

Valley New School  
**Policy Handbook**  
2011-2012



## **Mission Statement**

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

## **Values**

Self-reliance, Choice, Accountability, Community, Honesty.

## **Program Cornerstones**

- A small community of learners—low student/advisor ration
- Curriculum is integrated, student-driven, and project based
- High expectation for parent and community involvement

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# Table of Contents

<b>Overview</b>	<b>5</b>
Belief Statements	5
Structure	5
Projects	5
Credits/Academic Progress	7
Academic Progress/Student Options	8
School Management and Governance	8
<b>VNS Governance Board</b>	<b>9</b>
Structure & Protocol	9
Meetings	9
Decision-Making	10
Committees	10
<b>Parental Involvement</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Procedures</b>	<b>13</b>
Typical Daily Schedule	13
Attendance	13
Phone Policy	13
Sign-out Procedures	14
Health Services	14
Lunch/Food in the Building	15
Library Procedures	15
Intrascholastic/Intramural Offerings	16
Athletics	17
Routine Building Procedures	17
Crisis Plan	17
Parking	18
Technology Use Policy	18
Inappropriate Use of Technology	18
Levels of Computer Access	19
Use of Personal Computers	19
<b>Conflict Resolution</b>	<b>20</b>
Conflict Resolution Mindset	20
Conflict Resolution Process for Students	21
Conflict Resolution Process for Parents	22
Valley New School	23
Conflict Resolution Preparation Form	23
Student Conduct and Discipline	25
Student Code of Conduct	25
Clothing Standards	25
Harassment and Violence	26
Weapons and Gang Activity	26
Drug or Alcohol Use	26
Smoking and Tobacco Use	26

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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 his or her own best teacher.
- We believe students learn best when they are engaged in what they are learning.
- We believe the processes of learning (self-direction, curiosity, research, creativity, cooperation, and self-evaluation) are more important than any exact, fact-based curriculum.
- We believe parent and community involvement enhance learning.
- We believe small school size creates a more cohesive learning community.
- We believe 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 reading 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. Students are required to complete ten project credits per year. Projects generally last 4-6 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 meet acceptable requirements/standards on each of the following:

- Completing a Project Proposal Guide, which must be approved by the student's advisor/proposal team
- Charting completion of all phases of each project on the Project Checklist, which will be regularly reviewed and discussed with the student's advisor
- Documenting time and learning using a project time log
- Evaluation of the project based on the Performance Rubric, self-evaluation, evaluation by the student's advisor, and possibly parent evaluation.

**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 will 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, e.g. River Group and Pillars of the 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 and 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 & Reading Programs** provide instruction in those subjects at a level matched with the student's ability. The core of instruction is the computer-based ALEKS Math and Accelerated Reading Programs. Students will utilize the standards-aligned math program as they work at a pace and level appropriate to their abilities. The Accelerated Reading program is used to improve basic reading skills as well as providing the core of literature-based projects. In addition to Accelerated Reading, several other options for earning Reading credit are open to students.

**Family projects** require students 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.

## Credits/Academic Progress

Students are expected to earn ten project credits each school year (note: 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> 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 51 project credits. In addition to individual and group project credits, this credit total will include:

- A minimum of five 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 family project per year
- One service learning project per year

**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 timeframe, 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 student transfer to another school setting.
- 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who are credit-deficient for graduation and plan to return to VNS as "super-seniors" must successfully complete a summer project 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 (workstation, regular chair, adequate freedom of movement during work times, access to information/guided trips to APL).
- Students who are “on-track,” both in current and cumulative academic standing, will be eligible to exercise certain privileges (e.g., comfortable chair, unaccompanied access to APL). These students will provide evidence of measurable progress to their advisor and enumerate the privileges they wish to gain. Unique privileges (e.g., leaving the mall at lunch and listening to music) will be granted only if the student demonstrates outstanding leadership at VNS.
- Students may apply for increased privileges at six-week intervals.

## **School Management and Governance**

The governance of VNS will employ a two-tiered system. On site, the School Management Committee, comprised 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 Governance Board (GB). The GB will be comprised of staff, community members, parents, and student representatives.

# VNS Governance Board

## Structure & Protocol

- 4 Valley New School Advisors
- 4 Valley New School Students (one from each advisory group)
- 4 Valley New School Parents
- 2 Community Members

Student and parent council members will be selected by a lottery of interested applicants.

All VNS parents and students are welcome to attend and participate in discussions. Only the fourteen council members may vote on issues requiring a decision.

## Meetings

Governance Board meetings will be held on the second Monday of every month. Meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. and conclude by 8:00 p.m. (2-3:30 in selected months). Anyone wishing to place an item on the GB agenda must forward that item to the school secretary (wegnerchristin@aasd.K12.wi.us or 993-7037) by the first Wednesday of the month. Agendas will be emailed to parents and committee members by the first Friday of the month.

The GB President and a VNS advisor will facilitate meetings. The school secretary will document and post meeting minutes.

All members of the council will work to keep meetings focused and productive. The format of School Advisory Council meetings is as follows:

1. Each meeting begins with *Public Input Time* during which anyone in attendance may speak or present to the Council. While Public Input Time is a forum by which community members may introduce future agenda items, no decisions are made and only limited discussion of the item is allowed.
2. *Committee Reports* allow the various permanent and ad-hoc committees time to provide updates and summaries of work accomplished.
3. Discussion of *Agenda Items* is the primary focus of the Governance Board. The majority of meeting time is used to:
  - Identify & clarify the agenda item
  - Determine the level of the decision
  - Discuss, research, and debate
  - Make a decision

## **Decision-Making**

The VNS Governance Board will make decisions utilizing a consensus model. Meetings will be facilitated so that all voices are heard and “Fist to Five” process will be used to gauge opinions on issues being discussed. When a vote is required on an issue, a 75% majority of members present will determine acceptance. A minimum quorum of 9 members is required for any vote.

## **Committees**

**Council Committees** (Final decisions in the areas identified below are primarily made by the Governance Board):

- Facilities
- Special Events
- Communication
- Marketing/Public Relations
- Grant Use/Fundraising
- Budget Oversight

**Advisor Committees** (Final decisions in the areas identified below are primarily made by VNS Advisors):

- Curriculum/Assessment
- Technology
- Finance/Budget
- Staff Development
- Enrollment Policies
- Special Education

# 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 the parent's 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 Governance Board.
- Be active on a VNS committee.
- Assist in school governance and daily operations.
- Support your child's interests and efforts!

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# Procedures

## Typical Daily Schedule

8:00-8:20	Gathering
8:20-8:40	Advisory Group Meeting
8:40-9:25	Math
9:25-11:30	A.M. Project Work
11:30-12:00	Lunch
12:00-12:15	Journaling
12:15-2:10	P.M. Project Work
2:10-2:50	Reading
2:50-3:05	Advisory Group Meeting/Analysis
3:05-3:10	Clean Up

## Attendance

If students are absent, a parent should call the school secretary at 993-7037 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 insure that VNS operates in the most efficient manner.

- Cell-phone use by students 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. Exception to this policy will be made during the lunch period, but phones should be turned off at all other times.
- 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 (e.g. during Reading or after school). Calls are best made in the morning when the school secretary can answer and take written messages.

- Parent-Student calls 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 written, signed parental permission specifying the date and time when the student must leave the building. The student must present this written permission to their advisor and the school secretary before leaving the building. Students will also need to sign out in the office before leaving the building and need to sign in at the school office when they return.

### ***Service Learning/Out-of-School Learning***

Students who have arranged service learning or other off-site learning experiences must receive advisor and parent approval beforehand. A Site Visitation Form (found in Appendix B) 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 in the office before leaving the building and need to sign in at the school office when they 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.

### ***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 from the school secretary.

## **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” on page 13 of 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 re-admission 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,” on page 13.

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 Student Assurance Services, Inc.; if you are interested and do not receive information on this insurance at the beginning of the school year, contact the school.

## **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 at Appleton Central for \$3.00. A parent or staff member walks with students to take advantage of the AASD award-winning lunch program.
- Students may pack a lunch. There are a refrigerator, 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.

Students are asked to use common sense when consuming food and beverages. Food is to be eaten only in assigned areas (break room 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 advisory areas.

## **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.

## **Intrascholastic/Intramural Offerings**

VNS is not a traditional public school and does not provide the typical athletic and extracurricular offerings on site. However, the founders and advisors of VNS support the education of the whole child and believe that there are many alternative ways to meet one's educational goals. They will work with students and parents to help them find opportunities to meet their developmental needs. If students want to pursue foreign language, advanced placement/honors classes, band/orchestra, sports, drama, etc., they can incorporate them as part of their projects both within and outside of the school system. Because VNS is an Appleton Public School, students at VNS will have access to intrascholastic/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.

Appleton East	832-6208	Student Services:	832-6201
Madison MS	832-6279		832-7101
Appleton North	832-4307		832-4308
Einstein MS	832-6242		832-6240
Appleton West	832-4105		832-7405
Wilson MS	832-4987		832-7700
Roosevelt MS	832-6296		832-6294

## Athletics

<b>Boys (Fall)</b>	<b>Girls (Fall)</b>
Cross Country (7-12)	Cross Country (7-12)
Football (7-12)	Golf (9-12)
Soccer (9-12)	Swimming (9-12)
Spirit Squads (9-12)	Tennis (9-12)
Volleyball (9-12)	Volleyball (8-12)
	Spirit Squads (9-12)
<b>Boys (Winter)</b>	Softball (7)
Basketball (7-12)	
Hockey (9-12)	<b>Girls (Winter)</b>
Wrestling (7-12)	Basketball (7-12)
Spirit Squads (7-12)	Spirit Squads (7-12)
Swimming (9-12)	
	<b>Girls (Spring)</b>
<b>Boys (Spring)</b>	Soccer (9-12)
Baseball (9-12)	Softball (8-12)
Golf (9-12)	Track (7-12)
Tennis (9-12)	Volleyball (7)
Track (7-12)	

## 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 except the main entrance.
- 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:

- East Ramp (on Washington St.) - \$2/day for single entry/exit
- City Center Ramp - \$0.25/35 minutes
- Off street parking three blocks away - FREE

## **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 computers can be searched and programs deleted if they are not supporting educational learning. Games for entertainment are NOT to be used, installed, or played.

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 "executable files" from diskettes, CD-ROM, or the Internet.
- 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 illegally transfer software (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**

Valley New School students enjoy unprecedented access to computer technology. The use of personal computers (desktop or laptop) is prohibited except under the following conditions:

- Eligibility limited to students in good academic standing
- No wireless capability or connection
- Use must be tied to a specific project
- Contract is formed among student, staff, and parents regarding use and duration of exception

# 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 he/she fill 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 he/she fill 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 he/she 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 he/she 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 Governance 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 face-to-face meeting with advisor.
3. If issue is yet unresolved, establish 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 VNS community (Guidelines in Grievance Packet will be used.)

## Conflict Resolution Preparation Form

This form should be completed by party who is raising the issue before initial meeting. If no resolution is attained after 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 and Discipline**

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 school governance committee. 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.

## **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 on page 11 of 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.