

This family-student handbook belongs to:

Connections Teacher _____ **Grade** _____

VERNON MIDDLE SCHOOL
1301 5th Ave., Marion, IA 52302
Phone: 319-377-9401 Fax: 319-377-7670
www.marion.k12.ia.us

Amy L. Johnson, Principal
Roy Tompkins, Dean of Students & Athletic Director
Michelle Thomason, Guidance Counselor
Nancy Alderdyce, Health Coordinator
Michelle Wilson, Family Resource Specialist

MISD Mission Statement

The mission of the Marion Independent School District is to prepare all students with the skills required to enter future adult roles and become effective citizens, productive workers, informed consumers, and responsible family members.

VMS Mission Statement

Vernon Middle School exists to provide a safe, supportive environment where students are expected to reach a high level of academic achievement as determined by district and state standards. As a team we will identify, evaluate, and make accommodations based on individualized student needs.

Concerns

If you have concerns regarding a situation at school, you are urged to follow this procedure:

Step 1: Contact your child's teacher to discuss the problem and possible solutions.

Step 2: If the concern is not resolved, request a conference with the principal.

Step 3: If the concern is not resolved, request a conference with the superintendent

EQUITY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Marion Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, gender identity, sex, national origin, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability, in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices. If you believe you have (or your child has) been discriminated against or treated unjustly at school, please contact Brian Bartz, Business Manager, at 377-4691.

REGULAR BELL SCHEDULE*

1st period: 8:05-9:05
2nd period: 9:08-10:08
3rd period: 10:11-11:11
4th period: 6th grade – class 11:14-11:44, lunch 11:44-12:14, and class 12:14-12:44
7th grade – lunch 11:14-11:41, class 11:44-12:44
8th grade – class 11:14-12:14, lunch 12:14-12:44
5th period: 12:47-1:47
6th period: 1:50-2:50
Connections 2:53-3:05

EARLY DISMISSAL BELL SCHEDULE*

1st period: 8:05-8:45
2nd period: 8:48-9:28
3rd period: 9:31-10:11
5th period: 10:14-10:54
6th period: 10:57-11:37
4th period: 6th grade – class 11:40-12:00, lunch 12:00-12:30 and class 12:30-12:50
7th grade – lunch 11:37-12:07, class 12:10-12:50
8th grade – class 11:40-12:20, lunch 12:20-12:50
Connections: 12:53-1:05

LATE START BELL SCHEDULE*

1st period: 10:05-10:45
2nd period: 10:47-11:27
4th period: 6th grade – class 11:30-11:50, lunch 11:50-12:20 and class 12:20-12:40
7th grade - lunch 11:27-11:57, class 12:00-12:40
8th grade – class 11:30-12:10, lunch 12:10-12:40
3rd period: 12:43-1:23
5th period: 1:26-2:06
6th period: 2:09-2:49
Connections: 2:52-3:05

*3-minute passing time between periods

MY SCHEDULE:

1ST QUARTER

A Days B Days

1st period _____
2nd period _____
3rd period _____
4th period _____
5th period _____
6th period _____
Connections _____

4TH QUARTER

A Days B Days

1st period _____
2nd period _____
3rd period _____
4th period _____
5th period _____
6th period _____
Connections _____

2nd QUARTER

A Days B Days

1st period _____
2nd period _____
3rd period _____
4th period _____
5th period _____
6th period _____
Connections _____

3rd QUARTER

A Days B Days

1st period _____
2nd period _____
3rd period _____
4th period _____
5th period _____
6th period _____
Connections _____

Forward

This handbook* has been developed for both the students and their parents/guardians. Every effort has been made to summarize school policies and regulations so that students and parents/guardians will have a basic understanding of the staff expectations for students attending Vernon Middle School. Each student will be held accountable for the handbook's content. More detailed regulations can be found in the School Board Policy manuals located in the office of the principal and online at www.marion.k12.ia.us. The policies printed in this document are subject to change due to the continuous review and revision of Board policies.

**The policies stated in this student handbook are intended as guidelines only and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the Board of Education for the Marion Independent School District.*

School Day

School begins at 8:05 A.M. and ends at 3:05 P.M. at Vernon Middle School. All students should arrive at school between 7:40 A.M. and 7:55 A.M. No student should arrive before 7:30 A.M. unless they have an activity to attend. When students arrive, they are to report directly to the playground area. In case of inclement weather students will be directed to the gymnasium until the bell rings at 7:55 A.M.

If students need assistance from teaching staff, they may sign in at either the front entrance or south lobby doors to report to that teacher's room beginning at 7:30 AM. Students must either remain with that teacher until 7:55 or report back to the playground area when finished with that teacher. Roaming the halls and loitering in the restrooms is not allowed before or after school.

Breakfast is served from 7:45 – 8:05 A.M. Students eating breakfast at school may enter the building at 7:45 A.M. Students purchasing a lunch ticket may enter the south lobby after 7:45 A.M. Students will then leave the building immediately following the purchase until the first bell.

Students will be allowed access to their lockers and proceed to first period class after 7:55 A.M.. Students who need to stop in the office to get a pass or need to deposit

money in their lunch accounts may do so between classes or when the 7:55 bell rings to admit students into the building.

Students are expected to exit the building by 3:15 pm daily unless they are with a teacher.

Class Schedule and VMS Teams

Vernon Middle School operates on an A/B cycle (i.e. A Days, B Days, etc.) with alternating Fridays for odd and even numbered Fridays. Exploratory classes operate on B Days: Monday, Wednesday, and even-numbered Fridays schedule or A Days: Tuesday, Thursday, and odd-numbered Fridays schedule. For example, if the date is Friday the 26th then you would have your B day exploratory as the number 26 is an even number. If school is not held for any reason, the exploratory rotation will still follow the A and B rotation as scheduled originally. For example, if school is not held on Monday due to Labor Day when students return on Tuesday they will operate on a Tuesday schedule.

Students are randomly placed onto teams (Red and Gold) in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade for the 2010-11 school year. The goal of this setup is to form the "school within a school" concept. Each team of teachers (Red & Gold) will meet daily or every other day to plan and strategize lessons and ways to assist the students within that team. This smaller student- to-teacher ratio among the teams is designed to assist with relationship building and connections/success within the school. Teams are reassigned each school year so your student may be on gold as a 6th grader and red as a 7th grader. Also, the student population on the teams is changed each year.

ABUSE OF STUDENTS BY DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

An individual who has knowledge an employee has physically or sexually abused a student may immediately report it to the school district's Level I investigator. Reports are directed to: Mike Murphy by mail at 2301 3rd Ave, Marion, Iowa or by telephone at 373-4766.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY FOR ACTIVITIES/ATHLETICS

Students must maintain a minimum academic performance to be eligible to participate in interscholastic activities and contests.

Eligibility for 7th and 8th grade students at Vernon Middle School participating in interscholastic athletic competition will be determined on a biweekly basis by each individual student's grades. Every student must be passing all classes to be eligible for competitions. However, students ineligible for competition will still be a member of the team and may continue to participate in practices throughout the season.

When it has been reported that a student has a failing grade in any subject, the student will be ineligible for the next scheduled competition. The student will regain eligibility for any and all following competitions until the next grade reporting period which shall occur approximately every two weeks. If a student has three or more failing grades, that student will be ineligible for all competitions until the next grade-reporting period. For example, a student who has an overall failing grade in a class on Friday will not be eligible for the contest on Tuesday, but he/she will be eligible for the following game on Thursday. A student who has three failing grades, would be ineligible for both contests.

The seventh and eighth grade teaching teams will be responsible for maintaining eligibility lists and reporting them to the head coaches in season and to the Athletic Director. Awards will continue to be determined by the head coach of each team.

It is the philosophy of the Vernon Middle School staff and administration that participation in extracurricular activities is an integral part of the middle level educational experience. Students are encouraged to get involved. When you become affiliated with an organization, do your utmost to make that organization better because you are a part of it. Be a working member, whether you are a reserve on the football squad or have the lead in the school play. Sometimes students become members of too many groups and as a result their academic work begins to suffer. Make sure you make academics your top priority. This policy is designed to assist students in maintaining that focus.

The above policy applies to all athletic teams for 7th and 8th grade and the following non-graded activities and their performances and contests: Show

Choir, Jazz Band, and Cheerleading.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Vernon Middle School has created an afterschool program with the intent to provide students with a safe place to complete homework under the assistance of Vernon Staff. Parents will be notified by school staff at any time throughout the year if their student would benefit from this extra assistance program. Times and dates of this program will be announced each year during first quarter based on student need and staff availability. Students are expected to follow all school rules and expectations while in attendance at this program.

ASSEMBLIES/PERFORMANCES

Each student is expected to:

1. Become quiet upon the entrance of the master of ceremony or performer.
2. Remain quiet throughout the assembly.
3. Show his/her appreciation by clapping. No whistling or other noises will be tolerated.
4. Wait and listen for instructions prior to dismissal for returning to the proper class.

ASSIGNMENT BOOKS

Every middle school student will be given an assignment book and have it available at all times. The teacher and family will use the assignment book to improve the success of each student with the monitoring of assignments. Assignment books will be taken to Connections and opened for the supervisors to be more able to assist student learning. Parents are encouraged to check this each night and sign that they have assisted their student in the time-management and homework completion process. Replacement assignment books are available in the office for \$5.00.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

The philosophy of Vernon Middle School is that consistent and punctual attendance is of vital importance and is a prerequisite for completing an education. Attendance is a shared responsibility and requires cooperation and communication among students, parents, and the school. It is the goal of the District to promote the growth of the student from the parent-school imposed discipline to a student's self-discipline by the time he/she completes his/her high school education. Students will₄

be expected to attend classes regularly and to be on time in order to receive maximum benefit from the instructional program, to develop habits of punctuality, respect, self-discipline, and responsibility, and to assist in keeping disruption of the educational environment to a minimum.

Regular attendance at school is very important. Please help your child develop a commitment to school attendance and for getting to school on time. If it is necessary for your child to be absent, please call 377-9401 between 7:30 and 9:00 A.M. Absences can be reported before 7:30 A.M. by calling 377-9401 and leaving a recorded message. After 9:00, the school will call the parents of absent students who have not been excused.

Parents need to notify the office when a student is tardy or will be leaving the building during school hours. If a student must leave the building during the school day, he/she must obtain permission from the office. Upon his/her arrival or return to school the student needs to check in at the office and obtain a pass. It is the student's responsibility to make up any assignments missed as soon as possible. The amount of time allowed for making up work is the number of days that the student was absent plus one. However, the teacher may grant an extension of time if he/she chooses.

Continual attendance and/or tardy issues may involve the Marion Police Department and/or the Linn County officials at the discretion of school administration. Parents may be asked to provide additional documentation of absences if absence/tardiness is interfering with the success of their student while at Vernon Middle School.

Absence for School Related Activities

Students who will be missing school for school related activities are expected to make up all work before the absence. If this is not possible, the teacher will decide on the makeup procedure. All assignments due or tests to be taken must be fulfilled immediately upon the return of the student. The one additional day rule for absences does not apply. Any assignment given during the student's absence will be given special consideration unless advance arrangements were not made.

Activity Participation When Absent

Students who are not in school all day because of illness, suspensions, or unexcused absences cannot practice or participate in any after school or evening activity but may attend at the discretion of the coach/direction or school administration. Absences for appointments with a doctor or dentist are exempt.

Absences for appointments:

It is preferred that you schedule appointments after school hours. However, requests for early dismissal for dental and medical appointments are approved, provided the parent/guardian has sent a note or called to notify the school office of the appointment. A note from the doctor/dental office is the optimal excusal note. If a student must leave the building during the school day, he/she must first receive permission from the office.

Under no circumstances is a student to leave the building without a note or phone call from parents and without approval from the office. All work missed is the student's responsibility.

Tardy to School Procedures

All discipline regarding being tardy to school itself will be handled by the office. Students who are not in their first period class at the 8:05 bell are considered tardy for the day. Students reporting to school after 8:05 MUST stop at the main office to gain excusal for their tardy. If students report directly to their first hour without an office pass, they will be sent back to the office by the classroom teacher to report in. Repeated tardies to school may result in requests of parents to provide additional documentation or communication for excusal. Students with more than 2 unexcused tardies TO SCHOOL per quarter may be required to serve disciplinary time before or after school. Failure to serve the required time as assigned may result in additional consequences. Students arriving after the first hour bell (9:05 AM) will be counted as absent for that period and any subsequent periods they miss. Vernon Middle School operates on period-by-period attendance.

Tardy Between Classes

Classroom teachers/grade level teams reserve the right to create tardy policies for between class tardies. Parents will be notified by the classroom teachers of such policies via emails, notes home, or classroom⁵

expectations. Policies made by those parties will be upheld at the administrative level and may include detentions and or suspensions.

BAGS

Gym bags, backpacks, equipment bags, purses and other similar bags are to be used only to transport needed materials and supplies to and from school. These bags are to be stored in the student's locker during the school day. Teams using the organizational curriculum may request periodically for students to bring their bags to Connections time to assist with organization.

BICYCLES/SKATEBOARDS/SCOOTERS

Students are permitted to ride bicycles and non-motorized scooters to school with parental knowledge and permission. We respect the decision of the parents in this matter. Once the vehicle is at school, it is to be locked (to reduce chance of loss) and not ridden until dismissal. Safety rules should be stressed concerning bike and scooter usage. Bicycles and scooters are to be walked while on the sidewalks during arrival and dismissal hours. Skateboards and motorized vehicles are no longer allowed in school or on school grounds.

BOARD POLICIES

All MISD school board policies, including the equal opportunity in education statement, are available online via the www.marion.k12.ia.us website, under "Board of Education".

BOOKS

Textbooks are provided by the school district. Fines are charged for lost or damaged books. The amount of the fine is dependent upon the condition of the book and the degree of damage. Normal wear is expected, but broken covers, torn pages, and other damage will result in an appropriate fine.

BUILDING - USE OF

The school building and other facilities of Marion Independent Schools are intended to be of service not only to the school and its population, but also to the community at large. If rental or other usage is desired, please call 377-9401 for additional information. Certain guidelines must be followed for efficient use of our facilities:

1. Students are not to be in the building before or after school hours unless they have permission from a faculty member.
2. For security reasons, all doors will be locked from the inside beginning at 8:30 A.M., with the exception of the north door near the west corner of the building. You will need to use this unlocked door to enter the building during school hours.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Board Policy Number 104 (Formerly 502.5)

Harassment and bullying of students and employees are against federal, state and local policy, and are not tolerated by the board. The board is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, the board has in place policies, procedures, and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment of students by other students, by school employees, and by volunteers who have direct contact with students will not be tolerated in the school or school district.

The board prohibits harassment, bullying, hazing, or any other victimization of students, based on any of the following actual or perceived traits or characteristics, including but not limited to, age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socio-economic status, or familial status. Harassment against employees based upon the employee's race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, age or disability is also prohibited.

This policy is in effect while students or employees are on property within the jurisdiction of the board; while on school-owned or school-operated vehicles; while attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school or school district.

If, after an investigation, a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the student shall be disciplined by appropriate measures which may include suspension or expulsion. If after an investigation a school employee is found to be in violation of this policy, the employee shall be disciplined by appropriate measures which may include termination. If after an investigation a school volunteer is found to be in violation of this policy, the volunteer shall be subject to appropriate measures which may include exclusion from school grounds. "Volunteer" means an individual who has regular, significant contact with students.

When looking at the totality of the circumstances, harassment and bullying mean any electronic, written, verbal or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

- *Places the student in unreasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
- *Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- *Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- *Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

"Electronic" means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. "Electronic" includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, electronic text messaging or similar technologies.

Harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances:

- *Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- *Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, property, etc.;
- *Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student; and/or
- *Unreasonable interference with a

student's performance.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- *Submission to the conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of the student's education or benefits;

- *Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that student; or

- *The conduct has the purpose or effect or substantially interfering with the student's academic performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education environment.

In situations between students and school officials, faculty, staff, or volunteers who have direct contact with students, bullying and harassment may also include the following behaviors:

- * Requiring that a student submit to bullying or harassment by another student, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of the targeted student's education or participation in school programs or activities; and/or

- *Requiring submission to or rejection of such conduct as a basis for decisions affecting the student.

Any person who promptly, reasonably, and in good faith reports an incident of bullying or harassment under this policy to a school official shall be immune from civil or criminal liability relating to such report and to the person's participation in any administrative, judicial, or other proceeding relating to the report. Individuals who knowingly file a false complaint may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Retaliation against any person because the person has filed a bullying or harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding is also prohibited. Individuals who knowingly file false harassment complaints and any person who gives false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall any person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. Any student found to have

retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to and including suspension and expulsion. Any school employee found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to and including termination of employment. Any school volunteer found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to and including exclusion from school grounds.

The school or school district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying or harassment. The principal or designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying or harassment. The immediate supervisor or designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by employees alleging harassment.

It also is the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the investigator and principals, to develop procedures regarding this policy. The superintendent in conjunction with the director of teaching & learning are responsible for organizing training programs for students, school officials, faculty, staff, and volunteers who have direct contact with students. The training will include how to recognize harassment and what to do in case a student is harassed. It will also include proven effective harassment prevention strategies. The superintendent will also develop a process for evaluation the effectiveness of the policy in reducing bullying and harassment in the school district.

The board will annually publish this policy. The policy may be publicized by the following means:

- * Inclusion in the student handbook;
- *Inclusion in the employee handbooks;
- *Inclusion in the registration materials; and/or
- * Inclusion on the school or school district's web site.

A copy shall be made to any person at the central administration office, 777 S. 15th Street, Marion, IA.

Exhibits:

- 104.E1 Anti-Bullying/Harassment Complaint Form
- 104.E2 Anti-Bullying/Harassment

Witness Disclosure Form
104.E3 Disposition of Anti-Bullying/Harassment Complaint Form

CANDY/SODA/ENERGY DRINKS

Candy, Soda and Energy Drinks will not be allowed during classes at Vernon Middle School. However, all will be allowed during lunch and before and after school. Teachers using any of the above as student incentive prizes will require students to eat/drink the reward within the class period it was given. Due to health concerns, none of the above items will be allowed to be eaten between classes or remain open within the locker. Students may store unopened items listed above within the locker for consumption at lunch, before or after school. Confiscation or disciplinary action may result from violations.

CELL PHONES, ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND INCENDIARY DEVICES

Television sets, laser pointers, or other distracting devices should not be brought to school. Devices such as matches or lighters are also not allowed. CD players, MP3 players, iPods, video games, pagers, and cell phones are allowed but may **NOT** be used from 8:05 am to 3:05 pm. Teachers may request the use of these items for class projects which allow students to directly take them from the locker to that class only and then return them to the locker after that class. ****NOT*****These items must be turned off and stored in a locker between the hours of 8:05 am to 3:05 pm. Confiscation, detention and/or suspension may result from violations.

CHURCH NIGHT

Church activities represent a very important part of a student's educational growth and development. Wednesday night of every week during the school year has been set aside as church night. All school-related activities will end no later than 6:00 P.M. on Wednesdays.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The chart on communicable diseases from the Iowa State Department of health is available at the school nurse's office. Please inform the school nurse if you think your child has any of these communicable diseases.

COMPLIANCE-CURRENT ASBESTOS REGULATIONS

In order to remain in compliance with current asbestos regulations governing schools the district is required to give an annual notification to staff, parents, and legal guardians of students in the Marion Independent School District of the presence of and the availability of the management plan for that particular building located in the administration offices at 777 S. 15th Street. Should you want to know the locations and or the volume of asbestos in our buildings this information is located in the management plans. Also included in these are past activities the district has taken to remove and or encapsulate the asbestos to maintain safety to all occupants. Regulations require that the district have a full inspection of our facilities every 3 years and periodic surveillance inspections every 6 months to insure that it is maintained in a non-hazardous condition. In addition to this we have undergone E.P.A. audits and inspections in the last 10 years, which have found that the district is in full compliance on its program. Activities that have occurred in the past, in addition to our re-inspection, have been abatement of floor tile and thermal pipe insulation at Marion High School, Starry Elementary, and Francis Marion Intermediate in preparation of construction activities that occurred in the past. Should you have any questions please contact Ken Cook, Director of Operations, at 377-4974.

CONTACT INFORMATION

In the event of a serious accident or illness at school the parents and, if necessary, the emergency number 911 will be called. Please be sure to keep your student's health records and phone numbers updated so you can be reached in an emergency. Please notify the office of any phone or address changes in a timely manner to ensure continued communication between school and home. Refer to the Withdrawal of Students policy in this handbook. Please make certain anyone listed on your student's record as an emergency contact is willing to accept that responsibility.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, RESTRAINT AND PHYSICAL CONFINEMENT AND DETENTION

Chapter 103 Annual Notification Statement
State law forbids schools employees from using corporal punishment against any

student. Certain actions by school employees are not considered corporal punishment. Additionally, school employees may use "reasonable and necessary force, not designed or intended to cause pain" to do certain things, such as prevent harm to persons or property.

State law also places limits on school employees' abilities to restrain or confine and detain any student. The law limits why, how, where, and for how long a school employee may restrain or confine and detain a child. If a child is restrained or confined and detained, the school must maintain documentation and must provide certain types of notice to the child's parent.

If you have any questions about this state law, please contact your school. The complete text of the law and additional information is available on the Iowa Department of Education's web site: www.iowa.gov/educate.

COUNSELING SERVICE/AT RISK

Our Guidance Counselor is eager to get to know each of you. Services are available to boys and girls to assist them with personal or social problems and to give guidance in educational and vocational planning. Please feel free to talk to the counselor whenever the occasion arises. Appointments may be made by calling or stopping by the counseling office.

COURSE OFFERINGS

Exploratory Classes:

The following classes will meet every other day (opposite of PE) and on rotating Fridays. These classes are an important part of adolescent development to become well-rounded, diverse citizens that are ready for the challenges ahead in their academic and social future. It is the expectation that students strive to perform to the best of their ability in each of these classes. Attendance at Saturday school, the afterschool program, or summer school may be required if students fail to show passing status within these classes. These classes do contribute to the student's overall GPA and honor roll status.

6th Grade:

Building Skills (meets for a semester)
General Music (meets for a quarter)
Art (meets for a quarter)

7th Grade:

Teen Living (meets for a quarter)
Art (meets for a semester)

Music Exploratory (meets for a quarter)

8th Grade:

Teen Living (meets for a quarter)

Art –may be choices offered-(meets for a quarter)

Multi-media (meets for a semester)

Lab Classes:

Lab classes are offered to all students at Vernon Middle School with the intent of providing enrichment and/or remedial instruction within the school day. Staff and administration will analyze data and make recommendations for placement within these classes. Students may take more than one lab class throughout the year depending upon their need for enrichment/remediation. These classes are offered concurrently with band/choir to offer students not in those programs the ability to find a connection to school and learning. Students within band/choir are encouraged to remain in those programs, as participation in the arts has been researched and proven effective at raising scholastic performance and improving student attitudes and behaviors regarding school. It is the intent of the lab classes to provide opportunities to have a similarly positive academic experience to those students not in band/choir. Students are expected to participate and carry out the tasks set forth within the lab period. Lab classes will be graded on a pass/fail basis. Those students failing lab classes may be required to attend summer school, afterschool program, Saturday school, or take additional coursework to gain proficiency in the area of study for that lab class.

DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY/VANDALISM

Any student involved in writing, marking on, or vandalizing any part of school property will face strict disciplinary action and possible legal charges.

DANCE POLICY

School sponsored dances will be held periodically throughout the school year. The following rules will apply at all dances:

- Dances will be for Vernon Middle School students only.
- Visitors will not be allowed to attend. If a student needs to leave, s/he will not be allowed to return.
 - All school rules apply at dances.
 - No profanity is to be sung or

chanted under any circumstances.

- Students are not to be in locker area, or in any part of the building outside of the area where the dance is held.
- Moshing, grinding or slam-dancing at school dances is prohibited.
- Violators will be asked and expected to leave. Detention and/or suspension may apply for violations.

DISCIPLINE

Vernon Middle School Discipline Procedure
Discipline Procedures at Vernon have three intended outcomes:

- to provide a safe and orderly school environment conducive to optimal learning
- to modify the behavior of students who are habitually disruptive to the learning process
- to set boundaries and expectations for student behavior

If a student violates a classroom, school, or district procedure and is referred to the office, the building principal or designee will determine the nature and length of the consequence for the student. The disciplinary consequences assigned to the student will be determined by the policy or procedure which the student has violated and the number of times the student has violated that policy or procedure. Teachers and teams will communicate positive behavior plans and procedures regarding grade specific expectations within their classrooms. Teachers and paraprofessionals may assign consequences within the classroom environment based on violations of those or building expectations as the situation warrants.

The following items are examples of things that may receive disciplinary actions. This list is not all-inclusive and may include other items that violate school board policy and/or the safety or learning environment for students at Vernon Middle School.

- Noon or lunchroom violation
- Violation of cell phone/electronic device policies
- Insubordination
- Foul language
- Disrespect
- Fighting
- Failure to serve classroom detention
- Unexcused tardiness/truancy
- Violation of school dress code
- Failure to comply with or follow

- teacher/team expectations or systems
- Possession or use of weapons
- Profanity or obscenity
- Deliberate and open defiance of authority (verbal or physical).
- Inciting others to violence or disobedience
- Vandalism
- Theft
- Drugs or alcohol

DISCIPLINE-DETENTION

A detention room will be used for students who are staying after school because of truancy or some problem not directly related to classroom responsibility. All other detention cases are to be taken care of in the individual classrooms. Failure to serve detention at the arranged time will result in being assigned additional consequences. Students will be expected to read or work on assignments while serving detention. All students are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from school for detention.

Teachers assigning a student to serve detention for inappropriate behavior must send a notice to the office before 2:30 P.M. or the student will be required to stay the following day. (Principal may handle serious cases immediately.) Students will be required to spend the 45-minute time studying or reading quietly. No written requirements will be assigned unless a student has nothing to do. Students causing problems during detention will:

First time - student will be required to repeat the detention time.

Second time - parents will be called and student will repeat the detention with additional time.

Third time - a one-day suspension will be enforced.

DISCIPLINE - SUSPENSIONS

Students may be assigned ISS (in-school suspension), OSS (out-of-school suspension) or our off-site suspension program or a combination thereof depending upon the violation and the student's academic situation. Students may be suspended from class from one to ten days for a variety of reasons. The reasons may include:

- Habitual violation of one or more rules.
- Possession or smoking of cigarettes or tobacco.

- Possession or use of alcoholic beverages and/or drugs.
- Insubordination and/or profanity.
- Failure to make up detention time.
- Fighting.
- Disrespect to property, adults, and fellow students.
- Petty thievery.
- Truancy.
- Sexual harassment.
- Other items as determined by the principal and/or designee.

In-School Suspension (ISS) Rules

- Bring all books and materials with you when you report to the office for ISS (including lunch scan card).
- Use the restroom during the one morning and afternoon break.
- Ala carte items are not available for ISS students.
- Teachers will send assignments to you. Many students finish work early. You will bring additional reading materials.
- At no time is sleeping allowed.
- You are responsible for the appearance and condition of the furniture, carpet, and walls in the ISS area. You will be held accountable for any damage.
- If you are in ISS, you may not participate in any school activity that day.
- Conversation with other students in the ISS area is prohibited.

Failure to follow the above rules may result in additional suspension time. Repeat offenders may be suspended for up to three days.

If a teacher calls the student to the classroom after school for academic or disciplinary reasons, he/she is to spend the time doing homework, reading or sitting quietly. If the student fails to attend, he/she will be on main detention. If necessary, a parent conference should be scheduled by the classroom teacher to correct the problem. No sentences may be assigned as punishment; homework or reading is required. If a student refuses to cooperate he/she will be assigned detention again the following night, and the teacher will contact the parents.

Students who are required to see more than one teacher after school should go to each teacher and notify them of other obligations. Students failing to show-up for detention will be held accountable for the one skipped plus¹¹

one additional night. Students or parents may ask to make up time at a later date for an appropriate reason. (Staff will decide if appropriate.)

DISCIPLINE – DUE PROCESS

In the event the student refuses to comply with the teacher's directions to report to the office, the teacher may request assistance from the principal. The administration will follow due process procedures in related situations as directed by board policies.

DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED

Federal Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. The Marion Independent School District has the obligation, under Section 504 to identify, evaluate, and, if the student is determined to be eligible, to afford access to appropriate educational services. If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school district, he/she has a right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer.

DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

It will be a violation of conduct for students to demonstrate overt displays of affection at school or school activities, at home or away. This includes prolonged embraces, kissing, fondling or other inappropriate physical contact.

DRESS CODE

During school hours, VMS students are expected to dress and groom themselves in a way that is neither offensive nor distracting to students and/or faculty. While the primary responsibility for appearance rests with the students and their parents, the administration reserves the right to judge what is proper and what is not.

A student will be required to change his/her clothing if the dress code policy is not followed. Continued referrals to the office for dress code violations will be considered insubordination.

Faculty members are permitted to specify a dress code for field or activity trips.

The following clothing or other apparel

may not be worn: clothing which promotes illegal use by minors such as alcohol, tobacco, or drugs; clothing which displays obscene material, profanity, vulgar statements, gang symbols, hate messages, sexual innuendoes, suicide, intolerance, violent messages, or other messages which are interpreted as being inappropriate or offensive.

In addition, clothing that calls undue attention to anatomical details may not be worn. Examples include but are not limited to mini-skirts shorter than finger tip length, short shorts, bare midriff tops, backless tops, open mesh clothing without proper clothing underneath, sagging pants, or clothing with holes in inappropriate places which show intimate apparel.

Shoes or sandals must be worn at all times. Roller shoes or wheelies must have wheels retracted or removed while in school.

Students will not be permitted to wear caps, hats, hoods, or any headgear unless prescribed by a doctor during the school day. In addition, sunglasses cannot be worn in school unless prescribed by a doctor.

Student violating dress code may be asked to do any of the following: call home to have parent bring suitable clothing, go home and

change with the student making up the time they missed to do so before or after school, give the item to school staff to be picked up in the office afterschool or by a parent, or serve detention/suspension. Protecting a distraction-free learning environment is a priority for Vernon Middle School.

DRILLS

Tornado and fire drills are held regularly during the year, two of each during each semester. Intruder drills may also be held. Directions are posted in each classroom, and teachers will cover rules and procedures with the students. Students are expected to move quietly and quickly to designated areas. Students remain in designated areas until an "all clear" signal is given.

ELEVATOR

Students with special needs (either short or long term) will be allowed to use the elevator, if they adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Permission and/or a pass to use the elevator will be issued by the school nurse or office personnel.
2. A maximum of one designated student may ride along to assist with school books and supplies.
3. The elevator may only be used for a school related purpose.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Communication with school employees by e-mail is encouraged. To communicate with Vernon Middle School staff members by e-mail, please use the staff member's first initial followed by their last name, followed by @marion.k12.ia.us. **Example:** Amy Johnson; ajohnson@marion.k12.ia.us

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In the event of emergency evacuation, students will be moved to other locations. Parents will be asked to listen for emergency announcements on radio/TV but NOT to come to the school or the evacuation locations to pick up students until communication to do so takes place.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Actively enrolled Vernon Middle School students are eligible to practice and participate in a wide variety of extra-

curricular activities. All athletes must have a physical before they can participate in athletics. All athletic physicals are valid for one year from the examination date. All students should also be covered by either school insurance or a home accident policy as the school is not responsible for injuries. A participants eligibility for all extracurricular activities will depend on his/her grades, behavior, attendance at practices, and compliance with state association and local school board policies as well as rules provided by each activity sponsor and the Activities Director.

The following is a general list of extra-curricular activities offered. A complete listing of activities and detailed descriptions of each will be available at registration in August and in the school office throughout the school year:

Band, Jazz Band, Choir, Show Choir, 7/8 Girls' Athletics, 7/8 Boys' Athletics, Science Club, Cheerleading, VMS Book Club, SODA, Drama, Fine Arts Night, Volunteering/Service Learning, and Student Council.

FALSE ALARMS OF FIRE

The Code of Iowa discussion of false alarms of fires is as follows:

714.31: FALSE ALARMS OF FIRE. No person or persons shall cause or give a false alarm of fire, by setting fire to any combustible material, or by crying or sounding an alarm, or by any other means, without cause.

714.32: PUNISHMENT. Any person violating the provisions of section 714.31 shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars or by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding thirty days.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned as an additional educational experience for your children. Written permission is necessary for your child to go on any field trip. This is done when parents sign the handbook form at the beginning of the school year. Your student will always receive advance notice of upcoming field trips. Occasionally teachers will contact parents to request assistance in supervising field trips.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE OUTSIDE THE LUNCHROOM

There will be no beverages allowed outside of the lunchroom/gym without written permission from Vernon Middle School staff or administration. Open food and candy containers are not to be stored in lockers or carried in the hallways. Students will be expected to dispose of these open containers immediately in a trash can. Failure to comply with a staff member's request for disposal will be considered insubordination. Students may not order food to be delivered during the school day.

GANG ACTIVITIES

The Vernon Middle School philosophy is that the presence of gangs and gang activities has caused, and continues to cause, a substantial disruption of, or material interference with, school and school activities. A gang as defined in the Iowa Code 723A means any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities, the commission of one or more criminal acts, which has an identifiable name or identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang activity. The "pattern of gang activity" means the commission, attempt to commit, or solicitation of two or more criminal acts, provided the criminal acts were committed on separate dates or by two or more persons who are members of, or belong to, the same criminal street gang. By this policy we act to prohibit the existence of gangs and gang activities as follows:

No student on or about school property or at any school activity;

- Shall wear, possess, use, distribute, write, draw, display or sell any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, colors, or any other thing which is evidence of membership in or affiliation with any gang.
- Shall commit any act or omission or use any speech, either verbal or nonverbal (gestures, handshakes, etc.) showing membership or affiliation in a gang.
- Shall use any speech or commit any act or omission in furtherance of the interests of any gang or gang activity, including but not limited to:
 - a) Soliciting others for membership;
 - b) Requesting any person pay

- for "protection", otherwise intimidating or threatening any person;
- c) Committing any illegal act or violation of school district policies;
- d) Inciting another student to act with physical violence upon another student.

GRADING

Grading in the Vernon Middle School is done on a quarterly basis with the "A" through "F" scale providing the basis for the GPA (grade point average) in academic and exploratory classes. All Lab classes, with the exception of SCR and social skills, will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

GUM

No gum is allowed during the school day at Vernon Middle School. Consequences will be given if students do not comply or for repeated violations.

HALL PASSES

Anytime a student is in the halls, other than between classes, he/she should have their planner stating his/her destination and from what class he/she is being excused. It is the student's responsibility to fill out the planner and have their teacher sign it. Teachers may use classroom designed passes for the media center, nurse, office and restroom if they so choose. Students in the corridors, restrooms and other areas without their planner or a teacher pass may be assigned detention.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Grant Wood Area Education Agency provides annual hearing and vision testing to our schools. The dates of the testing will be posted in the school's newsletters and calendars.

Parents who do not wish to have their child tested, need to notify the school in writing prior to the testing.

To accommodate a new state law requiring dental screening of all students within one year of entering high school, St. Luke's Dental Health Center will be providing free dental screenings at Vernon for all 8th graders. If you do not want your child to receive the dental screening, you must provide proof of a dental screening within the past calendar year or you must complete an exemption form available from the school health office.

STATEMENT REGARDING THE HOMELESS

The Board of Directors of the Marion Independent School District is responsible for locating and identifying homeless children and youth who are "found" within the district. A "homeless child or youth of school age" is defined as one between the ages of 5 and 21 who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes a child or youth living on the street, in a car, tent or abandoned building or some other form of shelter not designed as a permanent home; living in a community shelter facility; or living with nonnuclear family members or friends whomay not have legal guardianship over the child or youth of school age. The district shall make available to the homeless child or youth all services and assistance including, but not limited to, compensatory education, special education, English as a second language, vocational courses or programs, programs for gifted and talented, health services, and food and nutrition programs, on the same basis as those services and assistance are provided to resident pupils.

HONOR ROLL

The honor roll applies to grades 6-8. To be placed on the Honor Roll a student must earn a 3.25 GPA or better in all classes for the reporting period.

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPEMENT

All Iowa public school districts are required to provide instruction in Human Growth and Development including instruction regarding human sexuality, self-esteem, stress management, interpersonal relationships, and aids, in grades one through twelve. The law also requires public schools to annually provide parents/guardians with information about this requirement and the procedure by which parents/guardians may inspect instructional materials prior to them being utilized in the classroom. A student shall not be required to take instruction in Human Growth and Development if the student's parent or guardian files with the appropriate principal a written request that the student be excused from the instruction. Parents/guardians of students enrolled at Vernon Middle School are hereby advised that well prior to their student's receiving Human Growth and Development instruction, they will

receive written notice and upon receipt of this notice, they should immediately contact the appropriate principal if they want to inspect the instructional materials to be utilized for instruction. A pupil shall not be required to take instruction in human growth and development if the student's parent or guardian files with the building principal a written request that the student be excused from the instruction.

NOTE: THIS IS THE WRITTEN NOTICE

ILLEGAL ITEMS FOUND IN SCHOOL OR IN STUDENTS' POSSESSION

Students are prohibited from distributing, dispensing, manufacturing, possessing, using, and being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or look-a-like substances; and possessing or using tobacco, tobacco products or look-a-like substances.

INSURANCE

The Marion Independent School District does not carry medical insurance to cover injuries to students while they are at school or while they are participating in school activities. Parents are encouraged to have their children covered by health insurance. If children are not covered by health insurance, parents may wish to purchase private insurance. The state of Iowa has a medical insurance called "Hawk-I" for children of low income families. You may learn more about "Hawk-I" by calling 1-800-257-8563.

LOCKER POLICY

Lockers are the property of the school and are provided for your convenience at no cost. They are subject to inspection by school officials. Students will be charged for any damage to lockers. Student access to each locker is limited to the use of combination lock. Students are not allowed to jam their lockers for easy access. Students must clean out lockers at the end of the school year. It is also recommended that lockers be cleaned out several times during the year. Students are to only use the locker they are assigned. Any change must be approved through the office or guidance office in charge of lockers.

LOST AND FOUND

A lost and found cart is located in the south lobby area. Please take lost and found articles to the cart. Textbooks and valuables,¹⁵

such as jewelry or keys, and any item with a name or identification on it should be taken to the office.

LUNCH COSTS

Please visit our website or contact us at 377-9401 for the most up to date lunch prices. Breakfast and hot lunch are available for all students every day. All students are encouraged to eat a hot lunch or bring a sacklunch. Skipping lunch is not healthy. Lunch at the middle school is "closed". Students do not leave the building for lunch.

Our district uses the School Dining System as our program for school meals. The lunch accounts are pooled together into "family" accounts that include other family members. Parents have access to their student's accounts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through the district website at <http://www.marion.k12.ia.us>. Deposits to lunch accounts can be made online. The link to the School Dining System is located under the "Community" menu item on the above website. You will be assigned a family ID number and a password. Checks or online deposits go into the family account and the funds are accessible from any building. Please make sure your family account has a positive balance at all times. A complete statement of the lunch charge policy was given to families at registration or is available at the office.

LUNCH ACCOUNTS AND SCAN CARDS

Each student will receive a plastic scan card on the first day of school. This card must be presented to the food service personnel to purchase any lunch items. Students will not be allowed to purchase snack items if they have lost their lunch card and have not yet purchased a replacement card. The fee for a replacement card is \$5.00. Students with continually or excessively negative lunch balances will be provided an alternate meal at the discretion of the lunch staff and administration. It is the goal of Vernon Middle School to zero out all lunch balances at the conclusion of each school year. Phone calls, emails and notes may be sent home to indicate a payment is needed on the account. If the debt is not resolved in a timely matter, the amount owed may be turned over to the District Business Office for further attempts at collection. Please refer to the food

service policies handed out at registration for further details.

MEDICATION PROCEDURES

Prescription medication brought to school is to be turned into the office. For safety reasons, parents should transport all medication to and from school. A physician must have prescribed the medication and the following information must be on the prescription bottle:

1. Name of student
2. Name of medication
3. Time of day to be given
4. Dosage
5. Physician's name and Pharmacy name

ONLY PROPERLY LABELED PRESCRIPTIONS WILL BE ADMINISTERED!

A signed permission slip must accompany the medication in order for it to be administered. Please remind your child that he/she is responsible for asking for the medication at the appropriate time. Unless indicated by your physician, medication to be given three times per day should be given at home before school, after school, and at bedtime. An exception to this is medication to be taken with meals or on a full stomach.

Nonprescription medication, such as Tylenol, will be administered following the same procedure. Medication must be accompanied by a note or medication form signed by the parent and must come in the original container.

At the end of the year, arrangements should be made to have any medication left in the office picked up by a parent. Any medication left in the office will be sent home with the student on the last day of school. Any medication left at school will be discarded.

If you have any questions concerning this medication policy, please contact Nancy Alderdyce, Health Coordinator. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

NURSE

A Health Associate is on duty from 8:00 A.M. to 3:15 P.M. daily. If your child is ill or injured, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The school nurse, health associate, or secretary will examine the child.
2. Minor cuts, scrapes and injuries will be treated with first aid methods.

3. Students with more serious injuries will receive first aid and their parents will be phoned. When students who are ill are sent to the nurse, their temperature will be taken and parents phoned if necessary.

If an illness is accompanied by a fever, your student should be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

The Vernon PTO provides much-needed financial and volunteer support for staff and students here at VMS. All interested individuals are welcome. Your support and participation are greatly appreciated.

REPORT CARDS AND GRADING SYSTEM

Report cards are issued each quarter, and parent teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year to discuss student progress. Multiple forms of assessment are used to determine grades. Students with Individualized Educational Plans will also have progress on their goals sent home four times a year with report cards.

SATURDAY SCHOOL

Students may be assigned school on Saturday to assist them in their academic success. There may also be occasions where students may be assigned to serve disciplinary consequence on Saturday. All Saturday school sessions will begin at 8 A.M. and will be supervised by a Vernon Staff member. Students failing to serve their Saturday school as assigned will be assigned additional consequences. Students are expected to follow all school rules and expectations while in attendance at this program.

SCHOOL FEES – GRADES 6-8

Please call us at 377-9401 or check our school website for the current fee schedule.

MISD bussing is available if your student lives more than 7 blocks from school. Please call Transportation at 377-0123 for transportation fees and available bus routes. Applications and payment for first semester bussing are due by June 30, 2010. Second semester applications are due by December 1, 2010.

SCHOOL GROUNDS

To preserve the neat appearance of our grounds and school building, always use the sidewalks and place any trash in waste cans. Students and staff at Vernon Middle School support recycling. We recycle all white and colored paper, cardboard, plastics, envelopes, and most other recyclable materials with the exception of glass and plastic bags. The VMS Science Club picks up the recycling boxes every week and fills our large recycling bin. Please support our recycling efforts to save our planet and its natural resources. Litter only detracts from the beauty of the grounds and building that the community has provided for your education. Take pride in your school.

SCHOOL PICTURES

In August/September, students will have school pictures taken. All students will be photographed for the yearbook. Price lists will be sent home in advance of picture day. Payment must be made at the time photos are taken. Spring photos have been suspended at Vernon until the construction of our new building is complete.

SCHOOL PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY

(In accordance with Board Policy 605.3)

If a student fails a core class (social studies, science, math and language arts) for the quarter, the student may be required to attend summer school, Saturday school, the afterschool program, or take additional classes for the classes failed. Accommodations will be followed for any student with a 504 plan or IEP. If these requirements are not met in a timely matter, the student may be retained at the same grade level the following year or be required to take all or parts of the failed class the next year. As students are individuals with varying needs of assistance, teachers and school administration will collaborate with parents to take each retention situation on a case by case basis with the overall goal to be defined as setting the student up for academic and social success in their future endeavors.

SCHOOL VISITATION

Parents are welcome to visit school and/or your child's classes during the school day. Please stop at the office and sign in first. It would be helpful if the classroom teacher could be notified before your visit. Please plan to have¹⁷

your visit last through a full class period. We discourage school age friends or relatives from requesting a special visit.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE - Board Policy 505.51

All school property is held in public trust by the Board of Directors. School authorities may, without a search warrant, search a student, student lockers, desks, work areas or student automobiles under certain circumstances to maintain order and discipline in the schools, promote the educational environment, and protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel. School authorities may seize any illegal, unauthorized or contraband materials discovered in the search. Items of contraband may include but are not limited to nonprescription controlled substances, apparatus used for the administration of controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, weapons, explosives, poisons and stolen property. Such items are not to be possessed by a student anywhere on the school premises.

School authorities may conduct periodic assessment of all school lockers.

A school authority may search an individual student or a protected student area under the following conditions:

1. There is a reasonable suspicion that a criminal offense or a school rule or regulation bearing on school order has been violated.
2. There is a reasonable belief that the search will produce evidence of such violation.
3. The suspicion and belief described above is particular to the student to be searched.

Under no circumstances may a search be made which is unreasonable in light of the age of the student, the non-seriousness of the violation, the sex of the student, or the nature of the suspected violation. A school authority shall not conduct a search that involves a strip search, a body cavity search or the use of a drug-sniffing animal to search a student's body. The search of a student by a school authority not of the same gender as the student is prohibited.

Drug Dog

In accordance with Board Policy 505.51- Searches/Seizures, a drug dog(s), in cooperation with law enforcement, may randomly sweep through the building. This is a precaution and not an alarm that signals any drug use.

SPECIAL SERVICES

The following special services are available at Marion Independent Schools:

1. Speech therapy
2. Hearing and vision screening
3. Social worker
4. School psychologist
5. Resource room

Additional support services are available to assist teachers when concerns arise.

These services include our building staff, (special education teacher, counselor, nurse, etc.) and Grant Wood Area Education Agency support staff, (psychologist, social worker, consultant, speech-language pathologist, occupational and physical therapist and others). Teachers and families may make use of input on an informal basis or request formal assistance in identifying strategies to address a concern, in carrying out these strategies, or in monitoring individual student progress. These services are available for all students through teacher or parent request. Working together, we can provide the best education possible for all of our children. At some time during the year, it may be beneficial for teachers and parents to request the help of these trained people. Your written permission is needed for some of these services.

STUDENT COUNCIL

The purpose of the Vernon Middle School Student Council is:

1. To foster friendliness and cooperation among the students and faculty.
2. To consider and resolve problems of concern to the student body.
3. To give students a chance to assist with the work of the school in a democratic way.
4. To promote school spirit.
5. To stimulate interest in developing high standards of citizenship and scholarship.
6. To encourage desirable community and school relationships.

Membership will consist of five representatives elected from each grade level, plus a president elected from the eighth grade. Members can be dropped from the council if they are not performing as good representatives and school citizens.

STUDENT ACCELERATION POLICY

(In accordance with Board Policy)

Acceleration of a student: Students with high academic ability, demonstrated or potential, may have extended needs that are best addressed through services that expand the deliver of instruction. Such services include, but are not limited to:

- Single subject acceleration
- Liaison services with other programs for exceptional learners
- Mentorship
- Provision of appropriate counseling to the student and his/her family
- Whole grade acceleration. (See 605.3R)

Whole grade acceleration is a radical form of curriculum modification considered after options such as for curriculum extensions and interventions have been explored. The Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) developed by the Belin-Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development will be used to inform the acceleration team when whole-grade acceleration is being considered.

STUDENT RECORDS

Student Records Access (Board Policy)

A student's parents may access the student's educational records. Other than the parents, only authorized certified personnel, and the student, authorized government officials from the U.S. Comptroller General, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, the Commissioner and the Director of the National Institute of Education, the Assistant Secretary for Education and State Education Department, and appropriate authorities in a health or safety emergency may access the student's educational records without the approval or the notification of the student's parents. Information from students' educational records, designated as directory information by the school district in compliance with board policy, "Student Directory Information", may be released without the consent of parents. Parents will have an opportunity to deny the release of directory information without their consent. It shall be the responsibility of

the superintendent to provide parents with notice annually informing them of their rights under this policy and allowing them to deny the release of directory information. It shall be within the discretion of the superintendent to determine the method of notice that will inform parents.

Students' educational records may be accessed during the regular business hours of the school district. If copies of documents are requested, a fee for such copying may be charged.

School district personnel shall be informed annually about their rights and about parents' rights to access student records and the procedure for doing so under this policy.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy. The administrative regulations shall include, but not be limited to, the location and types of educational records maintained by the school district, an explanation of the process for amendment of the records, the name of the contact person for access to the records, a procedure for recording disclosures of the records, the amount of a fee to be charged for copies of the records, and the name of the contact person for clarification of the records.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Substitute teaching is a difficult job. Misbehavior with a substitute teacher will not be tolerated. Substitute teachers are to write down the name of students or send students to the office that are demonstrating inappropriate behavior. Upon his/her return, the classroom teacher will administer the appropriate consequence for a student whose name is written down by the substitute teacher. If a student is sent to the office, office detention and/or suspension may be given by the administration. Grade level teams reserve the right to implement substitute policies that will be supported by the administration. Parents will be notified of those policies through a note home.

SUPPLIES

Students are expected to have pencils, paper, and any special supplies required for class.

TECHNOLOGY

Students are given the opportunity to use technology within their middle level education. It is an exciting way to learn, but with it comes responsibility. Each student must agree to the following the rules and procedures for using technology as required by the Marion Independent School District. Each parent/guardian and student must sign a form indicating that the student must follow the rules.

TELEPHONE CALLS

The office telephone is for office use and student emergencies. A pay telephone is located in the south lobby near the gym. Students are to use the phone between classes or get a pass from a teacher to make an emergency phone call.

TELEPHONE MESSAGES

Classroom interruptions will be kept to a minimum. Only emergency messages will be delivered to students. Routine messages and items that could be arranged in advance will not be delivered. Parent messages will be given broader consideration. Parents are encouraged to call teachers before (7:30-8:00 AM) or after (3:05-3:30) school or during their plan/team time (please contact the office to know when this happens for a specific teacher). Teachers at Vernon Middle School do have voice mail (and e-mail) to allow parents the ability to leave messages at your convenience.

TESTING

We will take the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in November 2010. Information regarding ITBS testing will be available through the counselor's office by calling 377-9401.

THEFT/VANDALISM

All theft or vandalism is to be reported to the principals' office at once. Do not assume that your locker is a safe place. Keep all items of value and cash with you at all times. Keep your lockers locked!

THREATS OF VIOLENCE

Any threat, verbal or otherwise, to staff members or other students is strictly prohibited. Threats intended as a joke will be treated with complete seriousness. Consequences, including suspension and/or exclusion may be imposed at the discretion of the

school Administration or Board of Education. Legal authorities may also be asked to assist in some cases.

VENDING MACHINES

Students may access the vending machine products before and after school and with special permission during the school day. Open containers are not to be carried through the school hallways or kept in student lockers.

VOLUNTEERS

We encourage and welcome volunteers to help in our school. If you are interested in helping at Vernon on a volunteer basis, please call our office at 377-9401. There are various opportunities for involvement in the school district through service on advisory committees. Individual buildings as well as the school district as a whole have organizations and advisory groups. At VMS there is a Parent Group which meets _____ and is open to all parents of Vernon Students. If you would like to become an active member please contact _____. Booster Clubs are another part of the supports available for fine arts and athletics. If you are interested in learning more about Athletic Boosters contact _____ or for Fine Arts contact _____. There are advisory committees to which members are appointed by the board. Such committees include the Superintendent's Advisory Committee as well as the School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC). The SIAC committee meets a couple times a year in the evening to discuss student achievement, learn about district initiatives, receive updates on state requirements and make recommendations on district goal. The Superintendent's Advisory Committee operates in a similar manner but provides feedback without the expectations for district goal recommendations. If you would like to be considered to serve on the SIAC please contact Cindy Diouf, Director of Teaching and Learning or Superintendent Sarah Pinion if you are interested in receiving information on the Superintendent's Advisory Committee.

WEAPONS POLICY

(In accordance with Board Policy)

School district facilities and/or school-sponsored events are not an appropriate place for weapons or dangerous objects. For purposes of this policy "weapons and/or dangerous objects" include any and all 20

objects intended to be used or used in such a fashion as to cause or threaten to cause injury to another. This would include, but not be limited to, objects such as knives, facsimiles of guns, etc., as well as other objects such as broken bottles or baseball bats used to cause or threaten to cause injury.

Students bringing weapons, or who are knowingly in possession or control of a weapon, on school district grounds, facilities, school vehicles and/or school-sponsored events, shall be disciplined up to and including expulsion. The principal may allow authorized persons to display weapons or other dangerous objects for educational purposes. Such a display shall also be exempt from this policy.

School district facilities and/or school-sponsored events are not an appropriate place for firearms. For purposes of this policy, the term "firearm" includes any weapon which is designed to expel a projectile by action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, a muffler or silencer for such a weapon, or any explosive, incendiary or poison gas.

Students bringing a firearm, or who are knowingly in possession or control of a firearm, on school district grounds, facilities, school vehicles and/or school-sponsored events shall

be expelled for not less than twelve months. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent in conjunction with the principals to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy. Such regulations shall include procedures for school officials to report all alleged violations of this policy to local law enforcement agencies.

WITHDRAWING FROM OR ADDING CLASSES

Band and Choir are optional classes offered at VMS. However, adding or dropping these classes is allowed only per the guidelines set forth in the music handbook. Such changes need to be processed through the Guidance Office after the parent/guardian has communicated with the band or choir teacher.

WITHDRAWING FROM VERNON MIDDLE SCHOOL

If your child will no longer attend Vernon Middle School, please do the following:

- Notify the office of the withdrawal date and they will prepare a Student Checkout Sheet.
- The student will take this sheet to teachers, media center, lunch cashier, school nurse and the principal for their signatures indicating materials have been returned and all fees paid. The new school will request the student's records.
- If your child rides a bus, please notify the Transportation Department at 377-0123