

**VALENTINE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**2018-2019**

**HANDBOOK for STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

[www.valentinecommunityschools.org](http://www.valentinecommunityschools.org)

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• Nebraska Department of Education and North Central Association accredited.

## WELCOME

Dear Students and Parents:

On behalf of the faculty, administration and board of education, we welcome you to another school year. We are looking forward to helping your children reach their learning potential and achieve their educational goals in the upcoming year.

**Please read this handbook carefully. Students and their parents are responsible for knowing the rules, regulations, and procedures covered in this handbook. The student handbook is an extension of school policies and has the force and effect of board policy when approved by the board of education.**

**There are several forms at the end of this handbook which you must read, sign and return no later than August 17, 2018.**

This handbook contains information of value to every student and parent. It contains explanations of school regulations and procedures necessary for our school to run smoothly and efficiently. If you are ever in doubt about what is the right thing to do, ask a classroom teacher, speak with the building principal, or contact my office.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jamie Isom  
Superintendent

## FOREWORD

### Section 1 - Intent of Handbook:

This handbook is intended to be used by students, parents and staff as a guide to the rules, regulations, and general information about Valentine Middle School. Each student is responsible for becoming familiar with the handbook and knowing the information contained in it. Parents are encouraged to use this handbook as a resource and to assist their child in following the rules contained in this handbook.

Although the information found in this handbook is detailed and specific on many topics, the handbook is not intended to be all encompassing so as to cover every situation and circumstance that may arise during any school day, or school year. This handbook does not create a “contract.” The administration reserves the right to make decisions and make rule revisions at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well-being of all students. The administration will be responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook. Should a situation or circumstance arise that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based upon all applicable school district policies, and state and federal statutes and regulations.

### NOTIFICATION

*This handbook also provides notification of the policies of Valentine Community Schools regarding Safe and Drug Free Schools, nondiscrimination, harassment, parental rights afforded under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, rights under The Family Educational Rights Policy Act (FERPA), disclosure of information to military recruiters, staff qualifications, student privacy protection, parental involvement, and homeless students.*

***Valentine Community Schools is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution. All teachers at Valentine Middle School are highly qualified. Specific qualifications can be supplied upon request.***

### Section 2 - District Organization:

Valentine Community Schools is a Class 3 School District which includes Kindergarten through Twelfth Grades. Valentine Elementary School located at 615 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street includes Grades K-5. Valentine Middle School located at 239 North Wood Street includes Grades 6-8. Valentine Rural Elementary Schools operate throughout the District and include Grades K-8. Valentine High School located at 431 North Green Street includes Grades 9-12. All schools are organized and operate under the laws that govern Class 3 School Districts and all are served by the same Board of Education.

#### Board of Education

Susan Beel, President

Will Fischer, Vice President

Kent Lopez, Secretary

Clint Assarsson, Treasurer

Greg Gass, Member

Shane Kime, Member

#### Administrative Staff

Jamie Isom, Superintendent

Jeff Sayer, Middle/Rural School Principal

Gus Brown, Activities Director

#### Middle School Faculty

Ian Bish (Physical Ed, Social Studies, Current Events)

Gina Breuklander (Reading, Art)

Candice Cronin (Physical Ed, Health)

Rose Dredge (Special Education)

Michael Fulton (Vocal Music, Band)

Tammy Gass (Social Studies, English, Keyboarding)  
Katie Galvin (Special Education)  
Samantha Hand (English, Art, Computers)  
Katy O’Kief (Media Specialist, Info Tech)  
Kevin Pettigrew (Math, Drivers’ Ed)  
Melanie Steskal (Reading, Computers, Social Studies, Art)  
J.J. Thorpe (Counseling, Badger Pause Coordinator, Careers)  
Michelle Tinant (Math, Science, Computers, STEAM)  
Joanna Utecht (Science, Computers, Health)  
Lori Clapper & Alyssa Downey (School Nurses)  
Cristen Witte (Special Education Coordinator/School Psychologist)

**Section 3 - Valentine Community Schools Calendar:**

Visit the school web site at [www.valentinecommunityschools.org](http://www.valentinecommunityschools.org).

## **ARTICLE 1 - MISSION AND GOALS**

### **Section 1 - School Mission Statement**

Valentine Community Schools will prepare our students for an ever-changing world.

### **Section 2 – School Improvement Goal**

All students will become proficient writers.

### **Section 3 - Goals and Objectives**

To meet the unique needs of Middle School aged students, the specially trained staff and selected curriculum at Valentine Middle School intends to:

- provide an opportunity to develop a set of values by which students can live and which are compatible with society;
- stimulate creativity, exploration, and independence;
- increase a sense of self-worth and the worth of others;
- strengthen basic skills and introduce conceptual learning to the degree which individual student maturity levels and abilities make possible;
- provide the atmosphere for interpersonal relationships fitted to the students' emotional and social maturity levels;
- develop physical coordination and skills, pride in health, and a wholesome attitude toward physical growth and changes.

### **Section 4 - Mutual Respect**

Valentine Middle School expects all staff members and students to be treated with respect and dignity. A show of disrespect toward a staff member or insubordination on the part of the student will not be tolerated.

### **Section 5 - Multicultural Education**

Diversity has been a part of our country since it's beginning. Multicultural education enables students to understand our country's racial, ethnic, and ancestral backgrounds. Contributions and perspectives of many diverse groups are infused into the curriculum to help prepare students to live, learn, and work in a pluralistic world. Multicultural education is incorporated into all academic areas.

### **Section 6 – Concern/Complaint Procedure**

The Board of Education, administration, and staff of the Valentine Community Schools want to do everything possible to ensure that each student's educational experience is a worthwhile and positive experience. We are committed to working with students, parents and guardians, and the community to have the best staff, programs, and materials possible. The proper procedures for a parent or student to make a complaint or raise a concern about school staff, programs or activities are set forth below. Other procedures exist to address discrimination or harassment, the bullying of students, and to challenge disciplinary actions, and such other procedures should be used to address those types of concerns.

Good communication helps to resolve many misunderstandings and disagreements. This complaint procedure applies to board members, patrons, students and school staff, unless the staff member is subject to a different grievance procedure pursuant to policy or contract who have a complaint should discuss their concerns with appropriate school personnel in an effort to resolve problems. When such efforts do not resolve matters satisfactorily, including matters involving discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, nation origin, sex, marital status, disability, or age, a complainant should follow the procedures set forth in **Board Policy 2006 – Updated Board Policies can found on the District Website** [www.valentinecommunityschools.org](http://www.valentinecommunityschools.org)

## ARTICLE 2 - SCHOOL DAY

### Section 1 - Daily Schedule

See inside back cover teacher/class/period schedule.

### Section 2 - Shortened Schedule

Shortened class schedules may be implemented to accommodate early out/late start days, for school assemblies, severe weather, testing schedules, or due to electrical or mechanical problems within facilities.

### Section 3 - Severe Weather and School Cancellations

**Decision to Close Schools** In the event of severe weather or mechanical breakdown, the school may be closed or the starting time delayed. The same conditions may also necessitate early dismissal. School closing, delayed starting time, early or delayed dismissal will be announced over local radio stations and the automated phone system will call the phone number on file for each family. If no report is heard, it can be assumed that school will be in session. **Parents who wish to deny the use of their cell phone for the automated phone system must notify the office in writing by September 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**After School Starts** Every attempt will be made to avoid closing school once classes are in session. In some instances, closing school during the day is inevitable if children are to safely return home before the brunt of a major storm hits. In these cases, as much advance notice as possible will be given to parents. If school is closed during the day KVSH Radio (940 AM) will broadcast the notice and the automated phone system will call the phone number the office has on file. **Parents who wish to deny the use of their cell phone for the automated phone system must notify the office in writing by September 1<sup>st</sup>.** Parents should have a plan in place to accommodate these circumstances. When students are dismissed early due to weather, students will not be allowed to leave the school building until a parent or guardian arrives. The parent or guardian must go into the school building to pick up their student or telephone the school stating other arrangements.

**Parental Decisions** *Parents may decide to keep their children at home in inclement weather because of personal circumstances.* Students absent because of severe weather when school is in session will be marked absent. The absence will be treated like any other absence for legitimate causes provided parents properly notify the school of their decision. Parents may pick up their children in inclement weather at any time during the school day. Students will not normally be dismissed from school during severe weather on the basis of a telephone request.

**What Not To Do** Parents should not attempt to come to school during a tornado warning. **School officials are not permitted to release students from the school building during a tornado warning.** Tornado safety procedures are practiced regularly by students and staff. Also, parents are urged not to telephone the radio station or the school during severe weather. Every effort will be made to provide accurate and timely information to parents through KVSH Radio, and/or automated phone system.

**Emergency Response Plans** Valentine Community Schools maintain Emergency Response Plans for Fire Drills, Emergency Exits, Tornadoes, and Critical Incident Response for the protection of students and school personnel. Regular drills are held as required by law throughout the school year in order that students and staff are instructed and prepared in appropriate procedures. Each school has a signal which, when activated, indicates the necessity to either evacuate the building or move to safer areas of the building. In the event of evacuation, information will be announced by KVSH Radio, and/or automate phone system so that parents will know how and where to pick up their students.

### Section 4 - Closed Campus

All students are required to remain on school grounds (campus) during the school day, except as required for classes or by written parent permission.

## Section 5 - Field Trips and Resource Speakers

Teachers are encouraged to plan at least one classroom field trip during the school year as part of our school programs. These trips may be walking trips or ones that require transportation. Written parent/guardian permission is required when the field trip is out of town. Field trips are supervised by the classroom teacher and usually one or two more adults.

Community resource speakers can be a wonderful asset to learning. Classroom teachers are encouraged to solicit the expertise of at least one resource speaker each year.

## Section 6 - Food Days

Due to food allergies, parents are asked to provide prepackaged treats only.

### ARTICLE 3 - USE OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

#### Section 1 - Entering and Leaving the Building

**Arrival and Dismissal** Students in the Valentine Middle School normally may enter the school building at 7:50 a.m. The tardy bell rings at 8:00. It would be appreciated if students did not arrive at school until after 7:50. SUPERVISION IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE BUILDING. The east lobby doors will be open at 7:40 A.M. for

- \* students who will be eating breakfast
- \* students who will be purchasing meals
- \* students who are using the library
- \* students who have been requested by a teacher to come in early
- \* students who must wait inside

Sixth and seventh grade students will normally enter through the east (Wood Street) entrance doors and depart through the east door. Eighth grade students will normally enter and depart through the north (3<sup>rd</sup> Street) doors. **Students will not use the Wood Street doors to enter or leave the building except as described above, when arriving at school late or when excused to leave the school building and return during the school day.**

**Beginning Of School:** Students should not be on school grounds prior to 7:50 a.m. unless they are going to eat breakfast, conduct business at the office or see a teacher for homework help or at the teacher's request. During fair weather conditions students will enter the building at the first bell, which rings at 7:55 a.m. **All students, except those entering for breakfast, and all visitors, anyone who is not a student or member of the Middle School staff, must stop at the office first. Students will not normally use the east lobby doors to enter or leave the building except for the above stated reasons.**

**During the School Day** Students are to remain on school grounds unless excused in accordance with school policies. No student may leave school during school hours without permission from the Principal. Failure to notify the Principal constitutes a skip, which is punishable by making up twice the time missed. Repeated violations will be dealt with by the Administration. Students, who leave and return to school during the day, must obtain a blue pass from the office, report to the school office before leaving and returning, and enter and exit the school using the Wood Street entrance.

**End of School** The school day normally ends at 3:00 p.m. Make-up work, special help from teachers, and any requests/requirements from teachers or the principal for students to remain begin at 3:00. The school reserves the right to keep a student until 3:35 p.m. When a teacher keeps a student after school for more than 10 minutes, the student or teacher will attempt to notify the parents. Extracurricular activities begin at 3:05 p.m. It is important that students who are involved in any of these activities report on time. All other students must clear the building as soon as possible.

Students Serving Detention. Teachers are responsible for keeping individual students for infractions of classroom rules. Detentions that students receive from the Principal's office for violation of school rules will typically be served from 3:05-3:35 p.m.

Dropping Off and Picking Up Students. Your student's safety is one of our major concerns. Cooperation between the home and school is necessary to build proper safety habits. Please help us teach traffic rules and prevent the risk of serious injury by carefully adhering to the following traffic safety rules:

*Parents are asked to use marked parking areas when dropping off and picking up students. Please do not stop on the street, in crosswalks, handicapped parking areas, or the areas immediately in front of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Wood Street entrance doors. **Students are to cross only where the crosswalks are clearly marked.***

## **Section 2 - Visitors**

During the school day, all entrance doors will be locked. Only the Wood St.(east) entrance to the school will be accessible. Upon entering the Wood Street entrance to the Middle School, all visitors (anyone who is not a student or staff member) must report to the office to sign in and receive a visitor's pass.

Parents are welcome at all times and encouraged to make arrangements to visit their child's classroom and/or school day activities. We suggest that a visit be limited to one instructional period. Parents who plan to visit school need to schedule their visit with the Principal's Office at least one day ahead of time so that the school can confirm the visit, let you know if that school day has been altered, or if for some reason another day would be better for a visit. Younger siblings should not accompany parents on school visits as they may cause a disruption to the class. Parents are asked to follow the parent involvement policy concerning visits to school. Note: The first and last month of the school year are not good times for visits. Parents should report to the office to sign in/out upon entering/exiting the school when visiting.

## **Section 3 - Smoke-Free Environment**

Valentine Community Schools declares all school buildings and grounds to be smoke-free, except in specifically designated areas.

## **Section 4 - Care of School Property**

1. Students are responsible for the proper care of all books, equipment, lockers, supplies and furniture supplied by the school.
2. Students who disfigure property, break windows or do other damage to school property or equipment will be required to pay for the damage or to replace the item.

Textbooks are rented by the school from Sawyer Memorial Library and/or taxpayers of School District #6. Book covers should be used by students to preserve textbooks that are loaned to them at their own risk. Students are responsible to maintain the condition of their textbooks. Textbooks should remain in the possession of the student or placed in a secure locker. Fines will be assessed for books that are damaged or lost. It is the responsibility of the parent/student to list prior damages when receiving textbooks. This list is to be given to the teacher.

Fines on library and textbooks are determined according to the following criteria:

Lost Book:	Replacement cost
Missing one or both covers or damaged beyond use:	Replacement cost
Cover Damage:	\$.25 - \$5.00
Page Damage - Useable:	\$.25 - \$.75 per page (up to replacement cost of book)

Page Damage - Beyond Use: \$1.00 (up to replacement cost of book)

School-issued items that are stolen or lost are the responsibility of the student to whom they were issued. General condition of materials and equipment is always a consideration before assessing fines. Students must pay all fines before they can receive final grades.

### **Section 5 - Lockers**

Each student will be assigned a locker and expected to keep all books, jackets, etc., in the assigned locker. Students will also be assigned gym lockers in which to keep all P.E. and sports clothes and equipment. Valuables, including money, SHOULD be locked up at all times. Each student is responsible for cleanliness inside his/her assigned lockers. Nothing should be posted by the student on the outside of their locker and magnets only may be used to attach items inside the locker. Students must use their own lockers and are not to share or exchange lockers with other students. A request to move to another locker must be approved by the Principal. Students may be assessed fines for damage to lockers.

To minimize locker, use and the need to return to their locker between each class, students are encouraged to take textbooks and other items needed for more than one class at a time. This saves them time and eases congestion in the halls between class periods.

### **Section 6 - Searches of Lockers and Other Types of Searches**

School faculty and staff are authorized to inspect lockers and desks and may remove any objectionable items. The school may use the assistance of specially trained dogs to detect contraband in students' lockers, belongings or automobiles on school property. Student lockers, desks, computer equipment, and other such property are owned by the school. The school exercises exclusive control over school property. Students should not expect privacy regarding usage of items placed in or on school property, including student vehicles parked on school property, because school property is subject to search at any time by school officials. Periodic, random searches of lockers, desks, computers and other such property may be conducted at the discretion of the administration.

The following rules shall apply to searches of students and of a student's personal property and to the seizure of items in a student's possession or control:

1. School officials may conduct a search if there is a reasonable basis to believe that the search will uncover evidence of a crime or a school rule violation. The search must be conducted in a reasonable manner under the circumstances.
2. Illegal items or other items reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety of others or a threat to educational purposes may be taken and kept by school officials. Any firearm or other weapon shall be confiscated and delivered to law enforcement officials as soon as practicable.
3. Items which have been or are reasonably expected to be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process may be removed from student possession.

### **Section 7 - Use of Restrooms**

Use of the restrooms is permitted before and after school, between class periods, and during lunch periods. Students may use their passbook up to two times during the day for restroom privileges. Students are expected to keep restrooms clean and are prohibited from writing on the walls or damaging the facilities in anyway. If a student is feeling ill, he/she should report to the Principal's office and not remain in the restroom.

### **Section 8 - Use of Telephone**

USE OF THE OFFICE COURTESY TELEPHONE WILL BE ALLOWED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE OFFICE STAFF. Plans for rides home, staying with friends, etc., should be made in advance to avoid unnecessary phone calls. Students are permitted, and it is their responsibility, to call their parents when they must stay after school unexpectedly. Courtesy and classroom telephones should NOT be used

during class time. Use of the telephone is not an excuse to be tardy to class.

### **Section 9 - Bicycles**

Students who ride bicycles to school must park them on arrival in the racks provided. All bicycles are to remain parked in the racks until the student vacates school grounds. It is recommended that all bicycles be equipped with locks. The school is not responsible for damage to or the theft of parts while bicycles are on school property.

### **Section 10 - Student Valuables/Lost and Found**

Students are responsible for their personal property and are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money or items of value to school or school activities. Valuables are not to be left in bathrooms, hallways or classrooms. Items of value should be locked up in the student's locker, taken to the Principal's office, or given to a classroom teacher for safekeeping.

Students who find lost articles are asked to take them to the office, where the articles can be claimed by the owner. If articles are lost at school, report that loss to office personnel. Unclaimed lost and found items will be kept in the school office for a short period of time.

### **Section 11 - Insurance**

Under Nebraska law, the District may not use school funds to provide general student accident or athletic insurance. The District requires that all student participants in athletic programs have injury and accident insurance and encourages all students who are in classes with risk of personal injury or accident to have insurance coverage. Information about student insurance providers is made available to all students upon enrollment in school.

### **Section 12 - Announcements and Bulletins**

Daily announcements will be posted on the school web site at [www.valentinecommunityschools.org](http://www.valentinecommunityschools.org), posted in lunchroom and read to students during Badger Pause. Items to be included in school announcements must be provided the school office by 9:00 a.m.

Bulletin boards and display cases are available for posting and displaying of school-related and approved materials. Approval for displaying or posting non-school related items must be obtained in advance from the building Principal.

### **Section 13 - Copyright and Fair Use Policy**

It is the school's policy to follow the federal copyright law. Students are reminded that, when using school equipment and when completing course work, they also must follow the federal copyright laws. The federal copyright law governs the reproduction of works of authorship. Copyrighted works are protected regardless of the medium in which they are created or reproduced; thus, copyright extends to digital works and works transformed into a digital format. Copyrighted works are not limited to those that bear a copyright notice.

The "fair use" doctrine allows limited reproduction of copyrighted works for educational and research purposes. The relevant portion of the copyright statute provides that the "fair use" of a copyrighted work, including reproduction "for purposes such as criticism, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research" is not an infringement of copyright. The law lists the following factors as the ones to be evaluated in determining whether a particular use of a copyrighted work is a permitted "fair use," rather than an infringement of the copyright:

- the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- the nature of the copyrighted work;
- the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and

- the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Although all of these factors will be considered, the last factor is the most important in determining whether a particular use is “fair.” Students should seek assistance from a faculty member if there are any questions regarding what may be copied.

## ARTICLE 4 – ATTENDANCE

### Section 1 – Attendance Policy 5001 - Compulsory Attendance and Excessive Absenteeism

#### Required Attendance

Every person residing in the school district who has legal or actual charge or control of any child who is of mandatory attendance age shall cause that child to regularly attend a public or private school unless the child has graduated from high school or has been allowed to dis-enroll pursuant to this policy. **Students are expected to attend every class every day. Parents or guardians must provide an explanation for the absence of a student for all or any part of the school day. The explanation may be presented in person, by phone, or in writing.**

#### Mandatory Attendance Age

All children who are or will turn six years old before January 1 of the current school year are of mandatory attendance age. Children who have not turned eighteen years of age are of mandatory attendance age.

#### Exceptions

This policy does not apply when temporary illness or severe weather conditions make attendance impossible or impracticable.

A child who will not reach age 7 before January 1 of the current school year may be excused from mandatory attendance if the child’s parent or guardian completes an affidavit affirming that alternative educational arrangements have been made for the child. A copy of the required affidavit is attached to this policy.

#### Discontinuing enrollment – 5-Year-Old Students

The person seeking to discontinue the enrollment of a student who will not reach six years of age prior to January 1 of the current school year shall submit a signed, written request to the superintendent using the form which is attached to this policy. The school district may request written verification or documentation that the person signing the form has legal or actual charge or control of the student. The school district shall discontinue the enrollment of any student who satisfies these requirements. Any student whose enrollment is discontinued under this subsection shall not be eligible to re-enroll in this school district until the beginning of the following school year unless otherwise required by law.

#### Discontinuing enrollment – 16 and 17-Year-Old Students

Only children who are at least 16 years of age may be dis-enrolled from the district. The person seeking to discontinue the child’s enrollment shall submit a signed, written request and submit it to the superintendent using the form which is attached to this policy. The district shall follow the procedures outlined in the attached form in considering requests to dis-enroll.

Only children dis-enrolling to attend a non-accredited school may be exempt from this policy. The person with legal or actual charge or control of the child must provide the superintendent with a copy of the signed request submitted to the State Department of Education for attending non-accredited schools. The superintendent may confirm the validity of the submission with the State Department of Education.

## **Attendance Officer**

Each building principal is designated as the attendance officer for the district. Each building principal, at his or her discretion, may delegate these responsibilities to any other qualified individual. The attendance officer is responsible for enforcing the provisions of state law relating to compulsory attendance. This responsibility includes but is not limited to filing a report with the county attorney of the county in which a student resides when the student is absent more than twenty days per year or the hourly equivalent. Compensation for the duties of attendance officer is included in the salary for the principal.

## **Excused Absences**

The following absences will be considered excused if they are confirmed by communication to the school from the student's parent/guardian:

1. Physical or mental illness of the student (a physician's verification is required after four (4) consecutive days of absence for illness)
2. Severe weather
3. Medical appointments for the student
4. Death or a serious illness of the student's family member
5. Attending a funeral, wedding or graduation
6. Appearance at court or for other legal matters
7. Observance of religious holidays of the student's own faith
8. College planning visits
9. Personal or family vacations
10. Whenever the principal considers that exemption from attendance is in the best interest of the student.

All other absences are unexcused. Arriving at school late or leaving school early is an unexcused absence unless the student was absent for one of the above reasons.

## **Excessive Absenteeism**

When a student receives 5 unexcused absences or the hourly equivalent in any semester, the Attendance Officer will follow the attached procedure for addressing barriers to the student's attendance.

When a student is absent more than twenty days per year or the hourly equivalent and any portion of the absences is unexcused, the Attendance Officer may file a report with the county attorney of the county in which the student resides.

## **Section 2 - Attendance and Absences**

Regular school attendance is a very important factor for success in school. Students are expected to be in attendance at school on all days that school is in session, if at all possible. When students are absent, we ask a parent or guardian to telephone the school office before 8:45 a.m. at 376-3367. Parents and students need to check with the Principal and teachers when they know in advance that a student will be absent. When a student returns to school after being absent, the parent(s) must provide an excuse to the office stating the reason for the absence.

**Absence Procedure** A student will not be allowed to enter class after an absence until an admit slip, based upon a written or verbal parental excuse, or a conditional admit slip, is issued by the Principal's office. Work must be made up within the time allowed on the admit slip. Students missing classes for school activities must present a completed makeup slip to the office before being allowed to leave for the activity.

**Retention** Retention, Alternative School and/or Summer School will be strongly considered when a student has excessive absenteeism. In cases of excessive absenteeism, the Valentine Community Schools Retention Procedure and Evaluation Process will not apply. In cases of excessive absenteeism, final authority for retention, Alternative School and/or Summer School rests with the professional staff of Valentine Community Schools.

### **Section 3 - Tardiness**

It is important that students arrive at school and to all classes on time. Students who are tardy are responsible for making up missing work. **They will also be required to stay for detention the day they are tardy, unless excused by the principal.** In addition, four tardies will count as one-half day absent from school. Habitual tardiness will be handled on an individual basis and may include staying after school, parent conferences, and in-school suspension.

**Tardy to School:** Students will be considered tardy to school if they are not seated in their assigned class or ready and attentive in their assigned area when the start bell for their first-class rings on regular school days or by the designated start time on late start days.

**Tardy to Class:** Students will be considered tardy to class if they are not in their classroom when the tardy bell rings, unless they have a pass from the teacher who detained them. Specific tardy guidelines, once students are in the classroom doorway, are at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Students have sufficient time between all class changes to make it to their next assigned class on time.

### **Section 4 - Leaving School**

Students who must leave school for any reason during the school day must be cleared in advance by a note or phone call from the student's parent or legal guardian. and obtain a blue "Permit to Leave Building" pass from the office before leaving. This pass is to be presented to the classroom teacher at the time the student needs to leave. No pupil is to leave school during school hours without permission from the Principal's office. Failure to notify the office constitutes a skip, which is punishable by making up twice the time missed.

Any student exiting the building for any reason during the school day must stop at the office to be signed out and will leave via the Wood Street doors only. Upon returning to school that same day, students are expected to stop at the office to be signed back in and to be readmitted to class.

Students who leave without permission and without signing out in the proper manner will be considered truant. Repeated violations will be dealt with by the Administration.

### **Section 5 - Attendance is Required to Participate in Activities**

Students must be in school and remain all day the day of any scheduled school activity in order to participate in the activity. This includes sports contests, practices, music and drama performances, and dances. Failure to be in attendance at school on the day of a scheduled activity will result in a student being withheld from participation in the activity. The Administration retains the right to grant participation should exceptional circumstances prevail.

### **Section 6 - Make-up Work**

Make-up work may be assigned for each day/class missed regardless of the type of absence. Normally, ample time is provided for a student to complete make-up work. It is advisable to complete make-up work as soon as possible. Students are encouraged to get assignments from a friend when they have been absent. If a student has been absent for more than one day or parents may request homework assignments by contacting the office. No assignments will be sent home until a parent request is made and/or at least two (2) consecutive days of absence have occurred. If the parents or students have concerns about assignments prior to this time, they are encouraged to contact the teacher. There will be a time limit allowed in which make-up work must be completed. This time limit must be observed by the pupil

if he/she is to receive credit for the make-up work. The time limit will be two days for each day of school missed in the event of illness. Teachers may give additional time or require work sooner if the situation warrants it. Upon returning to school (or before a planned absence from school) the student is responsible for obtaining a make-up/admit slip and contacting teachers regarding make-up assignments.

If the absence was an unplanned one, students must get a Make-up/Admit slip from the office. This should be presented to the student's teacher who will record assignments to be made up on it. When the work has been completed and turned in to the teacher, the teacher will sign the Make-up/Admit slip indicating the work has been completed. Assignment sheets will only be sent home in the case of extended absences such as chicken pox, hospitalization, or other prolonged illnesses. The student is responsible for contacting teachers regarding make-up assignments.

Students, who know in advance that they will be absent from school, should get assignments from their teachers before leaving and plan to have those assignments completed when they return to school.

Students who desire to participate in Valentine Middle School extracurricular activity programs are expected to keep all class work up-to-date. Students who will be absent during a regular school day to participate in a school activity must have their class work completed and present a teacher signed makeup slip indicating such to the activity sponsor before being allowed to leave for the activity.

## ARTICLE 5 - SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

### Section 1 - Curriculum

Valentine Community Schools strive to provide a quality, comprehensive educational program. Students are assessed throughout the school year by a variety of assessment tools. The educational program is continually monitored and regularly revised.

#### **SIXTH GRADE CURRICULUM**

Language Arts/Spelling - Write tools expository writing is included with applications across the curriculum. Write Source's Six-Traits Writing instruction supports writing. Moby Max and other online activities are included to improve skills dealing with mechanics, usage, listening, oral presentation, and note taking. Townsend Press's English Essentials is used to teach, re-teach, and practice grammar skills with activities, online activities and tests. Townsend Press is a vocabulary series used to teach vocabulary in context.

Math – McDougal Littell Math Course 1 develops students' number sense and builds algebraic thinking. Students continue building on essential math concepts such as decimals, fractions, ratios, and percentages. Development of problem solving skills will be emphasized. Students will then get the opportunity further in the book to develop a greater understanding of geometric ideas, integers, probability and statistics.

Physical Education - The physical education program strives to be an important part of the overall education of students. The physical, emotional, social, and intellectual well-being is developed in this program through team games, individual activities, and lifelong activities. These games and activities enhance the student's skills, coordination, balance, muscular and cardiovascular strength/endurance, and self-concept.

Reading - Reading skills initiated in the Elementary grades continue in sixth grade. Consistent use of the Macmillan/McGraw Hill reading curriculum provides for completion of that series. In addition, students will be given significant time, guidance, and support in reading select novels and Junior Great Book stories. Each child will have the opportunity to develop their reading skills and increase their reading abilities, while developing a love for reading using the books read together in class as well as reading books

of their own. Quick Reads are utilized to improve fluency and reading comprehension. Students will be given ample amounts of time for sustained, silent reading on a daily basis and opportunity to choose their own books to read as well as a choice in methods for accountability.

Science - *Glencoe Science* published by McGraw-Hill companies is an activity based science program emphasizing depth of concepts, skill development, and student engagement. Students gain knowledge of science by thinking, discussing, and writing about discoveries. Units included are: Energy and Energy Resources, From Bacteria to Plants, Animals, Life Structure and Function, Human Body Systems, and Weather & Climate.

Social Studies - Students will develop study skills for improving learning. These skills include digital citizenship, time management, organization, class participation, comprehensive strategies, test taking, working in groups, using their textbooks and references, and developing healthy habits that support learning. Students study the Eastern Hemisphere using the text *World Cultures and Geography* - published c. 2008 by McDougal Littell. Students look at the geography, history, and present-day circumstances of the countries covered. Comprehension skills, map skills, and understanding human relationships are the important aspects of this study.

6<sup>th</sup> Grade Choir - Students will review notes in the treble and bass clefs, learn rhythms and dynamics and other musical notation, and learn how to read music and sight-sing. Students will learn how to sing in two and three-part harmony. They will also be exposed to music and instruments from other cultures. Students will perform in two public concerts, as well as other school performances.

6<sup>th</sup> Grade Band - Students will learn to play the Bb, Eb, Ab Major concert scales. They also review notes learned and will continue to learn new notes, rhythms, and fingerings on their instruments. Students will be able to play many different types of music including Concert Band, Pep Band, and Marching Band. Percussion students will learn new rudiments and will be able to play all percussion parts. Students will march in the Cherry County Fair Parade, the Old West Days Parade, the high school Homecoming Parade, and a competition parade. Students will perform as a Pep Band for home athletic games and in two public concerts, as well as other school performances.

### **Nine Week Cluster Classes**

Keyboarding - Students review and learn the keyboard using the software program Mavis Beacon for six weeks. Students are then introduced to Microsoft Word/Google where they learn to use the formatting palette, create files, save, and print documents. Students learn to compose a variety of lessons and activities. They will develop a knowledge of the keyboard, improve typing speed, format, print, and save memos, letters, and reports ranging from one to two pages using a reference page and title page when required.

Art - Students will be introduced to basic art terminology. They will work on creating different values and colors using the three basic primary colors plus black and white and different art pencils. They will design and create a paper mache hat and a Poppy Poster to promote awareness and respect for Veterans. Instruction and assistance is given to train the eye to notice details and proportions when drawing. Students will learn and draw to the proportions of the human face. We will also study Vincent Van Gogh.

Health – Teen Health © 2014 will provide students with real-world, hands-on activities and interactive multimedia resources. Topics to be covered: building healthy relationships, dating relationships and abstinence, building character, bullying and cyberbullying, mental and emotional health, mental and emotional disorders, conflict resolution, and violence prevention.

Information Technology- Students will become familiar with information resources and services provided in the library media center as well as outside the school. Students will review/learn the best methods of using those available resources. Topics covered will include using and evaluating library resources,

Internet safety, evaluating web sites, using various software, computer terminology, copyright awareness, the research process, note taking and study skills, as well as the Six Traits Writing Model. Students will practice their writing and research skills by completing short research projects using the Big 6 research process. They will employ various methods of creating the projects by using both print sources and technology. Students will also have the opportunity to improve their presentation skills by presenting their completed projects to their peers.

## **SEVENTH GRADE CURRICULUM**

Language Arts - *Write Source* integrates six-traits writing instruction into every writing unit. All key forms of writing, descriptive, expository, text-dependent analysis, persuasive, poetry, and research are included with applications across the curriculum. Also included are a variety of activities to improve skills dealing with mechanics, usage, listening, oral presentation, and note taking. Students are encouraged to use writing as a tool for thinking, such as journals, and digital portfolios. Sadlier's Vocabulary Workshop, Level B, is the vocabulary series used to teach vocabulary in context.

Math - McDougal Littell Math Course 2 focuses on rational numbers, their operations, and their algebraic representations in the beginning chapters and topics such as equations and functions, geometry, square roots, and probability in the later chapters. Students build understanding of these concepts using models and will apply their skills to problem-solving situations and use estimation to check reasonableness. Topics from math strands such as measurement conversions, area, averages, and data displays are introduced early in the course and then integrated and expanded upon throughout.

Physical Education - The physical education program strives to be an important part of the overall education of students. The physical, emotional, social, and intellectual well-being is developed in this program through team games, individual activities, and lifelong activities. These games and activities enhance the student's skills, coordination, balance, muscular and cardiovascular strength/endurance, and self-concept.

Reading - Reading is at the heart of everything. We are transitioning from learning to read to reading to learn. Reading skills that are imperative throughout life will be developed by a variety of means. Reading from a wide range of genre will build the love for reading. Selected novels, Junior Great Book stories, and Holt – Elements of Literature © 2009 curriculum will highlight reading skills and begin the transition to elements of literature. Strategy, literature analysis, comprehension, vocabulary, and enrichment activities will guide each student's skills in reading. Students will be given ample amounts of time for sustained, silent reading on a daily basis and opportunity to choose their own books to read as well as a choice in methods for accountability.

Science - *Glencoe Science* published by McGraw-Hill companies is an activity based science program emphasizing depth of concepts, skill development, and student engagement. Students gain knowledge of science by thinking, discussing, and writing about discoveries. Units included are: Cells, Heredity, and Classification, Astronomy, Rock Cycle, and Volcanoes.

The Science Technology Lab is a state of the art science lab that consists of computers and electronic apparatuses. There are nine different modules that students rotate through for a semester. The lab was built on five foundations: system is student-centered; curriculum is module based; students must work cooperatively in pairs; modules are based on content delivered; and activities are hands-on. Workstations are self-sufficient and students, working in teams, will find everything needed to succeed at the module site.

Social Studies - A study of American history from the pre-Columbian period through reconstruction is the emphasis of this class. Students further their understanding by using primary and secondary sources, maps, charts, graphs, timelines, political cartoons, films and the internet. The study of history helps stu-

dents to understand the relationship between past and present and only by learning about the past can they truly understand the present.

7<sup>th</sup> Grade Choir - Students will review notes in the treble and bass clefs, rhythms, dynamics and musical notation. Students will learn other musical notation and will be able to sight-sing on their part. Students will be able to sing in two and three-part harmony. Students will be exposed to music and instruments from other cultures. They will perform in two public concerts as well as at other school events.

7<sup>th</sup> Grade Band - Students will be able to play the Bb, Eb, Ab, and C Major concert scales. They will review notes learned and will learn new notes, rhythms, and fingerings on their instruments. Students will be able to play many different types of music including Concert Band, Pep Band and Marching Band. They will play more difficult music. Students will march in the Cherry Co. Fair Parade, the Old West Days Parade, the high school Homecoming Parade, and march in a competition parade. Students will perform Pep Band for home athletic games. Students will perform in two public concerts as well as for other school events.

### **Nine Week Cluster Classes**

Art – Art is a project-based curriculum in which students will research and produce projects in the following area: on-point perspective, Op-art, and mask making.

Computer Projects – Students will learn how to operate various applications in Google (spreadsheets, docs, draw, calendar, mail) by creating a variety of projects. These projects will assist the students in other classes as their knowledge can be applied to projects in core classes. Students will review keyboarding and improve their keyboarding skills.

Health – Teen Health © 2014 will provide students with real-world, hands-on activities and interactive multimedia resources. Topics to be covered: nutrition, physical activity, the life cycle, personal health care, your body systems, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, using medicines wisely, and non-communicable diseases.

STEAM – S-Science T-Technology E-Engineering A-Art & M-Math – Students will enhance their critical thinking skills through inquiry based activities where they will generate ideas, problem solve, collaborate with other students with an emphasis on project based learning.

### **EIGHTH GRADE CURRICULUM**

Language Arts - *Write Source* integrates six-traits writing instruction into every writing unit. All key forms of writing, descriptive, expository, text-dependent analysis, persuasive, poetry, career, and research are included with applications across the curriculum. Also included are a variety of activities to improve skills dealing with mechanics, usage, listening, oral presentation, and note taking. Students are encouraged to use writing as a tool for thinking, such as journals, and digital portfolios. Sadlier's Vocabulary Workshop, Level C, is the vocabulary series used to teach vocabulary in context.

Literature/Computers - Students will be given the opportunity to build comprehension, fluency, enrich vocabulary, and build an understanding and appreciation for other time periods, cultures, and peoples using *Holt: Elements of Literature Second Course, Junior Great Books*/other selected short stories and novels, as well as non-fiction text selections. Students will participate in literature circles, reading discussion groups, and individually in order to develop, deepen, and apply thinking, speaking, listening and writing skills. Resources utilized will include those relative to the culture, history, and contributions of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. Literature will run concurrently with the computer curriculum. Students will develop a greater understanding of the various technologies, e.g., Microsoft Office, GarageBand, Schoology, Google Docs/Gmail. Students will learn about Internet safety as well as the legal and ethical aspects of Internet usage. Students will improve their keyboarding accuracy and skills through regular practice on typingweb.com. Reading and comput-

er skills will be reinforced in social studies classes.

Physical Education - The physical education program strives to be an important part of the overall education of students. The physical, emotional, social, and intellectual well-being is developed in this program through team games, individual activities, and lifelong activities. These games and activities enhance the student's skills, coordination, balance, muscular and cardiovascular strength/endurance, and self-concept.

Math - In the McDougal-Littell series, Pre-Algebra, the students will learn problem solving techniques involving: variables, expressions, and integers; solving equations; ratio, proportion, and probability; percents; linear functions; real numbers, and right triangles; measurement, area and volume; data analysis and probability; polynomials and nonlinear functions; angle relationships and transformations.

Social Studies – *American History: Reconstruction To The Present* integrates print and technology to capture students' imagination and help them connect to the essential questions of history. Students will develop and apply historical knowledge and skills to research, analyze and understand key concepts of past, current, and potential issues and events at the local, state, national, and international levels. Resources utilized will include those relative to the culture, history, and contributions of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. Spatial perspective and geographic skills will be applied to help students make informed decisions about issues and current events. Economic reasoning skills will be utilized to make informed judgments and become effective participants in the economy. Civic responsibility will be investigated and applied to make informed decisions based upon knowledge of government at all levels. Students will utilize primary and secondary sources, maps, charts, graphs, timelines, political cartoons, music, films and the Internet. Study skills, such as time management, organization, note taking, cooperative group work, reading comprehension, and test-taking strategies will be utilized to support student achievement. 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA Standards of reading, writing, speaking, and listening will be supported and refined through guided practice in order to prepare students for high school and beyond. Students will participate in the National Geographic Geography Bee.

Science - *Glencoe Science* published by McGraw-Hill companies is an activity based science program emphasizing depth of concepts, skill development, and student engagement. Students gain knowledge of science by thinking, discussing, and writing about discoveries. Units included are: Properties of Matter, Atomic Theory Development, Geologic Time and Fossils.

The science technology lab is a state of the art science lab that consists of computers and electronic apparatuses. There are nine different modules that students will rotate through for a given semester. The lab was built on five foundations: system is student-centered; curriculum is module based; students must work cooperatively in pairs; modules are based on content delivered; and activities are hands-on. Workstations are self-sufficient and students working as teams will find everything needed to succeed at the module site.

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Choir - Students will be able to identify notes in the treble and bass clefs as well as rhythm, dynamics and musical notation. Students will be able to sing in three and four-part harmony as well as sight-sing their part. Students will sing in foreign languages and be exposed to music and instruments of other cultures. They will perform in two public concerts, and for other school performances.

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band - Students will review notes, rhythms, dynamics and musical notations learned earlier and will continue to learn new music. Students will play Level Two and Three music. Students will be able to play their B flat concert scale from memory and will be able to play the C, F, E flat, A flat and other major scales. Students will be able to play many different types of music including Concert Band, Pep Band and Marching Band. Students will march in the Cherry County Fair Parade, the Old West Days Parade, the high school Homecoming Parade and in a competition parade. Students will perform as a Pep Band for home athletic games. Students will perform two public concerts, and for other school

events.

### **Nine Week Cluster Classes**

Drivers' Education - The written and prose section of Drivers' Education is taught to all eighth graders. The content of this course is aimed at the beginning driver to give them the knowledge necessary to begin their driving experience. The student text is divided into three units: Preparing to Drive, Driving in Different Environments, and Traffic-Citizen Responsibilities.

Art – Students will develop and apply ideas, knowledge, and skills to create, present, respond to, and connect art with the human experience. They will use the creative process to investigate and communicate personal voice in artwork, and apply their knowledge to a variety of presentation and communication techniques. The critical process will be utilized to compare and contrast multiple works of art and examine the significance of art in contemporary, historical, and a variety of cultural contexts. Students will investigate the elements of art: line, shape, form, space, color, and texture and create a variety of original works. Students will create three-dimensional pieces, including a wire/paper mache sculpture in the style of Alberto Giacometti. Ceramics will be explored through the creation of coil or pinch pots. The history of Mehndi and designs developed by a variety of cultural groups will be explored. Students will create an individualized representation of this art form.

Current Events - In this course, students study current challenges facing the United States both in our country and in the world as they relate to students. There is a strong emphasis placed on media literacy and understanding bias and perspective when examining these issues. Students are engaged in student-centered activities that ask them to develop arguments and defend those in the form of debates, scored discussions, and presentations. Themes include but are not limited to domestic political issues, current conflicts, the role of the United States, status of global human rights, and environmental issues. Class participation is a critical component of this course and will be required.

Career Education – Career Education is based on the middle school curriculum developed by the Nebraska Department of Education. It emphasizes career development through career awareness, exploration and preparation. Students will define career clusters and pathways, describe examples of career readiness, utilize self-assessments to better understand interests, establish a career portfolio, and begin to create a personal learning plan to provide direction to high school and post-high school activities. This course is aligned to American School Counselor Association Standards for Students and integrates EducationQuest tools and resources for middle school students.

### **Section 2 - Grading**

Valentine Middle School will use the following grading system:

A	93-100	D	70-76
B	85-92	F	69 and below
C	77-84	INC	Incomplete

Late or Incomplete Work. Teachers will explain and post their grading policy. Students need to complete work on time. If a student chooses not to come in for a teacher at a designated time the matter will be turned over to the office in the form of a “Zero Referral”. The student will be required to stay afterschool in the office until the work is complete. Students who consistently have late work will face disciplinary action.

### **Section 3 - Testing**

Most curricular areas have testing and progress systems built into the teaching materials. A variety of assessment programs/materials are used to monitor student progress. All students in Grades Six

through Eight are given NWEA MAP achievement tests and the OLSAT. Students are assessed in accordance with state and federal guidelines. These tests are used for school and district information and for feedback to parents and students. Results may be used to determine qualifications for special programs.

#### **Section 4 - Promotion, Retention, Alternative School, Summer School**

The professional staff of Valentine Community Schools will place students at the grade level and in the courses best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

Students will typically progress annually from grade to grade. A student, however, may be retained at a grade level or required to repeat a course or program when, in the judgment of the professional staff, retention is in the best interest of the student. Parents will be notified prior to the final decision. The final decision will rest with school authorities. Students with excessive absenteeism may be required to attend Alternative School, Summer School and/or may be considered for retention.

Alternative School. The Board of Education of Valentine Community Schools has implemented an Alternative School program for students who fail their classes, may have a poor history of academic performance and/or behavior issues that keep the student from succeeding in the traditional classroom setting and students whose absences from school exceeded state attendance requirements. Students will have the opportunity to attend Alternative School to help them to master specific objectives.

Summer School. Valentine Community Schools Board of Education has implemented a summer school program for students who fail their classes and students whose absences from school exceeded state attendance requirements. Students will have the opportunity to attend the summer school program, which will help them to master the specific objectives they did not master during the regular school year. The summer school program is the alternative provided for students rather than being retained in their present grade.

#### **Valentine Middle School Summer School Guidelines**

The method used for determining if a student qualifies for summer school may be:

1. if the student fails a semester in one or more core classes they will be required to take summer school.
2. demonstrate poor study skills, low-test scores (NSCAS, MAP), or poor academic skills in one or more core classes.
3. students who are absent 20 or more days or the hourly equivalent during the school year may be referred for Summer School.

Final determination will be made by the Summer School committee (Principal, School Counselor, Teacher(s)).

If a parent/guardian requests Summer School for their student, the request will be reviewed and every effort will be made to accommodate the request. Class size will be one determination for parent requests.

During the regular school year, every effort will be made to help students avoid failure, Alternative School and Summer School. The school will take the following steps to help students:

1. Students who are failing in one or more subjects will normally have their grades mailed to their parents' home address on Fridays and will also be informed that they are failing by the teacher who is instructing the class in which they are failing, as well as by their Badger Pause teacher. Teachers will provide before and after school help for students.
2. If students are still failing at mid-term, a meeting may be scheduled with parents. The counselor, principal, and teacher, whose class is being failed, will develop a plan to help the student receive

passing grades. The counselor, principal, and teacher make up the Alternative School and Summer School Committee.

It is the student's responsibility to take the following step to avoid failure, Alternative School and Summer School: Students who are failing in one or more subjects will report to the teacher(s) whose class(es) they are failing before or after school. Students are responsible for working with their teachers on improving their grades.

Should these measures fail to help the student develop better grades, Alternative School, and/or Summer School placement may be recommended for the student. *Students who are on the down list (failing) in one or more subjects are responsible for improving their grades.*

### **Section 5 - Schedule Changes**

Schedule changes for students must be initiated by the teachers involved, the Middle School Guidance Counselor, or the student's parents and are approved by the Principal only.

### **Section 6 - Interim Reports**

Various supplemental reports may be sent to parents throughout the school year concerning student performance. These reports may describe student work of an exceptional nature or work that needs improving. Parents may be notified when their son or daughter has had late papers during the school year.

Included in reports to parents may be a request from the teacher for the parents to contact the teacher by phone to discuss the student's academic progress. Teachers will arrange times with parents when their student can meet with the teacher, outside regular class time, to assist in returning the student to satisfactory academic standing.

### **Section 7 - Report Cards**

Valentine Middle School will use a quarterly reporting system and distribute printed report cards at the end of each quarter during the school year. Percentage grades as described in Section 1 above will reflect student work. Parents may access their student's grades online at the school website [www.valentinecommunityschools.org](http://www.valentinecommunityschools.org). Grades will be updated weekly by teachers and Weekly Grade Reports mailed to parents/guardians of students who are failing in any class. A weekly report (down list) will be compiled of students who are doing failing work. A mid-term meeting may be scheduled with parents of students who have been on the down list for the first half of the term to discuss the students' academic progress. Each teacher will assume the responsibility of keeping his/her students informed of their progress.

### **Section 8 - Student Goal Setting Days and Student-Parent-Teacher Conferences**

The first conference is a time for students, parents and teachers to establish goals for each student and to discuss academic progress. The second conference will be for the purpose of reviewing student goals and academic progress. Parents are strongly urged to attend their child's conferences. Individual consultations with teachers, at any other time, are available upon request during the school year.

### **Section 9 - Honor Roll**

The purpose of the honor roll is to recognize those students who demonstrate academic excellence. Honor rolls will be determined for each quarter and semester. Core curriculum classes (Reading, Literature, Math, Science, Social Studies, and English) will be weighed twice and all other classes will be weighed once in computing averages. Students will be recognized as follows:

Students with an overall average of 93 - 100% will be recognized as High Honor Roll students.

Students with an overall average of 90 - 92% will be classified as Honor students.

Honor roll lists are published in the Valentine Midland News, district website, and posted in the school.

## **Section 10 – Badger Effort Award**

The Badger Effort Award will be based on the school’s character education. Students who demonstrate Character In Action (CIA), responsibility, accountability, honesty, empathy, and respect will be nominated by classroom teachers and staff on a quarterly basis. These students will be recognized for their efforts in the Valentine Midland News and the district website.

## **ARTICLE 6 - SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

### **Section 1 - Badger Pause**

The middle school years in a student’s life are full of changes, challenges, transitions, and turbulence. It is a time when students need someone with whom they can feel at home and comfortable. Badger Pause is a time for a small group of students to form a close and trusting relationship with one another and with one adult in the Middle School. A student stays with the same Badger Pause group all through their middle school years. The middle school is known for its community service projects. Friendly competitions go on between the groups with News Bowl, Quiz Bowl, Almost Anything Goes Day and other contest throughout the school year.

### **Section 2 - Counseling and Guidance Services**

Valentine Middle School’s guidance program is based upon the belief that growth and development during the early years of schooling are the most significant in the total education of the child. Counseling in the formative years assists in the development of social skills that are fundamental in everyday interaction with others. The focus of school guidance is to develop skills, prevent problems and assist in resolving conflicts. The counseling program provides individual and group counseling, classroom guidance, and support guidance based upon individual and school need. Student referrals to the Middle School Counselor may be made directly by parents, the student’s teachers, or the building Principal. Appointments can be made with the Middle School Counselor by stopping by the Counselor’s office or by telephone.

### **Section 3 - Crisis Team**

The Crisis Team is a support service which helps our schools assess, plan, and intervene in crises affecting staff and students. A preplanned, organized approach has been shown to be effective in reducing the emotional and social impact of a crisis. The Valentine Community Schools’ Crisis Team has had specialized training to assist building administrators in directing crisis resolution activities. The team is made up of staff members from the elementary, middle, and high school.

### **Section 4 - Enrichment**

Nebraska state law requires school districts to identify learners of high ability. The Enrichment Program schedules various activities and competitions including the National Geographic Geography Bee and Middle School Math Olympiads. Other activities vary from year to year. Extracurricular activities are also available to students. An enrichment coordinator is available to classroom teachers to assist in efforts to provide for individual learning needs.

### **Section 5 - Library/Media**

Library/media services include research materials, general reading materials, and various technologies. Computers for student and teacher use are provided to be used for word processing, instruction, and research. Other technology supported through the library/media center includes electronic research materials, access to the Internet, and video equipment such as VCRs and camcorders. The library/media center is open during the school day, 20 minutes before school, and 30 minutes after school for student and staff use.

## **Section 6 - Special Education Services**

Special Education is federally mandated and partially state funded program for any student in need of special assistance. Upon recommendation by the school's Student Assistance Team, a student will be tested. The Multidisciplinary Team then determines eligibility for the student. Parent involvement and permission for placement of a student in this program is required. Valentine Community Schools' program is designed to provide comprehensive services in the least restrictive environment for each verified student and to develop each student's skills to his/her maximum ability. The building Principal is the first contact regarding referrals to the special education program and resolution of special education disputes.

## **Section 7 - Speech and Language**

Speech therapy services are provided for eligible preschool and school-aged children exhibiting speech-language deficits. Upon recommendation by the Student Assistance Team, students are tested to determine eligibility. The speech-language pathologist's functions can include assessment, multidisciplinary team involvement, collaborative IEP development and implementation, direct therapy, and recommendation regarding appropriate placement of children. Additionally, consultation is extended to staff members and parents.

## **Section 8 - Student Assistance Team**

The Student Assistance Team (SAT) works in cooperation with classroom teachers and parents of a child who has exhibited a learning difficulty or behavioral problem that leads to an academic problem. Intervention strategies for the regular classroom are implemented to assist the student. The student's performance is closely monitored and documented to determine whether instruction in the regular classroom is sufficient or if the student should be referred for special education evaluation.

## **Section 9 - Health and Safety**

Valentine Community Schools will maintain health and accident records and will oversee student possession and use of medication. The purpose of keeping health and accident records is to provide information for and support of a comprehensive safety education program for all children and district personnel. Accident reports promote the safe and efficient operation of the school system as well as the protection and education of the students. To ensure a safe school environment, Valentine Community Schools will use the guidance and assistance of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the Cherry County Clinic, and the Valentine Medical Clinic.

### **Medical Information to be Provided to the District**

All parents/guardians must complete a health questionnaire for each student. If the student is allergic to certain medication, foods or substances, has asthma, or is prone to seizure or other illness, the student's parents, guardian, and/or physician shall provide the school, in writing, with the following information on or by the first day of school:

- A. Name of medications, foods or substances to which the student is allergic.
- B. The serious illness(es) to which the student is susceptible, the triggers, and initial symptoms.
- C. If the student is susceptible to an illness, or allergic reaction, the steps to be taken by school personnel in the event the illness or allergic reaction occurs.

### **Student Illness or Injury**

School personnel will notify parents when a student needs to be sent home from school due to illness. Conditions requiring a student be sent home include: temperature greater than 100°F., vomiting, diarrhea, unexplained rashes, live head lice, or a determination that the child's condition prevents mean-

ingful participation in the educational program, presents a health risk to the child or others, or that medical consultation is warranted unless the condition resolves. The student should not return to school until they have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of a fever reducing medication (e.g., ibuprofen, acetaminophen, etc.). If the student does not have a fever, he/she will be encouraged to stay in school. Should the student's condition deteriorate, his/her parent or guardian will be notified. Please include emergency daytime phone numbers when enrolling your child so that you or an emergency contact can be reached if your child becomes ill or injured while at school. Also, please inform the school of any health-related information you feel is important for your student's success in the classroom and/or safety at school. Parents who have students with asthma or severe allergies will be asked to provide more specific information to the School Nurse.

Unless an injury is of a minor nature, the student's parent(s) or guardian will be notified. If the parent(s) or guardian cannot be reached, the student's emergency contact person will be notified. If the student's parent(s) or their emergency contact person cannot be reached, the school shall decide if an ambulance is necessary. Any accident resulting in injury will be reported to the building principal's office. The well being of the students is our foremost concern. Should a medical situation arise, the school may call for an ambulance. Parents or the student's emergency contact will be notified.

### **Communicable Disease Guidelines:**

Chicken Pox - Exclude for no less than 6 days\* after the appearance of first crop of vesicles and student is without fever and vesicles are dry.

Colds - May return if no fever.

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) - May return when eye is normal in appearance or with written physician approval.

Fifth's Disease - Exclude until fever and malaise are gone. May return with rash with written physician approval.

Impetigo - Exclude until lesions are treated. May return with written documentation from physician.

Lice (Head or Body) - Exclude until verification of appropriate treatment method.

Measles (Rubella) - Exclude for duration of illness and for no less than 4 days\* after onset of rash.

Measles - Three Day - Exclude for duration of illness and for no less than 4 days after onset of rash.

Mumps - Exclude for duration of illness and until swelling has subsided (about 9 days).

Ringworm - Exclude until treatment is started.

Strep Infections (Scarlet Fever, Scarletina, Strep Throat) - Exclude until no fever and under treatment for 24 hours.

*\*Day of onset of specific symptoms is counted as day zero, the day after onset is day 1.*

### **Medications**

Whenever possible your child should be provided medications by you outside of school hours. In the event, it is necessary that the child take or have medication available at school, the parent/guardian must provide a signed written consent for the child to be given medication at school. A consent form is available in the school office.

**Possession And Use of Medication** Prescribed medication shall not be brought to school unless a physician's written directions state that the prescribed medication must be taken during school hours or during school activities. Medication should be taken at home whenever possible.

**Prescribed Medication** The student or the student's parents or guardian must provide the Principal with a physician's written orders which prescribe the type and amount of medication. A current prescription label will satisfy the requirements of this paragraph. In addition, a written authorization permitting the use of the medication and giving the school permission to call the prescribing physician with questions must be signed by the student's parents or guardian and taken to the principal's office along with the medication. This must be done each time prescribed medication is needed. The school nurse may limit medication dosages to levels listed in current drug reference publications.

**Non-prescribed/Over-the-Counter Medication** A written authorization permitting the use of the non-prescribed over-the-counter medication must be signed by the student's parents or guardian and provided the principal's office **along with the medication in the original box/container**. This must be done for each type of medication needed (i.e., cough drops, Tylenol, etc.). The school may also require a written authorization signed by a physician giving the school permission to telephone that physician with questions.

**Taking of Non-prescribed/Over-the-Counter and Prescribed Medication** The ingestion, taking, or application of medication, including nebulizers, shall be performed under the direct supervision and observation of the principal or the principal's designee, and administered as directed by the student's parent or guardian for non-prescribed medication, and as directed by the student's physician in the case of prescribed medication.

**Medication Containers** Medications must be provided to the school by the parent/guardian in the pharmacy-labeled or manufacturer-labeled bottle/container. Repackaged medications will not be accepted.

**Custody and Storage of Medication** Medication delivered to the Principal shall be stored in the Principal's office or other area designated by the school Principal. The storage area shall either be locked or under the control of a designated school employee.

**Medication Quantity** No more than one week's supply of prescribed medication shall be provided or delivered to the school by the student or student parent or guardian, unless there is a written order by a physician requiring a greater supply.

**Transfer of Medication to Other Students** Students are prohibited from transferring or delivering any over-the-counter or prescribed medication to other students. Violation of this subsection will authorize the confiscation of the medication by the District, and subject the student, to student discipline.

**Inhalers** Students may use inhalers without supervision or monitoring by the Principal or Principal's designee. However, if the inhaler is a prescribed medication, the Nurse will be advised by the student's parent, guardian, or physician in writing of the inhaler's frequency of use. If school personnel observe a student using an inhaler in excess of the directions on the inhaler or more frequently than would be considered reasonable, it shall be reported to the Principal's office or Nurse in which case the student's future use of the inhaler shall be supervised by the principal or principal's designee.

**Finger Stick Blood Test** Parents of students who have diabetes, and students with diabetes, should notify the school at the beginning of the school year and provide the school with all required information. Students who have been taught finger stick blood tests shall follow those procedures.

### **Immunization Requirements**

Students must show proof of immunization upon enrollment in Valentine Community Schools. Any student who does not comply with the immunization requirements will not be permitted to continue in school. **Please refer to the Summary of School Immunization Rules and Regulations on the next page to determine compliance with Nebraska state law.** For students with medical reasons or sincerely held religious beliefs that do not allow immunizations, parents must provide a waiver statement with a

doctor's signature stating that the immunization(s) would be medically risky or, in the case of refusal due to religious beliefs, a notarized affidavit stating that the immunization(s) conflict with the family's religious beliefs must be provided. Medical waiver and religious affidavit forms are available in the school office.

*Note: Students with a signed waiver statement may be excluded from school in the event of a disease outbreak.*

## Summary of the School Immunization Rules and Regulations

Student Age Group	Required Vaccines
Ages 2 through 5 years enrolled in a school based program not licensed as a child care provider	<p>4 doses of DTaP, DTP, or DT vaccine</p> <p>3 doses of Polio vaccine</p> <p>3 doses of Hib vaccine or 1 dose of Hib given at or after 15 months of age</p> <p>3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine</p> <p>1 dose of MMR or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age</p> <p>1 dose of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age. Written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian, or health care provider will be accepted.</p> <p>4 doses of pneumococcal or 1 dose of pneumococcal given on or after 15 months of age</p>
Students entering school (Kindergarten or 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade depending on the school district's entering grade)	<p>3 doses of DTaP, DTP, DT, or Td vaccine, one given on or after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday</p> <p>3 doses of Polio vaccine</p> <p>3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine or 2 doses of adolescent vaccine if student is 11-15 years of age</p> <p>2 doses of MMR or MMRV vaccine, given on or after 12 months of age and separated by at least one month</p> <p>2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age. Written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian, or health care provider will be accepted. If the child has had varicella disease, they do not need any varicella shots.</p>
Students entering 7 <sup>th</sup> grade	<p>Must be current with the above vaccinations</p> <p>AND receive</p> <p>1 dose of Tdap (contain Pertussis booster)</p>
Students transferring from outside the state at any grade	<p>Must be immunized appropriately according to the grade entered.</p>

Source: Nebraska Immunization Program, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. . For additional information, call 402-471-6423.

The School Rules & Regulations are available on the internet: [http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/reg\\_t173.aspx](http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/reg_t173.aspx) (Title 173: Control of Communicable Diseases - Chapter 3; revised and implemented 2011)  
**Updated 01/26/2018**

## **Physical Examination Requirements**

Evidence of a physical examination by a qualified physician is required within six months prior to the entrance of the child into any Early Childhood Special Education classes, kindergarten and the seventh grade, or in the case of transfer from out of state to any other grade. The cost of such physical examination is to be borne by the parents or guardian of each child examined. A parent or guardian who objects may submit a written statement of refusal for his or her child. The statement will be kept with the student's records.

## **School Vision Evaluation**

A School Vision Evaluation **is required** for all children **within six months prior to entering** Nebraska schools for the first time (includes beginner grades including Kindergarteners, transfers, and other students new to Nebraska) [Nebraska Statute].

## **School Health Screening**

Students in Nebraska schools are required to be screened annually for vision, hearing, dental defects, height and weight, and BMI (body mass index) by qualified personnel. The Valentine Community Schools screening program also incorporates scoliosis screening for sixth through eighth grades. Students about whom health concerns are identified to the school nurse may also be screened. Parents are notified of any health concerns as they are identified. A child is not required to submit to school health screening if his or her parent or guardian provides school authorities with a statement signed by a physician, physician assistant, or an advanced practice registered nurse-nurse practitioner stating that the child has undergone the required screening within the last six months preceding the school's scheduled health screening. A child must submit to any required screening at school for which such a statement is not received.

## **Asthma-Severe Allergy Protocol**

Valentine Community Schools seeks to protect students and staff from exposure to allergens, preventing a life-threatening asthma attack or systemic allergic reaction. If a student or staff member experiences a **life-threatening** asthma attack or systemic allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) anytime during the school day in the school building the following protocol will be implemented.

The protocol requires 911 be called first. After that call is made, an Epi-Pen injection will be given and then albuterol is provided through a nebulizer. An Epi-Pen is a small pre-filled automatic injection device that resembles a highlighter. It is used to deliver epinephrine. Epinephrine is a medication that is used to bring quick relief by improving breathing and lung function. Albuterol is another medication that is used to bring breathing relief (commonly found in rescue inhalers). The nebulizer is a machine that mixes the albuterol with air to provide a fine mist for inhaling through a mask or mouthpiece.

The protocol steps are designed to provide quick, effective care in order to prevent death due to a severe asthma attack or anaphylaxis. Staff members have been trained to recognize signs and symptoms of a life-threatening breathing emergency and to properly administer the medications. The protocol is a standing medical order that has been signed by a local physician.

If you know that your child has asthma or a known allergy, it is **critically important** that you communicate this information to our school nurses. In rural attendance centers parents must also notify the classroom teacher. A school health form is an ideal place to provide this basic information, and you will receive a more detailed form to fill out if more information is needed. For each student with a known severe allergy or asthma, you must provide the school with:

- 1) Specific information about the condition
- 2) Instructions
- 3) Medications as directed by a physician, PA, or APRN

In the event that your student experiences a life-threatening asthma attack or systemic allergic reaction, we will defer to the specific documents and medications that you have provided. If you do not have medical documentation and instructions on file with the school for your student, we will defer to the regulatory protocol described above.

If, for whatever reason, you do not want your student to receive the life-saving emergency treatment under the protocol, you must file your written objection with the school.

## **ARTICLE 7 - DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO**

### **Section 1 - Drug-Free Schools**

It shall be the policy of Valentine Community Schools, in addition to standards of student conduct elsewhere adopted by board policy or administrative regulations, to absolutely prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs, tobacco or look alike drugs and/or paraphernalia, or alcohol on school premises or as a part of any of the school's activities. This shall include such unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs, tobacco or look alike drugs and/or paraphernalia, and alcohol by any student of the District during regular school hours or after school hours, at school sponsored activities on school premises, or at school sponsored activities off school premises.

The District has implemented regulations and practices to ensure compliance with the Federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act and all regulations and rules promulgated pursuant thereto. The District's safe and drug-free schools program is established in accordance with principles of effectiveness as required by law to respond to such harmful effects.

**Drug and Alcohol Use and Prevention** By this handbook, each student of the District is hereby provided a copy of the standards of conduct for student behavior in the District which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs, tobacco or look alike drugs and/or paraphernalia, or alcohol on school premises or as a part of any of the school's activities. Further, this District will have proper in-service orientation and training for all employed staff.

**Drug and Alcohol Education and Prevention Program of the District Pursuant to The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Laws and Regulations** All students are provided a comprehensive, age appropriate, developmentally based drug and alcohol education and prevention program. It shall be the policy of the District to require instruction concerning the adverse effects resulting from the use of illicit drugs and alcohol. Such instruction shall be designed by affected classroom teachers or as otherwise directed by the Board to be appropriate to the age of the student exposed to such instruction. One of the primary objectives shall be the prevention of illicit drug and alcohol use by students. It shall further be the policy of the District to encourage the use of outside resource personnel such as law enforcement officers, medical personnel, and experts on the subject of drug and alcohol abuse, so that its economic, social, educational, and physiological consequences may be made known to the students of the District.

It shall further be the policy of the District, through the instruction earlier herein referred to, as well as by information and consistent enforcement of the Board's policy pertaining to student conduct as it relates to the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol, that drug and alcohol abuse is wrong and is harmful both to the student and the District, and its educational programs.

**Drug and Alcohol Counseling, Rehabilitation and Re-entry Programs** Information concerning drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation, and reentry programs is available to any student from the

Guidance Counselor or other appropriate school personnel.

In the event of disciplinary proceedings against any student for any District policy pertaining to the prohibition against the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol, appropriate school personnel shall confer with any such student and his or her parents or guardian concerning available drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation, and reentry programs that appropriate school personnel shall consider to be of benefit to any such student and his or her parent or parents or guardian.

**Standards of Student Conduct Pertaining to the Unlawful Possession, Use, or Distribution of Illicit Drugs or Alcohol on School Premises or as a Part of Any of the School's Activities** In addition to standards of student conduct elsewhere adopted by board policy or administrative regulation to absolutely prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol on school premises or as a part of any of the school's activities. This shall include such unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by any student of the District during regular school hours or after school hours at school sponsored activities on school premises, at school sponsored activities off school premises.

Conduct prohibited at places and activities as herein above described shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Possession of any controlled substance, possession of which is prohibited by law.
2. Possession of any prescription drug in an unlawful fashion.
3. Possession of alcohol and/or tobacco or tobacco products on school premises or as a part of any of the school's activities.
4. Use of any illicit drug.
5. Distribution of any illicit drug.
6. Use of any drug in an unlawful fashion.
7. Distribution of any drug or controlled substance when such distribution is unlawful.
8. The possession, use, or distribution of alcohol.

It shall further be the policy of the district that violation of any of the above prohibited acts will result in disciplinary sanction being taken within the bounds of applicable law, up to and including short term suspension, long term suspension, expulsion, and referral to appropriate authorities for criminal prosecution.

#### **Drugs and Alcohol Prohibited - Standards of Conduct for Students and Employed Staff**

The manufacture, possession, selling, dispensing, use or being under the influence of alcohol or any alcoholic beverage or alcoholic liquor on school grounds, or during an educational function, or event off school grounds, or off school grounds if there is a substantial interference with school purposes, is prohibited.

The possession, selling, dispensing, use or being under the influence of any controlled substance or drug, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, any hallucinogen, any stimulant, or any depressant on school grounds, or during the educational function or event off school grounds, or off school grounds if there is a substantial interference with school purposes, is prohibited.

The possession, selling, dispensing, use or being under the influence of any abusable glue or aerosol paint or any other chemical substance for inhalation, including but not limited to lighter fluid, whiteout, and reproduction fluid, when such activity constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes on school grounds or during and educational function, or event off school grounds, is prohibited.

The possession, selling, dispensing or use of any look-alike drug or look-alike controlled substance when such activity constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes on school grounds or during an educational function, or event off school grounds, is prohibited.

Any prescription or nonprescription drug, medicine, vitamin or other chemical may not be taken unless authorized as stated in the next section on AUTHORIZED USE.

### **AUTHORIZED USE**

Any student whose parent or guardian requests that he or she be given any prescription or nonprescription medicine, drug, or vitamin shall provide signed permission by parent or physician.

### **Disciplinary Sanctions.**

1. Violation of this policy may result in suspension or expulsion. Prohibited substances will be confiscated and could be turned over to law enforcement authorities. The student may be referred for counseling or treatment. Parents or legal guardian will be notified.
2. If the student is observed to be violating this policy, the student will be escorted to the Principal/Superintendent's office immediately, or if not feasible, the Principal/ Superintendent will be notified. The student's parents or legal guardian will be requested to pick up the student. If it appears there is imminent danger to other students, school personnel, or students involved, the Principal/Superintendent, or such other personnel as authorized by the Principal/Superintendent, may have the student removed by authorized medical or law enforcement personnel.
3. Parents and students shall be given a copy of the standards of conduct and disciplinary sanctions required and shall be notified that compliance with the standards of conduct is mandatory.

**Intervention** The Valentine Community Schools District does not have the authority or responsibility to make medical or health determinations regarding chemical dependency. However, when observed behavior indicates that a problem exists which may affect the student's ability to learn or function in the educational climate or activity, the school then has the right and responsibility to refer the student for a formal chemical dependency diagnosis based on behavior observed by school staff. The school will issue a statement to all students and employed staff that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol is wrong and harmful. The school shall make available to students and employed staff information about any drug and alcohol counseling, and rehabilitation and reentry programs, which are available to students.

**Administration** The Administration of Valentine Community Schools is authorized to adopt such administrative rules, regulations or practices necessary to properly implement this policy. Such regulations, rules or practices may vary the procedures set forth herein to the extent necessary to fit the circumstances of an individual situation. Such rules, regulations and practices may include administrative forms, such as checklists to be used by staff to record observed behavior and to determine the proper plan of action.

**Safe and Drug-Free Schools—Parental Notice** Pursuant to the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act, if upon receipt of information regarding the content of safe and drug free school programs and activities other than classroom instruction, a parent who objects to the participation of their child in such programs and activities may notify the School District of such objection in writing. Upon receipt of such notice, the student will be withdrawn from the program or activity to which parental objection has been made. **Note: Written parent requests to have a student excused from testing, classroom instruction, and other school experiences may be granted when possible and educationally appropriate. Requests should be submitted to the school administration within a reasonable time prior to the testing, classroom instruction, or other school experience, and should be accompanied by a written explanation for the request. A plan for an acceptable alternative shall be approved by the admin-**

istration prior to, or as a part of, the granting of any parent request.

## **ARTICLE 8 - STUDENT RIGHTS, CONDUCT, RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **Section 1 - Student Conduct and Discipline Policies**

Good discipline originates in the home. The parent is the first teacher of a child and should help the child to develop good behavior habits and proper attitudes toward school. A parent should:

- Recognize that the student's discipline at school is the school's responsibility.
- Teach the child respect for law, authority, the rights of others, and for private and public property.
- Arrange for prompt and regular school attendance and comply with attendance rules and procedures.
- Work with the school in carrying out recommendations made in the best interest of the child.
- Talk with the child about school activities; show an active interest in report cards and progress.
- Valentine Community Schools feels it is important to maintain contact with parents concerning student behavior.

The common goal of students, parents, faculty and administration of Valentine Community Schools is to maintain a school atmosphere, which is conducive to learning. In order to achieve this, Valentine Community Schools will continue to review and distribute a set of reasonable and fair rules and policies.

### **VIOLATIONS OF THE VALENTINE COMMUNITY SCHOOL'S RULES AND POLICIES WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION.**

#### **Part 1: Forms of School Discipline**

**Short-Term Suspension** Students may be excluded by the Principal or his designee from school or any school function for a period of up to five school days (short-term suspension) on the following grounds:

Conduct constituting grounds for expulsion as hereinafter set forth; or,

Other violations of rules and standards of behavior adopted by the Valentine Community Schools Board of Education or the administrative or teaching staff of the school, which occur on or off school grounds, if such conduct interferes with school purposes or there is a nexus between such conduct and school.

*The following process will apply to short-term suspensions:*

The Principal or the Principal's designee shall make a reasonable investigation of the facts and circumstances. In addition, such short-term suspension will be made only after a determination that the suspension is necessary to help any student, to further school purposes, or to prevent an interference with school purposes.

Prior to commencement of the short-term suspension, the student will be given oral or written notice of the charges against the student. The student will be advised of what the student is accused of having done, an explanation of the evidence the authorities have, and be afforded an

opportunity to explain the student's version of the facts.

Within 24 hours or such additional time as is reasonably necessary following the suspension, the Principal or Administrator will send a written statement to the student, and the student's parent or guardian, describing the student's conduct, misconduct or violation of the rule or standard and the reasons for the action taken. An opportunity will be given to the student, and the student's parent or guardian, to have a conference with the Principal or Administrator ordering the short-term suspension before or at the time the student returns to school. The Principal or Administrator shall determine who in addition to the parent or guardian is to attend the conference.

Students must complete all schoolwork before returning to class and credit is given. If any of the work is not completed upon the student's return to school the student will not be allowed into class and may be sent home to finish all assignments.

**Long-Term Suspension** Students may be excluded by the Principal or the Principal's designee from school or any school function for a period of more than five school days but less than twenty school days on (long-term suspension) the conduct constituting grounds for expulsion as hereinafter set forth. The process for long-term suspension is hereinafter set forth.

### **Expulsion.**

**Meaning of Expulsion** Expulsion shall mean exclusion from attendance in all schools, grounds and activities of or within the system for a period not to exceed the remainder of the semester in which it took effect unless the misconduct occurred (a) within ten school days prior to the end of the first semester, in which case the expulsion shall remain in effect through the second semester, or (b) within ten school days prior to the end of the second semester, in which case the expulsion shall remain in effect for summer school and the first semester of the following school year, or (c) unless the expulsion is for conduct specified in these rules or in law as permitting or requiring a longer removal, in which case the expulsion shall remain in effect for the period specified therein. Such action may be modified or terminated by the school district at any time during the expulsion period.

**Summer Review** Any expulsion that will remain in effect during the first semester of the following school year will be automatically scheduled for review before the beginning of the school year. The review will be conducted by the hearing officer who conducted the initial expulsion hearing, or a hearing officer appointed by the Superintendent in the event no hearing was previously held or the initial hearing officer is no longer available or willing to serve, after the hearing officer has given notice of the review to the student and the student's parent or guardian. This review shall be limited to newly discovered evidence or evidence of changes in the student's circumstances occurring since the original hearing. This review may lead to a recommendation by the hearing officer that the student be readmitted for the upcoming school year. If the school board or board of education or a committee of such board took the final action to expel the student, the student may be readmitted only by action of the board. Otherwise the student may be readmitted by action of the Superintendent.

**Suspension of Enforcement of an Expulsion** Enforcement of an expulsion action may be suspended (i.e., "stayed") for a period of not more than one full semester in addition to the balance of the semester in which the expulsion takes effect, and as a condition of such suspended action, the student may be assigned to a school, class, or program and to such other consequences which the school district deems appropriate. In lieu of other authorized educational programs

to which the student may be assigned, such school, class, or program may be offered as a community-centered classroom and may include experiences for the student as an observer or aide in governmental functions, as an on-the-job trainee, and as a participant in specialized tutorial experiences or individually prescribed educational and counseling programs. Such programs shall include an individualized learning program to enable the student to continue academic work for credit toward graduation. At the conclusion of the designated period: (1) if the student has satisfactorily participated in the school, class, or program to which such student has been assigned the student shall be reinstated and permitted to return to the school of former attendance or to attend other programs offered by the district, and action to expunge the record of the expulsion action may be taken at the discretion of the Superintendent or his or her designee, or (2) if the student's conduct has been unsatisfactory, the expulsion action shall be enforced. The determination of whether the students' participation and conduct has been satisfactory or not shall be made by Principal or the Principal's designee.

**Students Subject to Juvenile or Court Probation** Prior to the readmission to school of any student who is less than nineteen years of age and who is subject to the supervision of a juvenile probation officer or an adult probation officer pursuant to the order of the District Court, Court, or Juvenile Court, who chooses to meet conditions of probation by attending school, and who has previously been expelled from school, the Principal or the Principal's designee shall meet with the student's probation officer and assist in developing conditions of probation that will provide specific guidelines for behavior and consequences for misbehavior at school (including conduct on school grounds and conduct during an educational function or event off school grounds) as well as educational objectives that must be achieved. If the guidelines, consequences, and objectives provided by the Principal or the Principal's designee are agreed to by the probation officer and the student, and the court permits the student to return to school under the agreed to conditions, the student may be permitted to return to school. The student may with proper consent, upon such return, be evaluated by the school for possible disabilities and may be referred for evaluation for possible placement in a special education program. The student may be expelled or otherwise disciplined for subsequent conduct as provided in Board policy and state statute.

**Other Forms of Student Discipline** Administrative and teaching personnel may also take actions regarding student behavior, other than removal of students from school, which are reasonably necessary to aid the student, further school purposes, or prevent interference with the educational process. Such actions may include, but need not be limited to, counseling of students, parent conferences, rearrangement of schedules, requirements that a student remain in school after regular hours to do additional work, restriction of extracurricular activity, or requirements that a student receive counseling, psychological evaluation, or psychiatric evaluation upon the written consent of a parent or guardian to such counseling or evaluation. The actions may also include in-school suspensions during the day. When in-school suspensions, after-school assignments, or other disciplinary measures are assigned, the student is responsible for complying with such disciplinary measures and a failure to serve such assigned discipline as directed will serve as grounds for further discipline, up to expulsion from school.

## **Part 2: Grounds for Student Discipline**

Students have an opportunity to learn by sharing some of the responsibility for creating a good learning environment. To help maintain a quality instructional environment, students at-

tending Valentine Community Schools are expected to refrain from the following conduct.

### **Grounds for Short-Term Suspension, Long-Term Suspension, Expulsion or Mandatory Reassignment**

The failure to refrain from the following conduct shall constitute grounds for long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment, subject to the procedural provisions of the Student Discipline Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-254 through 79-296, when such activity occurs on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event:

1. Use of violence, force, coercion, threat, intimidation, or similar conduct in a manner that constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes;
2. Willfully causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to property, stealing or attempting to steal property of substantial value, or repeated damage or theft involving property;
3. Causing or attempting to cause personal injury to a school employee, to a school volunteer, or to any student. Personal injury caused by accident, self-defense, or other action undertaken on the reasonable belief that it was necessary to protect some other person shall not constitute a violation of this subdivision;
4. Threatening or intimidating any student for the purpose of or with the intent of obtaining money or anything of value from such student;
5. Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon;
6. Engaging in the possession, selling, dispensing, or use of a controlled substance or an imitation controlled substance, as defined in section 28-401, a substance represented to be a controlled substance, or alcoholic liquor as defined in section 53-103 or being under the influence of a controlled substance or alcoholic liquor (note: the term “under the influence” for school purposes has a less strict meaning than it does under criminal law; for school purposes, the term means any level of impairment and includes even the odor of alcohol on the breath or person of a student; also, it includes being impaired by reason of the abuse of any material used as a stimulant);
7. Public indecency;
8. Engaging in bullying as defined in section 79-2,137 and/or hazing as defined by state law or school policy;
9. Sexually assaulting or attempting to sexually assault any person. In addition, if a complaint has been filed by a prosecutor in a court of competent jurisdiction alleging that the student has sexually assaulted or attempted to sexually assault any person, including sexual assaults or attempted sexual assaults, the student is subject to suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment regardless of where the conduct took place. For purposes of this subdivision, sexual assault shall mean sexual assault in the first degree and sexual assault in the second degree as defined in sections 28-319 and 28-320, as such sections now provide or may hereafter from time to time be amended;
10. Excessive Absenteeism or failure to attend assigned classes or assigned activities;

11. Tardiness to school, assigned classes or assigned activities;
12. The use of language, written or oral, or conduct, including gestures, which is profane or abusive to students or staff members. Profane or abusive language or conduct includes, but is not limited to, that which is commonly understood and intended to be derogatory toward a group or individual based upon race, gender, national origin, or religion;
13. Dressing in a manner which is dangerous to the student's health and safety, a danger to the health and safety of others, or which is disruptive, distractive or indecent to the extent that it interferes with the learning and educational process. (See Student Appearance Policy, pg. 34-35, for further information).
14. Willfully violating the behavioral expectations for students of Valentine Middle School.
15. Engaging in any other activity forbidden by the laws of the State of Nebraska which activity constitutes a danger to other students or interferes with school purposes; or
16. A repeated violation of any rules and standards validly established by the Board of Education or school officials if such violations constitute a substantial interference with school purposes.
17. In addition, a student who engages in the following conduct occurs on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event shall be expelled for the remainder of the school year in which it took effect if the misconduct occurs during the first semester, and if the expulsion for such conduct takes place during the second semester, the expulsion shall remain in effect for the first semester of the following school year, with the condition that such action may be modified or terminated by the school district during the expulsion period on such terms as the administration may establish:

- a. The knowing and intentional use of force in causing or attempting to cause personal injury to a school employee, school volunteer, or student, except if caused by accident, self-defense, or on the reasonable belief that the force used was necessary to protect some other person and the extent of force used was reasonably believed to be necessary, or,

- b. The knowing and intentional possession, use, or transmission of a dangerous weapon other than a firearm.

18. In addition, a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, shall be expelled from school for a period of not less than one year. The Superintendent may modify such one year expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis, provided that such modification is in writing. The term "to school" or "at school" means on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event.

Bringing a firearm or other dangerous weapon to school for any reason is discouraged; however, a student will not be subject to disciplinary action if the item is brought or possessed under the following conditions:

- a. Prior written permission to bring the firearm or other dangerous weapon to school is ob-

tained from the student's teacher, building administrator and parent.

b. The purpose of having the firearm or other dangerous weapon in school is for a legitimate educational function.

c. A plan for its transportation into and from the school, its storage while in the school building and how it will be displayed must be developed with the prior written approval by the teacher and building administrator. Such plan shall require that such item will be in the possession of an adult staff member at all times except for such limited time as is necessary to fulfill the educational function.

d. The firearm or other dangerous weapon shall be in an inoperable condition while it is on school grounds.

### **Additional Student Conduct Rules**

The following additional student conduct rules are established. Failure to comply with such rules is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, as further specified in these rules. These rules govern student conduct on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event.

#### **19. Student Appearance Policy**

Board Policy 5031 states: Any manner of dress, hair style, make up, or personal cleanliness, that constitutes a threat to safety, health, welfare, or morals of the student or others; that violates any statute; that interferes with the education process, or that school officials can reasonably predict will interfere with the education process; or that causes or may cause excessive maintenance problems in the school, may be grounds for corrective or disciplinary action. Valentine Community Schools understands and acknowledges that there are many different styles, fads, etc., in which people dress in today's society. Appearance is important to students both now and in their future. The dress code is in effect at all times school is in session and at any activities our school is taking part in anywhere - home or away. Any student that is dressed that offends any Staff member or Administrator will be addressed by Staff/Administration.

Items that can be addressed include:

- Billfold chains or other chains.
- Apparel referencing drugs (this includes alcohol) or tobacco or establishments referred to as bars, saloons, tobacco shops, etc.
- Apparel referencing anything sexual.
- Form-fitting clothing deemed inappropriate
- Clothing with improper holes; undergarments are not to be visible at any time and undergarments must be worn.
- Mesh shirts or sleeveless shirts and blouses drooping in the armpit area.
- Shirts must be of a length they can be tucked in.
- There must be clothing between the neck and shoulder area that covers any undergarment.

--Blouses, shorts, and skirts must be of proper length as determined by staff and administration.

--Hats, caps or any other type of head cover.

-- Students are required to have appropriate footwear on during school hours. No slippers.

--Visible temporary or permanent tattoos that are gang related, sexually suggestive, crude, vulgar, profane language, and/or depict tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs.

The presence of any apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook, or manner of grooming which by the nature of the articles color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute, which denotes membership to a gang will not be permitted. Such group's clothing may vary from school to school, and may change from year to year; therefore, it is the responsibility of the administration to determine appropriateness of clothing or accessories.

Consideration will be given students who wear special clothing or accessories required by religious beliefs, disability, or that conveys a particularized message protected by law.

Coaches, activity sponsors, and teachers may have additional dress requirements for students who are in special lab classes, participating in performing groups or representing the school as part of an extracurricular activity program.

On the first violation of Student Appearance Policy, the student may telephone his/her parents to request that proper apparel be brought to school for the student to change into. Students will not be permitted to leave school to change clothes or allowed to return to class until the change of clothes has occurred. Students will be counted tardy or absent from class during the time it takes to accomplish school appropriate dress or grooming. Should it not be possible for parents to bring a change of clothes, the student will change into PE clothes, or will remain in the office for the remainder of the day. Continual violations of the dress code will result in disciplinary actions following those outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. In the event the dress code violation is also determined to violate other student conduct rules (e.g. public indecency, insubordination, expression of profanity, and the like), the first violation may result in discipline, up to expulsion.

Should a student be uncertain as to whether his/her dress or method of grooming is consistent with the school's policy, he/she should stop by the building Administrative Office to review guidelines or contact the Principal directly for approval.

**20. Harassment, Bullying Policy and Dating Violence Policies** Students are prohibited from engaging in any form of bullying. "Bullying" means any ongoing pattern of physical, verbal, or electronic abuse on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose by a school employee or his or her designee, or at school-sponsored activities or school-sponsored athletic events. The disciplinary consequences for bullying will depend on the severity, frequency, duration, and effect of the behavior and may result in sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Students who believe they are being bullied should immediately inform a teacher or the building principal. (e.g., sexual harassment, sexting, cyber bullying, harassment of students with disabilities, race harassment, etc.). Dating violence, as that term is defined by Nebraska law, will not be tolerated by the school district. Students who engage in dating violence on school grounds, in a school vehicle or at a

school activity or that otherwise violates the Nebraska Student Discipline Act will receive consequences consistent with the Act and the district's student discipline policies. The school district shall provide dating violence training to staff deemed appropriate by the administration and in accordance with Nebraska law.

**21. Public Displays of Affection** Public displays of affection will not be tolerated on school property or at school activities. Such conduct includes: hugging, kissing or any other types of affection that would be considered inappropriate or an undue distraction to others. Students will face the following consequences if this type of behavior occurs.

- a. *1<sup>st</sup> Offense*: Student will be confronted and directed to cease.
- b. *2<sup>nd</sup> Offense*: Student will be confronted, directed to cease, and parents will be notified.
- c. *3<sup>rd</sup> Offense*: Students will be suspended from school for a minimum of 1 day, and parents and student will be required to meet with Administrator(s) and counselor.
- d. If this type of behavior continues, the student could face long-term suspension or expulsion.

**22. Rules for Attendance of School Activities**

Any student who has been absent during the school day should not attend any school activity that same day, unless prior approval has been given by the Principal.

No head cover (hats, hoods, etc.) allowed.

Students will sit in the Middle School assigned section, with the band, with their parents or guardian or with their coach and team if waiting to compete.

No running or loitering in the halls or concession area.

Belittling game officials or opponents and/or the throwing of any object will not be tolerated and may result in the person responsible being removed from the activity.

**23. Specific Rule Items** The following conduct may result in disciplinary action which, in repeated violations, may result in discipline up to and including expulsion:

**Class Work** - Students are expected to complete and submit class work on time. When a teacher keeps a student after school to complete class work, the student or teacher will try to notify parents. The school reserves the right to keep a student until 3:50 p.m.

**Cheating** - Students who cheat or help other students cheat will repeat the exam, paper, or assignment, receive a grade no higher than a 70%, receive a conduct report and will serve detention. Students learn by doing their own work.

**Rocks/Snowballs** - Throwing snowballs or rocks on school grounds at any time or under any circumstances is prohibited. School grounds are defined to include any territory within the school block, including the streets immediately surrounding the block.

**Fighting** - Fighting on school grounds at any time or under any circumstances is prohibited. School grounds are defined as above. Fighting that occurs while students are moving to and from school (off school grounds) will be reported to local law enforcement authorities.

**School Property** - School property and all other public property belong to the taxpayers, the parents. Any willful destruction or damage to school property will be repaired or replaced by those involved. Lockers and desks are school property and are subject to inspection at any time by school personnel who are authorized to remove any objectionable items.

**Weapons** - No weapons, including knives, air/spring guns, and laser pointers, will be allowed.

**Halls** - The halls are to be orderly and quiet at all times. Students should refrain from pushing, shoving, or any loud or unruly behavior. All school personnel shall have authority to discipline students who ignore this rule.

**Fire Alarm** - There may be an automatic three-day suspension from school and charges brought against any student who causes a false fire alarm. This is a very serious offense in that lives of students are at stake. All efforts will be made to insure the full punishment for any person committing this offense.

**Authorities** - A student shall comply with directions of teachers, student teachers, substitute teachers, teacher aides, principals, or other school personnel during any period of time when the student is properly under the authority of school personnel.

**Respect** - Students are expected to show respect to other students, teachers, school officials, and other employees.

**Language** - Students will not be allowed to use inappropriate language.

**Behavior** - Students shall not engage in any behavior that seriously interferes with class work or activities of the school.

**Tobacco, etc.** - The use or possession of tobacco, alcohol, or any other controlled substance is prohibited on school grounds and/ or at any school sponsored event.

**Theft** - Taking things belonging to the school, school personnel or other students is prohibited.

**Dress Code** - Students at Valentine Middle School take pride in their appearance and, therefore, are expected to adhere to the Student Appearance Code.

**Arrival** - Once a student arrives at school they are not permitted to return home for forgotten items. If they have forgotten an essential item they will be allowed to call home.

**Animals** - No animal of any kind is to be brought into a classroom, unless special approval has been granted by the classroom teacher.

**Candy/Food** – Eating candy or food maybe permitted only under the rules and regulations of the school (e.g., Badger Pause, classroom celebrations). Gum is allowed as long as it is not a distraction to learning environment (e.g., blowing bubbles, chomping, played with, etc) and the gum and wrappers are disposed of properly.

**Technology** - Students who commit major violations of the school's technology rules will be subject to suspension and/or expulsion.

**Show & Tell** - It is difficult to make a blanket policy on small items that students bring to school to show to their teacher and classmates. Students may bring those items if they serve a school purpose. However, it is the student's responsibility to bring and return these items safely.

The school or teacher cannot accept responsibility for such items becoming broken or stolen. If small items become classroom nuisances, they will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school year.

**Toys** - Students may not bring toys or other nuisance items to school.

**Bicycles** - Students riding bicycles, inline skates, roller blades, and/or scooters to school should park them in the racks provided upon arrival or stored in the student's locker. There is to be no riding on school grounds.

**Solicitation** - Students shall not solicit school personnel on school grounds for money making projects.

**Communication/Electronic Devices** - Portable communication/electronic devices such as iPods, iPads, Kindle, Kindle Fire, MP3 players, and cellular phones are to be turned off and placed in the student's locker during the regular school day. Students may not have communication/electronic devices on while they are in locker rooms or restrooms. If a student is found using their communication device or it is on, the matter will be addressed as follows: Communication devices will be confiscated by staff on all occasions and turned over to the office. First occurrence-the student will not get the device back until they serve a 30-minute detention and conduct report. Second occurrence-the student will serve a 30-minute detention, conduct report and the device will only be returned to a parent. Third occurrence-the device will only be returned to the parent-the student will be issued a suspension-length determined by cooperation-parent notification by mail. Any subsequent occurrences will result in a suspension of some kind. \*\*Some electronic devices may be allowed for educational purposes with the consent of the classroom teacher, principal, or superintendent.

**Lunchroom** -It is the school's desire to provide a safe and relaxing atmosphere during lunch where students can enjoy the company of their classmates; therefore, the following student expectations are necessary:

- Students will be orderly and quiet.
- Students will not throw food, wrappers, etc.
- Students will clean up their eating area before returning trays.
- Students will refrain from shoving, pushing, or tripping.
- Students will walk when entering or leaving the lunchroom.
- Students will refrain from any inappropriate or disruptive behavior.

**Study Hall** -

- Students should bring all of their homework and a book to read to study hall.
- There will be no more than four students allowed in the library at one time.
- Students who are on the down list may not go to the library or computer lab during Study Hall unless they have a written request from a teacher stating a specific need to do so.
- Students may use the computer lab or a laptop computer for class assignments, re-

search projects, and Internet usage related to class work. No games will be allowed. Study hall is for studying.

- Only one student at a time may leave Study Hall to use the restroom.
- Students may not study together unless the teacher/supervisor has given permission.
- Students will wait to be dismissed by the Study Hall teacher/supervisor when the dismissal bell rings.

### **Library/Media -**

1. Students may use the library to do reports or projects requiring library materials, to read magazines or library books. Other activities will be allowable as determined by the Media Specialist
2. If a student needs help or supplies, he/she may ask the librarian. Students are not allowed behind the circulation desk.
3. When students need to talk to someone, they must do so quietly. Never speak across the room to anyone.
4. Books may be checked out for two weeks and may be renewed for an additional two weeks. The date on the "Date Due" slip in the book indicates the date the book must be returned or renewed. Magazines may be checked out overnight.

### **Technology Center/Computer Labs -**

*Lab Schedule:* Students may use the technology labs during school hours when they are being monitored. Students who have a study hall or students being released from class as part of a class project related to computer usage may use the lab. Students who need to use technology labs before or after school may do so by signing up to do so. Sign-up sheets are available in the library. Changes as to lab availability beyond the normal school day will be announced.

*Lab Uses.* The technology labs will be open for the following purposes:

1. Research projects
2. Internet usage related to class work

*Lab Rules.*

1. No food or drink
2. Courtesy toward other users should be observed at all times
3. Clean up after yourself
4. No personal DVDs. CDs, zip disks, portable communication/electronic devices, game disks, or flash memory devices, external hard drives, digital cameras or digital video cameras will be allowed unless authorized by the superintendent, principal or classroom teacher.

*Lab Sign In.* All students will sign in when they come into a technology lab, with the exception of a teacher bringing an entire class to one of the labs for regular class instruction. Teachers desiring the use of a lab for this purpose will sign up in the library prior to use.

## **24. Student Internet and Computer Access**

**Policy and Rules for Acceptable Use of Computers and the Network** Valentine Community Schools will provide access to networked information resources for qualified individuals when such information is consistent with educational philosophy and goals of the district. The district supports research and educational use as well as collaboration with other individuals and groups. The Internet will provide a connection to this global community, promoting educational excellence.

The faculty will blend thoughtful use of network resources and the Internet throughout the curriculum, utilizing them to facilitate innovation and communication. By providing valuable electronic experiences, educators are building a community of lifelong learners.

To ensure quality use of district networks and the Internet, the following guidelines have been established:

**Training** Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA): students will be educated about Internet safety, appropriate online behavior that involves appropriate interactions on social networking websites, chat rooms, and cyber bullying awareness.

### **Board Policy 5037-Student Internet and Computer Access**

Students are expected to use computers and the Internet as an educational resource. The following procedures and guidelines govern the use of computers and the Internet at school.

#### **I. Student Expectations in the Use of the Internet**

##### **A. Acceptable Use**

1. Students may use the Internet to conduct research assigned by teachers.
2. Students may use the Internet to conduct research for classroom projects.
3. Students may use the Internet to gain access to information about current events.
4. Students may use the Internet to conduct research for school-related activities.
5. Students may use the Internet for appropriate educational purposes.

##### **B. Unacceptable Use**

1. Students shall not use school computers to gain access to material that is obscene, pornographic, harmful to minors, or otherwise inappropriate for educational uses.
2. Students shall not engage in any illegal or inappropriate activities on school computers, including the downloading and copying of copyrighted material.
3. Students shall not use electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, or other forms of direct electronic communications on school computers.
4. Students shall not use school computers to participate in on-line auctions, on-line gaming or mp3 sharing systems including, but not limited to Aimster or Freenet and the like.
5. Students shall not disclose personal information, such as their names, school, addresses, or telephone numbers outside the school network.
6. Students shall not use school computers for commercial advertising or political advocacy of any kind without the express written permission of the system administrator.
7. Students shall not publish web pages that purport to represent the school district or the work of

students at the school district without the express written permission of the system administrator.

8. Students shall not erase, rename or make unusable anyone else's computer files, programs or disks.

9. Students shall not share their passwords with fellow students, school volunteers or any other individuals, and shall not use, or try to discover, another user's password.

10. Students shall not copy, change or transfer any software or documentation provided by the school district, teachers or another student without permission from the system administrator.

11. Students shall not write, produce, generate, copy, propagate or attempt to introduce any computer code designed to self-replicate, damage, or otherwise hinder the performance of any computer's memory, file system, or software. Such software is often called, but is not limited to, a bug, virus, worm, or Trojan Horse.

12. Students shall not configure or troubleshoot computers, networks, printers or other associated equipment, except as directed by a teacher or the system administrator.

13. Students shall not take-home technology equipment (hardware or software) without permission of the system administrator.

14. Students shall not forge electronic mail messages or web pages.

## II. Enforcement

### A. Methods of Enforcement

1. The district monitors all Internet communications, Internet usage and patterns of Internet usage. Students have no right of privacy to any Internet communications or other electronic files. The computer system is owned by the school district. As with any school property, any electronic files on the system are subject to search and inspection at any time.

2. The school district uses a technology protection measure that blocks access to some Internet sites that are not in accordance with the policy of the school district. Standard use of the Internet utilizes a proxy server-based filter that screens for non-curriculum related pages.

3. Due to the nature of filtering technology, the filter may at times filter pages that are appropriate for student research. The system administrator may override the technology protection measure for the student to access a site with legitimate educational value that is wrongly blocked.

4. The school district staff will monitor students' use of the Internet through direct supervision and by monitoring Internet use history to ensure enforcement of the policy.

### B. Consequences for Violation of this Policy

1. Access to the school's computer system and to the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Any violation of school policy and rules may result in:

a. Loss of computer privileges;

b. Short-term suspension;

c. Long-term suspension or expulsion in accordance with the Nebraska Student Discipline Act; and

d. Other discipline as school administration and the school board deem appropriate.

2. Students who use school computer systems without permission and for non-school purposes may be guilty of a criminal violation and will be prosecuted.

A student who has had district network or Internet access privileges revoked may be issued a special account where that individual may be provided district network and/or Internet access by request of the classroom teacher. These accounts will only be available while the classroom instructor is in attendance.

**Valentine Community Schools will not be responsible for financial obligations by users of the districts**

network or Internet systems. The district will not accept responsibility for how students use knowledge of the Internet, nor the quality of information obtained. Any damages a user may suffer, including loss of data, will not be the responsibility of the district. All users assume full liability, legal, financial, or otherwise, for their actions. Users may encounter material which is controversial. This information may be considered inappropriate or offensive by the student, parents, or staff. However, on the Internet, it is impossible to control the content of the data. It is the user's responsibility to initiate access to appropriate materials. **\*\*Parent and student signatures required indicating agreement with policy.**

### **Part 3 - Reporting Student Law Violations**

- (1) Cases of law violations or suspected law violations by students will be reported to the police and to the student's parents or guardian as soon as possible.
- (2) When a Principal or other school official releases a minor student to a peace officer (e.g., police officer, sheriff, and all other persons with similar authority to make arrests) for the purpose of removing the minor from the school premises, the Principal or other school official shall take immediate steps to notify the parent, guardian, or responsible relative of the minor regarding the release of the minor to the officer and regarding the place to which the minor is reportedly being taken, except when a minor has been taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse, in which case the Principal or other school official shall provide the peace officer with the address and telephone number of the minor's parents or guardian.
- (3) In an effort to demonstrate that student behavior is always subject to possible legal sanctions regardless of where the behavior occurs it shall be the policy of the Valentine Community Schools to notify the proper legal authorities when a student engages in any of the following behaviors on school grounds or at a school sponsored event:
  - (a) Knowingly possessing illegal drugs or alcohol.
  - (b) Assault.
  - (c) Vandalism resulting in significant property damage.
  - (d) Theft of school or personal property of a significant nature.
  - (e) Automobile accident.
  - (f) Any other behavior which significantly threatens the health or safety of students, staff or other persons or which is required by law to be reported.

### **Part 4 - Due Process Procedure**

Procedures for Long-Term Suspension, Expulsion or Mandatory Reassignment: The following procedures shall be followed with regard to any long-term suspension, expulsion or mandatory reassignment.

1. The Principal shall prepare a written summary of the alleged violation and the evidence supporting the alleged violation with the Superintendent or his or her designee.
2. If the Principal determines that the student must be suspended immediately to prevent or substantially reduce the risk of (a) interference with an educational function or school purpose or (b) a personal injury to the student himself or herself, other students, school employees, or school volunteers, and a notice of intent to discipline the student by long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment is filed with the Superintendent or his or her designee, the student may be suspended by the Principal until the date the long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment takes effect if no hearing is requested or, if a hearing is requested, the date the hearing examiner makes the report of his or her findings and a recommendation of the action to be taken to the Superintendent.
3. The Principal or his or her designee shall serve by registered or certified mail or by personal ser-

vice the student and the student's parents or guardian with a written notice within two school days of the date of the decision to recommend long-term suspension or expulsion. Said notice shall include the following:

- (a) The rule or standard of conduct allegedly violated and the acts of the student alleged to constitute a cause for long-term suspension or expulsion including a summary of the evidence to be presented against the student as submitted by the Principal or assistant Principal.
  - (b) The penalties to which the student may be subjected and the penalty which the Principal, or his or her designee has recommended in the charge.
  - © A statement explaining the student's right to a hearing upon request on the specified charges.
  - (d) A description of the hearing procedures provided by these policies along with procedures for appealing any decision rendered at the hearing.
  - (e) A statement that the administrative representative, legal counsel for school, the student, the student's parents, or the student's representative or guardian shall have the right to examine the student's academic and disciplinary records and any affidavits to be used at the hearing concerning the alleged misconduct, and the right to know the identity of the witnesses to appear at the hearing and the substance of their testimony.
  - (f) A form or a request for hearing to be signed by such parties and delivered to the Principal or his or her designee in person or by registered or certified mail.
4. Nothing in this policy shall preclude the student, student's parents, guardian or representative from discussing and settling the matter with appropriate school personnel prior to the hearing stage.
  5. In the event that the Principal has not received a request for hearing within five school days following receipt of the written notice, the punishment recommended in the charge by the Principal, or his or her designee shall automatically go into effect.
  6. If a hearing is requested more than five school days following the actual receipt of the written notice, but not more than thirty calendar days after actual receipt, the student shall be entitled to a hearing but the punishment imposed may continue in effect pending final determination.
  7. If a request for hearing is not received within thirty calendar days following the mailing or delivery of the written notice, the student shall not be entitled to a hearing.
  8. In the event that a hearing is required to be provided, the Superintendent shall appoint a hearing officer.

#### **Hearing Procedure:**

1. **Hearing Officer** The hearing officer shall be any person designated by the Superintendent. The hearing officer shall be an individual who has had no involvement in the charge, will not be a witness at the hearing and who has not brought the charges against the student. It shall be the duty of the hearing officer to remain impartial throughout all deliberations. The hearing officer shall be available prior to any hearing held pursuant to this policy to answer any questions the administrative representative, the student, the student's parents, or guardian, may have regarding the nature and conduct of the hearing.
2. **Administrative Representative** The Principal may appoint an administrative representative to present the facts and evidence. Such administrative representative may be an attorney or may be represented by an attorney, but any such attorney shall not advise the hearing officer or parties who may review the proceedings as their counsel.

3. **Notice of Hearing** If a hearing is requested within five school days of receipt of the notice, the hearing officer shall, within two school days after being appointed, give written notice to the administrative representative, and the student, the student's parents or guardian of the time and place for the hearing. The hearing shall be scheduled within a period of five school days after it is requested. No hearing shall be held upon less than two school days' actual notice to the administrative representative, and the student, the student's parents, or guardian, except with the consent of all of the parties.
4. **Continuance** Upon written request of the student or the student's parents or guardian, the hearing officer shall have the discretionary authority to continue from time to time the hearing. In addition, the hearing officer may continue the hearing upon any good cause.
5. **Access to Records** The administrative representative, the student, the student's parent or guardian and the legal counsel of the student shall have the right to examine the records and affidavits and the statements of any witnesses in the possession of the Valentine Community Schools' Board of Education at any reasonable time prior to the hearing.
6. **Hearing Procedure**, The hearing shall be attended by the hearing officer, the student, the student's parents, or guardian, the student's representative if any, and the administrative representative. Witnesses shall be present only when they are giving information at the hearing or with the consent of both parties. The student may be excluded at the discretion of the hearing officer at times when the student's psychological evaluation or emotional problems are being discussed. The student or the student's parents or guardian or both may be represented by legal counsel. The hearing examiner may exclude anyone from the hearing when his/her actions substantially disrupt an orderly hearing. The formal rules of evidence shall not apply at the hearing. The administrative representative shall present to the hearing officer statements, in affidavit form, of any person having information about the student's conduct and the student's records, but not unless such statements and records have been made available to the student, the student's parents, guardian or representative prior to the hearing. The information contained in such records shall be explained and interpreted prior to or at the hearing to the student, parents or guardian, or representative at their request, by appropriate school personnel. The student, the student's parents, guardian, or representative, the administrative representative or the hearing officer may ask witnesses to testify at the hearing. Such testimony shall be under oath and the hearing officer shall be authorized to administer the oath. The student, parent, guardian, or representative, administrative representative, or the hearing officer shall have the right to question any witness giving information at the hearing, the student may testify in his/her own defense in which case he/she shall be subject to cross-examination nor will any conclusion be drawn therefrom. Any person giving evidence by written statement or in person at a hearing shall be given the same immunity from liability as a person testifying in a court case. A single hearing may be conducted for more than one student if in the discretion of the hearing examiner a single hearing is not likely to result in confusion or prejudice to the interest of any of the students involved. If during the conduct of such a hearing, the hearing examiner concludes that any of such student's interests will be substantially prejudiced by a group hearing, or that confusion is resulting, the hearing examiner may order a separate hearing for each or any of said students.
7. **Availability of Witnesses** The hearing officer will have the authority to subpoena any witnesses to the hearing and shall make reasonable efforts to assist in obtaining the attendance of any witnesses requested by the student, student's parents or guardian or their legal representative.
8. **Record** The proceedings of the hearing shall be recorded at the expense of the school district.
9. **Findings** Within a reasonable time after the conclusion of the hearing, the hearing officer shall

prepare and submit to the Superintendent of schools his/her written findings and recommendation as to disposition. This report shall explain, in terms of the needs of both the student and the school board, the reasons for the particular action recommended. Such recommendation may range from no action, through the entire field of counseling, to long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment.

10. **Review by Superintendent** The Superintendent of schools shall review the findings and recommendations of the hearing officer and in his/her discretion may also review any of the facts and evidence presented at the hearing and based upon such report and the facts shall determine the sanctions to be imposed. However, the Superintendent may not impose a more severe sanction than that imposed by the hearing officer.
11. **Notice of Determination** Written notice of the findings and recommendations of the hearing officer and the determination of the Superintendent of schools shall be made by certified registered mail or by personal delivery to the student, the student's parents or guardian. Upon receipt of such written notice by the student and/or parents and guardian, the determination of the Superintendent shall take immediate effect.
12. **Appeal to Board** The student, student's parents or guardian may, within seven school days following the receipt of the Superintendent's decision, submit to the Superintendent of schools a written request for a hearing before the Board of Education.
13. **Review by Board of Education** Upon receipt of the request for review of the Superintendent's determination, the Board of Education or a committee of not less than three members shall, within ten school days, hold a hearing on the matter. Such hearing shall be made on the record except that the board may admit new or additional evidence to avoid substantial threat of unfairness. Such new evidence shall be recorded. The Board of Education or committee thereof may withdraw to deliberate privately upon the record and new evidence. Any such deliberation shall be held in the presence only of board members in attendance at the appeal proceeding, but may be held in the presence of legal counsel who has not previously acted as the administrative representative in presenting the school's case before the hearing officer. If any questions arise during such deliberations which require additional evidence, the Board of Education or committee thereof may require the hearing to receive such evidence, subject to the right of all parties to be present. A record of any such new or additional evidence shall be made and shall be considered as a part of the record and based upon the evidence presented at the hearing before the hearing officer, and such new or additional evidence, the Board of Education or the committee shall make a final disposition of the matter. The board may alter the Superintendent's disposition of the case if it finds his/her decision to be too severe, but it may not impose a more severe sanction. A designated method of Board review shall be by posting on the schoolhouse door.
14. **Final Decision of Board of Education** The final decision of board shall be delivered to the student and parents or legal guardian of the student by personally delivering the same or by mailing the same by certified or registered mail.

## **ARTICLE 9 - EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **Section 1 - Extracurricular Activities**

Student participation in extracurricular activities has been linked to improved attendance, higher academic achievement, and greater student self-confidence and self-esteem. Valentine Community Schools provides students with the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive activities program that includes athletics, fine arts, and select clubs or organizations associated with academic areas.

Although the school district believes strongly in the value of student activities, participation in the activities program is a privilege, not a right. Students must obey the rules set out in the VCS Activity Handbook and any additional rules created by their coach or activity sponsor. This handbook is advisory and does not create a “contract” with parents, students, or staff. The administration reserves the right to make decisions and make rule revisions at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well-being of all students. The administration is responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook. If a situation or circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based upon all applicable school district policies, and state and federal statutes and regulations.

**Please read the VCS Activity Handbook carefully. Students and their parents are responsible for complying with all of the rules and procedures detailed in this booklet.**

**Parents must sign the acknowledgement and permission to participate form at the end of the Activity Handbook before their student will be permitted to participate in the activity programs of the district.**

The provisions in the handbook are subject to change at the sole discretion of the Board of Education. From time to time, you may receive updated information concerning changes in the handbook. These updates should be kept within the handbook so that it is up to date. If you have any questions regarding this handbook, please contact the Superintendent for assistance.

## **Section 2 - Student Fees Policy**

The school district shall provide free instruction in accordance with the Nebraska State Constitution and the Nebraska statutes. The district also provides activities, programs, and services that extend beyond the minimum level of constitutionally required free instruction. Under the Public Elementary and Secondary Student Fee Authorization Act, the district is permitted to charge students fees for these activities or to require students to provide specialized equipment and attire for certain purposes. This policy is subject to further interpretation or guidance by administrative or board regulations. Students are encouraged to contact their building administration, their teachers or their coaches, and sponsors for further specifics.

### **A. Definitions:**

1. “Students” means students, their parents, guardians or other legal representatives.
2. “Extracurricular activities” means student activities or organizations that (1) are supervised or administered by the district; (2) do not count toward graduation or advancement between grades; and (3) are not otherwise required by the district.
3. “Post-secondary education costs” means tuition and other fees associated with obtaining credit from a post-secondary educational institution.

### **B. Listing of Fees Charged by this District**

Guidelines for Clothing Required for Specified Courses and Activities. Students are responsible for complying with the district’s grooming and attire guidelines and for furnishing all clothing required for any special programs, courses, or activities in which they participate. The teacher, coach, or sponsor of the activity will provide students with written guidelines that detail any special clothing requirements and explain why the special clothing is required for the specific program, course, or activity.

### **Safety Equipment and Attire**

The district will provide students with all safety equipment and attire that is required by law. Building administrators will assure that (a) such equipment is available in the appropriate classes and areas of the

school buildings (b) teachers are directed to instruct students in the use of such devices, and (c) students use the devices as required. Students are responsible for using the devices safely and as instructed.

**Personal or Consumable Items**

The district will provide students with personal or consumable items for Participation in courses and activities including, but not limited to, pencils, paper, pens, and notebooks. Students who wish to supply their own personal or consumable items may do so, as long as those items comply with the requirements of the district. The district will provide students with facilities, equipment, materials, and supplies, including books. Students are responsible for the careful and appropriate use of such property. Students will be charged for damage to school property caused by students and will be held responsible for the reasonable replacement cost of any school property that they lose, damage, or destroy.

**Materials Required for Course Projects**

The district will provide students with the materials necessary to complete all curricular projects. In courses where students produce a project that requires more than minimal cost for materials, the finished project will remain the property of the district unless the students either furnish or pay for the reasonable cost of materials required for the course project.

**Extracurricular Activities**

The district may charge students a fee to participate in extracurricular activities to cover the district’s reasonable costs in offering such activities. The district may require students to furnish specialized equipment and clothing that is required for participation in extracurricular activities, or may charge a reasonable fee for the use of district-owned equipment or attire. The coach or sponsor will provide a list of the fees charged. The guidelines will explain the reasons that fees, equipment and/or clothing are required for participation for the activity.

The following list details the maximum dollar amount of all extracurricular activities fees and specifications for any equipment or attire required for participation in extracurricular activities:

Middle School Activity Cards      Student -\$15    Adult-\$20    Family-\$55

(Students must purchase uniforms and shoes selected by the sponsor and/or student group. The maximum dollar amount charged by the school district for these will be \$100.00)

Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Wrestling, Track, and Cross Country – Students must provide their own shoes and undergarments.

**Post-Secondary Education Costs**

Some students enroll in postsecondary courses while still enrolled in the district’s high school. As a general rule, students must pay all costs associated with such post-secondary courses. However, for a course in which student received high school credit or a course being taken as a part of an accelerated or differentiated curriculum program, the district shall offer the course without charge for tuition, transportation, books or other fees. Students who chose to apply for post secondary education credit for these courses must pay tuition and all other fees associated with obtaining credits from a post secondary educational institution.

**Transportation Costs**

The district will charge students reasonable fees for transportation services provided by the district to the extent permitted by federal and state statutes and regulations.

**Copies of Student Files or Records**

The district will charge a fee for making copies of a student’s files or records for the parents or guardians of such students. The Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee shall establish a schedule of student records fees. Parents of the students have the right to inspect and review the student’s files or rec-

ords without a payment of a fee, and the district shall not charge a fee to search for or retrieve any student's files or records.

The district will charge \$0.25 per page for reproduction of student records.

### **Charges for Food Consumed by Students**

The district will charge for items that students purchase from the district's breakfast and lunch programs. The fees charged for these items will be set according to applicable federal and state statutes and regulations. The district will charge students for the cost of food, beverages, and the like that student purchase from a school store, vending machine, booster club, or similar sources. Students may be required to bring money or food for field trip lunches and similar activities.

Charges for Breakfast and Lunch are as follow:

Breakfast	Adult	\$2.10
	High School Regular priced	\$1.65 per meal
	Middle and Elementary Regular priced	\$1.65 per meal
	Extra Breakfast Entrée	\$1.10 per entrée
Lunch	Reduced	\$0.30 per meal
	Adult	\$3.60
	Adult Boat-Fruit/Vegie Bar	\$1.60
	High School Regular	\$2.95 per meal
	Middle Regular priced	\$2.95 per meal
	Elementary Regular priced	\$2.85 per meal
	Extra Entrée	\$1.60 per entrée
	Extra Branded Pizza (HS & MS only)	\$1.80 per entrée
	Reduced	\$0.45 per meal
	Extra 8 oz juice (MS only)	\$0.55
Extra Milk	\$0.50	
Special Milk	\$0.50	

### **Charges for Musical Extra curricular Activities**

Students who qualify for fee waivers under this policy will be provided, at no charge, the use of a musical instrument in optional courses that are not extracurricular. For musical extracurricular activities, the school district will require students to provide the following:

**Band** – Students must provide their own instrument and marching band shoes which must be white & rubber soles.

### **WAIVER POLICY**

Students who qualify for free and reduced priced lunches under United States Department of Agriculture child nutrition programs shall be provided a fee waiver or be provided the necessary materials or equipment without charge for (1) participation in extracurricular activities, (2) materials for course projects, and (3) the use of a musical instrument in optional music courses that are not extracurricular activities. Actual participation in the free or reduced-price lunch program is not required to qualify for the waiver provided in this section. The district is not obligated to provide any particular type or quality of equipment or other materials to eligible students. Students who wish to be considered for waiver of a particular fee must submit a completed fee waiver application to their building administrator.

### **POLICY DISTRIBUTION**

This policy will be published on the district's website.

## **VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEFRAY COSTS**

The district will, when appropriate, request donations of money, materials, equipment or attire from parents, guardians, and other members of the community to defray costs of providing certain services and activities to students. These requests are not requirements and staff members of the district are directed to clearly communicate that fact to students, parents, and patrons.

### **STUDENT FEE FUND**

The school board hereby established a Student Fee Fund. The Student Fee Fund shall be a separate school district fund that will not be funded by tax revenue, and that will serve as a depository for all monies collected from students for (1) participation in extracurricular activities, (2) post-secondary education costs, and (3) summer school and or night courses. Monies in the Student Fee Fund shall be expended only for the purpose for which they were collected from students.

## **ARTICLE 10 - GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Section 1 - Balloon and Flower Deliveries to School**

It is the policy of the Middle School to accept balloon and flower deliveries for students any time during the school day, however, students will leave these items in the school office until 3:00 p.m. at which time they may take them home with them.

### **Section 2 - Change of Address, Telephone Number, and Email**

Any change of mailing, physical address, email of the student/parent or of telephone number where a parent or guardian may be reached during the day should be immediately reported to the Middle School office. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian to provide the school with the name and telephone number of an emergency contact person for their child in the event that the school is unable to reach the parent(s)/guardian when a student is ill.

### **Section 3 - Enrolling In School**

Basic requirements for new student enrollment:

1. Proof of residency in school district
2. A certified copy of the student's birth certificate\*, or other reliable proof of the student's identity and age
3. Copy of immunization records, physical examination, and a vision examination (see Health/Safety).
4. Complete the enrollment form, including ethnicity and race. Please note that the district must report ethnicity and race for each student.

Student records and transcripts will be requested from the student's former school by Valentine Middle School based upon information provided by the parent/guardian of the student.

### **Birth Certificate Requirements**

State law requires that a certified copy of a student's birth certificate be used when enrolling a new student in school. If your child is registering with Valentine Community Schools for the first time, you may obtain this document from the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the state in which your child was born. Assistance in obtaining birth certificates may be obtained from Health Records Management, P.O. Box 95065, Lincoln, NE 68509-5065. There is a fee per certificate. *Please note: The document parents receive from the hospital looks like a birth certificate, but it is not a certified copy. A certified copy is one provided by the State in which the student was born and signed by the Director of Vital Statistics.*

If a birth certificate is unavailable, other reliable proof of a student's identity may be used. These

documents could include naturalization or immigration documents showing date of birth or official hospital birth records, a passport, or a translation of a birth certificate from another country. The documents must be accompanied by an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate.

#### **Section 4 - School Breakfast and Lunch Programs**

##### **3011 - School Meal Program and Meal Charges**

**Meal Program.** The school district will make a school meal program available to students where feasible. The cost of the program will be determined by the board of education so as to make the program as nearly self-supporting as possible. With board approval, the district may contract with a private company or corporation for the management and/or provision of the program.

The district will notify the families with children attending school of the current guidelines for free or reduced-price school meals. A copy of the complete regulations and procedures regarding reduced-price and free meals shall be available in the office of the superintendent.

**Meal Charge Policy.** The district will notify students and their families of the policy for **Charged Meals**, meaning meals received by a student when the student does not have money in hand or in his or her food account. This policy applies to students who receive meals at the free, reduced, or full rates.

Notice of this policy must be provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households that transfer to the school during the school year. Notice may be provided through the student handbook, student registration materials, online portal used to access student accounts, direct mailing or e-mail, newsletter, the district website, and/or any other appropriate means. Notice of this policy will also be provided all school staff responsible for the enforcement of it, including food service professionals responsible for collecting payment for meals at the point of service, staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances, and other staff involved in enforcing any aspect of this policy.

The district's policy on charged meals is if a student has no funds available to pay for a meal, the student will be permitted to charge up to five meals. Thereafter, if a student has no funds available to pay for a meal, no food will be provided.

Students who qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from other food purchases. School staff may prohibit any students from charging a la carte or extra items if they do not have cash in hand or their account has a negative balance.

If a student repeatedly lacks funds to purchase a meal, has not brought a meal from home, and is not enrolled in a free meal program, the district will use its resources and contacts to protect the health and safety of the student. Failure or refusal of parents or guardians to provide meals for students may require mandatory reporting to child protection agencies as required by law.

##### **Collection of Delinquent Meal Charge Debt**

The school district is required to make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges. The building principal or his or her designee will contact households about unpaid meal charges and notify them again of the availability of the free and reduced meal program and/or establish payment plans and due dates by telephone, e-mail, or other written or oral communication. If these collection efforts are unsuccessful, the school district may pursue any other methods to collect delinquent debt as allowed by law.

Collection efforts may continue into a new school year.

In the event that the Nebraska Department of Education develops a state-level meal charge policy, it shall supersede that portion of this policy.

Meals are prepaid. Sufficient money for the purchase of seconds and additional milk/juice must be deposited/available in the family account prior to purchase. Parents or guardians will be notified by the

school's automated phone system and/or Principal's designee when a student's account falls below \$5.00. **Parents who wish to deny the use of their cell phone for the automated phone system must notify the office in writing by September 1<sup>st</sup>.**

Free and reduced-price meals are available to families who qualify after completing the necessary application.

Students may bring a sack or cold lunch to school if they prefer. Milk can be purchased to accompany these meals. These milks may be paid for in cash or deducted from the student's family account. Pop (soft drinks) is not allowed in the school lunchroom. Do not include this in sack or cold lunches from home.

Food items may not be ordered for delivery from local businesses to students for consumption in the lunchroom during lunch hours, unless a school-wide variation has been announced by the building Principal. Food items from local businesses may be packed in a student cooler for consumption during lunch.

Menus will be published in the local newspapers and announced on local radio stations. Monthly menus can also be found on the school website at [www.valentinecommunityschools.org](http://www.valentinecommunityschools.org) by clicking on the *Lunch* icon.

*The school lunch provider conducts an annual survey of grades 4-12 concerning their opinions on the school lunch program. The survey is available for parent review upon request.*

## **Section 5 - Parent Involvement Valentine Middle School**

Valentine Middle School welcomes and support parent involvement. A student's education is a joint partnership. Parents and teachers should work closely together to ensure student success. Teachers are encouraged to involve parents in some way during the school year.

**Parents have many additional opportunities for effective parental involvement at Valentine Middle School:**

August Middle School Orientation, an opportunity for students and their families to meet the student's teacher and become oriented to the school

Valentine Middle School Handbook: students and parents/guardians read through it together and verify that they have read and understand the policies and procedures of the school

Welcome Letter, sent by the school principal informing students of opportunities and a beginning of the year calendar for Valentine Middle School

Middle School Assignment Notebook, distributed to every student for student/parent/teacher communication

Parents have opportunities to visit classroom, assist with special projects, and other class events

Parent Newsletter, sent home monthly to inform parents/guardians on how they can help their student with academics and behavioral concerns

Parents are informed of Statewide Parent Conference

Parents receive weekly reports in mail or by accessing school website, quarterly report cards, annual individual Nebraska State Accountability results, individual NWEA MAP results, and an annual Valentine Community Schools Report Card

Student Assistance Team, 504, and Special Education IEP processes involve parents/guardians

Parent/student/teacher conferences are held in the fall and spring in conjunction with student Goal Setting

Informal, as-needed parent-teacher communication is encouraged

Parent Surveys are conducted

Parents/guardians are encouraged to attend student activities: band/choir performances, intramurals, sports, and school activities (ex: veterans' programs, Badger Pause, community service, TeamMates)

### **What Parents Can Do to Help Their Children Learn**

Start each day on a positive note; a calm beginning at home makes the school day much better.

Encourage your child to have a good breakfast and lunch. Make certain that your child sleeps at least eight hours each night.

Have a quiet area where your child may do homework. Ensure that he/she has the materials they need to complete class work. Set aside a special place to put schoolwork or whatever is brought home.

Stress organizational skills by reinforcing the use of their assignment notebook and having him/her gather any books, assignments, instruments, uniforms, etc. needed for the next school day the night before.

Work at home with skills taught at school.

Stress the importance of attendance and being on time for school and classes. If your child is ill, home is the best place; otherwise, your child needs to take advantage of every school day.

Encourage positive conversation about your child's school experiences and respect for your child's teachers. Listen attentively to what your child has to say.

Keep the lines of communication open between you and your child's teachers. Inform the counselor or principal of any family situation which could influence your child's behavior. Also, if he/she seems reluctant to go to school, let the counselor or principal know so that together you can find the reason.

Encourage reading for pleasure.

Praise your child each day for something he/she has done.

Parents are also encouraged to get involved in the local Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) chapter to learn more about volunteer opportunities that benefit our school. As a national organization, the primary objectives of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) are to promote the overall well-being of children and youth in the home, school and community, and to encourage a cooperative spirit of parent and public involvement in our public schools. Since its inception in 1994, the Valentine PTA has worked toward these goals by sponsoring a school "Spirit Days" each month, coordinating parent involvement in classrooms for school parties and other volunteer activities at both the elementary and middle school levels, and organizing and sponsoring fun and educational community events. Past events have included hands on science and art activity fairs, bike safety rodeos, book fairs, ice cream socials at the beginning of each school year, special guest speakers on timely topics for both students and parents, and operating a monthly store at which students who participate in the Accelerated Reading program may purchase items with reading points earned. This organization meets monthly during the school year at either the elementary or middle school.

### **Section 6 - Student Pictures, Records, and Work**

**Pictures** Individual student pictures are taken by a professional photographer in the fall of each school year and are available for purchase. These photographs are also included in the student's school records.

**Records** School records of all enrolled pupils are confidential. No school information (grades, health data, family information, psychological information, free meal application, etc.) shall be given to any person except those directly involved in teaching the students. A written permission form from the parents is required before any records may be given to any outside persons or organizations. Nebraska

School Laws will be followed concerning confidentiality of school records.

**Student Work** Valentine Community Schools may display the products or results of students' school related academic, athletic, musical, and/or art work in public places including but not limited to school buildings and functions, public places in the community, school, local, state, and national publications, on web pages produced and operated by Valentine Community Schools and other forms of media. Student photographs or other likeness and name may be displayed/published to promote student recognition or community involvement. **Parents who wish to deny this authorization must notify the office in writing by September 1<sup>st</sup>.**

## ARTICLE 11 - STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS

### Section 1 - Notice of Nondiscrimination

Valentine Community School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, marital status, disability, or age or in admission or access to, or treatment of employment or educational programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning Valentine Community School's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504 is directed to contact Superintendent Jamie Isom, in writing at 431 North Green Street, Valentine, Nebraska or by telephone at (402) 376-1780. Any person may also contact the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, in writing at 8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037, Kansas City, Missouri 64114-3302 or by telephone at (816) 268-0550, regarding compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504.

### Section 2 - Designation of Coordinator(s)

Any person having inquiries concerning this district's compliance with anti-discrimination laws or policies or other programs should contact or notify the following person(s) who are designated as the coordinator for such laws, policies or programs:

Jamie S. Isom, Superintendent  
Valentine Community Schools  
431 N. Green Street  
Valentine, NE 69201  
Telephone: 402-376-1780

<b>Law, Policy or Program</b>	<b>Issue or Concern</b>	<b>Coordinator</b>
Title VI	Discrimination or harassment based on race, color, or national origin; harassment	Superintendent Jamie S. Isom
Title IX	Discrimination or harassment based on sex; gender equity	Superintendent Jamie S. Isom
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA)	Discrimination, harassment or reasonable accommodations of persons with disabilities	Superintendent Jamie S. Isom
Homeless student laws	Children who are homeless	Superintendent Jamie S. Isom
Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities	Safe and drug free schools	Superintendent Jamie S. Isom

Parents, employees, and students who do not feel that their complaints regarding Title IX, Title VI, and Section 504 have met with resolution at the local level, they may appeal their grievances to the regional Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. This would be their final opportunity for resolution. The address for the Office of Civil Rights in this area is

U. S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037  
Kansas City, MO 64114  
TELEPHONE: 816-268-0550  
FAX: 816-823-1404; TDD: 800-437-083

### **Section 3 - Antidiscrimination and Harassment Policy**

**Elimination of Discrimination** The Valentine Community Schools hereby gives this statement of compliance and intent to comply with all state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination or harassment and requiring accommodations. This school district intends to take necessary measures to assure compliance with such laws against any prohibited form of discrimination or harassment or which require accommodations.

#### **Preventing Harassment and Discrimination.**

**Purpose** Valentine Community Schools is committed to offering employment and educational opportunity to its employees and students in a climate free of discrimination. Accordingly, unlawful discrimination or harassment of any kind by administrators, teachers, coworkers, students or other persons is prohibited. In addition, the Valentine Community Schools will try to protect employees and students from reported discrimination or harassment by non-employees or others in the work place and educational environment.

For purposes of this policy, discrimination or harassment based on a person's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age is prohibited. The following are general definitions of what might constitute prohibited harassment.

In general, ethnic or racial slurs or other verbal or physical conduct relating to a person's race, color, religion, disability or national origin constitute harassment when they unreasonably interfere with the person's work performance or create an intimidating work, instructional or educational environment.

Age harassment (40 years of age and higher) has been defined by federal regulations as a form of age discrimination. It can consist of demeaning jokes, insults or intimidation based on a person's age.

Sexual harassment is defined by federal and state regulations as a form of sex discrimination. It can consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature by supervisors or others in the work place, classroom or educational environment.

Sexual harassment may exist when:

Submission to such conduct is either an explicit or implicit term and condition of employment or of participation and enjoyment of the school's programs and activities;

Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used or threatened as a basis for employment related decisions, such as promotion, performance, evaluation, pay adjustment, discipline, work assignment, etc., or school program or activity decisions, such as admission, credits, grades, school assignments or playing time.

The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, classroom or educational environment.

Sexual harassment may include explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented "kidding" or "teasing", "practical jokes", jokes about gender-specific traits, foul or obscene language or gestures, displays of foul or obscene printed or visual material, and physical contact, such as patting, pinching or brushing against another's body.

## **Complaint and Grievance Procedures:**

Employees or students should initially report all instances of discrimination or harassment to their immediate supervisor or classroom teacher. However, if the employee or student is uncomfortable in presenting the problem to the supervisor or teacher, or if the supervisor or teacher is the problem, the employee or student is encouraged to go to the next level of supervision. In the case of a student, the Principal would be the next or alternative person to contact.

If the employee or student's complaint is not resolved to his or her satisfaction within five (5) to ten (10) calendar days, or if the discrimination or harassment continues, or if as a student, you feel you need immediate help for any reason, please report your complaint to the Superintendent of Valentine Community Schools. If a satisfactory arrangement cannot be obtained through the Superintendent of Valentine Community Schools, the complaint may be processed to the Board of Education.

The supervisor, teacher or the Superintendent of Valentine Community Schools will thoroughly investigate all complaints. These situations will be treated with the utmost confidence, consistent with resolution of the problem. Based on the results of the investigation, appropriate corrective action, up to and including discharge of offending employees, and disciplinary action up to expulsion against a harassing student, may be taken. Under no circumstances will any threats or retaliation be permitted to be made against an employee or student for alleging in good faith a violation of this policy.

NOTE: In no way is the grievance procedure meant to lessen the legal authority of the school officials to deal with disruptive students. Rather, it is a means of inviting student communication on matters of concern to the school and its students, short of having to engage in disruptive behavior in order to be noticed and to have grievance redressed. A grievance form may be obtained at the principal's office.

## **Section 4 - Notice to Parents of Rights Afforded by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

The following is a description of the rights granted by federal law to qualifying students with disabilities. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning the decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions. You have the right to:

1. Have your child take part in, and receive benefits from, public education programs without discrimination because of his/her disabling condition.
2. Have the school district advise you of your rights under federal law.
3. Receive notice with respect to Section 504 identification, evaluation and/or placement of your child.
4. Have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate. It also includes the right to have the school district make reasonable accommodations to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities.
5. Have your child educated in facilities and receive services which are comparable to those provided to nondisabled students.
6. Have your child receive exceptional education and related services if he/she is found to be eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 USC Chapter 33, PL 101-4761).
7. Have an evaluation, educational recommendation and placement decision developed by a team of persons who are knowledgeable of the student, the assessment data and any placement options.
8. Have transportation provided to and from an alternative placement setting (if the setting is a program not operated by the district) at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student were placed in a program operated by the district.

9. Have your child be given an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the district.
10. Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's Section 504 identification, evaluation educational program and placement.
11. Obtain copies of educational records at a reasonable cost unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records.
12. Obtain a response from the school district to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of your child's records.
13. Request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe that they are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child. If the school district refuses this request for amendment, it shall notify you of your right to an impartial hearing.
14. Request mediation or file a grievance in accordance with the school district's Section 504 Grievance Procedures.
15. Request an impartial hearing regarding the Section 504 identification, evaluation or placement of your child. You and the student may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you.
16. File a formal complaint with the U.S. Department of Education.

### **Section 5 - Notification of Rights Under FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school district to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education

record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the district discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

#### **NOTICE CONCERNING DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The district may disclose directory information. The types of personally identifiable information that the district has designated as directory information are as follows: student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date of and place of birth, major fields of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status (e.g., undergraduate or graduate, full-time or part-time), participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and most recent previous educational agency or institution attended. A parent or eligible student has the right to refuse to let the district designate any or all of those types of information about the student as directory information. The period of time within which a parent or eligible student has to notify the district in writing that he or she does not want any or all of those types of information about the student designated as directory information is as follows: two weeks from the time this information is first received. The district may disclose information about former students without meeting the conditions in this section.

#### **ADDITIONAL NOTICE CONCERNING DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The district's policy is for education records to be kept confidential except as permitted by the FERPA law, and the district does not approve any practice which involves an unauthorized disclosure of education records. In some courses student work may be displayed or made available to others. Also, some teachers may have persons other than the teacher or school staff, such as volunteers or fellow students, assist with the task of grading student work and returning graded work to students. The district does not either approve or disapprove such teaching practices, and designates such student work as directory information and as non-education records. Each parent and eligible student shall be presumed to have accepted this designation in the absence of the parent or eligible student giving notification to the district in writing in the manner set forth above pertaining to the designation of directory information. Consent will be presumed to have been given in the absence of such a notification from the parent or eligible student.

#### **Section 6 - Notice Concerning Disclosure of Student Recruiting Information**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires Valentine Community Schools to provide military recruiters and institutions of higher education access to secondary school students' names, addresses, and telephone listings. Parents and secondary students have the right to request that Valentine Community Schools not provide this information (i.e., not provide the student's name, address, and telephone listing) to military recruiters or institutions of higher education, without their prior written parental consent. Valentine Community Schools will comply with any such request.

#### **Section 7 - Notice Concerning Staff Qualifications**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 gives parents/guardians the right to get information about the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers. Upon request, Valentine Community

Schools will give parents/guardians the following information about their child's classroom teacher:

1. Whether the teacher has met State qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
2. Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or provisional teaching certificate.
3. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher. You may also get information about other graduate certification or degrees held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree. We will also, upon request, tell parents/guardians whether their child is being provided services by a paraprofessional and, if so, the qualifications of the paraprofessional. The request for information should be made to an administrator in your child's school building. The information will be provided to you in a timely manner. Finally, Valentine Community Schools will give timely notice to you if your child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet the requirements of the Act.

### **Section 8 - Student Privacy Protection Policy**

It is the policy of Valentine Community Schools to develop and implement policies, which protect the privacy of students in accordance with applicable laws. The District's policies in this regard include the following:

**Right of Parents to Inspect Surveys Funded or Administered by the United States Department of Education or Third Parties** Parents shall have the right to inspect, upon the parent's request, a survey created by and administered by either the United States Department of Education or a third party (a group or person other than the District) before the survey is administered or distributed by the school to the parent's child.

**Protection of Student Privacy in Regard to Surveys of Matters Deemed to be Sensitive** The District will require, for any survey of students which contain one or more matters deemed to be sensitive (see section headed "Definition of Surveys of Matters Deemed to be Sensitive"), that suitable arrangements be made to protect student privacy (that is, the name or other identifying information about a particular student). For such surveys, the District will also follow the procedures set forth in the section entitled: "Notification of and Right to Opt Out of Specific Events."

**Right of Parents to Inspect Instructional Materials** Parents shall have the right to inspect, upon reasonable request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for their child. Reasonable requests for inspection of instructional materials shall be granted within a reasonable period of time after the request is received. Parents shall not have the right to access academic tests or academic assessments, as such are not within the meaning of the term "instructional materials" for purposes of this policy. The procedures for making and granting a request to inspect instructional materials are as follows: the parent shall make the request, with reasonable specificity, directly to the building principal. The building principal, within five (5) school days, shall consult with the teacher or other educator responsible for the curriculum materials. In the event the request can be accommodated, the building principal shall make the materials available for inspection or review by the parent, at such reasonable times and place as will not interfere with the educator's intended use of the materials. In the event, there is a question as to the nature of the curriculum materials requested or as to whether the materials are required to be provided, the building principal shall notify the parent of such concern, and assist the parent with forming a request which can reasonably be accommodated. If the parent does not formulate such a request, and continues to desire certain curriculum materials, the parent shall be asked to make their request to the Superintendent.

**Rights of Parents to be Notified of and to Opt Out of Certain Physical Examinations or Screenings** The general policy and practice of the District is to not administer physical examinations or screenings of students which require advance notice or parental opt-out rights under the applicable federal

laws, for the reason that the physical examinations or screenings to be conducted by the District will usually fit into one of the following exceptions: (1) hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings; (2) physical examinations or screenings that are permitted or required by an applicable State law; and (3) surveys administered to students in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. For physical examinations or screenings which do not fit into the applicable exceptions, the District will follow the procedures set forth in the section entitled: "Notification of and Right to Opt Out of Specific Events."

**Protection of Student Privacy in Regard to Personal Information Collected from Students** The general policy and practice of the District is to not engage in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information. The District will make reasonable arrangements to protect student privacy to the extent possible in the event of any such collection, disclosure, or use of personal information. "Personal information" for purposes of this policy means individually identifiable information about a student including: (1) a student or parent's first and last name, (2) home address, (3) telephone number, and (4) social security number. The term "personal information," for purposes of this policy, does not include information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions. This exception includes the following examples: (i) college or post secondary education recruitment, or military recruitment; (ii) book clubs, magazines, and programs providing access to low-cost literary products; (iii) curriculum and instructional materials used by elementary schools and secondary schools; (iv) tests and assessments used by elementary schools and secondary schools to provide cognitive, evaluative, diagnostic, clinical, aptitude, or achievement information about student, or to generate other statistically useful data for the purpose of securing such tests and assessments, and the subsequent analysis and public release of the aggregate data from such tests and assessments; (v) the sale by student of products or services to raise funds for school-related or education-related activities; (vi) student recognition programs.

**Parental Access to Instruments used in the Collection of Personal Information** While the general practice of the District is to not engage in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information, parents shall have the right to inspect, upon reasonable request, any instrument which may be administered or distributed to a student for such purposes. Reasonable requests for inspection shall be granted within a reasonable period of time after the request is received. The procedures for making and granting such a request are as follows: the parent shall make the request, with reasonable specificity, directly to the building principal and shall identify the specific act and the school staff member or program responsible for the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information from students for the purpose of marketing that information. The building principal, within five (5) school days, shall consult with the school staff member or person responsible for the program which has been reported by the parent to be responsible for the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information from students. In the event such collection, disclosure, or use of personal information is occurring or there is a plan for such to occur, the building principal shall consult with the Superintendent for determination of whether the action shall be allowed to continue. If not, the instrument for the collection of personal information shall not be given to any students. If it is to be allowed, such instrument shall be provided to the requesting parent as soon as such instrument can be reasonably obtained.

**Annual Parental Notification of Student Privacy Protection Policy** The District shall provide parents with reasonable notice of the adoption or continued use of this policy and other policies related to student privacy. Such notice shall be given to parents of students enrolled in the District at least annually, at the beginning of the school year, and within a reasonable period of time after any substantive change in such policies.

**Notification to Parents of Dates of and Right to Opt Out of Specific Events** The District shall directly notify the parents of the affected children, at least annually at the beginning of the school year, of the specific or approximate dates during the school year when any of the following activities are scheduled, or are expected to be scheduled:

The collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information. (Note: the general practice of the District is to not engage in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information).

Surveys of students involving one or more matters deemed to be sensitive in accordance with the law and this policy; and,

Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is required as a condition of attendance; administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance; and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student or of other students. (Note: the general practice of the District is to not engage in physical examinations or screenings which require advance notice, for the reason that the physical examinations or screenings to be conducted by the District will usually fit into one of the following exceptions to the advance notice requirement and parental opt-out right: (1) hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings; (2) physical examinations or screenings that are permitted or required by an applicable State law, and (3) surveys administered to students in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ).

Parents shall be offered an opportunity in advance to opt their child out of participation in any of the above listed activities.

In the case of a student of an appropriate age (that is, a student who has reached the age of 18, or a legally emancipated student), the notice and opt-out right shall belong to the student.

**Definition of Surveys of Matters Deemed to be Sensitive** Any survey containing one or more of the following matters shall be deemed to be “sensitive” for purposes of this policy:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s parent;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the student has close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the students or the student’s parent;
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

## **Section 9 - Parental Involvement Policies**

### **A. General - Parental/Community Involvement in Schools:**

Valentine Community Schools welcomes parental involvement in the education of their children. We recognize that parental involvement increases student success. It is Valentine Community Schools’ policy to foster and facilitate, to the extent appropriate and in their primary language, parental information about, and involvement in, the education of their children. Policies and regulations are established to protect the emotional, physical and social well-being of all students.

1. Parental involvement is a part of the ongoing and timely planning, review and improvement of

district and building programs.

2. Parents are encouraged to support the implementation of district policies and regulations.
3. Parents are encouraged to monitor their student's progress by reviewing weekly grades, quarterly report cards, and attending parent-teacher conferences.
4. Textbooks, tests and other curriculum materials used in the district are available for review by parents upon request.
5. Parents are provided access to records of students according to law and school policy.
6. Parents are encouraged to attend courses, assemblies, counseling sessions and other instructional activities with prior approval of the proper teacher or counselor and administrator. Parents' continued attendance at such activities will be based on the students' well-being.
7. Testing occurs in this school district as determined to be appropriate by district staff to assure proper measurement of educational progress and achievement.
8. Parents submitting written requests to have their student excused from testing, classroom instruction and other school experiences will be granted that request when possible and educationally appropriate. Requests should be submitted to the proper teacher or administrator within a reasonable time prior to the testing, classroom instruction or other school experience and should be accompanied by a written explanation for the request. A plan for an acceptable alternative shall be approved by the proper teacher and administrator prior to, or as a part of, the granting of any parent request.
9. Participation in surveys of students occurs in this district when determined appropriate by district staff for educational purposes. Parents will be notified prior to the administration of surveys in accordance with district policy. Timely written parental requests to remove students from such surveys will be granted in accordance with district policy and law. In some cases, parental permission must be given before the survey is administered.
10. Parents are invited to express their concerns, share their ideas and advocate for their children's education with board members, administrators and staff.
11. School district staff and parents will participate in an annual evaluation and revision, if needed, of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy.

#### **B. Title I Parental Involvement Policy:**

This Title I Parental Involvement Policy is established in compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Valentine Community Schools has a parental involvement policy applicable to parents of all children. The parental involvement policy applicable to parents of all children is not replaced by this Title I Parental Involvement Policy and shall continue to be applicable to all parents, including parents participating in Title I programs.

It is the policy of Valentine Community Schools to implement programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in Title I programs consistent with the Title I laws. Such programs, activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.

**Expectations for Parental Involvement** It is the expectation of Valentine Community Schools that parents of participating children will have opportunities available for parental involvement in the programs, activities, and procedures of the District's Title I program. The term "parental involvement" means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring (A) that parents play an integral

role in assisting their child's learning; (B) that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; (C) that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and (D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in this parental involvement policy. The District intends to meet this expectation through the following activities:

1. Involving parents in the joint development of the District's Title I plan and the processes of school review and school improvement.
2. Providing coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance.
3. Building the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement.
4. Coordinating and integrating parental involvement strategies under Title I with parental involvement strategies under other programs.
5. Conducting, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under the Title I program, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in Title I programs, with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background, and use the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parental involvement policies of the District.
6. Involving parents in the activities of the schools served under Title I Policy Involvement: Each school served under the Title I program shall:
  - a. Convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation under the Title I program and to explain the requirements of the Title I program.
  - b. Offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening. If sufficient funds are provided for this purpose, the District may assist parental involvement in such meetings by offering transportation, childcare, or home visits.
  - c. Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs.
  - d. Provide parents of participating children: (1) timely information about programs under Title I, (2) a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet; and (3) if requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.
  - e. If the District operates a school wide program under Title I and such plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parental comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the District.

**Shared Responsibilities for High Student Academic Achievement** As a component of the District's parental involvement policy, each school served under the Title I program shall jointly develop with parents for all children served under the Title I program a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the school, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achieve-

ment and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards. Such compact shall: (1) describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under Title I to meet the State's student academic achievement standards and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time; and (2) address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum: (i) parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement; (ii) frequent reports to parents on their children's progress; and (iii) reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities.

**Building Capacity for Involvement** To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the District, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, each school participating in the Title I program and the District: (1) shall provide assistance to participating parents, as appropriate, in understanding such topics as the State's academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, State and local academic assessments, the requirements of Title I and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children; (2) shall provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement; (3) shall educate teachers, student service personnel, principals, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school; (4) shall, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, the Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teacher Program, and public preschool and other programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children; (5) shall ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format, and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand; (6) may involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training; (7) may provide necessary literacy training from funds received under Title I if the District has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training; (8) may pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions; (9) may train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents; (10) may arrange school meetings at a variety of times, or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school, in order to maximize parental involvement and participation; (11) may adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement; (12) may establish a district wide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in programs supported under Title I; (13) may develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities; and (14) shall provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under Title I as parents may request.

**Accessibility** In carrying out the parental involvement activities for this Title I Parental Involvement policy, the District shall provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English

proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under Title I in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand.

**Use, Distribution, and Updating of this Policy** This Title I Parental Involvement Policy shall be incorporated into the District's Title I plan, shall be distributed to parents of participating children, shall be made available to the local community, and shall be updated periodically to meet the changing needs of the parents and the school.

### **Section 10 - Homeless Students Policy**

Homeless children for purposes of this Policy generally include children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, as further defined by applicable federal and state law.

**No Stigmatization or Segregation of Homeless Students:** It is the District's policy and practice to ensure that homeless children are not stigmatized or segregated by the District on the basis of their status as homeless.

**Homeless Coordinator:** The Superintendent shall serve as the District's designated Homeless Coordinator. The Homeless Coordinator shall serve as the school liaison for homeless children and youth and shall ensure that: (1) homeless children are identified by school personnel; (2) homeless children enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, school; (3) homeless children and their families receive educational service for which they are eligible and referrals to health, dental, and mental health services and other appropriate services; (4) the parents or guardians of homeless children are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children; (5) public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated where such children receive services under the federal homeless children laws, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens; (6) enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law; and (7) the parents or guardians of homeless children, and any unaccompanied youth, are fully informed of transportation services available under law. The Homeless Coordinator shall coordinate with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provisions of education and related services to homeless children. The Homeless Coordinator may designate duties here under as the Homeless Coordinator determines to be appropriate.

**Enrollment of and Services to Homeless Children:** A homeless child shall be enrolled in compliance with law and be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school in which the homeless child has been placed. Placement of a homeless child is determined based on the child's "school of origin" and the "best interests" of the child. The "school of origin" means the school that the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled. Placement decisions shall be made according to the District's determination of the child's best interests, and shall be at either: (1) the child's school of origin for the duration of the child's homelessness (or, if the child becomes permanently housed during the school year, for the remainder of that school year) or (2) the school of the attendance area where the child is actually living. To the extent feasible, the placement shall be in the school of origin, except when such is contrary to the wishes of the homeless child's parent or legal guardian. If the placement is not in the school of origin or a school requested by the homeless child's parent or legal guardian, the District shall provide a written explanation of the placement decision and a statement of appeal rights to the parent or guardian. If the homeless child is an unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Coordinator shall assist in the placement decision, consider the views of the unaccompanied youth, and provide the unaccompanied youth with notice of the right to appeal. In the event of an enrollment dispute, the placement shall be at the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute in accordance with the dispute resolution process. The homeless child shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which the District has determined to place the child, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic

records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation. The District shall immediately contact the school last attended by the homeless child to obtain relevant academic and other records. If the homeless child needs to obtain immunizations or medical records, the District shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the homeless child to the Homeless Coordinator, who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations or medical records. The District may nonetheless require the parent or guardian of the homeless child to submit contact information.

Transportation will be provided to homeless students, to the extent required by law and comparable to that provided to students who are not homeless, upon request of the parent or guardian of the homeless child, or by the Homeless Coordinator in the case of an unaccompanied youth, as follows: (1) if the homeless child's school of origin is in the Valentine Community Schools, and the homeless child continues to live in the Valentine Community Schools' District, transportation to and from the school or origin shall be provided by Valentine Community Schools; and (2) if the homeless child lives in a school other than the Valentine Community Schools, but continues to attend the Valentine Community Schools based on it being the school of origin, the new school and the Valentine Community Schools shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin and, if they are unable to agree, the responsibility and cost for transportation shall be shared equally.

*The process to resolve disputes concerning the enrollment or placement of a homeless child is as follows:*

1. *The homeless child and the parent, guardian or other person having legal or actual charge or control of the homeless child shall be referred to the Homeless Coordinator. The Homeless Coordinator shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. The dispute resolution process is as follows:*
  - a. *The homeless child and parent/guardian will submit a written dispute statement to the Homeless Coordinator. The District's Dispute Resolution Form shall be used if such is available.*
  - b. *When it is determined that additional information would be helpful, the Homeless Coordinator will schedule a meeting within 10 days, or such time as practicable, at which time the homeless child and parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to provide information in support of their position.*
  - c. *The Homeless Coordinator will contact school officials and others as determined appropriate to obtain information to corroborate the information provided in support of the positions of the homeless child and parent/guardian and the District.*
  - d. *The Homeless Coordinator will provide a written response and explanation of a decision regarding the dispute within 30 calendar days after receiving the dispute statement.*
  - e. *The written response and explanation of the decision will include a notice of the right to appeal using the appeal process provided for in the Nebraska Department of Education Rule 19.*

2. *In the event of an enrollment dispute, the homeless child's placement shall be at the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute in accordance with the dispute resolution process. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.*

## **Section 11 - Breakfast and Lunch Programs**

The Valentine Community Schools has agreed to participate in the National School Lunch Program and accepts responsibility for providing free and reduced-price meals to eligible children in the schools under its jurisdiction. The school food authority assures the State Department of Education that the

school system will uniformly implement the following policy to determine children's eligibility for free and reduced-price meals in all National School Lunch Programs. In fulfilling its responsibilities, the school food authority:

1. Agrees to serve meals free to children from families whose income meets eligibility guidelines.
2. Agrees to serve meals at a reduced price to children from families whose income falls between free meal scale and the poverty guidelines.
3. Agrees to provide these benefits to any child whose family's income falls within the criteria after deductions are made for the following special hardship conditions which could not reasonably be anticipated or controlled by the household: Unusually high medical expenses; shelter costs in excess of 30 percent of reported income; special education expenses due to the mental or physical condition of a child; disaster or casualty losses.
4. In addition, agrees to provide these benefits to children from families who are experiencing strikes, layoffs and unemployment which cause the family income to fall within the criteria set forth in federal guidelines.
5. Agrees there will be no physical segregation of, nor any other discrimination against, any child because of his inability to pay the full price of the meal. The names of the children eligible to receive free and reduced-price meals shall not be published, posted or announced in any manner and there shall be no overt identification of any such children by use of special tokens or tickets or any other means. Further assurance is given that children eligible for free or reduced-price meals shall not be required to: Work for their meals; use a separate lunch room; go through a separate serving line; enter the lunchroom through a separate entrance; eat meals at a different time; or eat a meal different from the one sold to children paying the full price.
6. Agrees in the operation of child nutrition programs, no child shall be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, or national origin.
7. Agrees to establish and use a fair hearing procedure for parental appeals to the school's decisions on applications and for school officials' challenges to the correctness of information contained in an application or to be continued eligibility of any child for free or reduced-price meals. During the appeal and hearing the child will continue to receive free or reduced priced meals. A record of all such appeals and challenges and their dispositions shall be retained for three (3) years. Prior to initiating the hearing procedures, the parent or local school official may request a conference to provide an opportunity for the parent and school official to discuss the situation, present information, and obtain an explanation of data submitted in the application and decisions rendered. Such a conference shall not in any way prejudice or diminish the right to a fair hearing. The hearing procedure shall provide the following:
  - A publicly announced, simple method for making an oral or written request for a hearing.
  - An opportunity to be assisted or represented by an attorney or other person.
  - An opportunity to examine, prior to and during the hearing, the documents and records presented to support the decision under appeal.
  - Reasonable promptness and convenience in scheduling a hearing and adequate notice as to the time and place of the hearing.
  - An opportunity to present oral or documentary evidence and arguments supporting a position without undue interference.
  - An opportunity to question or refute any testimony or other evidence and to confront and cross-examine any adverse witnesses.

- The hearing be conducted and the decision made by a hearing official who did not participate in the decision under appeal or in any previous conference.
  - The parties concerned and any designated representative thereof be notified in writing of the decision of the hearing official.
8. Agrees to designate the Superintendent to review applications and make determinations of eligibility. This official will use the criteria outlined in this policy to determine which individual children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
  9. Agrees to develop and send to each child's parent or guardian a letter as outlined by State Department of Education including an application form for free or reduced-price meals at the beginning of each school year. Applications may be filed at any time during the year. All children from a family will receive the same benefits.

In accordance with Federal law and United States Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discrimination in the school lunch program on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disparity. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### **Section 12 - Annual Notification of Asbestos Management Plan Availability**

Federal regulations require all schools to inventory asbestos containing materials and develop management plans to identify and control asbestos containing materials in their buildings.

The presence of asbestos in a building does not mean that the health of building occupants if necessarily endangered. As long as asbestos containing material remains in good condition and is not disturbed, exposure is unlikely.

The plan is available for review in the school administrative office during normal business hours.

At least once each six months' periodic surveillance is being conducted on all asbestos containing material and suspect material assumed to contain asbestos.

A reinspection is being conducted every three years in all schools that have asbestos containing material.

From time to time operations and maintenance activities may be conducted to maintain all material in good condition.

For more information please contact: Robert Krepel Jr, ESU #8, Box 89, Neligh, NE 68756. Phone (402) 887-5041.

### **Section 13 – Sex Offenders**

The safety of students attending schools is of great importance. It is important that school employees, students, and parents be aware of dangers posed by sex offenders living in the area. According to district policy, the school district shall notify staff members, parents, and students of persons who are registered within the Nebraska Sex Offender Registry living within our school district. This continually updated information can be found at the Nebraska State Patrol's web page at <https://sor.nebraska.gov/>. The district provides a link to this website on the district website as notification for employees, students, and parents. Registered sex offenders are generally not allowed on school grounds, at any school sponsored activities, or on any property under the control of the school district. The superintendent and/or his/her designee has the authority to notify sex offenders of this policy and to grant limited permission to attend certain activities on a case-by-case basis. *Please be advised that state law prohibits using the Nebraska Sex Offender Registry for any retaliatory purpose against the sex offender, the offender's family, or the offender's employer.*

## **Section 14 – Videotaping and Photography**

The school district generally prohibits students, parents, and patrons from taking photographs or making video recordings on school grounds, in a school vehicle, or during educational activities. Students, parents, and patrons are permitted to take photographs and make videotapes of sporting events, concerts and other public performances. If an individual is uncertain about whether photographs and/or videotaping is permitted, he/she should consult with a school district administrator.

