turned in on the day it is due after an absence is considered late, and will follow the Vidor Middle School Late Work Policy. (Exceptions may occur, but are at the discretion of the teacher.)
A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

DAEP Makeup Work

A student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, a foundation curriculum course which the student was enrolled at the time of removal. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the course through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA(LEGAL).]

In-school Suspension (ISS) Makeup Work

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FO(LEGAL).]

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

Medication that must be administered to a student during school hours must be provided by the student's parent. All medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, must be kept in the nurse's office and administered by the nurse or another authorized district employee, unless the student is authorized to possess his or her own medication because of asthma or a severe allergy as described below or as otherwise allowed by law.
The district will not purchase nonprescription medication to give to a student. District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer prescription or nonprescription medications, herbal supplements or dietary supplements. **For safety purposes, no medicine, prescription or other (including headache tablets, cold capsules, cough syrup, etc.) may be in a student's possession. Do not send medication on the school bus with your child.**

Procedure for Medication
Parent or legal guardian must take the medicine to the school health office along with a signed statement giving the nurse authority to administer the medication. Prescribed medicines must be in a properly labeled container showing the child's name, physician's name, dosage and contents. A note from a physician must accompany non-prescription medicines. Also, non-prescription medicines must be in the original container and must be clearly identified with the name of the student, the grade, teacher, and directions for dosage. All medications will be dispensed from the health office. Parents will need to pick-up medication left at the end of the school year, prior to the last day of school. Medication will not be sent home with students. All medication not picked up will be destroyed.

Students whose schedules provide for regular time spent outdoors, including for recess and physical education classes, should apply sunscreen before coming to school. For students at the elementary level, the student's teacher or other district personnel will apply sunscreen to a student's exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and requests assistance with the application of the sunscreen. Nothing prohibits a student at this level from applying his or her own sunscreen if the student is capable of doing so. For students at the secondary level, a student may possess and apply sunscreen when necessary. If the student will need assistance with this application, please address the need for assistance with the school nurse. Whether a student is at the elementary or secondary level, if sunscreen needs to be administered to treat any type of medical condition, this should be handled through communication with the school nurse so that the district is made aware of any safety and medical issues.

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider and to the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse and the campus principal.

In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or campus principal for information. [See policy FFAF(LEGAL).]

Psychotropic Drugs

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policies at FFAC.]

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, and as required by law, Vidor ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law in providing education services, activities, and programs, including CTE programs, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following district representatives have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment or gender-based harassment: and ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: David Croak, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, 120 E. Bolivar, Vidor, Texas, 409-951-8704.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent, Dr. Jay Killgo, 120 E. Bolivar, Vidor, Texas, 409-951-8704. [See policies FB(LOCAL) and FFH(LOCAL).]

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See **Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** page 6]

One minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. In addition, state law requires that each campus provide for the observance of one minute of silence at the beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.
[See policy EC for more information.]

PRAYER

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level, the recommendation of the teacher, the score received on any state-mandated assessment, and any other necessary academic information as determined by the district. In grades 1-8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based upon course-level, grade-level standards (TEKS) for all subject areas. Students must make a grade of 70 or above in English-language arts/social studies (ELA/SS), math, and either science or social studies.

In addition, at certain grade levels a student—with limited exceptions—will be required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), if the student is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and the date of the first administration of the STAAR.*

- In order to be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 assessments in English or Spanish.

Parents of a student at or above grade level 3 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her state-mandated exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year. Failure of a student to attend these programs may result in violations of required school attendance as well as the student not being promoted to the next grade level.

A student in grade 5 will have two additional opportunities to take a failed assessment. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher, and the student's parent, will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third failed attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. In order for the student to be promoted, based on standards previously established by the district, the decision of the committee must be unanimous and the student must complete additional special instruction before beginning the next grade level. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. [See policies at EIE.]

Certain students—some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS and CONFERENCES

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every 6 weeks. At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written progress report of their child's performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent may be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. Report cards and progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school. [See **Working Together** on page 3 for how to schedule a conference]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal pursuant to the board-adopted policy and are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment for the grading period. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. [See policy EIA(LOCAL) and **Grading Guidelines** on page 34]

Questions about grading calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG(LOCAL).

SAFETY

Student safety on campus, at school-related events and on district vehicles is a high priority of the district. Although the district has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, campus behavior coordinator, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

Accident Insurance

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather and Other Emergencies

Fire and disaster drills are held at unannounced intervals during the school year. Each classroom should have posted a map showing the evacuation route for that classroom. During drills, students are to follow their teacher's directions, exit the building quickly, and conduct themselves in an orderly manner while waiting on the signal to return to the building. When given the signal to return, students should return to their classrooms.

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school may have to rely on previously provided written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

Emergency School-Closing Information

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that school is dismissed early, or opening is delayed because of severe weather or another emergency. If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will alert the community in the following ways: by an automated callout system and/or media alerts.

Red-Tagged Students

Red-tagged students are students who have restricted pick-up. In order to place your child on this list, you must have custody papers stating that restrictions have been issued by a court of law. Also, a red-tag form must be filled out completely and kept on file for reference in the front office. When someone comes to check out a red-tagged student, he/she will be required to show proper identification. (See Transportation - Parent Pick-up page 54)

- Red-tag forms must be updated every year. The list does not move from campus to campus. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to keep this information current each year.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Conduct Before and After School

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices, and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

Arrival Schedule and Procedures

Please do not drop off students prior to 7:10am. The doors will be unlocked for entrance at 7:10am. Vidor Middle School staff members are required to report to morning duty at 7:20 am. Students arriving on campus prior to that time may be unsupervised and should report to the lower level of the cafeteria, be seated, and remain there until a staff member reports to duty.

Beginning at 7:30 am the following procedures should be followed:

- Students who eat breakfast should report directly to the breakfast line and get his/her tray. Then, the student should report to the lower level of the cafeteria to eat. When the student has completed the meal, he/she should report to his/her designated grade level area.
- **6th Grade** students report to the top two levels of the cafeteria.
- **5th Grade** students report to the gymnasium.

Hallway Behavior

When in the hallways, students should go promptly to their classes without running, pushing, talking loudly, yelling or whistling. Courtesy and safety must be exhibited at all times. Teachers will monitor student transition, but students are responsible for their own behavior.

Cafeteria Services

The district participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need or household situation. Information about a student's participation is confidential. Applications for free or reduced lunch are available in the office or cafeteria. Please take advantage of this opportunity.

Breakfast and Lunch Prices

VMS Students:	Breakfast: $0.75 Daily Lunch: $1.70	Reduced Breakfast: $0.30 Daily Reduced Lunch: $0.40 Daily
	Additional Milk: $0.30 Daily	Additional Juice: $0.25 Daily
Employee:	Breakfast: $1.90	Lunch: $3.25
Adult Guests:	Breakfast: $2.65 Daily	Lunch: $4.00 Daily

Meals in the cafeteria may be purchased daily or paid for in advance. Students should know their identification number to eat in the cafeteria. Identification numbers should not be shared. Students may add money to their accounts, but must have written permission from their parents to give the cashier to withdraw money. Parents are strongly encouraged to continually monitor their child's meal account balance. No more than two (2) charges are allowed in the cafeteria. All students will receive something to eat. A sandwich and carton of milk will be given to all who are unable to charge. The week that report cards are sent home no charges will be allowed in the cafeteria. All returned checks will have a $15 service charge, plus the amount of the check.

Students are reminded to clean their eating areas and turn in their trays before leaving the cafeteria. Students not following the cafeteria rules are subject to disciplinary action.

Library

The library is a learning place and all activities will center on learning.

- Students may not write or color in library books since the books are to be returned in the same condition in which they leave the library.
- The student who borrowed the book from the library will pay for the book if it is lost. The purchase price of the book will be charged. If the book is found by the end of the school year, the price of the book will be refunded. There will be a charge for damaged books depending on the degree of damage.
- Report cards will not be issued until charges are paid and students have been cleared by the librarian
- Students moving out of the school district must be cleared through the library before their records and withdrawal cards are released.
- Students are not allowed to have gum, candy, food or drinks in the library.
- Students are not allowed to have markers or ink in the library.

SEARCHES

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

Students' Desks and Lockers

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students must be certain that their lockers are locked, and that the combinations are not available to others.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable suspicion to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Telecommunications and other Electronic Devices

Use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the district.

Any searches of personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated in order to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

Trained Dogs

The district will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around lockers and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas, or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. An item in a classroom or a locker to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency or who are English language learners, students diagnosed with dyslexia, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact their child's grade level principal.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)

Grades 3–8

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels are required to take the state assessment called STAAR in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 is required by law in order for the student to be promoted to the next grade level. [See **Promotion and Retention** on page 46 for additional information.]

STAAR-A will be available for an eligible student with a Section 504 accommodation plan who has been identified with dyslexia or a related disorder, as well as for a student receiving special education services, if the student meets state-established criteria and requires certain instructional and assessment accommodations on a routine basis.

STAAR Alternate, for students receiving special education services who meet certain state wide criteria, will be available for students, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

STAAR-L is a linguistically accommodated assessment that is available for certain limited English proficient (LEP) students, as determined by the student's Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC). A Spanish version of STAAR is also available to students through grade 5 who need this accommodation.

STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district strives to assist any student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state) with the enrollment and registration process, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment in the district.

Please contact D'Lana Barbay, who has been designated as the district's liaison for children in foster care, at 409-951-8736 with any questions.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

If you are worried that your child may be using or is in danger of experimenting, using, or abusing illegal drugs or other prohibited substances, please contact the school counselor. The school counselor can provide you with a list of community resources that may be of assistance to you. The TDSHS maintains information regarding children's mental health and substance abuse intervention services on its Web site: http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhsa-child-adolescent-services/.

SUICIDE AWARENESS

The district is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please access http://www.texassuicideprevention.org or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention services available in your area.

TARDIES

Students are considered tardy after 7:55 am. Students who are late must go by the office and get a permit before reporting to class. When students enter the classroom late, it can be very disruptive to the teaching/learning environment. The school will notify parents of students who are habitually late. Habitual tardiness will be subject to disciplinary action.

TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Textbooks and other district-approved instructional materials are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Any books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. Electronic textbooks and technological equipment may also be provided to students, depending on the course and course objectives. A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return an item in acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage is paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

TRANSFERS

The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another.

[See **School Safety Transfers** on page 7, **Bullying** on page 17]

TRANSPORTATION

School-Sponsored Trips

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. The principal, however, may make an exception if the parent makes a written request that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

Buses and Other School Vehicles

All pupils regularly enrolled in grades Pre-K through Grade 12 are eligible to ride the buses in the Vidor Independent School District unless such privileges are denied because of misconduct on the bus. Vidor Middle School students ride the secondary bus route along with Vidor Junior High and Vidor High School students. For transportation concerns or information regarding bus routes and stops, you may contact the VISD Transportation office at 951-8760.

Bus Rules and Expectations

Each student will receive a copy of the VISD School Bus Rider's Contract. Students enrolled in VISD will be required to follow these rules and procedures. Please keep the contract as a reference.

- The driver's instructions are to be obeyed at all times. The bus driver is in complete charge of the bus and all persons on the bus.
- Students are to be on time at the designated school bus stop. Bus drivers are not to blow horns or wait on students.
- Horseplay is not permitted.
- During an emergency, the students are to remain on the bus and carefully follow the directions given by the bus driver.
- <u>Riders will not be discharged at places other than the regular bus stops unless by proper authorization from the parents and approved by a school official.</u>
- For the safety of the operator of the vehicle and all passengers, students must board buses only at authorized stops, and drivers must unload passengers only at authorized stops.
- Bus riders are to be seated and remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- The offender will pay the cost of damages resulting from any acts of vandalism.
- There is to be no loud talking or unnecessary noise that might distract the bus driver.
- Students must exhibit good citizenship at all times. Specifically, the following actions will not be permitted on a school bus: fighting, use of matches or lighters, throwing objects, profanity, use of tobacco products, and hanging out of the window.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; the privilege to ride a bus may be suspended or revoked.

Bus Disciplinary Referrals
The following procedures shall be followed when a discipline concern arises on a bus serving a regular route or on an extracurricular activity:

- The student shall report to his/her assistant principal with the report of misconduct when the student gets to the school campus. **The student will NOT be allowed to ride the bus until the assistant principal handles the bus referral report.**
- A conference involving the principal, the student passenger, the driver and the parent(s) may be required.
- The principal may suspend the student's bus riding privileges. If such a suspension occurs, the assistant principal will attempt to notify the parents prior to the time the suspension takes effect.
- In case of serious misconduct that endangers the safety of other passengers or the driver, the driver shall have the authority to call for law enforcement assistance. The principal and parents shall be notified of the situation as soon as possible. The student shall not be provided bus service again until a conference involving all persons listed has been held.
- Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

Parent Pick-Up
Students brought to school or taken home in private vehicles must be picked up or dropped off in the Parent Pick-Up area. This area is located at the end of the school building and offers a covered drop off area. All other entrances are locked during the school day for your child's safety. Students are not allowed to be picked up in any other area including the bus entrance (front of building). In order to speed up Parent Pick-Up, we need your help in the following areas:

- Vehicles need to form one line.
- Please remain in your vehicle.
- ***Please display the name of the student you are picking up in the windshield of your vehicle. A duty teacher will be calling the names over a radio from each vehicle in line.***
- The names will be called over the speaker beginning at 3:00 PM. Those students will be released from the cafeteria at this time.
- Red-tagged students **will not** be released through parent pick-up. You must come in to the office to be identified.

Transportation Changes
Please make every effort to have your child's transportation issues taken care of before he/she leaves for school in the morning. If an emergency arises, a parent or guardian may call the office and request for his/her child to return the call to find out the details of the change. You may also fax a written request for a change to our school office.

Riding a Different Bus
A note of permission from a parent/guardian for a student to ride a different numbered bus must be presented to the principal or assistant principal for approval. Without approval from the principal or assistant principal, the student will not be allowed to ride a different bus. Then the

approved note must be given to the bus driver when boarding the bus. The note should be specific to the student's destination including the address and telephone number and must be signed by the parent or guardian.

VANDALISM

The taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and for years to come—littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

VIDEO CAMERAS

For safety purposes, video and audio recording equipment is used to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video and audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

General Visitors

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the principal's office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their children, attend scheduled programs, and meet with the teachers at scheduled conference times, but must follow the stated procedures.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

Raptor V-Soft Identification System

As part of Vidor ISD's initiative to increase safety and security, we have installed a "RAPTOR" system on our campus. The online Raptor System screens all visitors to determine if they are included in a data base listing sex offenders from 48 states. All campus visitors will be required to provide a valid state or government issued photo identification to receive a visitor's pass. If cleared by the system, their name and picture will be printed on an adhesive badge and they will be allowed to participate in activities on the campus.

How will this affect you? You will be asked to swipe your driver's license. Once cleared by the system, you will be provided a visitor's pass that you will be required to wear.

Frequently asked questions by parents

- **What is the Raptor System?** Raptor is a computer software system that enhances school security by reading visitor drivers' license, comparing information to a sex offender data base, alerting campus administrators if a match is found, then (assuming no match was made) printing visitor badges that includes a photo.
- **How does it work?** Valid state or government issued photo identification information is compared to a data base that consists of registered sex offenders from 48 states including Texas. If a match is found, a campus administrator is notified so school access can be denied or restricted to that visitor.
- **Why is Vidor ISD using this system? Student safety is our highest priority.** The system is an efficient method for checking the status of a visitor as a potential sexual predator. The system also quickly prints visitor badges that include a photo, the name of the visor, time and date.
- **I just moved to Texas; can I use my photo ID from another state or country?** Raptor will read any state issued photo ID from anywhere in the US, Mexico, and many other countries, including U.S. military ID's.
- **How much time should I allow at the front office for check in ?** The first time you sign in with Raptor System, you should expect to wait for about one to two minutes while the scanner inputs your ID into the system. After this initial scan, signing in with Raptor on future visits is just as fast as using handwritten nametags and sign in sheets.

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the principal's office.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book and equipment clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the school counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

Glossary

Accelerated instruction is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level and/or as a result of a student not meeting the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

ARD is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student and his or her parents are members of the committee.

Attendance review committee is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent or in some cases 75 percent of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit lost because of absences.

Corporal Punishment is spanking or paddling the student—may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and policy FO(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual.

DAEP stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

FERPA refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

IEP is the written record of the individualized education program prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; accommodations for state or district wide tests; whether successful completion of state-mandated assessments is required for graduation, etc.

ISS refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the Student Code of Conduct. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

NCLB Act is the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

SHAC stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to assist the district in ensuring that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, along with providing assistance with other student and employee wellness issues.

Section 504 is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in

activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

STAAR is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state's system of standardized academic achievement assessments, effective beginning with certain students for the 2011–2012 school year.

STAAR-A is an accommodated version of the STAAR that is available for certain students who receive special education services or students who have been identified as dyslexic.

STAAR Alternate is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

STAAR Linguistically Accommodated (STAAR L) is an alternative state-mandated assessment with linguistic accommodations designed for certain recent immigrant English language learners.

State-mandated assessments are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing STAAR, end-of-course assessments, when applicable, is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

Student Code of Conduct is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from the classroom, campus or district vehicle. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

TELPAS stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English language learners make in learning the English language, and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.

UIL refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.