

Valley New School

Policy Handbook

Our Mission

To create a learning community that empowers individuals to become purposeful adults

Our Code

Challenge Yourself
Follow Your Passions
Desire Success
Respect

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Overview

Student-driven, project-based learning seldom resembles a traditional classroom. Instead of formal, subject-oriented classes, individuals and groups of students choose, plan, research, and complete academic study and hands-on projects that result in tangible, real life products. Learning experiences take place outside the confines of the school building (in the “real world”) whenever possible, include community experts as much as possible, and cover broad academic areas of study. The activities require students to develop skills in time management, teamwork, communication, planning, self-assessment, problem-solving, and meaningful applications of acquired knowledge.

Belief Statements

We believe:

- Each person is their own best teacher.
- Students learn best when they are engaged in what they are learning.
- The processes of learning (self-direction, curiosity, research, creativity, cooperation, and self-evaluation) are more important than any exact, fact-based curriculum.
- Parent and community involvement enhance learning.
- Small school size creates a more cohesive learning community.
- Project-based learning allows students to incorporate their natural talents and interests as they prepare to continue on their educational paths.

Structure

VNS is a project-based, student-driven model for secondary students. VNS provides students access to technology, an active focus on the community, and a student-advisor ratio of no more than 17 to 1.

VNS offers a learning model based on students’ interests and needs as well as state and local academic standards. VNS curriculum addresses educational goals through a project-based model that incorporates individual and group projects, individually-paced math and literature programs, family-connected study, and service learning.

Projects

While projects at Valley New School take a variety of forms, projects will have many common components. Projects generally last 5-8 weeks and students are expected to document approximately 100 hours of work time for each project credit. Students begin each project by completing a Project Proposal Form and presenting it to a Proposal Team that consists of two advisors. After acceptance of the project plan, students complete the project by following the steps outlined in the Project Checklist. Students collaborate with advisors to seek assistance in

problem areas and to incorporate academic standards. After students complete the Project Checklist, they submit their finished work to the Proposal Team for evaluation and credit. In order to receive credit for completed projects, students must show evidence (including logs that document time and learning) that acceptable requirements/standards are completed.

Individual projects center on specific interests and passions of each student and are developed in concert with the student's advisor and parent(s). Projects will emphasize the area(s) most pertinent to the future path of the student and form the core of the individual student's education. The student and advisor determine the scope and time frame of these investigations. In order to graduate, twelfth-grade students design and execute a comprehensive Senior Project worth 3+ credits (300+ hours documented time) and formally present their work to the entire learning community.

Group projects can take several forms. Some group projects arise from initiatives to connect with and improve the wider community. These tend to be more service-oriented, and project requirements are determined by the group and advisors. Other group projects are advisor/adult led, e.g. Chemistry Seminar, Reading Group.

Students with common interests can also propose and participate in "personal" group projects. Participants must be "on-track" for credits, both cumulatively and currently, and each student involved is still responsible for all the components required in individual projects. Students can also earn Lifelong Learning credits for participating in another student's project, e.g. playing a part in a video production.

Math & Literature Projects provide learning opportunities in those subjects at a level matched with the student's ability. Students will utilize the standards-aligned math program (ALEKS, eSchool, Khan Academy, or others) as they work at a pace and level appropriate to their abilities. The VNS Literature Project should be a comprehensive plan for the entire year that students will follow during Literature time. Several options for earning Literature credit are open to students.

Family projects are optional and give students the opportunity to participate with their family in a joint project, investigation, or other learning experience. Students propose, design, and carry out a project involving family members using the VNS project format. In their final presentation, students include a Family Project Reflection component documenting involvement of family members in the project.

Service learning projects involve significant dedication of project hours to assisting individuals or community organizations in a positive way. Students will choose a worthwhile organization to assist and then research its background and history. After devising an action plan, students will log service hours at their organization and reflect on the impact they are making in the community. The service learning program is designed to create an entire school culture where students feel and understand the need to help others, take part in public efforts, and develop

leadership skills. Students present their service learning experience to their advisory at the close of the year.

Credits/Academic Progress

Students are expected to earn ten project credits each school year (note: 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students must earn 7, 8, and 9 credits respectively). As a reference, one credit is equivalent to approximately 100 documented hours of work. Students who graduate from Valley New School will complete a minimum of 54 project credits. In addition to individual and group project credits, this credit total will include:

- A minimum of six credits in literature
- A minimum of three credits of a formal cumulative senior project
- A minimum of six credits of mathematics (three high-school level courses minimum)
- One service learning project per year
- One post-high school planning project to be completed during grade 11
- One credit (optional) of documented Lifelong Learning experiences

Acceptance in a post-secondary program will be required for graduation from Valley New School. Graduating students will be granted a diploma through Valley New School and the Appleton Area School District.

Both group and individual projects will be guided by the Project Proposal Guide and judged by the Performance Rubric. The Project Proposal Guide will document the detailed expectations of the project and outline which academic standards will be met during its completion. The Performance Rubric will be used to assess student growth in specific competency areas. This process will provide students and parents with a clear idea of which standards have been attained and which need to be attended to in future projects.

Students not making adequate academic progress may be subject to the following policies:

- A student showing inadequate credit progress will need to meet with the advisor/proposal team to develop a progress plan.
- If insufficient progress is made during the specified time frame, a parent/student/staff conference will be held to develop an improvement plan.
- At the conclusion of the improvement plan period, a conference will be held to determine the suitability of the VNS project-based model for that student's education. If at least 75% of the goals have been met, a new plan will be developed to address the remaining goals. If the goals remain substantially unmet, the discussion will center on determining the best educational environment for the student, which may include recommendation for student transfer to another educational setting.
- 12th-grade students who are credit-deficient for graduation and plan to return to VNS as "super-seniors" must successfully complete a summer progress contract. In addition, adequate progress must be shown at six-week intervals in order to remain at VNS.

Academic Progress/Student Options

All VNS students will have the basic rights and privileges of a VNS education.

School Management and Governance

The governance of VNS will employ a two-tiered system. On site, the School Management Committee, composed of the staff, will be responsible for the daily operation of the program and school. Traditional administrative duties will be divided among the committee members. Overseeing the vision and mission of the school is the primary responsibility of the VNS Inc. Governance Board. The Board will be composed of staff, community members, parents, and a student representative.

Valley New School, Inc. Bylaws

The name of this Corporation shall be Valley New School, Inc. (VNS, Inc.). VNS, Inc. is incorporated as a Wisconsin non-stock corporation, which is recognized as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Article 1: Valley New School Mission Statement

To create a learning community that empowers individuals to become purposeful adults.

Article 2: VNS, Inc. Mission Statement

The mission of VNS, Inc. is to support, guide and promote Valley New School in the fulfillment of its stated mission by way of its unique “student-driven, project-based” model of learning.

Article 3: Board Composition, Term, Term Limits, and Elections

VNS, Inc. will consist of nine (9) voting members. VNS, Inc. will include representation by one to two (1-2) parent(s) or guardian(s) of students, four to five (4-5) community members, two (2) Valley New School advisors, and one (1) Valley New School student. From this Board, a President, Vice President, and Treasurer shall be elected. The organization is organized exclusively for educational and charitable purposes under IRC Section 501(c)(3) or corresponding section of any future federal tax code; and does not expressly empower the organization to engage, otherwise than as an insubstantial part of its activities, in activities that in themselves are not in furtherance of those specific exempt purposes. In addition, the organization's assets are dedicated to the above listed exempt purposes within IRC 501(c)(3).

VNS, Inc. shall serve as a nominating committee to solicit candidates for open positions and present the candidates at the meeting prior to the voting meeting. Preceding the voting meeting an interview of the interested candidates shall be conducted by a party of not less than two members of the existing board. Voting will be conducted at the last meeting of the school year. If the number of candidates exceeds open positions, the vote will be a paper ballot. Eligible voters shall be existing VNS, Inc. members as well as parents/guardians of current VNS students in attendance at the voting meeting (no proxy voting). Highest vote getters will be awarded the position with their term to start at VNS, Inc. meeting following their election.

Midterm vacancies will be filled by appointment of VNS, Inc. based on a 2/3 majority vote.

The President and Vice President of VNS, Inc. will each serve a two (2)-year term and no more than two (2) consecutive terms. Other members of VNS, Inc. will serve a two (2)-year term and with no limit to consecutive terms. VNS, Inc. members may resign at any time by giving written notice to the President. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified in the written resignation. A member may be removed for cause by a majority vote of the entire VNS, Inc. Cause could be for failing to adhere to the list of responsibilities and commitments expected from council members, as well as unprofessional/disrespectful conduct.

Article 4: Officers

President: Presides at all VNS, Inc. meetings and is ex-officio on all of its Committees.

- ___ Works with VNS Advisors in planning and directing the activities of VNS, Inc.

- ___ Prepares and distributes an agenda four (4) days prior to all VNS, Inc. meetings (with exception of special meetings).
- ___ Oversees formation and execution of committees.
- ___ Manages any electronic voting

Vice President: Carries out special assignments requested by the President and will perform the duties of the President in their absence.

Treasurer: Chair of the Finance Committee for VNS, Inc.

- Manages the review of and action related to VNS, Inc.'s financial responsibilities.
- Works with the VNS advisors to ensure accurate financial reports are available to VNS, Inc. quarterly at meetings, including a year-end summary.
- Prepares and presents the annual budget for approval at the first meeting of the new school year.

Student Representative: Elected for two (2) years from the Valley New School student body prior to the first Board meeting of the new school year.

- Leads monthly student input meetings with members of the student body.
- Discusses their needs and requests and brings them to the monthly VNS, Inc. meeting for presentation and, if needed, approval.

Secretary: The Valley New School Secretary shall be responsible for minutes at each VNS, Inc. meeting.

- The minutes are distributed electronically to all VNS, Inc. members within one week of the previous board meeting.
- VNS, Inc. members are to submit any changes to these minutes to the secretary author by one week prior to the next meeting.

Article 5: Committees

The committees of VNS, Inc. are:

- Finance
- Curriculum
- Community Partnership
- The board may vote to add or remove additional committees as needed.

The Chair of each committee is a VNS, Inc. Officer or Member appointed by the President.

The Finance Committee will gain an understanding of the budget process that exists between Valley New School and the Appleton Area School District, develop a proposed budget for each school year based on the identified needs of VNS, Inc. Committees, and create structures to supplement and support the needs of the Valley New School program.

Curriculum Committee is dedicated to supporting sustainability of Valley New School by influencing school curriculum, current and future faculty, and dissemination of the Project-based Learning model.

Committee annually reviews and recommends if changes are needed in content and measurements of student success.

Community Partnership markets Valley New School's students, brands Valley New School, and partners with local organizations for the sustainment of the school. Committee is responsible for relations with all partners and recruits and administers student count and waiting list.

Article 6: Meetings

VNS, Inc. will meet a minimum of nine (9) times during a school year. Additional and/or special meetings may be called by the Valley New School advisors or VNS, Inc. President as long as all VNS, Inc. members are notified of the meeting at least 24 hours in advance. A majority of board members need to be present to hold a meeting.

Agendas will be produced and distributed by VNS, Inc. President at least four (4) days in advance of the meetings (with the exception of special meetings). Typical meetings will consist of time for Community Input, Approval of Minutes, Community Sharing, Old business, New Business, and Adjournment. Persons interested in presenting at a VNS, Inc. meeting may request to be put on the agenda by contacting the Board President at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting. Any discussion items concerning issues with personnel or students will be confidential and held in a closed session.

The President, or in the absence of the President, the Vice-President, shall serve as facilitator at all of the meetings of VNS, Inc. Operation of VNS, Inc. meetings shall follow rules prescribed in the most recent Robert's Rules of Order.

A majority of VNS, Inc. members need to be present to hold a meeting. Each voting member has one vote, which is indicated by saying "aye". VNS, Inc. will reserve the right to initiate electronic voting if time or circumstances dictate this procedure. Electronic votes will be managed by VNS, Inc. President. A simple majority of the Board members entitled to vote shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business. The President may vote on all actions placed before VNS, Inc. Governing Board. A tie vote will be tabled to the next scheduled meeting. The Board will reserve the right to utilize consensus decision-making protocols as well as Robert's Rules of Order, current edition.

Once a decision has been reached by VNS, Inc., by a successful affirmation of the whole or majority vote, it is expected that all Board members will support that decision. In order for a VNS, Inc. member to speak for the VNS, Inc. to a District Administrator or designate, community, staff, or parents, that member must have been given that authority by a formal vote of the Board.

Article 7: Amendments

To take effect, this document must be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the VNS, Inc. These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of VNS, Inc. by a majority vote of those present provided that the specific amendments have been introduced at a prior meeting, included in the minutes of that meeting, and are listed on the agenda for the current meeting.

Amendment One:

Upon the dissolution of VNS, Inc., the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all liabilities of the Corporation, transfer ownership of all Charter School assets and unspent funds to the Appleton Area School District or, if the Appleton Area School District is unable to receive the assets and funds, to such organization or organizations that are organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes under section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

Amendment Two:

Conflict of Interest Language as written in Exhibit A to Bylaws.

These bylaws and any amendments thereto, shall become effective immediately upon their adoption.

These bylaws were approved by VNS, Inc. on the 13th day of February, 2014.

Exhibit A to Bylaws:
Conflict of Interest for
Valley New School, Inc.

Article 1: Purpose

The purpose of the Conflict of Interest policy is to protect the interests of Valley New School, Inc. (VNS, Inc.) when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of VNS, Inc. This policy is intended to supplement, but not replace, any applicable Wisconsin laws governing conflicts of interest for this nonstick corporation.

Article 2: Definitions

1. Interested person
 - a. Any director, officer, or member of a committee with Board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person. If a person is an interested person with respect to any VNS, Inc. entity, they are an interested person with respect to all VNS, Inc. entities.
2. Financial Interest
 - a. A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment or family:
 - i. an ownership or investment interest in any entity with which VNS, Inc. has a transaction or arrangement, or
 - ii. a compensation arrangement with VNS, Inc. or with any entity or individual with which VNS, Inc. has a transaction or arrangement, or
 - iii. a potential ownership or investment in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which VNS, Inc. is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
 - b. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are substantial in nature.
 - c. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under this Exhibit A, Article 3, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

Article 3: Procedures

1. Duty to Disclose
 - a. In connection with any actual or possible conflicts of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of his/her financial interest and must be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors or members of committee with board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists
 - a. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, they shall leave the board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.
3. Procedures for Addressing Conflicts of Interest
 - a. An interested person may make a presentation at the board or committee meeting, but after such presentation, they shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and vote on, the transaction or arrangement that results in the conflict of interest.
 - b. The chairperson of the board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.

- c. After exercising due diligence, the board or committee shall determine whether VNS, Inc. can obtain a more advantageous transaction or arrangement with reasonable efforts from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
 - d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably attainable under circumstances that would not give rise to a conflict of interest, the board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in VNS, Inc.'s best interest and for its own benefit and whether the transaction is fair and reasonable to VNS, Inc. and shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement in conformity with such determination.
4. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy
- a. If the board or committee has reasonable cause to believe that a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
 - b. If, after hearing the response of the member and making such further investigation as may be warranted in the circumstances, the board or committee determines that the member has in fact failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Article 4: Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the board and all committee with board-delegated powers shall contain:

1. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
2. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection therewith.

Article 5: Compensation

1. A voting member of the board of directors who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from VNS, Inc. for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
2. If any employee is a voting member of the board of directors, they are precluded from discussion and voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation; provided, however, that no employee is prohibited from providing information to the board of directors regarding compensation.
3. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from VNS, Inc. for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

Article 6: Statement

Each director, officer and member of a committee with board delegated powers shall sign at the time they take office a statement, attached at Attachment 1, which affirms that such person:

1. has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy,
2. has read and understands the policy,
3. has agreed to comply with the policy and,
4. understands that VNS, Inc. is a charitable organization and that in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities that accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Article 7: Periodic Reviews

To ensure that VNS, Inc. operates in a manner consistent with its charitable purposes and that it does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its status as an organization exempt from federal income tax, periodic reviews shall be conducted.

**ATTACHMENT 1
STATEMENT OF DIRECTOR, OFFICER OR MEMBER OF COMMITTEE OF
VALLEY NEW SCHOOL, INC.
AS TO ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy of Valley New School, Inc., I hereby affirm that:

1. I have received a copy of the Conflict of Interest Policy.
2. I have read and understand the Policy.
3. I agree to comply with the terms of the Policy.
4. I understand that Valley New School, Inc. is a charitable organization and that in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities that accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.
5. To my present knowledge neither I nor any member of my immediate family is a director, trustee, officer, shareholder, partner, member, owner, employee or agent or any business or organization with which Valley New School, Inc. has, or in the foreseeable future probably would have, a transaction, contract or other relationship that may give rise to a conflict of interest on my part or the part of a member of my immediate family, except as follows:

(If there is none, write "None" below. Otherwise, list each applicable business or organization and the office of relationship of you or any member of your immediate family.)

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement begins with the development of the student's individual learning plan together with the student and his/her advisor. Parents will provide further support through the student evaluation process, school governance, organization of community events, and participation in mentoring/apprenticeship programs. Additional parental interaction will include conferences, event nights, and special presentations.

There are many opportunities for parental involvement in VNS. Depending upon talents, availability, and schedule, s/he may be able to participate in one or more of the following ways:

- Participate in student/parent/advisor consultations for planning and evaluation.
- Learn the project-based process along with your child so that you can support and assist him/her.
- Provide input/feedback to teachers.
- Share with people in the community the exciting goals and philosophy of VNS.
- Attend VNS student Event Nights.
- Participate with your child in a family project for credit.
- Participate in student carpools to and from school.
- Chaperone VNS student events.
- Offer yourself as a resource to VNS students in your area of expertise.
- Share knowledge of community resources with VNS students and teachers.
- Assist VNS students and teachers on site, monitor lab(s), organize library, etc.
- Provide administrative assistance from home as needed (word processing, mailings, phone calls, etc.).
- Provide daytime student transportation for research, volunteer work, apprenticeship, sports, etc.
- Be an occasional daytime public library chaperone for VNS students.
- Organize community events.
- Serve on the VNS Inc. Board.
- Be active on a VNS committee.
- Assist in school governance and daily operations.
- Support your child's interests and efforts!

Procedures

Typical Daily Schedule

7:55-8:15	Gathering
8:15-9:00	Advisory Circle
9:00-10:00	Math Hour
10:00-11:30	Morning Project Work
11:30-12:00	Lunch
12:00-12:15	Gathering
12:15-12:30	Cleaning Job/Journaling
12:30-1:30	Literature Hour
1:30-3:00	Afternoon Project Work
3:00-3:10	Advisory Circle

Attendance

If students are absent, parents should call the school secretary at 920-852-5605 EX 54000 by 8:30 a.m. to report the absence and the reason for the absence.

VNS adheres to the AASD policy on attendance. Refer to the AASD Policy Manual Attendance Guidelines for details about excused or unexcused absences, tardiness, and truancy. VNS students who are tardy three times in any six-week period will be assigned one hour of “make-up” time for each subsequent tardy. Unexcused absence will result in six hours of “make-up” time.

Phone Policy

VNS phone policies reflect the desire to maximize student and advisor time-on-task and minimize distractions and interruptions. The cooperation of all will help ensure that VNS operates in the most efficient manner.

- Recreational/personal cell phone use is not permitted during school hours, per AASD policy. VNS students have access to phones for the purposes of contacting sources and conducting other school business. Exceptions to this policy will be made during gathering time and the lunch period.
- General phone use:
 - Please plan ahead! Phone calls to make transportation arrangements, lunch plans, or reminders of appointments should be kept to a minimum. The timing of these items should be determined before school to avoid interruptions to both students and advisors.
 - Emergency calls are permitted at any time.
 - Parent-Advisor contact should be limited during the school day when the primary responsibility of the advisors centers on the students. If you need to contact an advisor, please call and leave a message or email. The advisor will return your call,

in most cases at the end of the day. Calls are best made in the morning when the school secretary can answer and take written messages.

- Parent-Student calls/texts for the purpose of “checking-in” are, as in all AASD schools, inappropriate and detract from the learning environment.
- The job demands on VNS advisors require a balance with their private lives. Please use discretion regarding calls to advisors during their personal time.

Sign-out Procedures

Medical/Dental Appointments

Students who have a medical or dental appointment during the school day must have parental permission specifying the date and time when the student must leave the building. The student must notify their advisor and the school secretary before leaving the building. Students will also need to sign out before leaving the building and need to sign in upon return.

Out-of-School Learning

Students engaged in off-site learning experiences must receive advisor and parent approval beforehand. A Site Visitation Form (Appendix A) must be completed, signed, and submitted to their advisor. Students should give their advisor at least 24 hours advance notice. If approved, students will also need to sign out before leaving the building and need to sign in upon return.

Excused Absence

Excused absences such as family trips require an AASD form to be completed and approved prior to the absence. These forms are available from the school secretary. Please note, according to Wisconsin State Law, family trips resulting in greater than 10 days of missed school require withdrawal of the student’s enrollment in school.

Field Trips

Students participating in a field trip must submit a Field Trip Permission form. This includes permission for medical treatment, if necessary. Forms are available at school.

Health Services

Parents/guardians are required to complete a health condition/emergency information form and return it to VNS by the first week of school.

Please read the “Illness/Communicable Disease Guidelines” in your AASD Policy Manual for symptoms of disease which require you to keep your child home from school. To prevent the spread of contagious diseases, staff must be informed of all students who have contracted a communicable disease. These include the following: chicken pox, pinkeye (conjunctivitis), measles, mumps, rubella, impetigo, ringworm, head lice, scabies, strep throat, etc. Contact the school regarding readmission guidelines for each particular disease.

If a student becomes ill or injured at school, first aid or other necessary care will be given immediately. School personnel will not assume responsibility for any medical treatment beyond first aid. No drugs or medication, including aspirin or Tylenol, will be given. If your child becomes ill at school, every attempt will be made to send your child home. Should your child have an injury of a serious nature, parents will be called immediately; if parents cannot be contacted, a doctor will be called or the student will be transported to the nearest clinic or hospital for examination.

For guidelines regarding administration of medication to students, refer to the AASD Policy Manual section titled “Medication Administration to Students”.

The AASD does not provide health or accident insurance for injuries incurred by students at school. Parents are encouraged to review their present health and accident insurance policy to determine if coverage is adequate. The school district makes accident insurance available through First Agency, Inc.; if you are interested in this insurance, please go directly to their website at www.1stagency.com

Lunch/Food in the Building

During lunchtime students may not leave the school site without permission from an advisor.

Lunch options for students are as follows:

- Students may purchase a hot lunch through Appleton Central by indicating they will have hot lunch to the VNS Secretary during morning attendance count. A parent, student, or staff member will pick up and bring lunch to the students at VNS.
- Students may pack a lunch. There is a refrigerator, a stove, and three microwave ovens available for students who choose to bring a bag lunch. We encourage parents to provide healthy choices for their student’s lunch. Per AASD policy, soda is not permitted at school. While this is difficult to police completely, we ask parents to support our efforts to limit the consumption of superfluous sugars/caffeine.
- Microwave popcorn is not permitted at VNS.
- Students may access the mall restaurants if they have filled out the proper forms and have both advisor and parent approval.

Students should exercise common sense when consuming food and beverages. Food is to be eaten only in assigned areas (kitchen and front area) or outside of the building before school, after school, or during lunchtime. There should be no food or beverages, other than water (in clear, closed containers), in the library, music room, and makerspace.

Library Procedures

Each VNS student must have his/her own current and clear (free of fines) Appleton Public Library card. Sharing of cards is a “recipe for disaster” and is not permitted. Students must have

specific sources identified and advisor approval before going to the APL to check out materials. The VNS LMC operates within the AASD library system and employs the same procedures and rules. Students will be assessed fines/fees for late returns/lost materials.

Interscholastic/Intramural Offerings

VNS is not a traditional public school and does not provide the typical athletic and extracurricular offerings on site. Because VNS is an Appleton Public School, students at VNS will have access to interscholastic/intramural offerings at traditional public schools in Appleton. Other alternatives might include private lessons, community leagues/teams, YMCA programs, apprenticeships, online courses and E-school instruction, etc. Parents and students are also encouraged to facilitate organizing extracurricular opportunities at VNS if enough interest exists.

Out-of-district Students

If out-of-district students wish to take advantage of Appleton School District extracurricular activities, they are assigned to the following schools:

Kimberly and Kaukauna:	Appleton East High and Madison Middle Schools
Freedom, Hortonville, Little Chute:	Appleton North High and Einstein Middle Schools
Neenah and Menasha:	Appleton West High and Wilson Middle Schools

Students from districts other than those listed above will use the school closest to their home, “as the crow flies.”

In-District Students

“In-district” students will use their “home school” for extracurricular activities.

In addition to the sports listed below, there are many other extracurricular activities in which VNS students may choose to participate. It is suggested that families call the school of participation for their student and request that the school newsletter be mailed to their home. If students are interested in a sport, contact the athletic directors listed below; inquiries about other activities may be directed to the Student Services office numbers also listed.

Contact information including start dates and schedules for fall, winter and spring activities can be found through the specific schools on the AASD website:

<http://www1.aasd.k12.wi.us/sp/district/schools/Pages/default.aspx>.

Routine Building Procedures

VNS has in place a non-crisis building security plan/practice for daily use as follows:

- During the instructional day, all exterior doors remain locked.
- Staff members are responsible for limiting access to building zones not authorized for use outside of normal school hours. Staff members are responsible to assure that all exterior doors remain locked and operational.
- All advisors and school/community groups utilizing building space after hours and on weekends are responsible for securing doors, limiting access to the use of specific areas, and assuring that the building is clear and locked prior to leaving the building.

Crisis Plan

A Crisis Plan is on file at VNS, and staff will brief students on all components of this plan. If a crisis should occur, the advisors will contact parents as soon as feasibly possible. If students are evacuated from the building, they will meet with advisors in their assigned areas and attendance will be taken. All students will be expected to stay with the group for safety and security purposes.

Parking

Students who drive to school have several parking options:

- Parking Ramp (corner of N. Morrison & Washington Sts.) - \$2/day for single entry/exit
- Off street parking three blocks away – FREE

Conflict Resolution

With open dialog and communication, a positive approach to problem solving, and the proper focus, a formal conflict resolution process should rarely be necessary at Valley New School. When conflicts between parents/students and advisors do arise, however, the following protocol should be followed to efficiently and professionally reach a solution to the problem.

Conflict Resolution Mindset

- Embrace the fact that VNS was conceived, born, and continues to develop out of passion, vision, and dedication for the education, personal growth, and well-being of young people.
- Acknowledge that, as a charter school, VNS is a unique model of education with some concepts that possibly challenge our ideas about learning, or about what school should look like. While each family here has been attracted to the model, we may find ourselves uncomfortable with some aspects of it. This is normal, and the advisors encourage open dialogue about the model and philosophy to increase each family's comfort level.
- Recognize that while it is the desire of VNS advisors to serve the students and families of VNS, they must be permitted to do so within their philosophy of education and their vision of the charter school. This means that they can not, and must not, always agree with and take action based on any and every suggestion, request, or complaint issued.
- Be careful to gather all the facts involved in a situation, and weigh all perspectives of the parties involved prior to deciding to initiate the Conflict Resolution process.
- Refrain from initiating rumors, generating discontent, or sparking emotions among other students or parents when concerns arise.
- **Be willing to listen and understand as much as be listened to and understood.**
- Agree that for the well-being of the charter school and its students, who benefit from a unique and exciting educational approach as well as passionate and dedicated advisors, every possible effort to resolve differences of opinion must be pursued and conducted within VNS. Students and parents must understand that pursuit of a grievance to the district level will have grave effects upon everyone within the school; this should only be done if it is clear that achieving 100% satisfaction considerably outweighs the toll of such an action upon the school.

Conflict Resolution Process for Students

1. Examine the conflict at hand by filling out the Conflict Resolution Preparation Form.
2. Think about your answers, and determine whether you would like to start the Conflict Resolution Process. In completing the form, you may have brainstormed an acceptable solution to the problem that does not involve a formal procedure.
3. The next step, although often the hardest, is to approach the person/people with whom you have a conflict.
 - a. ***If the conflict is between you and another student.*** . . Set a time to discuss the problem, and ask that the student fills out the Conflict Resolution Preparation Form before you meet. Attempt to resolve the issue between the two of you.
 - b. ***If the issue impacts your advisory.*** . . Bring up the issue during Advisory Group time. If you would like help with this, set a time to discuss the problem with your advisor. Your advisor will help you determine how best to approach the group.
 - c. ***If the issue impacts many or all students at VNS.*** . . Bring up the issue during Monday Morning Meeting. If you would like help with this, set a time to discuss the problem with your advisor. Your advisor will help you determine how best to approach the group.
 - d. ***If the conflict is between you and your advisor.*** . . Set a time to discuss the problem. Ask that the advisor fills out the Conflict Resolution Preparation Form before you meet. If necessary, consult another advisor about how to best approach your advisor about the problem.
 - e. ***If the conflict is between you and an advisor other than your own.*** . . Set a time to discuss the problem, and ask that the advisor fill out the Conflict Resolution Preparation form prior to meeting. If necessary, consult your own advisor about how best to approach the advisor about the problem.
 - f. ***If the conflict involves you and a parent.*** . . Consult your advisor regarding the conflict, and set a meeting to discuss the problem with the parent. Ask that the parent fill out the Conflict Resolution Preparation Form before you meet.
 - g. ***If the issue impacts students, advisors, and parents.*** . . Bring up the issue at the next VNS Board meeting. If necessary, consult your advisor about how to best present the issue to the group.

4. Meet with the other party. Share your issue, and listen to the other party's side. Discuss possible resolutions.
5. If a resolution is not possible, schedule a meeting with the other party and an advisor. Both parties should reexamine their Conflict Resolution Preparation Form answers prior to the meeting. Meet and work toward a resolution.
6. If a resolution is yet unattained, schedule "Meeting #1 with Four Advisors," as listed under "Conflict Resolution Process for Parents." Follow guidelines until resolution has been reached.

Conflict Resolution Process for Parents

1. Read "Conflict Resolution Mindset" and fill out Conflict Resolution Preparation Form.
2. Schedule a face-to-face meeting with your advisor.
3. If the issue is yet unresolved, establish a realistic timeline for future meetings.
 - a. **Meeting #1 with Four Advisors.** . . Become informed; share facts and information. (Additional meetings may be scheduled to continue discussion.)
 - b. **Meeting #2 with Four Advisors.** . . Decision/Resolution
 - c. **Mediation.** . . Mediator from within the VNS community (Guidelines in Grievance Packet will be used.)

Conflict Resolution Preparation Form

This form should be completed by the party who is raising the issue before the initial meeting. If no resolution is attained after the initial meeting, both/all parties should complete the form again before the next meetings. Answer as completely as possible, using the other side of the form if necessary.

1. Describe the issue in detail from your point of view.
2. Who is affected by this problem?
3. How does this issue make you feel (angry, sad, hurt, rejected, powerless, concerned, uncertain, confused, etc.)?
4. When you feel this way, how do you react?
5. Please state a positive incentive for this meeting. What is your big picture desire—how do you think the resolution of this issue will impact the VNS community (e.g., a safer learning environment, a better working relationship, etc.)?
6. What could you do to help positively change this issue/situation?
7. List at least three possible solutions to this issue.

8. What do you think the other party's point of view is?

9. What feelings can you imagine on the other side of this issue?

10. What do you imagine the response will be to this issue at the meeting?

Additional Comments:

Schedule for Resolution Process

Fill out this section if and when the Conflict Resolution Process will go beyond Meeting with Advisor.

__/__/__ Meeting #1

__/__/__ Meeting #2

__/__/__ Date of Further Action (explain) _____

Student Conduct

Following are brief overviews of school policy on student conduct issues; however, parents and students should read the Appleton Area School District Policy Manual for complete information, as VNS must adhere to all AASD policies.

Student Code of Conduct

In a project-based model, serious discipline problems are almost non-existent. Students are more engaged in their learning, parents are better informed of expectations, and the tone of the school is one of cooperation. Discipline problems will first be addressed between the student and the advisor. Unresolved problems will require parental involvement and if still unresolved, the matter will go to the advisor team or Assistant Superintendent. If necessary, severe individual situations will be dealt with in accordance with AASD board policy and State statutes.

A student may be disciplined or dismissed on any of the following grounds:

- Violation of any school board regulation.
- Conduct that significantly disrupts the rights of others to an education.
- Conduct that endangers others or property of the school.

Parents will receive a verbal and written notification of any out-of-school suspension.

In addition to suspension, students who violate the law while on school property or at school-sponsored events may be cited accordingly by police authorities.

(All EEN students will be dealt with in accordance with Wis. SS 120.13.)

VNS administration reserves the right to use its discretion in applying the above criteria to decisions regarding suspension.

Technology Use Policy

Access to technology is a privilege and demands responsibility. All students will be expected to comply with technology use rules of VNS and the AASD.

Computers, school telephones, and other electronic media are to be used solely for educational purposes. The use of electronic media for private purposes violates the school policy. All electronic communications are not private, but subject to review and monitoring by the staff. Personal devices can be searched and programs deleted if they are not supporting educational learning. Games for entertainment are NOT to be used, installed, or played during school hours.

Students should notify an adult immediately if they encounter materials that are offensive or violate appropriate use.

Inappropriate Use of Technology

- Sending or displaying offensive messages, pictures, Internet sites, etc.
- Deliberately accessing materials that are inconsistent with the school's Code of Conduct or district educational goals.
- Bringing in malicious "executable files" from thumb/jump drives, the Internet, or any other source.
- Participating in unauthorized "chat" or Internet games.
- Using AASD systems or networks in such a manner as to encumber disk space, processors, bandwidth, or other system resources or to interfere with others' normal use of services.
- Participate in activities that violate local, state, or federal statutes, including distribution of software or licensed products without the express written consent of its rightful creator.
- Using a computer to harm other people or their work.
- Damaging computers or networks in any way.
- Interfering with the operation of the network by installing illegal software, shareware, or freeware.
- Wasting limited resources such as disk space or printing capacity.
- Using the system for commercial use.
- Using the network in such a way that would disrupt the use of the network by other users.
- Using the network to engage in "content theft" (pirating).
- Creating and/or distributing a computer virus over the Internet.

Levels of Computer Access

Students not in compliance with the above guidelines may have their computer access limited. These limitations may include restrictions up to/including complete loss of computer privileges. Advisors will determine the extent and time-span of the restrictions on an individual basis.

Use of Personal Computers

Please refer to the AASD Policies for bringing your own device.

Clothing Standards

Dress and grooming are personal matters but should be appropriate for the occasion. How you dress has an effect on you, your school, and the community. Neatness and cleanliness is expected of all students.

AASD students are prohibited from wearing clothing or attire which, in the opinion of school authorities, is contrary to acceptable health and safety standards or may disrupt the educational process or learning atmosphere.

Parents are asked to monitor clothing so it is not a distraction to a positive learning environment.

Harassment and Violence

VNS will maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, or violence. It is a violation for any student or staff member to harass, intimidate, or inflict violence upon a student or staff member through conduct or communication as defined by this policy. Intimidation is defined as behavior which causes fear and psychological or physical discomfort. A student will be warned to discontinue any behaviors that cause another discomfort. If they should choose to continue, they will face suspension. Flagrant intimidation/harassment may result in immediate suspension and/or eventual expulsion.

The school will act to investigate all complaints, formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment or intimidation, and to discipline any student or staff member who harasses or intimidates a student or staff member of VNS. Complaints should be addressed in written form by following the AASD Complaint Procedure in the AASD Family Policy Manual.

Weapons and Gang Activity

No one shall possess, use, threaten the use of, or store a weapon or look-alike weapon on school property, in a school facility, or at any school-sponsored function. A weapon is defined as any object that, by its design, use or intended use could cause bodily harm or property damage or intimidate other persons. Weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, loaded or unloaded, look-alike weapons, knives and martial arts equipment. This policy is not intended to interfere with instruction or the use of appropriate equipment and tools by students. Such equipment when properly possessed, used and stored, shall not be considered in violation of the rule against the possession, use or distribution of weapons by students.

Gang activity in the Appleton Area School District is prohibited. Gang activity includes, but is not limited to, the display or possession of gang symbols; soliciting others for membership, requesting payment of dues, insurance, or other forms of protection from any individual; intimidating or threatening any individual; participating and/or inciting others to participate in any form of physical violence involving persons or property; or other criminal activity.

Drug or Alcohol Use

No student shall knowingly possess, use, distribute, or be under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, or any other mood-altering chemicals while on school property or during school-sponsored activities. Since these are expellable offenses, both parents and students should read the AASD policy on Alcohol and Drug-Free Schools in the policy manual.

Smoking and Tobacco Use

In the interest of a tobacco-free environment and in compliance with State law, smoking and/or use of other tobacco products is prohibited in all School District buildings, on all District controlled properties, excluding residential properties, and in all school-sponsored transportation vehicles, at all times. Violations of this policy could result in disciplinary action such as suspension and expulsion, as well as the issuance of a municipal citation.

Valley New School Contact Information

Name/Title	Phone	E-mail
Main School Phone Number	920-852-5605	
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School Fax Number	920-852-5606	

<https://vns.asd.k12.wi.us/>