

Employee handbook receipt

Name _____

Campus/department _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of my personal copy of the Van Alstyne ISD Employee Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

Employees have the option of receiving the handbook in electronic format or hard copy. Employees may access the electronic format by going to www.vanalstyneisd.org and click on the **Personnel tab** and then click on the **Employee Handbook**.

Please indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box below:

I choose to receive the employee handbook in electronic format and accept responsibility for accessing according to the instructions provided.

I choose to receive a hard copy of the employee handbook.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in District policies may supersede, modify, or eliminate the information summarized in this booklet. As the District provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

I understand that no modification to contractual relationships or alterations of at will relationships is intended in this handbook.

I understand that I have an obligation to inform my campus principal of any changes in personal information, such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting my campus principal or the Superintendent's office if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

Signature

Date

Note: This handbook includes two copies of this form. Please sign and date one and keep it in the handbook. Sign and date the other copy and forward it to the campus principal's office.

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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all district policies and procedures are included. Those that are included have been summarized. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to Dr Alan Seay, Superintendent or Rick DeMasters, Assistant Superintendent.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. It is not intended to alter the at will status of employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures related to employment. District policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics found in Appendix A, confer with their campus principal, or call the district office. Policy manuals are located in your campus principal's office and are available for employee review during normal working hours. District policies can be accessed on line at www.vanalstyneisd.org and click on the **Administration tab**, **Central Office**, and **Online Board Policy**.

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I understand that no modification to contractual relationships or alterations of at will relationships is intended in this handbook.

I understand that I have an obligation to inform my campus principal and the Central Office staff of any changes in personal information, such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting my campus principal or the Superintendent's office if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

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VAN ALSTYNE I S D

OATH OF CONFIDENTIALTY

In accordance with Principle IV of the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, the following Standards are the responsibility of all Texas educators, including certified and non-certified personnel working in the public school.

Standard 1: The educator shall not intentionally expose the student to disparagement.

Standard 2: The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure served professional purposes or is required by law.

After staff development on this issue of student confidentiality, I understand the legal requirements for educators and will not knowingly divulge any information, either written or verbal, to any person not directly involved with a child's education without written permission from the child's parent or guardian unless required to do so in a court of law.

Signature of Employee Date

Signature of Trainer Date

Signature of Campus Administrator Date

District Information

Description of the District

Van Alstyne Independent School is fully accredited by TEA and is governed by a seven-member board of trustees. The District is composed of three campuses housing approximately 1,390 students. The Elementary campus is made up of pre-kindergarten through 4th grade. The Middle school houses grades 5-8, and the High school has grades 9-12.

The District presently maintains an excellent student/teacher ratio of 14:1. The area is fortunate to have supportive parents who participate in district activities through parent/teacher organizations and booster clubs for athletics, band and vocational programs.

Van Alstyne ISD has a varied curriculum at all campuses with programs for the gifted and talented and for those students with special needs. An award winning vocational program is available at the high school campus. Advanced Placement (AP) courses are offered at the high school level in English, Math, Science, and Spanish. The district offers Spanish and Latin in grades 9-12. The district offers Band, Art, Music and a variety of sports for both boys and girls. **The VAISD is a Recognized District.** Van Alstyne Intermediate School has received an **“Exemplary”** rating and VA Elementary and High School have both received **Recognized** ratings. VA Middle School achieved an **Acceptable** rating. The District is extremely proud of the accomplishments of its students on the state and national level. Yearly, students excel in University Interscholastic League academic competition at the District, Regional, State and National levels with participation in events such as Science, Journalism, and Latin. Each year graduates are not only accepted to, but have also received academic scholarships from prestigious institutions.

Van Alstyne football, volleyball, cross-country, basketball, track, softball, power-lifting, tennis, and baseball teams have been state ranked, winning numerous District championships and participating in post-season play.

Van Alstyne is extremely proud of its long history of outstanding accomplishments in academics and athletics.

Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

Policy AE

The mission of the Van Alstyne Independent School District is to collaborate with families and the community to educate our students in a supportive and challenging environment to be ethical, responsible, successful learners who reach their highest potential to compete and thrive in our rapidly changing world.

District goals and objectives are established at the beginning of each school year in accordance with school district policy. District goals and objectives are located in your campus principal's office and are available for employee review during normal working hours.

Board of Trustees

Policies BB, BD, BE Series

Texas law grants the Board of Trustees the power to govern and oversee the management of the District's schools. The board is the policy-making body within the District and has overall responsibility for the curriculum, school taxes, annual budget, and employment of the superintendent and other professional staff, facilities, and expansions. The board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal law and regulations.

The Board of Trustees is elected by the citizens of the District to ensure a strong educational program for the District's children. Trustees are elected annually and serve three-year (3) terms. Trustees serve without compensation, must be registered voters, and must reside in the district.

Board members:

Kyle Beall	President
David Kerr.....	Vice President
Kim Weber	Secretary
Holly Carter.....	Trustee
Misha Frey.....	Trustee
Rodney Carroll.....	Trustee
John Allen.....	Trustee

Trustees usually meet on the third Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Meetings are held in the VAISD Administration Board Room located at 203 S. College. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted at the district administrative office entrance at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and agenda of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

All meetings are open to the public. Texas law permits the board to go into a closed session under the following circumstances: to discuss prospective gifts or donations, real property acquisition, personnel issues including conferences with employees and employee complaints, security matters, student discipline, or to consult with attorneys.

Administration

Dr. Alan Seay	Superintendent
Rick DeMasters	Assistant Superintendent
Kenneth Daniel	Technology Director
Lawana Merriman	Administrative Assistant
Peggy Miller	Business Manager
Rhonda Moore	Accounts Payable Manager
Twila Whitaker	Payroll/Benefits Manager
Duke Sparks	High School Principal
Karen Walker	High School Assistant Principal
Becky Clemens	High School Secretary
Ryan Coleman	Middle School Principal
Carrie Barton	Middle School Secretary
Michael D. Welch	Middle School Principal
Jane Ruyle	Middle School Secretary
Terry Billups	Elementary School Principal
Lanette Dyer	Elementary Assistant Principal
Joy Clay	Elementary School Secretary
Brian Polk	Athletic Director/Head Football Coach

Helpful Contacts

From time to time, employees have questions or concerns that should be answered by supervisors or at the campus or department level. Employees are encouraged to resolve concerns at the campus level. If those questions or concerns cannot be answered by supervisors or at the campus or department level, the employee is encouraged to contact the Superintendent's office.

Employment

Equal Employment Opportunity

Policy DAA, DIA

The Van Alstyne ISD does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, military status, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Employment decisions will be based on each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, or age or questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should contact Rick DeMasters, Title IX Coordinator/Assistant Superintendent.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Policy DC

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are published regularly on the District website (www.vanalstyneisd.org), on each campus, and in the central administration office.

Employment After Retirement

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed in limited circumstances on a full-or part-time part-time basis without affecting their benefits, according to TRS rules and state law. Detailed information about employment after retirement is available in the TRS publication *Employment After Retirement*. Employees can contact TRS for additional information by calling 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. Information is also available on the TRS Web Site (www.trs.state.tx.us).

Contract and Non-contract Employment

Policies DC, DCA, DCB, DCC, DCD, DCE

State law requires the district to employ all full-time professional employees (teachers, librarians, and nurses) in positions requiring a certificate from SBEC under probationary, or term contracts as appropriate. Employees in all other positions are employed at will and are not subject to the procedures for non-renewal or termination under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. The paragraphs that follow provide a general description of the employment arrangements used by the District.

Probationary Contracts. Nurses and all full-time professional employees new to the District and employed in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive

probationary contracts during their first year of employment if they have not been previously employed by the district. Former employees who are hired after at least a two-year lapse in District employment also may be employed by probationary contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed in public schools for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the District may not exceed one full school year. For those with less experience, the probationary period will be three full school years, with an optional fourth full school year if the district has doubts about whether a term or continuing contract should be given.

Term Contracts. Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification who have successfully completed the probationary period will be employed by term contracts. Campus principals and central office administrators may be employed under multi-year term contracts. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. All employees will receive a copy of their contract and employment policies.

Non-certified Professional and Administrative Employees. Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require certification are not employed by contract. Employment is for an unspecified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees. All paraprofessional and auxiliary employees, regardless of certification, are employed at will and not by contract. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.

Dress Code

Policy DH

All District employees shall dress in a clean, neat, and professional manner for their assignments, and in accordance with any additional standards established by their supervisors and approved by the Superintendent.

Cell Phone Courtesy Guidelines

VAISD employees may carry a cell phone during working hours. It is expected that all cell phone users abide by these courtesy guidelines.

- The person you are with is the most important person to talk to. Work-related, meetings with parents, job applicants, employees, and students should not be interrupted to take a call. All participants should put phones on **silent** or turn them **off**. A District employee pulling out his or her phone during a conversation to check **Caller ID** can be just as offensive to an upset parent as actually taking a call.
- Cell phones should be turned **off** during class time.
- Change Ringing tones to the one most appropriate for the setting you are in. Inside, use **silent** or **vibrating** options.

- Turn **off** your phone during public performances or while in public spaces where talking is disruptive and violates basic courtesy.
In settings such as assemblies, concerts, student performances and any learning environments, turn **off** your phone. Set the phone for text messaging if you are expecting an important call.
- Don't engage in "Cell Yell."
Most phones have sensitive microphones that can pick up whispers. Be especially sensitive when you have a "captive" audience such as in a bus, meeting, or waiting in line.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

Policy DHE

Non-investigatory searches in the workplace, including accessing an employee's desk, file cabinets, or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes may occur when an employee is unavailable. Therefore, employees are hereby notified that they have no legitimate expectation of privacy in those places. In addition, the District reserves the right to search when there is reasonable cause to believe a search will recover evidence of work-related misconduct. Such an investigatory search may include drug and alcohol testing if the suspected violation relates to drug or alcohol use. The District may search the employee, the employee's personal items, work areas, lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or work-sites used in District business.

Employees required to have a Commercial Driver's License. All employees who are required to have a commercial driver's license (CDL) are subject to drug and alcohol testing. This includes all drivers who operate a motor vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people, counting the driver; drivers of large vehicles; or drivers of vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials. Teachers, coaches, or other employees who primarily perform duties other than driving are subject to testing requirements if their duties include driving. The purpose of alcohol and drug testing is to ensure safety and prevent accidents and injuries resulting from the misuse of alcohol and drugs by drivers of commercial motor vehicles.

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted following accidents. Return-to-duty and follow-up testing will be conducted when an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs returns to duty.

All employees required to have a CDL that are subject to alcohol and drug testing will receive a copy of the district's policy, the testing requirements, and detailed information on alcohol and drug abuse and the availability of assistance programs. Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational

material should contact their campus principal.

First Aid and CPR Certification

Policies DBA, DMA

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the District proof of current certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED). Certification must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification to the campus principal.

Reassignments and Transfers

Policy DK

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the Superintendent. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract. Campus reassignments must be approved by the principal at the receiving campus. When reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes, the superintendent has final placement authority. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time unless an extracurricular or supplemental duty assignment is part of a dual-assignment contract. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the district process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and district policy DGBA (Local).

Employees with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's campus principal. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the superintendent's office and must be approved by the receiving campus principal.

Workload and Work Schedules

Policies DEA, DL

Professional Employees. Professional and administrative employees are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10-, 11-, or 12-month basis, according to the work schedules set by the district. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule for teachers and all school holidays. Notice of work schedules including required days of service and scheduled holidays will be distributed each school year.

Classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation and conferences. The schedule of planning periods is set at the campus level but must provide at least 450 minutes within each two-week period in blocks not less than 45

minutes within the instructional day. Teachers and librarians are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes. The district may require teachers to supervise students one day a week when no other personnel are available.

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees. Support employees are employed at will and will be notified of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees are not exempt from overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor. Overtime will be paid ONLY with prior approval of supervisor.

Notification of parents regarding qualifications

Policies DBA, DK

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notification under NCLB is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals serving with an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take the EXCET exam) or individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request.

In schools receiving Title I funds, the district is required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. NCLB also requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned, or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Employees who have questions about their certification status can call Rick DeMasters, Assistant Superintendent.

Outside Employment and Tutoring

Policy DBD

Employees are required to disclose in writing to their immediate supervisor any outside employment that may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest of the District. Supervisors will consider outside employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

Performance Evaluation

Policies DN, DNA, DNB

Evaluation of an employee's job performance should be a continual process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned

job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor at least annually. Written evaluations will be completed on forms approved by the District. Reports, correspondence, and memoranda also can be used to document performance information. All employees will receive a copy of their written evaluation, have a performance conference with their supervisor, and have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

Employee Involvement

Policies BQA, BQB

At both the campus and district levels, Van Alstyne ISD offers opportunities for involvement in matters that affect employees. As part of the District's planning and decision-making process, employees may either be asked or elected to serve on district-or campus-level advisory committees. Plans and detailed information about the shared decision-making process are available in each campus office or from the Superintendent's office.

Staff Development

Policy DMA

Staff development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and the District. Staff development for instructional personnel is predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, addressed in the campus improvement plan, and approved by a campus-level advisory committee. Staff development for non-instructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements (e.g., bus drivers) and continued employee skill development. Individuals holding renewable SBEC certificates are responsible for obtaining the required training hours and maintaining appropriate documentation.

Compensation and Benefits

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

Policies DEA, DEAA

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and a pay structure established for each position. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional and administrative employees are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See Overtime Compensation, page 18)

Salaries and wages are reviewed on an annual basis and adjusted according to the budgeted amounts approved by the board. All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules before the start of each school year. Classroom teachers, librarians, and nurses will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extracurricular duties or supplemental duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the district's extra-duty pay schedule.

Employees should contact their supervisor for more information about the district's pay schedules or regarding personal pay information.

Annualized Compensation

Policy DEA

The district pays all salaried employees over 12 months regardless of the number of months employed during the school year. Salaried employees will be paid in equal monthly or bimonthly payments, beginning with the first paid period of the school year. An employee who separates from service before the last day of instruction or retires under TRS, will receive in his or her final paycheck, a lump sum payment for wages actually earned from the beginning of the school year to the date of separation. Employees that separate after the last day of instruction will continue to receive paychecks through the end of the summer.

Paychecks

All professional employees are paid monthly. During the school year, paychecks are delivered to each campus. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check without the employee's written authorization. During summer breaks, paychecks will be available on the 25th of each month in the Superintendent's office between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. If the paycheck is not picked up that day, it will be mailed to the employee's mailing address.

An employee's payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information, and the amount of leave accumulated. If you have questions about your payroll statement, contact the campus principal.

Payday for VAISD is the 25th of each month. If the 25th is during a weekend or holiday, staff will receive checks on the last working day preceding the holiday or weekend.

Automatic Payroll Deposit

Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of 15 days is necessary to activate this service. With automatic deposit, an employee's pay is immediately available on the pay date. Contact the Superintendent's office for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

Payroll Deductions

Policy CFEA

Automatic payroll deductions for the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and federal income tax are required for all full-time employees. Medicare tax deductions also are required for all employees hired after March 31, 1986. Temporary and part-time employees who are not eligible for TRS membership must have their Social Security contributions deducted.

Employees may elect to include payroll deductions for the employee's share of premiums for health, dental, life, and vision insurance; annuities; and higher education savings plans. Employees also may request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations, charitable organizations, as well as the cost of child care. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

Overtime Compensation

Policy DEA

The District compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. All employees are classified as exempt or nonexempt for purposes of overtime compensation. Professional and administrative employees are ineligible for overtime compensation. Only nonexempt employees (hourly employees and paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. Nonexempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor.

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours weekly and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Employees who

must work beyond their normal schedule but less than 40 hours per week will be compensated in straight-time pay or compensatory time off. Employees must work more than 40 total hours in a week to earn overtime compensation.

For the purpose of calculating overtime, a work week begins at 12:01 a.m. Sunday and ends at midnight Saturday. Employees may be compensated for overtime with compensatory time off or direct pay at time-and-a-half rates. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 60 hours of comp time.
- Comp time must be used in the duty year it is earned.
- Use of comp may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval as workload permits, or at the supervisor's direction.
- An employee may be required to use comp time before using any other available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time sheets will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for wage and salary administration.

Reimbursement Payments

Reimbursement for school business expenditures (including mileage) will be paid to employees on the 10th and 25th of each month. Proper forms must be in the Superintendent's office 5 days prior in order to be processed by check dates.

Travel Expense Reimbursement

Policy DEE

An employee's campus principal must give approval before any travel expenses are incurred. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule authorized by the District. Employees must submit receipts to be reimbursed for expenses other than mileage.

Health, Dental, and Life Insurance

Policy CRD

Group health insurance coverage is provided through TRS-Active Care, the statewide public school health insurance program. The District's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the Board of Trustees. Employees eligible for health insurance coverage include the following:

- Employees who are active, contributing TRS members
- Employees who are not contributing TRS members and who are regularly scheduled to work at least 10 hours per week

TRS retirees and employees who are not contributing TRS members that are regularly scheduled to work less than 10 hours per week are not eligible to participate in TRS-

Active Care.

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each spring. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact the Superintendent's office for more information.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

Policy CRD

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Superintendent's office for more information.

Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)

Employees may be eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) and, under IRS regulations, must either accept or reject this benefit. This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pretax basis (i.e., disability, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer and dread disease, dental insurance, and additional term life insurance). A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts.

New employees must accept or reject this benefit during their first month of employment. All employees must accept or reject this benefit on an annual basis and during the specified time period.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

Policy CRE

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has worker's compensation coverage from Claims Administrative Services, effective on the first day of employment. Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of the case.

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the campus nurse. Employees who are unable to work due to a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance

Policy CRF

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months if they have employment contracts or reasonable assurance of returning to service. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact the Superintendent's office.

Teacher Retirement

Policy DEG

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least four and one-half months are members of the Teacher Retirement System (TRS). Substitutes not receiving TRS service retirement benefits who work at least 90 days a year are also eligible for TRS membership and to purchase a year of creditable service. TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify TRS and the Superintendent's office as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available in the Superintendent's office. Additional inquiries should be addressed: Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web (www.trs.state.tx.us).

Leaves and Absences

Policy DEC

The District offers employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence in times of personal need. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence. Employees who have personal needs that will require long leaves of absence should call the Superintendent's office for counseling about leave options and continuation of benefits.

Employees who take an unpaid leave of absence may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. The District will pay health care benefits for employees on leave authorized under the Family and Medical Leave Act as if they were working. Otherwise, the District does not make benefit contributions for employees who are on unpaid leave.

Employees must follow District, department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate leave request form. Any employee who is absent more than **five (5)** days because of a personal or family illness must submit medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and-in the case of personal illness- the employee's fitness to return to work.

Personal and local sick leave is earned on an annual basis. Leave is available for the employee's use at any time during the school year. If an employee leaves the District before the end of the work year, the cost of any unearned leave days taken shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck. Retiring employees will be paid for unused sick leave according to the provisions in board policy.

Personal Leave

State law entitles all employees to **five** days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is earned at a rate of one-half a workday for each 18 workdays of employment, up to the statutory maximum of five workdays per year. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to an assigned workday. There is no limit on the accumulation of state personal leave, and it can be transferred to other Texas school districts and is generally transferable to education service centers. There are two types of personal leave: non-discretionary and discretionary.

Nondiscretionary. Leave that is taken for personal or family illness, emergency, or a death in the family, or active military service is considered non-discretionary leave. This type of leave allows very little or no advance planning and will be granted to employees in the same manner as state sick leave.

Discretionary. Leave is taken at an employee's discretion and should be scheduled in advance. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a notice of the request **three (3)** days in advance of the anticipated absence to his or her principal or supervisor. Discretionary personal leave will be granted on a first-come,

first-served basis, with a maximum of 20 percent of campus employees in each category permitted to be absent at the same time for discretionary personal leave. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor. Discretionary leave **may not last more than five (5)** consecutive workdays, except with special approval for extenuating circumstances. Except in extenuating circumstances as determined by the superintendent, discretionary leave will not be allowed under the following:

- the day before a school holiday
- the day after a school holiday
- days scheduled for end-of-semester or end-of-year exams
- days scheduled for TAKS tests
- professional or staff development days
- the first or last day of a grading period.

Sick Leave

Previously accumulated state sick leave is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. If an employee uses more sick leave than he or she has earned, the cost of unearned sick leave will be deducted from the employee's next paycheck.

Sick leave may be used for the following reasons only:

- Employee illness
- Illness in the employee's immediate family
- Family emergency (i.e., natural disasters or life-threatening situations)
- Death in the immediate family
- Active military service

Sick Leave Pool

Purpose

The creation and operation of a sick leave pool is to benefit employees who suffer, or are affected by, a **catastrophic injury or illness as defined in DEC (Local) as follows:**

A severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of the employee or the employee's immediate family that requires the present care of a licensed physician (Doctor of Medicine or Doctor of Osteopathy) for the treatment of the specific catastrophic illness or injury for prolonged period of time and that forces the employee to exhaust all leave time accrued by that employee and to lose compensation from the District for the employee.

For this purpose, immediate family is defined as a father, mother, spouse or a child who

is dependent upon the employee (as defined by Internal Revenue Service), is living in the household or, if not in the same household, is totally dependent upon the employee for personal care or services on a continuing basis.

A District sick leave pool may be established from voluntary donations by District staff to assist an employee suffering from a serious health condition, including **complications** from pregnancy.

The local sick leave pool policy DEC (Local) will allow Van Alstyne ISD employees an opportunity to donate sick leave days to other district employees who, because of a catastrophic situation, have exhausted their leave days.

Eligibility

All “regular employees” of the Van Alstyne ISD shall be eligible to donate local sick leave days.

All “regular employees” of the Van Alstyne ISD shall be eligible to receive local sick leave days.

*“Regular employees” refers to those persons employed over 20 hours per week by the district.

Procedure Establishment: In order to request that a pool be established, an employee must have used all available paid leave. A maximum of 15 days may be donated for any individual employee per school year.

A request to establish a sick leave pool shall be made in writing to the principal and the superintendent shall inform District staff when a sick leave pool may be started by voluntary contributions designated for a specific employee. Forms shall originate from the campus office.

A pool may be established on the first day that an employee (having a qualifying event) has exhausted all leave and will remain active until the event is resolved.

More than one pool may be established per employee during a school year; however, the 15 day per school year limit applies.

Donated days may not be carried forward to the next school year.

Contributions

Days may be donated after an employee has exhausted all leave and the days are needed. In other words, DAYS will not be “banked” for anticipated use. Donated days will be accepted as they are received and will be deducted from the donor’s leave when they are received. Donated days that are unused WILL NOT be returned to the donor.

When the 15-day limit is reached and the employee is still unable to return to work, the

full daily rate of pay shall be deducted from his or her paycheck for each day absent.

Forms

A donation form is available from the campus office. Please complete the form, sign it, and send it to the Superintendent's office. Donors must complete and sign a donation form.

Limits

An employee may contribute no more than four days of leave per school year with a limit of two days to any one pool.

Exclusions

A pool may not be established for employees who have exhausted all leave but do not meet the criteria for a catastrophic illness or event.

Dissolution

A sick leave pool shall cease to exist when the recipient returns to work or when the 15-day limit is exhausted.

Local Leave

DEC (Local)

All employees shall earn an additional **two** equivalent workdays of local personal leave per school year, concurrently with state personal leave. Local personal leave shall be non-cumulative and shall be taken with no loss of pay. **At the end of each school year, employees shall be reimbursed for unused personal leave days at the prevailing substitute's rate of pay.** Local leave shall be subject to the same notice procedures and schedule limitations as discretionary leave.

Temporary Disability

Certified employees. The purpose of temporary disability leave is to provide job protection to full-time educators who cannot work for an extended period of time because of a mental or physical disability of a temporary nature. Any full-time employee whose position requires certification by the State Board for Educator Certification or by the District is eligible for temporary disability leave. Pregnancy and conditions related to pregnancy are treated the same as any other temporary disability. A full-time educator may voluntarily request to be placed on temporary disability leave or be placed on leave involuntarily.

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. The leave request must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days. If disability leave is not approved, the employee must return to work or be subject to termination procedures.

If an employee is placed on temporary disability leave involuntarily, he or she has the right to request a hearing before the Board of Trustees. The employee may protest the action and present additional evidence of fitness to work.

When an employee is ready to return to work, the Superintendent should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able to resume regular duties. Professional employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned as soon as an appropriate position is available. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, professional employees will be reinstated at the beginning of the following school year.

Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

Eligibility. Employees who work in a District where there are at least 50 employees within a 75-mile radius, have been employed by the District for at least 12 months, and have worked at least 1,250 hours during that time are eligible for family and medical leave. Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave each year beginning on the first duty day of the school year for the following reasons:

- The adoption, foster placement, or birth of a child
- To care for a spouse, parent, or child with a serious health condition
- An employee's serious health condition
- A qualifying exigency resulting from active military service of a spouse, child, or parent

A husband and wife who are both employed by the District may be limited to a combined total of 12 weeks leave as determined by the District to care for a parent with a serious health condition or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child; or to care for a covered military service.

Military service family leave. An eligible employee is entitled to leave to care for an active duty military service member who incurs a serious illness or injury in the line of duty. The service member must be the employee's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin. An eligible employee may take up to 26 weeks on a one-time basis to provide care to a covered service member.

Continuation of benefits and job restoration. Eligible employees are entitled to continue their health care benefits under the same terms and conditions as when they were on the job and are entitled to return to their previous job or an equivalent job at the end of their leave. Under some circumstances, teachers who are able to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue their leave until the end of the semester.

Use of paid leave. Family and medical leave runs concurrently with accrued sick and

personal leave, temporary disability leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. The district will designate the leave as family and medical leave, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

Intermittent leave. In some circumstances, employees may take family and medical leave in blocks of time or by reducing their normal weekly or daily work schedule. Intermittent leave may be taken under the following circumstances:

- To allow an employee to care for a seriously ill spouse, child, or parent
- When an employee requires medical treatment for a serious illness
- When an employee is seriously ill and unable to work
- When an employee becomes a parent or has a foster child placed in his or her home

Requests for FMLA. When the need for family and medical leave is foreseeable, employees must provide 30-days advance notice to the District. When the need for leave is not foreseeable, employees must contact the Superintendent as soon as possible. Employees may be required to provide the following:

- Medical certification from a qualified health care provider supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting the employee or an immediate family member
- Second or third medical opinions and periodic re-certification of the need for leave
- Periodic reports during the leave regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work
- Medical certification of an employee's ability to return to work from a qualified health care provider at the conclusion of leave
- Certification of the need for family military leave

Employees requiring family and medical leave should contact the Superintendent for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Workers' Compensation Benefits

An employee absent from duty because of a job-related illness or injury may be eligible for workers' compensation weekly income benefits if the absence exceeds seven calendar days.

An employee receiving workers' compensation wage benefits for a job-related illness or injury may choose to use sick leave or any other paid leave benefits. While receiving workers' compensation wage benefits, the district will pay the difference between the weekly income benefit and the employee's regular salary and charge available leave proportionately.

Assault Leave

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person's age or mental capacity renders the person nonresponsible for purposes of criminal liability.

An employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to two years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. At the request of an employee, the District will immediately assign the employee to assault leave. Days of leave granted under the assault leave provision will not be deducted from accrued personal leave and must be coordinated with workers' compensation benefits. Upon investigation the District may change the assault leave status and charge leave used against the employee's accrued paid leave. The employee's pay will be deducted if accrued paid leave is not available.

Bereavement Leave

Use of state leave and/or local leave for death in the immediate family shall not exceed **five** workdays per occurrence, subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

Jury Duty

Employees will receive leave with pay and without loss of accumulated leave for jury duty. Employees must present documentation of the service and shall be allowed to retain any compensation they receive.

Other Court Appearances

Employees will be granted paid leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding. Other absences for court appearances related to an employee's personal business must be taken as personal leave or leave without pay (if no personal leave is available). Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

Military Leave

Paid leave for military service. Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, or reserve component of the United States armed forces will be granted a paid leave of absence without loss of any accumulated leave for authorized training or duty orders. Paid military leave will not exceed 15 days each federal fiscal year (October 1-September 30). In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during active military service.

Re-employment after military Leave. Employees who leave the District to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active state military duty (Texas National Guard or Texas State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the District will be re-employed in the same position they previously held or reassigned to a position they would have held if employment had not been interrupted or reassigned to an equivalent or similar position provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties of the position. To be eligible for re-employment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for re-employment to the Superintendent.

Continuation of health coverage. Employees who perform service in the uniformed services may elect to continue their health insurance plan coverage at their own cost for a period not to exceed 24 months. Employees should contact the Superintendent's office for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Employee Relations and Communications

Employee Recognition and Appreciation

Policy DJ

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities.

District Communications

Throughout the school year, the Superintendent's office publishes newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements. There is also information available to employees on the district's website @ www.vanalstyneisd.org.

Complaints and Grievances

Policy DGBA

In order to hear and resolve employee complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the board has adopted an orderly grievance process. Employees are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with their supervisors or an appropriate administrator at any time.

The formal grievance process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative grievance procedures are exhausted, employees can bring grievances to the Board of Trustees. For ease of reference, the District's policy concerning the process of bringing complaints and grievances can be accessed electronically by going to www.vanalstyneisd.org and clicking the **Administration tab, Central Office**, and the **On Line Board Policy** option, DGBA (Local). All complaints should be filed on the **Van Alstyne ISD Employee Complaint Form** located on-line at <http://vaisdintranet> printable forms.

Employee Conduct and Welfare

Standards of Conduct

Policy DH

All employees are expected to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the district and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public. Employees are expected to observe the following standards of conduct:

- Recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees and members of the community.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action.
- Know and comply with district and campus procedures and policies.
- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use district time, funds, and property for authorized district business and activities only.

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day the Superintendent first learns of the incident.

The *Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators*, adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification, which all District employees must adhere to, is reprinted below:

Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

Statement of Purpose

The Texas educator shall comply with the standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations

with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward the realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community.

Professional Standards

1. Professional Ethical conduct, Practices, and Performance

Standard 1.1: The educator shall not knowingly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district or educational institution.

Standard 1.2: The educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

Standard 1.3: The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

Standard 1.4: The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

Standard 1.5: The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

Standard 1.6: The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

Standard 1.7: The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other applicable state and federal laws.

Standard 1.8: The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.

2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

Standard 2.1: The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 2.2: The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about colleagues or the school system.

Standard 2.3: The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.

Standard 2.4: The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Standard 2.5: The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, or family

status.

Standard 2.6: The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues

Standard 2.7: The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC under this chapter.

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

Standard 3.1: The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 3.2: The educator shall not knowingly treat a student in a manner that adversely affects the student's learning, physical health, mental health, or safety.

Standard 3.3: The educator shall not deliberately or knowingly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

Standard 3.4: The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, sex, disability, national origin, religion, or family status.

Standard 3.5: The educator shall not engage in physical mistreatment of a student.

Standard 3.6: The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student.

Standard 3.7: The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or knowingly allow any student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of an educator.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Policies DHB, DIA

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees or students. While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment of other persons, including board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents. A substantiated charge of harassment against a student or employee shall result in disciplinary action.

Employees who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against or harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal, supervisor, or appropriate district official. If the campus principal, supervisor, or district official is the subject of a complaint, the employee shall report the complaint directly to the Superintendent. A complaint against the Superintendent may be made directly to the board.

The District's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation can be found by accessing electronically the **Policy on Line** at www.vanalstyneisd.org and clicking on the

Administration tab, Central Office, and Online Board Policy DIA (Local).

Harassment of Students

Policies DF, DH, FFG, FFH

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between district employees and students are strictly prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. All allegations of prohibited harassment or abuse of a student will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. Conduct that may be characterized as known or suspected child abuse also will be reported to the appropriate authorities, as required by law.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students can be found by accessing electronically the **Policy on Line** at www.vanalstyneisd.org and clicking on the **Administration tab, Central Office, and Online Board Policy DF (Legal) and FFH (Local).**

Alcohol-and Drug-Abuse Prevention

Policies DH, DI

Van Alstyne ISD is committed to maintaining an alcohol-and drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of alcohol and illegal drugs in the workplace and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours may be dismissed. The District's policy regarding employee drug use can be found by going to the **Policy on Line** at www.vanalstyneisd.org and clicking on the **Administration tab, Central Office, and Online Board Policy DH (Local) and DI (Exhibit).**

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Policies DF, DG, DH, FFG, GRA

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering a facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Abuse is defined by Texas Family Code and includes any sexual conduct involving an educator and a student or minor. Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to a local office or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.

Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the district is prohibited from retaliating against an employee who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution for the commission of a Class B misdemeanor. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agencies. In addition, employees must cooperate with child abuse and neglect investigators. Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report to the appropriate state agency. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the investigator is prohibited.

Fraud and Financial Impropriety

Policy CAA

All employees should act with integrity and diligence in duties involving the District's financial resources. The District prohibits fraud and financial impropriety, as defined below. Fraud and financial impropriety includes the following:

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets, including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities

- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district

Conflict of Interest

Policies BBFA, DBD

Employees are required to disclose to their supervisor any situation that creates a potential conflict of interest with proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or creates a potential conflict of interest with the best interests of the district. This includes the following:

- A personal financial interest
- A business interest
- Any other obligation or relationship
- Nonschool employment

Gifts and Favors

Policy DBD

Employees may not accept gifts and favors that could influence, or be construed to influence, the employee's discharge of assigned duties. The acceptance of a gift, favor, or service by an administrator or teacher that might reasonably tend to influence the selection of textbooks may result in prosecution of a Class B misdemeanor offense. This does not include staff development, teacher training, or instructional materials, such as maps or worksheets, that convey information to students or contribute to the learning process.

Associations and Political Activities

Policy DGA

The District will not directly or indirectly discourage employees from participating in political affairs or require any employee to join any group, club, committee, organization, or association. Employees may join or refuse to join any professional association or organization.

An individual's employment will not be affected by membership or a decision not to be a member of any employee organization that exists for the purpose of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work.

Use of district resources, including work time, for political activities is prohibited.

Safety

Policy CK

The District has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, co-workers, and students and to protect and conserve district equipment, employees must comply with the following requirements:

- Observe all safety rules
- Keep work areas clean and orderly at all times
- Immediately report all accidents to their supervisor
- Operate only equipment or machines for which they have training and authorization

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact their supervisor.

Tobacco Use

Policies DH, GKA, FNCD

State law prohibits smoking or using tobacco products on all District-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off campus. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for athletics and other activities. Drivers of district-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking or using tobacco products while inside the vehicle. Notices are displayed in prominent places in all school buildings stating that smoking or using tobacco products is prohibited by law and punishable by a fine.

Criminal History Background Checks

Policy DBAA

Employees may be subject to a review of their criminal history record information at any time during employment. National criminal history checks based on an individual's fingerprints, photo, and other identification will be conducted on certain employees and entered into the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Clearinghouse. This database provides the district and SBEC with access to an employee's current national criminal history and updates to the employee's subsequent criminal history.

Employee Arrests and Convictions

Policy DH

An employee must notify his or her principal or immediate supervisor within three calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other

ajudication of any felony, any offense involving moral turpitude, and any of the other offenses listed below:

- Crimes involving school property
- Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator
- Crimes that occur wholly or in part of school property or at a school-sponsored activity
- Crimes involving moral turpitude

Moral turpitude includes the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit
- Theft
- Misrepresentation
- Deliberate violence
- Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor
- Drug- or alcohol-related offenses
- Acts constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code

Possession of Firearms and Weapons

Policies FNCG, GKA

Employees, visitors, and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, illegal knives, or other weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district weapons policy should report it to a campus administrator or call the superintendent immediately.

Visitors in the Workplace

Policy GKC

All visitors are expected to enter any District facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the building's main office. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the district premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge.

Copyrighted Materials

Policy EFE

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of copyright law relating to the unauthorized use, reproduction, distribution, performance, or display of copyrighted materials (i.e., printed material, videos, computer data and programs, etc.). Rented videotapes are to be used in the classroom for educational purposes only. Duplication or backup of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

Computer Use and Data Management

Policy CQ

The District's electronic communication system, including its network access to the Internet, is to be used for administrative and instructional purposes only. Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications systems are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use.

Employees who are authorized to use the systems are required to abide by the provisions of the District's communications systems policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the District's Technology Director.

Asbestos Management Plan

Policy CKA

The District is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each piece of district property. A copy of the District's management plan is kept in the Superintendent's office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

Pest Control Treatment

Policies DI, CLB

Employees are prohibited from applying any pesticide or herbicide without appropriate training and prior approval of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) coordinator. Any application of pesticide or herbicide must be done in a manner prescribed by law and the district's integrated pest management program.

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located near the main entrance to the building. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

General Procedures

Bad Weather Closing

The District may close schools because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the District's facilities. School closings will be noted on the school website at www.vanalstyneisd.org. School officials will also notify the following radio and television stations when it becomes necessary to open late or release students early.

-FM Radio Stations

KLAK 97.5
KKAJ 95.7/1240 AM
WBAP 820 AM

-TV Channels

5, 8, 10, 11, 12

If no announcement is made by 6:30 a.m., then it can be assumed that school will open as usual.

Emergencies

Policy CKC

All employees should be familiar with the evacuation diagrams posted in their work areas. Fire, tornado, and other emergency drills will be conducted to familiarize employees and students with evacuation procedures. Fire extinguishers are located throughout all district buildings. Employees should know the location of the extinguishers nearest their place of work and how to use them. Should a crisis situation arise, a Crisis Management Flip Chart is provided for each staff member and should be kept for quick reference. Employees should familiarize themselves with the Flip Chart upon receipt.

Purchasing Procedures

Policy CH

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the campus principal on an official district purchase requisition form with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district can be made without a requisition number. The District will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the District's business office. Contact your campus principal for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the Superintendent's office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, home telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. The form to process a change in personal information is located at <http://vaisdintranet> **Online Forms** under **Personnel** and click on the **Employee Information Change Form**.

Personnel Records

Policy GBA

Most District records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

- Address
- Phone number
- Social Security number
- Information that reveals whether they have family members

The choice to not allow public access to this information may be done at any time by submitting a written request to the Superintendent's office. New or terminating employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information will be released to the public.

Building Use

Policies DGA, GKD

Employees who wish to use District facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. Campus principals are responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the campus principal to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

Termination of Employment

Resignations

Policy DFE

Contract Employees. Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Superintendent. Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the superintendent or the Board of Trustees. Resignation without consent may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

The Superintendent will notify the State Board of Certification when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any of the acts listed in *Reports to the State Board for Educator Certification*, on page 43.

Non-contract Employees. Non-contract employees may resign their positions at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Superintendent at least two weeks prior to the effective date. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so.

Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

Policies DFAA, DFAB, DFBA, DFBB, DFCA, DFD, DFF

Employees on probationary and term contracts can be dismissed during the school year or non-renewed at the end of the year according to the procedures outlined in District policies. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The time lines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee. Advanced notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or whose certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the time lines and procedures can be found in the *DF* series policies provided to employees or in the policy manuals located in campus offices.

Dismissal of Non-contract Employees

Policy DCD

Non-contract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, religion, sex, national origin, disability,

military status, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Non-contract employees have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance.

Exit Interviews and Procedures

Policy DC

Exit interviews will be scheduled for employees leaving the District. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time. Separating employees are asked to provide the District with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the District with feedback on his or her employment experience. All District keys, books, property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment.

Reports to the State Board for Educator Certification

Policy DF

The dismissal or resignation of a certified employee will be reported to the SBEC when the Superintendent first learns about an alleged incident of conduct that involves the following:

- A reported criminal history
- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other illegal conduct with a minor
- Soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of school property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle the individual to a professional position or to receive additional compensation associated with a position
- Committing a crime on school property or at a school-sponsored event
- Violating assessment instrument security procedures

Reports Concerning Court-ordered Withholding

The District is required to report the termination of employees that are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance to the court and the individual receiving the support (Texas Family Code §8.210, 158.211). Notice of the following must be sent to the court and support recipient:

- Termination of employment not later than the seventh day after the date of termination

- Employee's last known address
- Name and address of the employee's new employer, if known

Student issues

Equal Educational Opportunities

Policies FB, FFH

Van Alstyne ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs. Programs are provided in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (vocational); Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students on any of the bases listed above should be directed to Rick DeMasters, Assistant Superintendent.

Student Records

Policy FL

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records.

The following people are the only people who have general access to a student's records:

1. Parents: Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights
2. The student (if 18 or older or emancipated by a court)
3. School officials with legitimate education interests

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus principal for assistance.

Parent and Student Complaints

Policy FNG

In an effort to hear and resolve parent and student complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the board has adopted orderly processes for handling complaints on different issues. Any campus office or the Superintendent's office can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint.

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teachers or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved should be directed to the campus principal. The formal complaint process provides parents and students with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with a principal's response. Once all administrative

complaint procedures are exhausted, parents and students can bring complaints to the Board of Trustees.

Administering Medication to Students

Policy FFAC

Only designated employees can administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. A student who must take medicine during the school day must bring a written request from his or her parent and the medicine, in its original, properly labeled container. Contact the principal or school nurse for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students.

Dietary Supplements

Policies DH, FFAC

District employees are prohibited by state law from knowingly selling, marketing, or distributing a dietary supplement that contains performance-enhancing compounds to a student with whom the employee has contact as part of his or her school district duties. In addition, employees may not knowingly endorse or suggest the ingestion, intranasal application, or inhalation of a performance-enhancing dietary supplement to any student.

Psychotropic drugs

Policy FFAC

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

District employees are prohibited by state law from doing the following:

- Recommending that a student use a psychotropic drug
- Suggesting a particular diagnosis
- Excluding from class or school-related activity a student whose parent refuses to consent to a psychiatric evaluation or to authorize the administration of a psychotropic drug to a student

Student Discipline

Policies in the FN series and FO series

Students are expected to follow the campus rules, classroom rules, and rules listed in the Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management

procedures that have been adopted by the District. Other employees that have concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or campus principal.

Teachers must file a written report with the principal or another appropriate administrator when they have knowledge that a student has violated the Student Code of Conduct. The principal or administrator will send a copy of this report to the student's parents within 24 hours.

Student Attendance

Policy FEB

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the District's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student, upon returning to school, must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the student handbook. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

Bullying

Policy FFI

All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying to the campus principal. The District's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students can be found by accessing electronically the **Policy on Line** at www.vanalstyne.org and clicking on the **Administration tab, Central Office,** and **Online Board Policy FFI (Local)**.

Hazing

Policy FNCC, FO

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of "initiation rites" of a school club or organization. While most initiation rites are permissible, engaging in or permitting "hazing" is a criminal offense. Any teacher, administrator, or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, who has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing, or has engaged in hazing must report that fact or suspicion to the designated campus administrator.

Appendix A: Board Policies

The following list of employment policies, including (Legal) and (Local) policies and exhibits can be found at the following codes in your policy manual.

* Indicates a policy affected by Update 83.

DAA*	Equal employment opportunity
DBAA	Criminal history and credit reports
DBD	Conflict of interest
DC Series	Employment practices
DEA*	Salaries and wages
DEAA	Stipends and incentives
DEC*	Leaves and absences
DFAC	Return to probationary status
DFB Series	Termination of term contracts
DFD	Hearings before hearing examiner
DFE	Resignations
DFF	Reduction in force
DG	Employee rights and privileges
DGBA*	Employee complaints
DH	Employee standards of conduct
DHE	Searches and Drug/Alcohol Testing
DI	Employee welfare
DIA*	Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation
DK	Assignments and schedules
DN Series	Performance appraisal
FN and FO Series	Student discipline

Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code (§37.001 through §37.019) deal with student discipline.

