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Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is conveniently organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact the principal at (903) 482-8803.

### **ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day’s learning on the previous day’s, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student’s mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws, one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit, are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below:

#### **Compulsory Attendance**

State law requires that a student between the ages of six and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday is required to attend each school day. If a student 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, however, the district may revoke the student’s enrollment. The student’s presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing.

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of the reading diagnosis test.

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction (termed “accelerated instruction” by the state) assigned by a grade placement committee and basic skills for ninth graders; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

A court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student:

Is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

### Attendance for Credit

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit for the class.

If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed the plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit, if appropriate.

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for religious holy days and documented health-care appointments will be considered days of attendance for this purpose. [See policies at FEB.]
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district. For a student transferring into the district after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL).

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive credit, will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

### Parent's Note After An Absence

When a student must be absent from school, the student—upon returning to school—must bring a note, signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older.

### Doctor's Note After An Absence for Illness

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than 5 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school. [See FEC(LOCAL).]

### Attendance: Exemptions/Perfect Attendance

For the purposes of determining absences that may affect exemptions or perfect attendance; Board policy and state regulations that allow a student to be absent from their campus, yet marked present, will be followed.

- 1) Participation in a Board-approved extracurricular activity or public performance
- 2) Participation in a mentorship approved by District personnel to serve as one of the measures to complete the Distinguished Achievement Program
- 3) Participation in an Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program by a Medicaid-eligible student
- 4) Student is observing a religious holy day, including travel to and from the site where the holy day is observed
- 5) Student has a documented appointment with a health care professional during regular school hours, and the student commences classes or returns to school in the same day as the appointment.

Campus policy:

- a) Three tardies in a period count as one absence for that period.
- b) Campus-approved college visitation absences are restricted to a maximum of two days for seniors. **Advance approval and official documentation of attendance /campus visitation are required.**

- Exceptions:
1. Additional day(s) to allow for travel distance
  2. Attendance/ participation in college/university pre-enrollment events for high school juniors

[Documentation of event, registration, attendance, AND advance approval are required.]

The student is not marked present; however, absences for college visitation are not counted when exemption decisions are made.

### Driver License Attendance Verification

To obtain a driver license, a student between the ages of 16 and 18 must provide to the Texas Department of Public Safety a form obtained from the school verifying that the student has met the 90 percent attendance requirement for the semester preceding the date of application. The student can obtain this form at the campus Principal's office.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

The school counselor provides students and parents' information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices. [For more information, see page 16 of this handbook and policies at EIF.]

[See **Academic Counseling** on page 21.]

## **AWARDS AND HONORS**

- Attendance/Perfect – Students with Perfect Attendance for the school year will be recognized. For purposes of this recognition, those who have no absences in any class and no tardies for the school year shall be considered to have Perfect Attendance.
- Academic Awards – Criteria for each academic area is established by the teacher and individual awards are recognized at the end of the school year during an Awards Assembly.
- Honor Roll – A student earning no course grades below 80 during the six weeks period will be placed on the A-B Honor Roll. A student who earns no course grades below 90 during the six weeks period will be placed on the Straight-A Honor Roll

## **CAFETERIA AND LUNCH PROCEDURES**

Breakfast and lunch are available on a paid, free, and reduced basis. Students must pay for lunches in the cafetorium before 7:55 A.M. Several lunches and/or breakfasts may be paid for in advance. The school board determines prices for lunch and breakfast annually. Students and their families will be notified of these prices at the beginning of school.

For free or reduced meals, an application must be filed and approved. Application forms are available upon entry or registration or from the office at any time. All information requested on the forms must be given. The forms are then sent to the V.A.I.S.D. Central office for approval. Parents will be notified of the results of eligibility. Please note that this information stays confidential.

The following cafeteria conduct is expected from all students:

- Students will go to the lunchroom accompanied by their teacher.
- Anyone bringing a lunch will be escorted to his or her assigned table. Those purchasing a lunch or milk will follow teacher directions. \*Do not send glass containers.
- Trays are to be returned and students dismissed when the teacher or teacher aide on duty grants permission.
- Food and drinks must be kept in the lunchroom.
- Cafeteria rules will be followed by all students, which include good table manners and students quietly visiting with the students closest to them at their table.
- Students are asked to clear their area before leaving the cafeteria.
- Students may not charge breakfast or lunch. (Emergency situations must be cleared through the office.)

- Students will remain seated during lunch and will raise their hand if they need assistance. An aide or a cafeteria helper will assist them.

**\*\* For the health of your child, we encourage that you limit the amount of soft drinks and sweets that are sent to school in your child's lunch.**

### **CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS**

The district offers career and technology programs in Family and Consumer Science, Vocational Education, Agricultural Science and Technology, and Trade and Industrial Education. Admission to these programs is based on prerequisites as stated in the VAHS Course Guide.

Van Alstyne ISD will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

### **CHECK ACCEPTANCE POLICY**

Our school district has established the following policy for accepting checks and collecting bad checks: for a check to be an acceptable form of payment it must include your current, full and accurate name, address, telephone number, driver's license number and state. In the event your check is returned for non-payment, the face value may be recovered electronically along with a state allowed recovery fee. In the event your check is returned for non-payment, checks will no longer be an acceptable form of payment for the remainder of the school year. Alternative forms of payment may be used instead of a check payment (cash, credit card, money order).

### **CLASS RANK / TOP TEN PERCENT / HIGHEST RANKING STUDENT**

For ranking and GPA calculation purposes, students entering the district from other districts will be given weighted credit only in courses that Van Alstyne High School makes available to Van Alstyne students [EIC LOCAL].

For two school years following his or her graduation, a district student who graduates in the top ten percent of his or her class is eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas if the student:

- Completes the Recommended or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program; or
- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.

Students and parents should contact the counselor or principal for further information about the application process and deadlines.

[For further information, see policies at EIC.]

Class Ranking/Procedure The weighted numerical grade point average of each student will be computed using the high school grades the student has accumulated through the end of the senior year. Grades in all subjects that may count toward meeting graduation requirements are counted toward determining class rank and senior awards. The student with the highest weighted numerical grade point average will be the top-ranked student. In case of a tie, the weighted numerical grade point average for the senior year will determine ranking. If a tie still exists, the weighted numerical grade point average for the junior, then sophomore and finally the freshman year will be considered. Fifth year students, homebound students, foreign exchange students, and students transferring from non-accredited high schools will not be ranked.

Grade Classification

After the ninth grade, students are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation.

Credits Earned

5

10

15

Classification

Grade 10 (Sophomore)

Grade 11 (Junior)

Grade 12 (Senior)

Advanced and Honors Courses / Weighted Grading Scale

ADVANCED COURSES

Art III & IV  
 Band III & IV  
 Theatre Production  
 Pre-AP/GT Biology  
 Pre-AP/GT Chemistry  
 Pre-APGT/ Physics  
 Pre-AP English I & II  
 for dual credit  
 GT English I & II  
 Pre-AP/ GT Geometry  
 Pre-AP/ GT Algebra II  
 Pre-AP/GT Pre-calculus

HONORS COURSES

AP English III & IV  
 Foreign languages—levels III, IV, & V  
 GT English III & IV  
 AP/GT Biology  
 AP/GT Chemistry  
 AP/GT Calculus  
 Core Academic College credit courses taken

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>HONORS</u>	<u>ADVANCED</u>	<u>REGULAR</u>
100	6.0	5.0	4.0
99	5.9	4.9	3.9
98	5.8	4.8	3.8
97	5.7	4.7	3.7
96	5.6	4.6	3.6
95	5.5	4.5	3.5
94	5.4	4.4	3.4
93	5.3	4.3	3.3
92	5.2	4.2	3.2
91	5.1	4.1	3.1
90	5.0	4.0	3.0
88	4.8	3.8	2.8
86	4.6	3.6	2.6
85	4.5	3.5	2.5
84	4.4	3.4	2.4
83	4.3	3.3	2.3
82	4.2	3.2	2.2
81	4.1	3.1	2.1
80	4.0	3.0	2.0
79	3.9	2.9	1.9
78	3.8	2.8	1.8
76	3.6	2.6	1.6
75	3.5	2.5	1.5
74	3.4	2.4	1.4
73	3.3	2.3	1.3
72	3.2	2.2	1.2
71	3.1	2.1	1.1
70	3.0	2.0	1.0

### Valedictorian and Salutatorian

The valedictorian and salutatorian shall be the highest ranking and second highest ranking seniors respectively. Only the students who attend the district high school during their junior and senior years, four consecutive semesters, shall be eligible for these honors. For ranking and GPA calculation purposes, students entering the district from other districts will be given weighted credit only in courses that Van Alstyne High School makes available to Van Alstyne students [EIC LOCAL].

### CLASS SCHEDULES

Student schedule choices should be made thoughtfully. Class sections are set and teacher assignments are made based on student needs. Schedule changes will be made only in the event of error, logistical conflict, and/or course availability. Any schedule changes must be approved by the principal.

### COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES

#### **DUAL CREDIT COURSES/COLLEGE COURSES 2009-2010**

Requirements for enrolling in college while in high school:

- Student must be enrolled in a minimum of four high school credit only courses in accordance with TEC 130.008.
- Student must be a junior or senior in good standing with a “B” average or higher in related high school seatwork.
- Student must have passed the section of the THEA/TASP relating to the course requested.
- Student must have the administrative designee’s permission to take the course.
- Student must be in compliance with state attendance laws.

**Dual credit courses failed during the spring semester of senior year jeopardize a student’s ability to participate in graduation exercises. Students should be cautious about what dual credit courses they take during the spring semester of their senior year.**

### COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district’s policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal’s or superintendent’s office or online at:

<http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/091908>.

In general, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees.

## **COMPUTER RESOURCES**

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these computer resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these resources; violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and their parents should be aware that e-mail using district computers are not private and will be monitored by district staff. [For additional information, see policies at CQ.] See *Student Code of Conduct for VAISD Acceptable Use Policy*.

## **CONDUCT**

### Applicability of School Rules

As required by law, the board has adopted a *Student Code of Conduct* that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus—and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as campus and classroom rules.

To achieve the best possible learning environment for all students, the *Student Code of Conduct* and other campus rules will apply whenever the interest of the district is involved, whether on or off school grounds, in conjunction with classes and school-sponsored activities.

### Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling the student—may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct* and policy FO(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual.

### Displays of Affection

Open displays of affection by students are inappropriate for the educational setting. Kissing and other displays of intimate affection in any building, on schools grounds, or in cars around the school will not be permitted. Repeated incidents will cause students to be subject to disciplinary action.

### Disruptions

As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.

- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in district vehicles.

#### Radios, CD Players, Other Electronic Devices and Games, and Cell Phones

Students are not permitted to possess such items as pagers, radios, CD players, tape recorders, camcorders, DVD players, cameras, electronic devices or games at school, unless prior permission has been obtained from the principal. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the Assistant Principal's office. The Assistant Principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess cell phones; however, cell phones must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing. The use of cell phones in locker rooms or restroom areas at any time during the school day is strictly prohibited.

#### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of using the thoughts, ideas, words, or works of another person, student, or author without giving credit to this source. Students will receive a zero on any work in which plagiarism has been found. The Assistant Principal will assign the appropriate discipline.

#### **STUDENT PROPERTY**

**BAND** The school does not assume responsibility for privately owned instruments or school owned instruments when in possession of the student outside the band hall. Privately owned instruments are left in the band hall at the owner's risk.

**MONEY**, Students are encouraged to bring only the amount of money needed for lunch and other expenses to be used on a given day.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES - The use of all electronic devices is prohibited during the regular school day.** Without such permission teachers will collect the items and turn them into the Assistant Principal's office. The Assistant Principal will determine whether to return the items at the end of the day for students to take home or whether parents will be contacted to pick up the items.

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct* and may include confiscation of the device. The school may charge the owner for the release of certain telecommunications devices [See policy FNCE.]

### Social Events

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

### CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

Students with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher; or experiencing vomiting or diarrhea must remain out of school until symptom free for 24 hours without symptom reducing medications.

The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Department of State Health Services regarding these diseases.

### COUNSELING

#### Academic Counseling

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in grades 7 through 12 will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and vocational opportunities.

To plan for the future, each student should work closely with the counselor in order to enroll in the high school courses that best prepare him or her for attendance at a college, university, or training school, or for pursuit of some other type of advanced education. The counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

#### Personal Counseling

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with the counselor should make an appointment or if the need arises may walk in.

### Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment

The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent. Parental consent is not necessary when a psychological examination, test, or treatment is required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

[For more information, refer to FFE(LEGAL) and FFG(EXHIBIT).]

### **CREDIT BY EXAM**

#### If a Student Has Taken the Course

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit for it—may, in circumstances determined by the teacher, counselor, principal, or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, correspondence courses, or independent study supervised by a teacher.

The counselor or principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject.

The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an exam.

A student may not use this exam, however, to regain eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

#### Prior Instruction

A student who has received prior instruction in a course or subject—but did not receive credit—may, in circumstances determined by the teacher and counselor or principal, be permitted by the District to order the appropriate final exam(s) in either of two options:

### **CREDIT RETRIEVAL FROM UNACCREDITED PROGRAMS AND/ OR SCHOOLS**

- Order the appropriate Texas Tech High School final exam at student expense. The final exam grade will be the grade entered on the student's transcript for that course; however, credit will only be awarded by semester for a passing grade of 70 or higher on the TT final exam for that course.
- Schedule an appointment for a Nova Net course pre-test through the counselor. The pre-test score will indicate whether or not a student should schedule additional course work before attempting the final exam for that semester course. The final exam grade will be the grade entered on the student's transcript for that course; however, credit will be awarded only for a passing grade of 70 or higher on the NN final exam for that course.

### Credit retrieval for course failure

- Order the appropriate Texas Tech High School final exam at student expense. The final exam grade will be the grade entered on the student's transcript for that course; however, credit will be awarded by semester only for a passing grade of 70 or higher on the TT final exam for that course.
- Retake the course in summer school at student expense.

The final exam grade will be the grade entered on the student's transcript for that course; however, credit will be awarded only for a passing grade of 70 or higher on that course. The attendance review committee may offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to receive credit for a course by passing an exam ordered at student expense from Texas Tech High School. A student may not use this exam, however, to regain eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

[For further information, see the counselor and policies EEJA.]

### If a Student Has Not Taken the Course

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has had no prior instruction. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2009–2010 school year include:

Dates Scheduled:

November 5, 2009

February 25, 2010

June 8 and 9, 2010

A student will earn credit with a passing score of at least 90 on the exam.

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the principal no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. The district will not honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. If the district agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the district, the parent must purchase a test from a university approved by the State Board of Education. [For further information, see EEJB (LOCAL).]

## **DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS**

### School Materials

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc.

All District publications and announcements are available to students.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

[See **Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes** on page 8.]

### Nonschool Materials...from students

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before posting, circulating, or distributing written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any nonschool material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made in two school days.

The principal has designated Van Alstyne High School office as the location for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by students. [See policies at FNAA.]

A student may appeal a principal's decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who posts nonschool material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Materials displayed without the principal's approval will be removed.

### Nonschool Materials...from others

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by policies at GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any nonschool material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the principal for prior review. The principal will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies at DGBA, FNG, or GF.]

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD (LOCAL) or a non-curriculum related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB (LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.
- All nonschool materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

**DRESS AND GROOMING**  
**VAHS Dress Code**

VAHS ADMINISTRATORS BELIEVE THAT THE FOLLOWING DRESS CODE MEETS THE STANDARDS MOST CONDUCTIVE TO PROMOTING INSTRUCTION, ARE ENFORCEABLE WITHOUT UNDUE JUDGMENT CALLS, AND EQUITABLE.

It is our belief that young people should dress for success. The district's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, and minimizes safety hazards. Dress codes are established to instill self-discipline, prevent disruption, and promote a positive self-image. Students are expected to dress appropriately for school and school activities. **CAMPUS ADMINISTRATORS EXERCISE FINAL JUDGMENT ON GARMENTS AND/OR STYLES THAT ARE A DISTRACTION.** Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be no more than 2 ½" above the knee.
- All outer garments must have sleeves (cap sleeves are permitted). "Spaghetti straps" or "tank tops" are not allowed
- Shoes must be appropriate to the activity. Footwear must be of a style that insures safety and does not present a distraction. Teachers may restrict (designate) the kind of footwear needed for that class in order to meet safety standards of the instructional activity.
- Garments that are torn, cut inappropriately, have large holes, or have holes in inappropriate places are not permitted.
- All garments should meet the standard of modesty:
  - Garments that are too tight, revealing, and/or worn in a manner other than that for which they are designed are not allowed at school.
  - Midriffs, cleavage, and undergarments should be covered at all times.
  - Tops must overlap the waistband of the pants.

(**Modest:** observing properties of dress and behavior, moderate: avoiding extremes of behavior or expression, observing reasonable limits; Webster's 7<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Dictionary)

- All students must have hair that is neatly groomed, out of the face, and a natural color. **Boys' hair must be worn above the shirt collar.**
- Goatees, beards, mustaches, and other facial hair are not permitted. Sideburns must be neatly trimmed and no longer than the bottom of the earlobe.
- Students may not wear hats, headgear, or sunglasses in the building during the school day.

- Wallets with dangling chains and dangling or oversized jewelry are not allowed at school. Male students may not wear earrings, ear studs, or anything else in the ear. Jewelry for body/tongue piercing may not be worn at school except pierced earrings for females.
- Students may not wear garments or bring items to school that display pictures, emblems, or writings that are lewd, offensive, vulgar or obscene; and/or advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other objects or ideas that in the principal's judgment may be expected to cause disruption of school activities or interference with classroom and other normal school activities.

### **EXEMPTION POLICY 2009-2010**

- Freshman must take all final exams
- Sophomores can be exempt only from electives the first semester, and any classes in which they pass the TAKS test the second semester
- Juniors must take exams in core subject areas including Languages other than English (LOTE).

These five subject areas will be split between the fall exam time and the spring exam time.

Science and English will be tested together

Math, Social Studies, and LOTE will be tested together

- Seniors may be exempt from all classes

### **Students must meet the following guidelines to earn exemption status. Exemptions are determined separately in each class.**

**TAKS** Students **cannot** earn an exemption in any class(es) in which he/she has **not passed** the TAKS test in that content area.

**GRADES**

- “A” 3 or fewer absences
- “B” 2 or fewer absences
- “C” 1 or 0 absences

Three (3) tardies count as one (1) absence.

**ATTENDANCE** - For the purposes of determining absences that affect exemptions; Board policy and state regulations that allow a student to be absent from their campus, yet marked present, will be followed (See Attendance: Exemptions/Perfect Attendance on page 13.)

**CITIZENSHIP - Re: Exemption Policy** No student can earn an exemption in a class in which he/she has an unsatisfactory (U) on a report card. A student who receives off-campus suspension, in-school suspension, or alternate education placement is not eligible for any exemptions during that semester. If the student serves days of off-campus suspension, in-school suspension, or alternate education placement spanning both semesters, the student is ineligible for exemptions both semesters.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Participation in school-related activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Eligibility for participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing inter-district competition. The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to 10 absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of 5 absences for post-district competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

**Please note:** Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the *Student Code of Conduct* or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization’s standards of behavior.

Students are responsible for turning in any assignments or taking any tests that were assigned prior to the absence(s). Students are encouraged to ask for assignments and make arrangements for tests before planned extra-curricular absences.

### **NO PASS; NO PLAY**

The Board has chosen to establish strict academic standards for participation in extracurricular activities; therefore, all students, including those enrolled in honors or advanced courses, shall be subject to the “no pass, no play” guidelines. [See FM(LEGAL)]

A student who is enrolled in a pre-AP, AP, and/or dual credit enrollment course may apply for a principal approved waiver from eligibility rules one time per semester. The waiver is good for only one course and may be granted only once per semester. The following conditions must be met in order for the waiver to be considered:

1. The grade in the class is between 60 and 69;
2. The student makes application in writing within five days of the end of the grading period; and
3. The teacher of the course completes a checklist that indicates the student had satisfactory behavior and attendance, both in class and in tutorials.

A coach/sponsor may, but is not required to, submit in writing a description of any extenuating circumstances, if appropriate to the situation.

**An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.**

UIL rules stipulate a one (1) week grace period from the end of the school day at the end of a grading period. The student's ineligibility begins at the end of the school day one week from the end of a grading period when the three weeks of ineligibility begins. The student regains eligibility at the end of the designated school day when the administrator and teachers determine that the student has: (1) earned a passing grade (70 or above in all academic classes, and (2) completed the three weeks ineligibility. [See the UIL Side by Side booklet which can be downloaded from the UIL web page]

1/2 DAY ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

In order to be eligible to participate in a game or practice that takes place during the regular school week, students involved in athletics or other extra-curricular activities must be in attendance for ½ day of their classes on the day of that game, practice, or activity.

**EXTRA-CURRICULAR FORMS**

PHYSICAL EXAM FORMS                      **Available in office of Athletic Director**

UIL BOOSTER CLUB GUIDELINES   **Available from coach, director, or sponsor**

VAISD Drug Testing Policy                      **Available in HS Office, and at  
[www.vanalstyneisd.org](http://www.vanalstyneisd.org)**

Each of these organizations is categorized as extracurricular activities: Athletics, Band, Art Club, Future Farmers of America, Future Homemakers of America, Latin Junior Classical League, Equine and Livestock Judging Teams, National Honor Society, Spanish Club, Student Council, Whiz Quiz, and Texas Association of Future Educators.

Sponsors of the above organizations and teams may establish standards of behavior – including consequences for misbehavior –that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequence specified by the organizations standards of behavior. To have clearer and more consistent expectations for all VAHS students who participate in extracurricular activities, the following organizations have individual handbooks which are distributed to members each fall: Athletics, Band, Cheerleaders, and Student Council. Copies are available in the HS office upon request. The National Honor Society and Texas Association of Future Educators operate under charters which are also available in the HS office.

The staff and administration of Van Alstyne High School are excited about the prospect of working with your children during the upcoming year. Extracurricular activities provide an avenue of enrichment to the academic program offered at VAHS which teaches many of the habits and values that all students should learn.

Please contact the appropriate coach, director, sponsor, or administrator with any questions and/or suggestions.

Our motto continues to be “Excellence: Everyday in Every way . . . no excuse.”

### Extracurricular Activities Defined

The term “extracurricular activities” means any non-curricular event and membership or participation in groups, clubs, and organizations recognized and approved by the Board of Trustees and the school district and sponsored by the district or a campus. Extracurricular activities include, but are not limited to, public performances, contests, club events, and our UIL events.

### Van Alstyne High School Jurisdiction

Student participation in extracurricular activities is encouraged. Van Alstyne High School makes extracurricular activities available as an extension of the regular school program, with this important difference: the extracurricular program is a privilege not a right that carries additional expectations for acceptable conduct. Students engaging in extracurricular activities represent not only themselves, but also other students and the school district. For this reason, their behavior must be exemplary and reflect the finest attributes of the total Van Alstyne High School student body at all times. Goals of the extracurricular program are to give students direction in developing self-discipline, responsibility, pride, loyalty, leadership, teamwork, respect for authority, and healthy living habits.

### FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.

- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school. [See **Buses and Other School Vehicles** on page 47.]
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the principal. [For further information, see policies at FP.]

**FUND-RAISING**

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the principal at least 14 days before the event. Except as approved by the principal and the superintendent, fund-raising by school, PTA, and/or booster organizations is not permitted on school property.

[For further information, see policies at FJ and GE.]

**GRADING GUIDELINES**

The following numerical values adopted by the Board of Trustees shall be used for letter grades.

When recording the grade for a college course or for a student transferring from another school that uses only letter grades transcript the following table will be used when a numeric grade is not provided.

**4 Letter System**

A+ = 97	B+ = 88	C+ = 79	D+ = 74
A = 94	B = 84	C = 77	D = 72
A = 91	B = 80	C = 75	D = 70

**3 Letter System**

A+ = 97	B+ = 88	C+ = 79
A = 94	B = 84	C = 75
A = 91	B = 80	C = 70

## GRADUATION

### Requirements for a Diploma

To receive a high school diploma from the district, a student must successfully complete the required number of credits and pass a statewide exit-level exam.

The exit-level test, required for students in grade 11, covers English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and requires knowledge of Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Integrated Chemistry and Physics, English III, and early American and United States History, World History, and World Geography. A student who does not pass the exit-level assessment will have additional opportunities to take the test.

### Graduation Programs

The district offers the graduation programs listed below. All students entering grade 9 are required to enroll in the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished/Advanced Program. Permission to enroll in the Minimum Graduation Program will be granted only if an agreement is reached among the student, the student's parent or person standing in parental relation, and the counselor or appropriate administrator. [See policy EIF (LEGAL).]

Beginning with the 2007–2008 school year, a student entering the ninth grade will be affected by new state graduation requirements for the Recommended Program and the Distinguished/Advanced Program. To graduate under either of these programs, an incoming ninth grade student will have to earn an additional credit in math and an additional credit in science.

The Van Alstyne High School Course Guide contains detailed information on all graduation programs. VAHS Course Guides are available in the high school offices or can be viewed on the VAHS website: [www.vanalstyneisd.org](http://www.vanalstyneisd.org)

### Students with Disabilities

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal committee, a student with disabilities may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her individualized education program (IEP).

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school, but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may not participate in graduation commencement.

### Graduation Expenses

Because students and parents will incur expenses in order to participate in the traditions of graduation—such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior picture—both student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year. [See **Student Fees** on page 29.]

### State Scholarships and Grants

Under the Texas Early High School Graduation Scholarship Program, students who complete the Recommended or Advanced Achievement High School Program may earn

financial credits in varying amounts to apply toward college tuition. The amounts depend on the number of consecutive months in which the student completed graduation requirements and the number of early college credits earned and may be used at public or private higher education institutions within the state. The counselor can provide additional information about meeting the program's eligibility requirements.

Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished/Advanced Program may be eligible under the T.E.X.A.S. Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions. [For further information, see the principal or counselor and policy EJ (LEGAL).]

### **DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, RETALIATION**

The district believes that all students learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. [See policy FFH]

#### **Dating Violence**

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

#### **Discrimination**

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that negatively affects the student.

### Harassment

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. A copy of the district's policy is available online at: <http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/091908>.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

### Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student is prohibited.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

### Retaliation

Retaliation against a person, who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Retaliation against a student might occur when a student receives threats from another student or an employee or when an employee imposes an unjustified punishment or unwarranted grade reduction. Retaliation does not include petty slights and annoyances from other students or negative comments from a teacher that are justified by a student's poor academic performance in the classroom.

### Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. See policy FFH(LOCAL) for the appropriate districts officials to whom to make a report.

### Investigation of Report

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district.

In the event prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL).

## **HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS**

### School Health Advisory Council

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held three meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from the VAHS School Nurse. [See also policies at BDF and EHAA.]

### Physical Fitness Assessment

Annually the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3-12. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to the principal to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

### Vending Machines

The district has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines see the Director of Food Services. [See policies at CO and FFA.]

### Other Health-Related Matters

#### **Tobacco Prohibited**

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of tobacco products by students and others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the *Student Code of Conduct* and policies at FNCD and GKA.]

### **Asbestos Management Plan**

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, and is available in the Superintendent's office. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Alan Seay at the superintendent's office at (903) 482-8802.

### **Pest Management Plan**

The district applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact Lawana Merriman at central office at (903) 482-8802.

### **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, Rick DeMasters at (903) 482-8802.

### **HOMEWORK**

Each grade level and/or course content teacher has established their own homework rules and guidelines. Students and parents are encouraged to communicate with their teachers regarding homework policies and practices.

### **IMMUNIZATION**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services, Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. The immunizations required are: diphtheria, rubella (measles), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, pertussis, meningitis, poliomyelitis, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and varicella (chicken pox). The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the Department of State Health Services. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition. [For further information, see policy FFAB (LEGAL) and the Department of State Health Services Web site: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.]

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

#### **Questioning of Students**

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the

interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

#### Students Taken Into Custody

State law requires the district to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

#### Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred

adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

[For further information, see policy GRA (LEGAL).]

## **MAKEUP WORK**

### Routine and In-depth Makeup Work Assignments

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject, or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. Board Policy requires (one) school day per absence.[For further information, see policy EIAB(LOCAL).]

A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Upon returning to school, students will be responsible for turning in any assignments or taking any tests that were assigned prior to the absence(s), unless the classroom teacher permits additional time.

A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

If an absent student wishes to receive assignments, the **MAIN OFFICE (482-8803)** must be notified no later than 9:00 a.m. of the day on which the assignments are needed. The assignments will be ready for pick-up in the **main office** by 2:30 p.m. The MAIN Office is located in the front of the building (Hwy 5 entrance—north side of the commons).

### DAEP or In-school Suspension Makeup Work

A student removed to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, coursework needed to fulfill the student's high school graduation requirements.

The district may provide the opportunity to complete the coursework through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA (LEGAL).]

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. [See policy FEA (LEGAL).]

Students and their parents are encouraged to discuss options with the teacher or counselor to ensure the student completes all work required for the course or grade level.

### **MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

Cough Drops **without DM** may be carried by the student; all other medications must be checked in to the Nurse's Clinic.

District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer:

- Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
- Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
- Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

In certain emergency situations, the district will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:

- In accordance with the guidelines developed with the district's medical advisor; and
- When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the district's form.

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider and to the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse or principal.

In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or principal for information. [See policy FFAF (LEGAL).]

### Psychotropic Drugs

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.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policies at FFAC.]

### **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS**

A student desiring to participate in the UIL athletic program shall submit annually a statement from a health care provider authorized under UIL rules indicating that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the athletic program.

### **PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE**

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge.

One minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. [See policy EC (LEGAL) for more information.]

### **PRAYER**

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

### **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

In addition, at certain grade levels a student—with limited exceptions—will be required to pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), if the student is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and April 15 and is a Texas resident during the week that the TAKS is administered the first time.

Certain students—some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, counselor, or special education director.

A Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) will be prepared for any student in a middle school or beyond who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment or is determined by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth

school year following enrollment in grade 9. The PGP will be designed and implemented by a guidance counselor, teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will, among other items, identify the student's educational goals, address the parent's educational expectations for the student, and outline an intensive instruction program for the student. [For additional information, see the counselor or principal and policy EIF(LEGAL).]

### **RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL**

Because class time is important, doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time. A student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day except with permission from the principal or designee and according to the campus sign-out procedures. A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning and follow the campus sign-out procedures before leaving the campus. Otherwise, a student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day. Unless the principal or superintendent has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day. Doctor's appointments must be documented by note upon return in order for attendance to be recorded. A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the school nurse. The nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent.

**Students will be subject to disciplinary actions if they do not follow the required sign in and sign out procedures in the attendance office.**

### **REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES**

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every 6 weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written progress report. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, parents are strongly encouraged to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. [See **Working Together** on page 1 for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal and are designed to reflect each student's academic achievement for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. [See policy EIA (LOCAL).]

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every six (6) weeks. No average below 50 will be recorded on the report card. However, an average of 50 on the report card is a clear signal to parents and students that the student is in danger of failing the course and or grade level for the year. Every effort should be made by all parties to seek the academic support needed by the student at that time.

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG (LOCAL).

## SAFETY

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the district. Although the district has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers. Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

### Accident Insurance

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

### Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies

From time to time, students, teachers, and other district employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

#### **Fire Drill Bells**

3 bells	leave the building
1 bell	halt; stand at attention
2 bells	return to the classroom

#### **Tornado Drill Bells**

1 continuous bell	move quietly but quickly to the designated locations
2 bells	return to the classroom

### Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school would need to have written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

### Emergency School-Closing Information

In the event of any incident including severe weather which could cause the closing or the delayed opening of school, the superintendent will notify the following radio and TV stations:

#### **RADIO:**

KLAK (97.5 FM), KKAJ (95.7 FM/1240 AM);

#### **TV:**

Channels 10, & 12

In addition district residents can sign up for “Flash Alert”, an online program that will notify persons of closings from their selected organizations. Access to the system is free to subscribers. You may sign up for this service by going to <http://flashalert.net/>. Once there follow the appropriate links to select Van Alstyne ISD as the organization you wish to receive information from. In the event of an emergency or school closing the district contacts Flash Alert who then sends an e-mail to the subscribers e-mail address, a text message to the subscribers’ cell phone, or both. If no announcement is heard by 6:30 A.M. then it can be assumed that school will be open as usual.

INSTANT ALERT SYSTEMS can be utilized for emergency information to those who enter their information into the system.

**Check the VAISD web site for the most current and “official” information regarding any emergency school closing at [www.vanalstyneisd.org](http://www.vanalstyneisd.org)**

### **SCHOOL FACILITIES**

#### Use By Students Before and After School

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place.

The following areas are open to students before school, beginning at 7:30 a.m.

Cafeteria – Student Commons

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

After dismissal of school in the afternoon, and unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher, students must leave campus immediately.

#### Conduct Before and After School

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices, and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the **Student Code of Conduct** or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

Use of Hallways During Class Time

Loitering or standing in the halls during class is not permitted. During class time, a student must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the **Student Code of Conduct**.

CLOSED CAMPUS

To ensure the safety of our students, Van Alstyne High School is a closed campus. Students may not receive visitors without the express permission of the administrator. Anyone coming on campus for the purpose of contributing to the delinquency of our students, including truancy, will be subject to criminal prosecution. Rules regarding closed campus apply to the thirty-minute lunch period as well as to the school day. Students are to remain on campus for lunch and eat their lunch in the cafeteria. A student wishing to leave campus during lunch for a special occasion must be signed out and signed in by the parent or guardian in the administrator’s office. A note from home requesting that the student be able to leave campus to eat lunch is not sufficient and undermines the security established by the closed campus policy.

Any rare exception to the above policy regarding closed campus at lunch would require a physician’s formal certification of a specific medical condition that requires ongoing treatment and a special diet.

Cafeteria Services

The district participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced lunches daily. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need. Information about a student’s participation is confidential. See the High School Secretary to apply.

The district follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day. [For more information, see policy CO (LEGAL).]

Cafeteria Charges and Payments

No VAISD child will be denied the opportunity to receive a meal at our cafeterias.

In situations where students have outstanding charges, we have two levels of responsibility: (1) appropriate communication with the student and parent and (2) procedures for providing a lunch and/or breakfast for the student. The following chart details our policy in both levels:

Account Status	Expectations for Communication	Procedures for Student Meals
\$5 - \$0	Cafeteria staff will verbally communicate status of account with student.	Student will receive regular student meal.
\$0	Cafeteria staff will prepare written documentation of	Student will receive regular student meals but will not be allowed to

	student's account status with instruction for student to inform parents.	purchase or charge "extra" items (i.e., extra servings, snack bar items, tea).
-\$5	Cafeteria staff will prepare written documentation of student's account status to be mailed to the student's home.	Student will receive a sandwich, fruit, and drink. The student will not be allowed to purchase or charge any "extra" items.
-\$20	Campus principal will prepare written documentation of student's account status to be mailed to the student's home.	Student will receive a sandwich, fruit, and drink. The student will not be allowed to purchase or charge any "extra" items.

### **Breakfast and Lunch Prices**

The Student breakfast price is \$1.50 and student lunch price is \$2.50. Reduced price breakfast is \$0.30 and the reduced price for lunch is \$0.40.

#### Returned Check Policy

Our school district has established the following policy for accepting checks and collecting bad checks: for a check to be an acceptable form of payment it must include your current, full and accurate name, address, telephone number, driver's license number and state. In the event your check is returned for non-payment, the face value may be recovered electronically along with a state allowed recovery fee. In the event your check is returned for non-payment, checks will no longer be an acceptable form of payment for the remainder of the school year. Alternative forms of payment may be used instead of a check payment (cash, credit card, money order).

#### Library

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open daily from 8:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. for independent student use with a teacher permit. Books may be checked out for a two week period and may be renewed if there is not a prior request. Students are expected to observe library rules and procedures in order for everyone to receive maximum benefit from the learning center. Students may not check out new items if fees and/or fines are owed.

#### Meetings of Non-curriculum-Related Groups

Student-organized, student-led non-curriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB (LOCAL).

A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

## ***SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL***

The board of trustees has established and adopted a local School Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the district and to assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the operation of each center and in the provision of health education. A majority of the members of the council are parents of students enrolled in the district. Others appointed are licensed health care professionals; clergy; law enforcement; school administration, teachers, business community; and students.

The SHAC meets 3-4 times a year. Anyone interested in joining should contact the school nurse, Cynthia Tillett, for details.

## ***SCHOOL TELEPHONES***

Students may use the school telephone only in the case of an emergency. Students must have permission to use the telephone from the secretary, principal, and/or a note from the teacher. Students will not be allowed to use the phone to set up social engagements after school. Phone lines need to be kept open for official school business. **Every teacher has a telephone and access to voice mail in her classroom.**

## **SEARCHES**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

### Students' Desks and Lockers

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students must be certain that their lockers are locked, and that the combinations are not available to others.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

### Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the permission of the owner. The owner has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. [See also the **Student Code of Conduct.**]

### Trained Dogs

The district will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around













## **GLOSSARY**

**Accelerated instruction** is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level.

**ACT** refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the American College Test. The test may be a requirement for admission to certain colleges or universities.

**Alternative assessment instrument**, developed by the state, may be given to students in special education and students identified as limited English proficient.

**ARD** is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student's parents are part of the committee.

**Attendance Review Committee** is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit lost because of absences.

**DAEP** stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students in the DAEP will be separated from students not assigned to the program. The DAEP will focus instruction on English language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self-discipline, and provide for students' educational and behavior needs, as well as supervision and counseling.

**FERPA** refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

**IEP** is the written record of the Individualized Education Program prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; modifications to state or district wide tests, etc.

**ISS** refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the *Student Code of Conduct*. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

**NCLB Act** is the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

**Personal Graduation Plan (PGP)** is required by state law for any student in middle school or higher who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district

as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

**SAT** refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

**Section 504** is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined by an ARD committee to be eligible for special education services, appropriate regular educational services will be provided.

**State-mandated tests** are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the grade 11 exit-level test is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

**Student Code of Conduct** is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board; identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from the classroom or campus. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion, and states whether self-defense is a consideration in suspension, DAEP placement, or expulsion. The *Student Code of Conduct* also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

**TAKS** is short for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the state's standardized achievement test currently given to students in certain subjects in grades 3–11.

**UIL** refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

**APPENDIX**  
**Acknowledgment Form—Amendment**

My child and I have received a copy of the Van Alstyne High School *Student Handbook* Amendment #  dated .

Print name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_