Middle School Student Handbook
2015-2016 School Year

VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Telephone: 757-263-1000 • ***www.vbschools.com***

MISSION STATEMENT

The Virginia Beach City Public Schools, in partnership with the entire community, will empower every student to become a life-long learner who is a responsible, productive and engaged citizen within the global community.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Virginia Beach City Public Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, pregnancy and childbirth, or marital status. School Board policies and supporting regulation (Policies 2-33, 4-4, 5-7, and 6-7 and Regulation 5-44.1) provide equal access to courses, programs, counseling services, physical education and athletics, vocational education, instructional materials and extracurricular activities. Violations of these policies should be reported to the Director of Guidance Services at 757-648-6160 or the Chief Human Resources Officer at 757-263-1133.

Dr. Aaron Spence, Superintendent · School pages produced by Virginia Beach City Public Schools · No part of this publication may be produced or shared in any form without giving specific credit to Virginia Beach City Public Schools · ***www.vbschools.com***.

2015-2016 SCHOOL CALENDAR*

FIRST SEMESTER	
September 7	**Labor Day, schools closed**
September 8	**First day of school for students**
October 1	**Adjusted dismissal – Elementary and Middle**
October 8	**Progress reports issued**
November 3	**Staff day, schools closed for students**
November 4	**Begin second grading period**
November 10	**Report cards issued**
November 11	**Veterans Day, schools closed**
November 25	**Adjusted dismissal – All schools**
November 26 & 27	**Thanksgiving holidays, schools closed**
December 10	**Adjusted dismissal – Elementary and Middle**
December 15	**Progress reports issued**
December 23	**Adjusted dismissal - All schools**
Dec. 24 – Jan. 1	**Winter holidays, schools closed**
January 18	**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, schools closed**
February 1	**Staff days, schools closed for students**

SECOND SEMESTER	
February 2	**Begin third grading period**
February 8	**Report cards issued**
February 15	**President's Day, schools closed**
February 25	**Adjusted dismissal – Elementary and Middle**
March 4	**Progress reports issued**
March 28- April 1	**Spring holidays, schools closed**
April 12	**Adjusted dismissal - Elementary**
April 13	**Staff Day, schools closed for students**
April 14	**Begin fourth grading period**
April 19	**Report cards issued**
May 17	**Progress reports issued**
May 30	**Memorial Day, schools closed**
June 14-16	**Adjusted dismissal - High School**
June 17	**Last day for students – Adjusted dismissal**
June 24	**Report cards mailed to all students**

***Calendar is subject to change by the School Board.**

VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS' MIDDLE SCHOOL INFORMATION

Please review the following information that summarizes School Board policies, regulations, and procedures that directly affect middle school students. Additional information and direction can be found on ***www.vbschools.com*** and in the *Code of Student Conduct, Secondary School Curriculum Student Guide for 2014-2015*, transportation rules, *Code of Virginia*, and the *Virginia Beach City Public Schools' Policy and Regulations*. Individual school rules are provided by each middle school. Students and parents/legal guardians are to return the completed forms following a review of the material. Students are required to carry their student planners on their persons whenever moving through a school building.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Academic Support Program is designed to respond to the needs of students who have demonstrated a deficiency in the area of English/Language Arts or mathematics. Students must be enrolled in this course if they scored between 375-399 on the English or mathematics SOL test the previous year. In addition, students who earn a nine weeks grade below a 70 in any core course must be removed from an elective course to participate in Academic Support. Additional information regarding this program may be obtained by contacting the school's School Improvement Specialist.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP) FOR COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

The School Board provides a computer system to promote educational excellence and prepare students to live and work in the 21st century. To be eligible to use this system, students under the age of 18 must obtain parental/legal guardian acknowledgment of the provisions of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), which is integrated into the *Code of Student Conduct*. A Parent Acknowledgment Form will be forwarded annually and signed by the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) acknowledging that they have read and understand the AUP. Inappropriate use of the computer can result in disciplinary action taken under the provisions of the *Code of Student Conduct* and/or other School Board policies and School Division regulations governing student discipline. Understanding the importance of Internet/computer safety, information on this subject will be made available to all students throughout the school year. Additionally, Internet/computer safety tips can be found on ***www.vbschools.com***.

ACCESS/DISCLOSURE OF STUDENT RECORDS

In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and in accordance with School Board Policy (5-31) and Regulations (5-31.1 & 2), parents/legal guardians may review their children's cumulative education records at the school office upon request. If student

education records are inaccurate or misleading, the student's parent or legal guardian may request an amendment by contacting the school principal. Cumulative records are treated as confidential material, and the privacy rights of parents/legal guardians and students are safeguarded. Except as provided by law, no outside agencies or individuals may have access to a student's record without written consent of the parent/legal guardian. If records are copied, a minimal fee may be charged. Parents/legal guardians have the right to file a complaint with the Family Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education for failure to comply with FERPA. Whenever a student transfers from one school or school division to another, the scholastic and discipline record or a copy of the scholastic and discipline record will be transferred to the school or school division upon request from the school or school division.

The School Board authorizes making certain Student Directory Information public as permitted under state and federal laws and School Board policies and regulations. Student Directory Information means information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. School Board Policy 5-66 defines Student Directory Information as the following: name of student in attendance or no longer in attendance; address; date and place of birth; telephone listing; dates of attendance; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; height and weight, if member of athletic team; awards and honors received; and other similar information. School Board policy provides the Superintendent with the discretion of selecting which student directory information may be released.

Detailed information on FERPA can be found on ***vbschools.com*** under the category *Policies*.

ALCOHOL/DRUG POLICY

Under Virginia and Federal law, it is unlawful for any person to manufacture, sell, distribute, possess with the intent to sell, give, distribute or bring any controlled substance, imitation controlled substance or marijuana on the property, including buildings and grounds, of public school property, within 1,000 feet of school property, on any school bus, or to any school-sponsored event. Violation is a felony; violators are subject to expulsion. A student will be recommended for expulsion for the use or possession of alcohol or drugs, or possession of paraphernalia used with drugs. A student accused of simple possession, a first offense, at the principal's discretion, may be offered the opportunity to participate in the *Substance Abuse Intervention Program* (SAIP) in lieu of the recommendation of expulsion.

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

The School Division has established residency rules and attendance zones for schools. Under Virginia law, parents/legal guardians who falsify address information may be found guilty of a class 4 misdemeanor. Parents/legal guardians shall be liable to the School Division for tuition charges for the time the student was enrolled in such School Division. At the discretion of the School Administration, students who are admitted to VBCPS or specific schools based upon false information may be disqualified from attending VBCPS or a specific school.

Regular school attendance is important to academic development and successful completion of required Standards of Learning and end-of-course tests; therefore, excessive or unexcused absences from school and specific classes can be detrimental. Virginia law requires that all persons who have not reached their 18th birthday must attend school in the city or county in which they reside. Failure to attend school regularly may result in a referral to the courts. Virginia law requires schools to develop plans of action when a student has five unexcused absences for which the parent/legal guardian has provided no documentation. After seven unexcused absences, schools must report these absences to appropriate authorities.

The School Division has established reasons for which an excused absence can be granted. These reasons follow: personal illness, severe illness or death in the family, exposure to contagious disease, religious holidays, extremely inclement weather or school-related activities for which participation has been granted by the school. Absences for other reasons, including out-of-school suspension, are considered unexcused absences.

Absence for any reason other than those stated above must receive prior permission from the school administration. Request for this approval should be written and submitted as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours prior to the date requested. The reason for the request and length of the absence must be provided. In all cases of absence or tardiness, students must present a written excuse from a parent/guardian to the school stating the reason. With a tardy or late arrival, the parent/legal guardian must accompany the student to the school office to obtain a pass to class. Students taking credit-bearing courses (often called high school courses) must meet special attendance requirements. Students with more than 12 class absences in a semester—excused or unexcused—receive a failing grade—63/N (N=failure due to absences) for that semester or the actual class grade, whichever is lower.

In credit courses where alternate day schedules or block scheduling are in effect, students with more than six class absences, within a given semester—excused or unexcused—will receive a failing grade (63/N) for that course or the actual class grade, whichever is lower.

When extenuating circumstances exist, a parent/guardian should discuss extensive absences with the principal or his/her designee. Students who miss 15 consecutive days during the school year will be withdrawn from the school.

Students having more than 24 absences for the year are considered as having excessive absences. When a student's absences number 16 or more, the school notifies the parents/guardians of the need to develop a corrective action plan for attendance. If attendance continues to be excessive, the student may be denied promotion by the principal.

BICYCLES/SKATEBOARDS

At schools where bicycles are allowed, students must obtain permission from the school to ride to or from school. Bicycles must be secured on a bike rack with the student's lock. Bicycles are not permitted in the school building and may not be ridden on sidewalks at the school. Students under 14 are required to wear helmets while riding bicycles and should obey traffic signals and signs to ensure a safe ride to and from school. The school assumes no responsibility for bicycles on school property. Skateboards and scooters are not allowed on School Board property and cannot be used for transportation purposes to and from school.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH PROGRAM

VBCPS participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. Applications for free or reduced price meals can be obtained from the school office throughout the school year. Menus, current meal prices, and a complete listing of a la carte items can be found on ***vbschools.com***. In addition to breakfast and lunch items, other items are offered for sale a la carte. Payments for meals can be made using one of three methods: **cash**; a **computerized** point-of-service system that allows individual students to have accounts for prepayment and payment at the time of service; and **online** using Visa, MasterCard or a debit card. This online service –via ***www.vbschools.com*** – allows parents of students to prepay money directly into their child's account, monitor their child's food purchases, set up low-balance email reminders, and schedule recurring payments.

BULLYING

Virginia Code 22.1-276.01 defines bullying as "any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate or humiliate the

victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyberbullying. Bullying does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument or peer conflict." Should a student be aware of any act of bullying committed by another student that takes place in school, on school property, at a bus stop, on a school bus, or at any school activity, he or she should immediately report this incident to the School administration.

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students may possess or use portable communications devices such as cellular telephones, or other hand-held computing devices (when such device is being used as a communications device). These devices shall be regulated and/or prohibited at each school or school sponsored event as deemed necessary to prevent disruption of the educational environment and to maintain order on school property and at school activities. For additional information, visit www.vbschools.com/curriculum/byod.

The School Division reserves the right to inspect or search both School Division owned and private electronic devices or storage systems.

CHILD CUSTODY

The School Division recognizes that issues related to the legal and physical custody of students are complicated and can impact the student's educational experience. Parents and legal guardians of students are strongly encouraged to stay involved with their student's academic progress. Unless a court order decrees otherwise, either parent or a legal guardian may view education records and attend school functions or school meetings regarding the student. Official notices and report cards will be sent to the parent or legal guardian with primary physical custody of the student during the school year. It is the responsibility of the parent or legal custodian with primary physical custody to provide current copies of court orders to the school. Child visitation and exchange of custody should not take place during school hours or on school property. The School Division will assume no responsibility for enforcing visitation or custody orders and reserves the right to prohibit parents or legal guardians from entering School Board property if their conduct becomes disruptive to the school environment. Concerns regarding custody and visitation should be directed to the school principal.

CHILD FIND/NOTICE OF GENERAL SCREENING

Virginia Beach City Public Schools maintain an active and continuing child find program designed to identify, locate, and evaluate those children in need of special services. Child find includes children who are migrant, homeless, attend private schools or are home schooled. All new students in kindergarten through grade three are screened in the areas of speech, language, voice, and fine and gross motor functions. Students in kindergarten and grades three, seven and 10 receive vision, and hearing screens within the first 60 days of enrollment. Vision and hearing screenings are conducted by the school nurse for all students new to the division in grades four through 12 during the school year.

CLINIC: OVERVIEW OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Each school clinic is staffed with a full-time registered nurse, along with trained clinic assistants in the larger schools. They provide health screenings, assessments for chronic and acute illness and first aid. The registered nurse at each school is available to consult with parents as needed, regarding health concerns of students.

If a student has special health needs (medication, seizure precautions, catheterizations, gastric tube feedings, blood sugar checks, oxygen needs or others), the parent is to schedule a time to meet with the school nurse to arrange for these needs to be taken care of during the student's school day. All medications and treatments require both a written physician's order and a parent's/guardian's signature. The school nurse will assist the parent by preparing a plan of care and advising what supplies the student will need at school.
If a student is required to take a prescription or over the counter medication during the school day, the following guidelines must be met:

- A Request for Administration of Medication in Hampton Roads Schools form must be completed and signed by either a physician, dentist, nurse practitioner or physician assistant, and include the parent/guardian signature. This medication form is available for your convenience in the school clinic and on ***vbschools.com***.
- Medication must be in a container that has been labeled by the pharmacy and has the most current prescription date. Over-the-counter medication must be in a sealed, unopened new bottle.
- Parent /guardian (or an adult parent designee) must deliver medication to the school clinic, as students are not permitted to transport medication.
- All medicine must be picked up by a parent (or an adult parent designee) at the end of the school year. Medicine not picked up will be discarded.

In some situations, accommodations can be made for students with asthma or life-threatening allergies to self-administer their inhaled asthma medication or their auto-injectable epinephrine medication. Students requiring further accommodations should contact the Schools' Section 504 Coordinator. For further information, www.vbschools.com/health/allergies.asp. The school nurse must receive either a ***Virginia Asthma Action Plan*** form, or a Life-Threatening Allergy Management Plan (Part 2 & 3) forms completed and signed by either a physician, or nurse practitioner. These forms may be obtained from your school clinic and on ***vbschools.com***. Additional questions and concerns may be directed to the registered nurse at your school.

As per the *Code of Virginia* and VDOE regulation, the School Division must comply with all requirements for immunizations as pertaining to school age children. There are specific regulations for DPT, Polio, MMR, Hepatitis B, and Varicella immunizations which can be located on ***vbschools.com***. Rising sixth graders are required to have a Tdap booster prior to entering sixth grade. In addition, initially enrolling students in the seventh through 12th grades who have not had the Tdap booster, must receive the vaccine. Lack of compliance with vaccine requirements can result in students being excluded from school until compliance, or a plan for compliance, is achieved.

Parent/legal guardians are encouraged to keep the school nurse informed of significant health concerns and diagnoses for their children. It is essential that the clinic staffs have current work, cell, home phone numbers, and any other means whereby parents can be contacted. Emergencies can occur at any time. It is imperative that your child's school be able to reach parents/legal guardians and caregivers during the school day.

CREDIT-BEARING COURSES/GRADE REMOVAL

Currently, Virginia Board of Education regulations allow middle school parents/legal guardians to submit to the principal a written request that a final grade from a credit-bearing course be omitted from the student's transcript and that high school credit not be earned. The parent/legal guardian of a middle school student taking a high school credit-bearing course(s) may request that the grade for such course or courses be purged from the student's transcript and that the student not earn high school credit for the course. The request must be presented for consideration no later than July 15 after the completion of the student's eighth grade year. **EXCEPTION:** In a sequential program such as a foreign language

where one course must precede the next, students who choose to purge or expunge the credit from a lower level course after successfully completing the higher level(s) of the course will not be permitted to do so without expunging all subsequent courses in that sequence.

DISCIPLINE/*CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT*

Every student is expected to maintain self-discipline. If the student is unable to behave appropriately, he/she may be referred to an administrator. Disciplinary actions may include detention, suspension or recommendations for long-term suspension or expulsion. Parents/legal guardians must attend conferences following suspensions. Refer to the *Code of Student Conduct* for additional information. Parents/legal guardians and students must review these rules and procedures annually and sign an acknowledgment of support of the *Code of Student Conduct*. School personnel may interview students regarding school matters without prior notice or consent of the parent/legal guardian. **The School Board requires all principals to make recommendations for expulsion when the following incidents occur.**

1. Arson or attempted arson
2. Assault and battery on an employee or student
3. Possession, use, or sale of a firearm or dangerous weapon
4. Use, possession, being under the influence of, selling, bringing, giving, distributing or passing to another individual or possessing with intent to sell, give or distribute alcohol, marijuana, controlled substances or imitation controlled substances, and inhalants
5. Extortion, attempted extortion, robbery, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and/or larceny
6. Sex offenses: Sexual battery, inappropriate sexual behavior, obscene phone calls and sexual assault
7. Hazing: Initiation of another student through abuse and humiliation so as to cause bodily injury
8. Kidnapping or other serious criminal violations
9. Possession, use, distribution, sale, lighting or discharging of explosive devices
10. Homicide
11. Malicious wounding of an employee or student
12. Other good and just cause as determined by the Superintendent

DRESS CODE

Dress guidelines are designed to promote a standard of appearance that compl**e**ments the learning environment; each middle school will provide guidelines. All students are expected to wear dress appropriate to the occasion; therefore, extreme or ostentatious apparel or appearance is to be avoided. Any article of clothing or accessory that advertises alcohol, or an illegal substance, depicts lewd graphics, displays offensive or obscene language, or is gang-related is forbidden. Disciplinary action will be taken against any student taking part in gang-related activities that are disruptive to the school environment, which include the display of any apparel, jewelry, accessory or tattoo, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark or any other attribute, denotes membership in a gang that advocates illegal or disruptive behavior. If there is doubt about a particular item of apparel, the student should contact a school administrator for a decision prior to wearing the clothing to school. If the item is deemed inappropriate and the student does not modify the attire, entry into class may be denied by an administrator. Students must also wear appropriate attire to participate in physical education classes. For convenience, schools sell shorts and t-shirts.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

The School Board of the City of Virginia Beach recognizes the critical importance of environmental sustainability in today's changing world and is committed to fostering the principles of environmental, economic, and social stewardship through the incorporation of sustainable practices throughout the School Division. The intent of this policy is to provide a healthful learning/working environment, which contributes to protecting, conserving, and enhancing the nation's environmental resources while providing long-term savings to taxpayers through lower operating costs.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of after school activities, including intramural, athletic, academic and club activities. The school's Student Activity Coordinator (SAC) can provide information regarding the individual programs. Students in good standing may participate in intramural, interscholastic and club activities. Students requiring accommodations in order to try out or participate in extracurricular activities should contact their school administration or the Section 504 Coordinator for the school.

Middle schools provide the opportunity for students to participate in interscholastic competition. Students at all grade levels may participate on any competitive team once selected for the team. Interscholastic competitive activities include: academic challenge, boys' baseball, boys' and girls' basketball, cheerleading, debate, girls' field hockey, football, forensics, one-act play festival, girls' softball, boys' and girls' soccer, boys' and girls' track, girls' volleyball and wrestling. Students must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- A student must be enrolled in no less than five subjects and passed five subjects for the previous year for first semester participation and passed five subjects in the first semester for second semester participation.
- A student must have achieved a 2.0 grade-point average in the preceding semester.
- A student must have a current middle school league participation form and permission for emergency care form properly completed and signed.
- A student must not turn 15 years of age before Aug. 1 immediately prior to the start of the current school year.
- From the time a student first enters the sixth grade, he/she is eligible to compete in Virginia Beach Middle School League activities for a total period of six consecutive semesters. If the student continues in middle school past six semesters, he/she would no longer be eligible to participate.
- **Virginia Beach Middle School League Activities :**
  Students must be in good standing in order to participate in VBMSL activities. Students who receive Out-of-School Suspension will be removed from participation for the remainder of the season. Students who receive In-School Suspension will not be permitted to participate in any VBMSL activity on the day(s) the ISS is served. Students who receive a second referral resulting in ISS during the season will not be permitted to participate the remainder of the season. Principals may choose to assess additional disciplinary measures if warranted.

FIREARMS/DANGEROUS WEAPONS, INCLUDING LASER LIGHTS

Carrying or possessing firearms or other dangerous weapons, including look-alikes, is prohibited. Using, distributing, selling, lighting or discharging an explosive device, including fireworks, on school property violates Virginia law and School Board policy. Possessing and using laser lights to potentially cause harm, injury or irritation violates the ***Code of Student Conduct***. Students may be recommended for expulsion. Police notification is mandatory for these offenses.

FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS

Regular emergency evacuation drills are conducted at the direction of school staff. When a fire alarm sounds, students must evacuate the school quickly in an orderly fashion. At the direction of staff, students must follow evacuation routes noted on diagrams posted throughout the school. Students must follow all staff directions regarding movement to other locations and return to classrooms. It is essential to be quiet during drills and evacuations. Specific procedures will be outlined by each middle school for all other emergencies.

GIFTED PROGRAM

The middle school gifted program serves students through a cluster/resource model or a full-time gifted school. Students may apply for admission to the gifted middle school, Kemps Landing/Old Donation School, or students may choose to remain in their home schools and receive gifted instruction through the collaborative works of cluster teachers and the gifted resource teacher. For additional information, call 757-263-1405.

GRADING SCALE

The School Board adopted a modified 10-point grading scale at the start of the 2010-2011 school year. All grades earned through August 2010 will remain on the old grading scale. The modified 10-point grading scale follows:

RANGE	LETTER GRADE	POINT VALUE
93 - 100	A	4.0
90 - 92	A-	3.7
87 - 89	B+	3.3
83 - 86	B	3.0
80 - 82	B-	2.7
77 - 79	C+	2.3
73 - 76	C	2.0
70 - 72	C-	1.7
67 - 69	D+	1.3
64 - 66	D	1.0
Below 64	E	0.0

A “W” is given when a student has withdrawn from a class; “I” indicates incomplete work that must be turned in to the teacher prior to the end of the following nine weeks. “N” indicates excessive absences and loss of credit.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

There are specific requirements for graduation from high school established by the Virginia Board of Education and the School Board. Middle school students may take high school courses. Specific course requirements and course descriptions are provided in a student guide published annually through the Office of Guidance Services and available on ***www.vbschools.com***. It is the responsibility of the student, with family support, to meet all requirements for graduation.

GUIDANCE COUNSELING PROGRAM

Each middle school offers a comprehensive and developmental counseling program that is an integral part of the total educational program designed to promote the academic, social, and career development of all students. Certified school counselors provide a variety of services, including classroom guidance, crisis intervention, individual and group counseling, consultation with parents, teachers and administrators, and coordination of services with outside agencies.

Parents/legal guardians may arrange conferences by calling the school. On a space available basis, student schedules may be modified. Students may elect to add a yearlong class to their schedule prior to the end of the 15th school day. Students may add a semester course only during the first eight days of the semester. Students may add a nine-week course during the first four school days of the grading period.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) is available for children (birth to 19 years) of families who qualify based on income. FAMIS is Virginia's health insurance program for children. For information, call 1(866) 873-2647 or visit ***www.famis.org.***

HONOR ROLL

In elementary, middle and high school, an *Honor Roll* and *Principal’s List* are established after each nine weeks to recognize students who achieve excellence in academic performance. To qualify for the *Honor Roll* at the middle and high school levels, a student must earn a “B” average, with no grade lower than a “C.” If a student receives a “C-,” he or she is not eligible for the *Honor Roll*. To qualify for the *Principal’s List*, a student must earn all “As” and must be enrolled in five classes or earning five credits. If a student receives an “A-,” he or she will **not be eligible** for the *Principal’s List*. To be eligible for both the *Honor Roll* and *Principal’s List* a student must be enrolled in five classes or earning five credits.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the interest of student safety, federal and local agencies are consulted prior to making a decision to close, delay, or dismiss schools early due to inclement weather. Parents/legal guardians will be notified via phone and/or email about school delays or cancellations using *AlertNow*. An official notice will also be posted on the home page of ***vbschools.com***. Each school has an *Emergency Response Plan* for use in the event of early closings and other emergencies. Parents/legal guardians should make sure plans are place if students are released early. Makeup days are built into the school calendar, which is located at http://www.vbschools.com/calendar/index.asp.

INVESTIGATING SCHOOL-RELATED INCIDENTS

If an allegation is made that an employee was exhibiting poor performance and/or engaging in misconduct (which could include an allegation of child abuse/neglect), a VBCPS Human Resources Employee Relations Specialist or other administrator could decide to interview one or more students to obtain pertinent information. In appropriate circumstances an interview(s) may be conducted jointly with the Department of Human Services and/or law enforcement personnel. School Division administrators are not legally obligated to obtain parental permission before interviewing a student. Virginia law permits law enforcement personnel and/or child protective service workers to interview any child suspected of being abused or neglected and/or siblings without first obtaining parental consent.

LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS

Students must remain on school grounds after arriving on school premises. Minor students are released to parents/legal guardians or designated adults listed in the student database who have presented acceptable photo identification. Minor students are dismissed to older siblings when parents/legal guardians submit prior authorization. Written parental approval is necessary prior to leaving school grounds for field trips or special visits to specific schools or work sites.

MAKEUP WORK

Students who receive excused absences will be allowed to make up all assignments that affect the course grade and will be made aware of these assignments. It is the student's responsibility to make up assignments within a reasonable amount of time. Students who receive unexcused absences may make up assignments at the discretion of the teacher, subject to the requirements communicated (provided) by the teacher at the beginning of the course. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of established guidelines and to follow those guidelines to make up the assignment. Students who are under the penalty of Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) will be provided class work and homework material if requested by the parent/guardian and/or student, so the student may remain current with school instruction as long as enrolled in school. If a student has been offered educational placement as the result of a discipline matter, makeup work will not be provided.

MINUTE OF SILENCE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Virginia General Assembly has mandated a daily minute of silence and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. The *Code of Student Conduct* addresses disruptive behavior during these daily activities.

NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE

From time to time, news reporters may use photos or videotape of students in incidental news coverage. A parent/legal guardian who objects to a student's image being used should notify the school at the beginning of each academic school year. If a student is not to be interviewed on school property by the news media, a signed parental consent form is required (*2015-16 School Year Opt-Out Form*) and is available in each school office.

NONDISCRIMINATION/ ANTI-HARASSMENT/SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Virginia Beach City Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. School Board policies and supporting regulation (including but not limited to, Policies 2-33, 4-4, 4-43, 5-7, 5-33, 5-44, 6-7, 7-11,7-48, and 7-49, and Regulations 5-44.1,7-11.1,and 7-57.1, as amended) provide equal access to courses, programs, counseling services, physical education and athletic, vocational education, instructional materials, and extracurricular activities. Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited and students, parents/legal guardians should immediately report sexual harassment to school administrators.

To seek resolution of grievances resulting from alleged discrimination or to report violations of these policies, please contact the Title IX Coordinator/Director of Student Leadership at 757.263.2020, 1413 Laskin Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451 or the Director of the Office of Programs for Exceptional Children 757-236-2400, 1413 Laskin Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451 (for student complaints) or the Section 504/ADA Coordinator/Chief Human Resources Officer at 757-263-1133, 2512 George Mason Drive, Municipal Center, Building 6, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456 (for employees or other citizens). Concerns about the application of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should be addressed to the Section 504 Coordinator/Director of Guidance Services and Student Records at 757-263-1980, 2512 George Mason Drive, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456 or the Section 504 Coordinator at the student's school.

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Each parent/legal guardian will receive a *Parent/Legal Guardian Acknowledgement Form* during the first week of the school year. This form is for parents/legal guardians of all minor students or for students who are 18 years of age or older enrolled in Virginia Beach City Public Schools. The *Parent/Legal Guardian Acknowledgement Form* must be signed and returned to the student's teacher in order to verify that the parent/legal guardian has received these important documents. A complete list of documents is available on ***vbschools.com***.

PROMOTION STANDARDS

Middle school students are promoted to the next grade on the basis of criteria requiring final passing grades in the four core subjects (English, math, science and social studies) and a final passing grade in either health/physical education or the equivalent of a full-year in exploratory/elective course(s). SOL test results are a part of the criteria utilized to determine promotion.

PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT, 20 U.S.C. § 1231 (H)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) 20 U.S.C. § 1231 (h), as amended, requires that the School Board notify parents/legal guardians and obtain consent or allow parents/legal guardians to opt their student out of participating in certain school activities such as student surveys, analyses or evaluations that concern one or more of the following areas:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
- Sexual behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- Legally recognized privileged relationships such as with lawyers, doctors or ministers;
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
- Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- This requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure or use of student information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams and screenings.

The School Division will publish a schedule of activities requiring parental notice and consent or opt-out for the upcoming school year.

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Only students who earn a grade below a 70 are required to be issued progress reports during each of the nine-weeks grading period. The dates when progress reports and report cards are issued can be found on the School Division calendar and on ***vbschools.com***. In addition, parents/legal guardians can view students' grades and attendance online anytime via the ***VBCPS Parent Portal*** link found on the home page of each school website or at ***www.vbschools.com/schoolnet.*** Students earning a grade below a 70 in any core subject on a report card will be placed in a mandatory Academic Support class.

SAFE SCHOOLS AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

VBCPS is committed to providing a **safe environment** for students, staff and visitors. The School Division conducts annual safe school audits of all school facilities in accordance with state and federal law or regulation. The audit process provides a comprehensive overview of the School

Division's security and emergency preparedness. As part of our commitment to safety, students and visitors may be subject to unannounced electronic screening for weapons.

VBCPS works closely with national, state and local safety officials – police, fire, emergency medical services and public health – in order to ensure VBCPS schools are well prepared for an emergency. The School Division has developed a comprehensive *Emergency Response Plan* that covers a wide variety of emergencies that serves as a guide to help staff and public safety partners respond swiftly should a crisis occur in VBCPS schools.

Should a school emergency occur, parents/legal guardians concerns will be notified and updated by phone and/or email using *AlertNow*. Prior to reporting to a student's school during an emergency, it is critical for parents/legal guardians to follow directions communicated via *AlertNow*. Should a school be evacuated, each school has a procedure for helping parents/legal guardians locate their child. Parents/legal guardians will be directed to a specific location where they will be required to show proper identification. **Remember, a student can only be released to an adult who is documented as an emergency contact.** Non-custodial parent/legal guardian must be listed with the child's emergency contact information as an authorized person and show proper identification.
In addition to being notified via *AlertNow*, parents/legal guardians are able to receive information about the school emergency by calling the school division's Emergency Hotline at 757-263-1000 or by visiting ***vbschools.com***.

SCHOOL INSURANCE

The School Division contracts with authorized insurance carriers for voluntary student accident and dental insurance programs. This insurance is available yearly to all students. Fee information, application forms, and information are sent home with students at the beginning of the school year.

SECTION 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The statute ensures that a qualified student with a disability receives reasonable accommodations necessary for that student to access education or school-related programs and activities. A student suspected of needing a Section 504 Plan can be referred by any source. Upon referral, the process for determining whether the student meets the qualifications under this federal law will be initiated. For more information on Section 504, please contact the 504 Coordinator at the student's school. A complete description of *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973* is available on ***www.vbschools.com***.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education is specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a student determined eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004). The referral of a student for a suspected disability that may require special education services can be made by any source. A comprehensive evaluation is conducted to determine the student's eligibility and to assist in planning to meet the student's unique educational needs.
A student who has been found eligible for special education will receive supports and services as identified through an *Individualized Education Program (IEP)* that is designed to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Further information and referrals may be made to the administration of the school where the student is enrolled. Additional information may be obtained through the Parent Support and Information Center at 757-263-2066 or at ***vbschools.com/curriculum/ParentSupportCtr***.

STATE AND FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Standardized testing will be administered to gather additional information about student progress. **Virginia Standard of Learning (SOL)** objectives will be assessed by criterion-referenced tests. For more information on what SOL tests are administered in middle school, visit ***vbschools.com/sol/index.asp***.

VBCPS also complies with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) — known since 2001 as No Child Left Behind — which requires states to set Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) for increasing student achievement to ensure that all children have an opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. These new annual objectives in reading and mathematics replace Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). More information about AMOs can be found at *vbschools.com*.

STUDENTS CHARGED WITH OR CONVICTED OF AN OFFENSE

If a court petition or warrant is filed against a student, or a student is found guilty or not innocent of a crime, the School Board may require that the student attend an alternative education program. Students who have been expelled or suspended for 30 days from another public or private school may be required to attend an alternative education program.

STUDENT PORTAL

Many students have access to the *Student Portal*, an online resource that supplements coursework and promotes student proficiency in the use of online collaboration tools. Students are provided a student site, which provides permanent file storage space for the duration of their enrollment in VBCPS. The *Student Portal* can be accessed from school, home or any Internet connected computer. Students are encouraged to use this resource for their electronic file storage needs and as a means of interaction with teachers on class websites. To learn more about accessing the *Student Portal*, go to www.vbschools.com/students/portal.asp.

TEXTBOOKS

The School Division provides textbooks and instructional resources free of charge to students for use during the school year. Students are expected to care for the resources they receive. Fees are assessed for damaged or lost books/resources. Virginia law authorizes local school boards to take action against students who fail to return property owned by the School Division.

TOBACCO AND NICOTINE VAPOR OR ALTERNATIVE NICOTINE PRODUCTS POSSESSION AND USE

Students possessing or using tobacco products or nicotine vapor or alternative nicotine products are subject to disciplinary actions as described in the *Code of Student Conduct*. Based on the number of offenses, students could receive recommendations for various interventions and short- or long-term suspensions. Under Virginia law, the Virginia Beach Police Department must be notified when a student 18 years or younger is suspended for a tobacco related offense. VBCPS is a smoke free environment and smoking is strictly prohibited on school grounds or at school events.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation is provided for certain VBCPS students to and from school, based on each school's transportation zone. Students riding a bus to school must be at their stop no earlier than five minutes before regular pickup time. The *Code of Student Conduct* outlines the conduct for all students while riding a school bus. Bus routes, pickup times, and safety tips are posted on ***www.vbschools.com*** and are available at every school prior to the beginning of the school year. Students must ride their assigned buses. Extenuating circumstances requiring a bus change must be

submitted in writing with a contact telephone number and approved in advance by the administration. Failure to comply with policies and regulations may result in loss of bus privileges.

VISITATION TO SCHOOLS/ TRESPASS/ BAN

Preservation of the educational environment and safety of students and staff are of paramount importance. Accordingly, any person who is not an authorized student, employee, official or agent of the School Board is considered an invitee to School Division activities. All invitees must receive authorization to be in the school, on school grounds, communication systems or vehicles, or attending school sponsored events and must comply with all School Board policies and regulations. Failure to comply with policy or regulation or disruptive/threatening conduct may result in a ban or limitation of access to schools or school sponsored activities as well as criminal charges. Students may not visit schools to which they are not assigned unless they have prior authorization. Visitation with students or observation of students during school hours or while attending school sponsored events must be authorized by the school administration and be done in accordance with School Board policy and regulation. Visitation for the purposes of exercising child custody/visitation rights, observing educational services, providing private services, interviews, evaluations or counseling are considered disruptive to the educational environment and are unauthorized. VBCPS reserves the right to deny access to or require that a person leave School Division property, vehicles or School Division sponsored events. Other specific guidelines may be established by middle schools.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

Students withdrawing from school during the school year must present a written or electronic note from a parent/legal guardian stating the reason for the withdrawal, the withdrawal date and the student's destination, so that the transfer process can be completed. Withdrawing students must return all textbooks, library books, and instructional materials assigned to them. All financial obligations must be cleared.

Alternative formats of this publication, which may include taped, Braille, or large print materials, are available upon request for individuals with disabilities. Call or write Department of School Leadership, Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2512 George Mason Drive, P.O. Box 6038, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038. Telephone: 757-263-1088; fax: 757-263-1260 or e-mail DeptofSchoolLeadership@vbschools.com