

Code of Conduct?

A Code of Conduct is more than a guideline for good student behavior; it sets up our school culture for successful learning by promoting an environment that is safe, civil, responsible, and respectful.

The VCS Code of Conduct was developed to give students, staff and parents a plan for success not only in the classroom, but at any school related event, on and off our campus, including on the school bus.*

A high-quality education can only be attained in a high-quality setting, without disruption or interference. The Code of Conduct emphasizes the importance of good conduct and valuable character-building principles such as civility, mutual respect, citizenship, acceptance, honesty and integrity. The code also highlights the consequences that result from poor quality conduct and character.

The code is compliant with the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA or Dignity Act). The intent of the Dignity Act is to provide all public school students with an environment free from harassment, bullying (including cyber bullying) and discrimination, as well as to foster civility in public schools. The Dignity Act focuses on the prevention of discriminatory behaviors, including harassment/bullying, through the promotion of educational measures meant to positively impact culture and climate. Dignity Act Coordinators (DACs) in each building are trained to work within their school community to proactively build warm and welcoming environments that foster a strong sense of belonging for each student. In addition, the DACs will conduct thorough investigations when a DASA concern is raised. More information, can be found on the [VCS Website](#).

** Unless otherwise indicated, this code applies to all students, school personnel, parents and other visitors when on school property or attending a school function.*

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Student Rights

The District is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal law and District policy. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly, and supportive school environment, all District students have the right to:

1. Take part in all District activities on an equal basis regardless of race, weight, color, creed, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.
2. Present their version of the relevant events to school personnel authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty.
3. Access school policies, regulations, and rules and, when necessary, receive an explanation of those rules from school personnel.

Student Responsibilities

All District students have the responsibility to:

1. Act in an empathetic and respectful manner toward others while on school property.
2. Contribute to maintaining a safe, supportive, and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning.
3. Attend school every day unless they are legally excused and be in class, on time, and prepared to learn.
4. Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible.
5. Ask questions when they do not understand.
6. Seek help in solving problems.
7. Dress appropriately for school and school functions.
8. Accept responsibility for their actions.
9. Be familiar with and abide by District policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct.
10. React to direction given by teachers, administrators, and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner.
11. Work to develop mechanisms to manage their anger.
12. Conduct themselves as representatives of the District when participating in or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events and to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, and sportsmanship.

Student Responsibilities cont.d

13. Inform school officials of knowledge of potential safety issues.
14. Promptly report violations of the Code of Conduct to a teacher, school counselor, administrator, or appropriate staff member.
15. Use technology resources, including the Internet and email, in a responsible manner.

Essential Partners

Parents, teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, administrators, the School Resource Officer (SRO), Board of Education, DACs and other school personnel are vital to the success of a learning environment where all students can thrive. Together, they collaborate to optimize our students' educational opportunities through a safe, orderly and stimulating setting and to maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students.

Student Dress Code

Students and parents have the right to determine how a student dresses providing that such attire is not destructive to school property, complies with requirements for health and safety and standard of decency within the community. Appropriate student dress is required at all instructional times and District-sponsored events (i.e. extracurricular events, prom, etc.). The administration is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet stated requirements.

Prohibited Student Conduct

VCS expects all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, District personnel and other members of the school community, and for the care of school facilities and equipment. The following conduct is strictly prohibited at VCS:

- Disorderly conduct
- Insubordinate conduct
- Disruptive conduct
- Violent conduct
- Conduct that endangers the safety, physical or mental health or welfare of others
- Misconduct while on a school bus
- Any form of academic misconduct
- Off-campus misconduct that interferes with, or can reasonably be expected to substantially disrupt the educational process in the school or at a school function

Reporting Violations

All students are expected to promptly report violations of the Code of Conduct to a teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, administrator or appropriate staff member.

All District staff who are authorized to impose disciplinary sanctions are expected to do so in a prompt, fair and lawful manner. District staff who are not authorized to impose disciplinary sanctions are expected to promptly report violations of the Code of Conduct to a supervisor.

Disciplinary Consequences, Procedures and Referrals

Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary penalties will consider the following:

1. The student's age.
2. The nature of the offense and the circumstances which led to the offense.
3. The impact of the offense.
4. The student's prior disciplinary record.

Disciplinary Consequences, Procedures and Referrals cont'd.

5. The effectiveness of other forms of discipline.
6. Information from parents, teachers and/or others, as appropriate

7. Other extenuating circumstances.

Disciplinary Consequences

Students who are found to have violated the District's Code of Conduct may be subject to any of the following consequences, either alone or in combination:

- Oral warning
- Disciplinary referrals to parent
- Detention
- Suspension from transportation
- Suspension from athletic participation
- Suspension from social or extracurricular activities
- Suspension of other privileges
- In-school suspension
- Removal from classroom
- Short-term (five days or less) suspension from school
- Long-term suspension hearing/long-term (more than five days) suspension from school
- Permanent suspension from school

Restorative mediation between student and student and/or staff and students may be offered as an alternative to disciplining consequences in appropriate circumstances, as determined by the District.

Minimum Periods of Suspension

The safety and security of all VCS students and staff is our top priority. As such, certain student violations, regardless of the circumstances, may call for a minimum period of suspension.

In the event of a suspension, the student and the student's parent will be given the same notice and opportunity for an informal meeting given to all students subject to a short-term suspension. If the proposed consequence exceeds the minimum five-day suspension, the student and the student's parent will be given the same notice and opportunity for a hearing given to all students subject to a long-term suspension. A student with a disability may be suspended only in accordance with the requirements of state and federal law.

The following scenarios were developed to outline varying degrees of violations as they relate to varying degrees of suspension.

Students who bring to or possess a weapon on school property: Any student found guilty of bringing to or possessing a weapon on school property will be subject to a long-term suspension from school for at least one calendar year. Under certain mitigating circumstances a shorter suspension may be considered. Before being suspended, the student will have an opportunity for a hearing pursuant to Education Law §3214.

Students who commit violent acts other than bringing to or possessing a weapon on school property: Any student who is found to have committed a violent act, other than bringing to or possessing a weapon on school property, shall be subject to a short- or long-term suspension from school.

Students who are repeatedly substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interfere with the teacher's authority over the classroom: Any student who repeatedly is substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interferes with the teacher's authority over the classroom will be suspended from school for at least one day and can be suspended up to five days.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

A student identified as having a disability will not be disciplined for behavior related to his/her disability, however, VCS recognizes that it may be necessary to suspend, remove or otherwise discipline students with disabilities who violate the District's student Code of Conduct, and/or to temporarily remove a student with disabilities from his or her current placement because maintaining the student in that placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others. The Board also recognizes that students with disabilities deemed eligible for special education services under the IDEA and Article 89 of New

York's Education Law enjoy certain procedural protections that school authorities must observe when they decide to suspend or remove them. Under certain conditions those protections extend, as well, to students not currently deemed to be a student with a disability but determined to be a student presumed to have a disability for discipline purposes. If the conduct of a student is related to a disability or suspected disability, the student shall be referred to the Committee on Special Education.

Visitors to the Schools

VCS encourages parents and other District citizens to visit the District's schools and classrooms to observe the work of students, teachers and other staff. Since schools are a place of work and learning, however, certain limits must be set for such visits. The principal or his/her designee is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds. For these reasons, the following rules apply to visitors to the schools:

1. Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the school will be considered a visitor.
2. All visitors to the school must report to the main office or other secure entrances upon arrival at the school. There, they will be required to present their ID for verification through our electronic check in system and will be issued a visitor's identification badge, which must be worn at all times while in the school or on school grounds. The visitor must return the identification badge to the office before leaving the building.
3. Visitors attending school functions that are open to the public outside of the regular school day, such as concerts, athletic competitions, parent organization meetings or public gatherings, are not required to register.
4. Parents or citizens who wish to observe a classroom while school is in session are required to get permission from the building administrator to arrange such visits in advance with the classroom teacher(s), so that class disruption is kept to a minimum.
5. Teachers are expected not to take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
6. Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the principal or his/her designee. Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave. The police may be called if the situation warrants.
7. All visitors are expected to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property contained in this Code of Conduct.
8. Using an unmanned aerial vehicle (also known as a drone) or any remote-controlled aircraft on school property or during any school functions without the prior written authorization from the District's Superintendent is prohibited. Prior to such use, users must also demonstrate compliance with any and all applicable Federal Aviation Administration rules and regulations.

In Conclusion

The VCS Code of Conduct was developed in consultation with teachers, administrators, school board members, other school service professionals, students and parents/legal guardians. Parents/guardians are encouraged to review this document with their child(ren) in an age-appropriate manner. If you have any questions about the Code of Conduct, or VCS Behavioral expectations, please contact your child's building administrator.

If you do not have access to the internet, a hard copy of the unabridged Code of Conduct can be obtained at your child's school.

Victor Central School District

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