

2011-2012

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## FOREWORD

### Section 1 - Intent of Handbook:

This handbook is intended to be used by students, parents and staff as a guide to the rules, regulations, and general information about Valentine Community Schools. Each student is responsible for becoming familiar with the handbook and knowing the information contained in it. Parents are encouraged to use this handbook as a resource and to assist their child in following the rules contained in this handbook.

Although the information found in this handbook is detailed and specific on many topics, the handbook is not intended to be all-encompassing so as to cover every situation and circumstance that may arise during any school day, or school year. This handbook does not create a “contract.” The administration reserves the right to make decisions and make rule revisions at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well-being of all students. The administration will be responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook. Should a situation or circumstance arise that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based upon all applicable school district policies, and state and federal statutes and regulations.

### NOTIFICATION

*This handbook also provides notification of the policies of Valentine Community Schools regarding Safe and Drug Free Schools, nondiscrimination, harassment, parental rights afforded under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, rights under The Family Educational Rights Policy Act (FERPA), disclosure of information to military recruiters, staff qualifications, student privacy protection, parental involvement, and homeless students.*

***Valentine Community Schools is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.***

***All teachers at Valentine Community Schools are highly qualified. Specific qualifications can be supplied upon request.***

### Section 2 - District Organization:

Valentine Community Schools is a Class 3 School District which includes Kindergarten through 12th Grades. Grades K-5 operate in the Elementary School located at 615 East 5th Street. Grades 6-8 operate in the Middle School located at 239 North Wood Street. K-8 classrooms operate in various attendance centers in the District. Grades 9 - 12 operate in the High School located at 431 North Green Street. All schools are organized and operate under the laws that govern Class 3 School Districts and are served by the same Board of Education.

#### Board of Education

Cort Dewing, President  
 Duane Kime, Vice President  
 Susan Beel, Secretary  
 Dean Churchill, Treasurer  
 Kent Lopez, Member  
 Konni Kluender, Member

#### Valentine Community Schools Administrative Staff

Jamie Isom, Superintendent  
 Dave Renning, High School Principal  
 Jolyne Westover, Rural Schools Principal  
 Jeff Sayer, Middle School Principal  
 Cindy Wobig, Elementary Principal

<u>Valentine Rural Schools Faculty</u>	
Deborah Winter (Simeon East, Bldg 5)	
Lisa Eide (Simeon East, Bldg 5)	
Kristin Hanna (Simeon West, Bldg 6)	<u>Valentine Rural Schools Support Staff</u>
Carolyn Clark (Wood Lake, Bldg 7)	Margaret Schneider, Secretary
Amanda Evans (Wood Lake, Bldg 7)	
Linda Schafer (German Settlement, Bldg 9)	<u>District Nurses:</u>
Hollie Hanna (Goose Creek, Bldg 14)	Lori Clapper, Staci Stec
Pam Scheer (Goose Creek, Bldg 14)	
Ashley Kasner (Cutcomb Lake, Bldg 20)	
Kandyce Bloomfield (Cutcomb Lake, Bldg 20)	
Maureen Johnson (Special Education Coordinator)	
Rose Dredge (Resource Teacher)	

### **Section 3 - Valentine Community Schools 2011-2012 School Calendar:**

See back cover of this handbook or find the school calendar on the school web site at [www.valentinecommunityschools.org](http://www.valentinecommunityschools.org).

## **ARTICLE 1 - MISSION AND GOALS**

### **Section 1 - School Mission Statement**

Valentine Community Schools will provide positive and challenging educational opportunities for all students in preparation of productive and responsible citizenship for the future. Valentine Community Schools believe:

- Learning is a life-long process
- Each student can learn
- All individuals have value and should be treated with dignity and respect
- Education is a responsibility to be shared between the student, staff, parents, and community

### **Section 2 - School Improvement Goal**

All students will improve their problem solving proficiency, which includes, but is not limited to, math reasoning and reading comprehension.

### **Section 3 - Mutual Respect**

Valentine Community Schools expect all staff members and students to be treated with respect and dignity. A show of disrespect toward a staff member or insubordination on the part of the student will not be tolerated.

### **Section 4 - Multicultural Education**

Diversity has been a part of our country since its beginning. Multicultural education enables students to understand our country's racial, ethnic, and ancestral backgrounds. Contributions and perspectives of many diverse groups are infused into the curriculum to help prepare students to live, learn, and work in a pluralistic world. Multicultural education is incorporated into all academic areas.

### **Section 5 - Concern Procedure**

The Board of Education, administration, and staff of the Valentine Community Schools want to do everything possible to ensure that each student's educational experience is a worthwhile and positive experience. We are committed to working with students, parents and guardians, and the community to have the best staff, programs, and materials possible. The proper procedures for a parent or student to make a complaint or raise a concern about school staff, programs or activities are set forth below. Other procedures exist to address discrimination or harassment, the bullying of students, and to challenge disciplinary actions, and such other procedures should be used to address those types of concerns.

#### **1. Complaint procedure:**

Step 1. Have a scheduled conference with the staff person involved in the complaint matter.

Step 2. Appeal to the Principal if the matter is not resolved at Step 1.

Step 3. Appeal to the Superintendent if the matter is still unresolved at Step 2.

Step 4. Appeal to the Board of Education if the matter is still unresolved at Step 3.

Written appeal should be made within five (5) days of the Superintendent's decision.

#### **2. Conditions Applicable to All Levels of Complaint Procedure:**

All information to be considered at each appeal step should be placed in writing in order to be most effective. Appeal decisions shall be expedited as quickly as possible. A decision at any level should be rendered within ten (10) calendar days, unless a legal hearing is requested or required.

## ARTICLE 2 - SCHOOL DAY

### Section 1 - Daily Attendance & Schedules

**Attendance** Regular school attendance is a critical factor for success in school. Students are expected to be in attendance at school all days that school is in session. If a student must be absent, we ask parents or guardians to **call the attendance center** to notify the teacher. There will be a time limit allowed for make-up work. This time limit will be two days for each day of school missed. Teachers may give additional time or require work sooner if the situation warrants it. When a student returns to school after an absence, he/she must present a **written excuse** stating the reason for the absence. Parents and students need to check with their principal and teacher(s) for assignments if they know in advance they will be absent. Retention will be strongly considered for any student who misses more than 20 days during the school year. (See the Attendance/Excessive Absenteeism/Truancy Policy.) Habitual tardiness will be handled on an individual basis and may include staying after school, parent conferences, and in-school suspension.

See the schedule at each individual attendance center for starting and dismissal times for the day. **Kindergarteners will attend 3 days a week during the first quarter (generally Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, unless other days are needed due to scheduling of Bookmobile, Special Education services, or other needs). From second quarter on, kindergarteners will attend all day every day.** An instructional schedule is posted in your child's classroom.

### Section 2 - Severe Weather and School Cancellations

**Decision to Close Schools** In the event of severe weather or mechanical breakdown, the school may be closed or the starting time delayed. The same conditions may also necessitate early dismissal. The administration, in conjunction with the advisory committee and teacher will make such decisions. Individual families will be notified and/or local news media will be contacted when inclement weather warrants such action. If no report is heard, it can be assumed that school will be in session.

**After School Starts** Every attempt will be made to avoid closing school once classes are in session. In some instances closing school during the day is inevitable if children are to safely return home before the brunt of a major storm hits. In these cases as much advance notice as possible will be given to parents. If school is closed during the day individual families will be notified and/or local news media will be contacted. **Parents should have a plan in place to accommodate these circumstances.** Teachers will be responsible for remaining with students until all students have safely left school or arrangements have been made for the remaining students.

**Parental Decisions** *Parents may decide to keep their children at home in inclement weather because of personal circumstances.* Students absent because of severe weather when school is in session will be marked absent. The absence will be treated like any other absence for legitimate causes provided parents properly notify the school of their decision. Parents may pick up their children in inclement weather at any time during the school day. Students will not normally be dismissed from school during severe weather on the basis of a telephone request.

**What Not To Do** Parents should not attempt to come to school during a tornado warning. **School officials are not permitted to release students from the school building during a tornado warning.** Tornado safety procedures are practiced regularly by students and staff. Also, parents are urged not to telephone the radio station or the school during severe weather. Every effort will be made to provide accurate and timely information to parents through KVSH radio and/or via telephone.

**Emergency Response Plans** Valentine Community Schools maintain Emergency Response Plans for Fire Drills, Emergency Exits, Tornadoes, and Critical Incident Response for the protection of students and school personnel. Regular drills are held as required by law throughout the school year in order that students and staff are instructed and prepared in appropriate procedures. Each attendance center

has a signal which, when activated, indicates the necessity to either evacuate the building or move to safer areas of the building.

### **Section 3 - Closed Campus**

All students are required to remain on school grounds during the school day, unless they are under the direct supervision of school personnel or released to parents or other school-authorized personnel.

### **Section 4 - Field Trips and Resource Speakers**

Teachers are encouraged to plan one local field trip during the school year as part of our school programs. All field trips must be approved in advance by the Principal. These trips may require transportation. Written parent/guardian permission is required when the field trip is away from the school. Teachers will provide parents with information about the vehicle their child is riding in; including cell phone numbers, phone numbers at destination, schedule and other important information. Field trips are supervised by the classroom teacher and usually one or two more adults. Children under age 6 will be in a restraint system as determined by Nebraska State Law in order to travel on any school sponsored trips. Community resource speakers can be a wonderful asset to learning. Classroom teachers are encouraged to solicit the expertise of at least one resource speaker each year.

## **ARTICLE 3 - USE OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

### **Section 1 - Visitors**

Outside entrances to the buildings are kept locked for safety and security reasons. All visitors must report to the teacher upon entering the school. Parents are welcome at all times and encouraged to make arrangements to visit their child's classroom and/or school day activities. We suggest that a visit be limited to one instructional period. Parents who plan to visit school need to schedule their visit with the Principal's Office at least one day ahead of time so that the school can confirm the visit, let you know if that school day has been altered, or if for some reason another day would be better for a visit. Younger siblings should not accompany parents on school visits as they may cause a disruption to the class. Parents are asked to follow the parent involvement policy concerning visits to school. *Note: The first and last month of the school year are not good times for visits.*

### **Section 2 - Pictures**

Individual and class pictures will be arranged in conjunction with a school photographer and are available for purchase. Pictures will generally be taken when students are in Valentine for the multicultural/patriotic program held in the fall. A copy of your student's portrait will be kept in the student's permanent school records.

### **Section 3 - School Parties**

Halloween, Christmas, Easter, and Valentine's Day are the times during the school year when parties will be held. The classroom teacher coordinates the parties with the parents. Gifts may be exchanged at the Christmas party, however, a limit of \$5.00 will be placed upon the gift exchange. Valentine's Day cards will be exchanged in the classrooms. Teachers will send home a list of students' names. Additional items in Valentine's (candy, gum, etc.) should be limited to a very few, small pieces. School parties must take place at the end of the school day and may not last for more than 1 hour.

### **Section 4 - Birthdays**

Students may bring treats on their birthdays. Due to food allergies, parents are asked to send only prepackaged treats. These treats should consist of a snack sent to school to be distributed at an appropriate time to be determined by the teacher. No decorations, candies, games, gifts, or other treats should be planned for birthdays. **Please do not send or arrange for the delivery of balloons to school for a child's birthday or other occasions.** Children may not distribute personal party invitations at school unless all of the children in the room are invited. There are too many hurt feelings if some students do

not receive an invitation. The office is not permitted to release the full names, addresses, or phone numbers of students.

### **Section 5 - Use of Telephone**

Use of the school telephone will be allowed at the discretion of the staff. Plans for rides home, staying with friends, etc., should be made in advance to avoid unnecessary phone calls.

### **Section 6 - Student Valuables/Lost and Found**

Students are responsible for their personal property and are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money or items of value to school or school activities. If it is necessary, these items are to be left with a staff member for temporary safe-keeping. Even then, the school is not in a position to guarantee that the student's property will not be subject to loss, theft, or damage.

Students who find lost articles are asked to take them to a staff member. Likewise, students who lose articles should report that loss to a staff member.

### **Section 7 - Insurance**

Under Nebraska law, the District may not use school funds to provide general student accident or athletic insurance. Information about student insurance providers is made available to all students upon enrollment in school.

### **Section 8 - Smoke-Free Environment**

Valentine Community Schools declares all of our schools buildings and grounds to be smoke-free. We would appreciate your help in meeting the goal of a smoke- and tobacco-free environment for our children. When attending school events, including athletic events, please remember that our grounds are smoke- and tobacco-free and abide by our District's policy.

### **Section 9 - Care of School Property**

1. Students are responsible for the proper care of all books, equipment, supplies and furniture supplied by the school.
2. Students who disfigure property, break windows or do other damage to school property or equipment will be required to pay for the damage or to replace the item.

Textbooks are rented by the school from Sawyer Memorial Library and/or taxpayers of the district. Book covers should be used by students to preserve textbooks that are loaned to them at their own risk. Fines will be assessed for books that are damaged or lost. It is the responsibility of the parent/student to list prior damages when receiving textbooks. This list is to be given to the teacher.

Fines on library and textbooks are determined according to the following criteria:

Lost Book:	Replacement cost
Missing one or both covers or damaged beyond use:	Replacement cost
Cover Damage:	\$0.25 - \$5.00
Page Damage - Useable:	\$0.25 - \$0.75 per page (up to replacement cost of book)
Page Damage - Beyond Use:	\$1.00 (up to replacement cost of book)

School-issued items that are stolen or lost are the responsibility of the student to whom they were issued. General condition of materials and equipment is always a consideration before assessing fines. Students must pay all fines before they can receive final grades.

### **Section 10 - Searches of Lockers and Other Types of Searches**

School faculty and staff are authorized to inspect lockers and desks and may remove any objectionable items. Student lockers, desks, computer equipment, and other such property are owned by the school. The school exercises exclusive control over school property. Students should not expect privacy

regarding usage of or items placed in or on school property because school property is subject to search at any time by school officials. Periodic, random searches of lockers, desks, computers and other such property may be conducted at the discretion of the administration. The school may use the assistance of specially trained dogs to detect contraband in students' lockers, belongings, or automobiles on school property.

The following rules shall apply to searches of students and of a student's personal property and to the seizure of items in a student's possession or control:

1. School officials may conduct a search if there is a reasonable basis to believe that the search will uncover evidence of a crime or a school rule violation. The search must be conducted in a reasonable manner under the circumstances.
2. Illegal items or other items reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety of others or a threat to educational purposes may be taken and kept by school officials. Any firearm or other weapon shall be confiscated and delivered to law enforcement officials as soon as practicable.
3. Items which have been or are reasonably expected to be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process may be removed from student possession.

### **Section 11 - Copyright and Fair Use Policy**

It is the school's policy to follow the federal copyright law. Students are reminded that, when using school equipment and when completing course work, they also must follow the federal copyright laws. The federal copyright law governs the reproduction of works of authorship. Copyrighted works are protected regardless of the medium in which they are created or reproduced; thus, copyright extends to digital works and works transformed into a digital format. Copyrighted works are not limited to those that bear a copyright notice.

The "fair use" doctrine allows limited reproduction of copyrighted works for educational and research purposes. The relevant portion of the copyright statute provides that the "fair use" of a copyrighted work, including reproduction "for purposes such as criticism, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research" is not an infringement of copyright. The law lists the following factors as the ones to be evaluated in determining whether a particular use of a copyrighted work is a permitted "fair use," rather than an infringement of the copyright:

- the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- the nature of the copyrighted work;
- the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and
- the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Although all of these factors will be considered, the last factor is the most important in determining whether a particular use is "fair." Students should seek assistance from a faculty member if there are any questions regarding what may be copied.

## **ARTICLE 4 - ATTENDANCE**

### **Section 1 - Attendance Policy**

The Board of Education believes it is the shared responsibility of the school and the home to assist students in developing desirable habits of punctuality and attendance. The Board expects that every step will be taken by appropriate school personnel to implement this philosophy. The only excused absences are those due to verified illness of the pupil, death in the family, a doctor or dentist appointment, or whenever the principal considers that exemption from attendance is in the best interest of the pupil. All

other absences are unexcused. Every pupil must attend school punctually. Habitual tardiness is defined as excessive absence.

Principals are authorized to require satisfactory explanation from the parent or guardian for the absence or tardiness of a pupil for all or any part of the school day. The explanation may be obtained in person, by telephone, or in writing. The final decision determining whether an absence is excused or unexcused rests with the administration.

It shall be the policy of the school district, also known as Valentine Community Schools, to report as truant any student enrolled in the district for excessive absenteeism on the part of such student. The term "excessive absenteeism", as used herein, shall mean unexcused absences of 5 or more days per quarter or the hourly equivalent or when the number of unexcused absences exceeds 20 days cumulatively per school year or the hourly equivalent.

For any quarter in which the number of unexcused absences is 5 days, or its hourly equivalent, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall see that services which shall include, but need not be limited to, the following are provided to the student and his/her parent or guardian:

1. One or more meetings between a school attendance officer, school social worker, or the school principal or a member of the school administrative staff designated by the school administration if such school does not have a school social worker, the child's parent or guardian, and the child, if necessary, to report and to attempt to solve the problem of excessive absenteeism;
2. Educational counseling to determine whether curriculum changes, including, but not limited to, enrolling the child in an alternative education program that meets the specific educational and behavioral needs of the child, would help solve the problem of excessive absenteeism;
3. Educational evaluation, which may include a psychological evaluation, to assist in determining the specific condition, if any, contributing to the problem of excessive absenteeism, supplemented by specific efforts by the school to help remedy any condition diagnosed; and
4. Investigation of the problem of excessive absenteeism by the school social worker, or if such school does not have a school social worker, by the school principal or a member of the school administrative staff designated by the school administration, to identify conditions which may be contributing to the problem. If services for the child and his/her family are determined to be needed, the school social worker or the school principal or a member of the school administrative staff performing the investigation shall meet with the parent or guardian and the child to discuss any referral to appropriate community agencies for economic services, family or individual counseling, or other services required to remedy the conditions that are contributing to the problem of excessive absenteeism.

Under the current version of this law, all school districts must have a written policy describing notification of habitual truancy to the county attorney. The number of absences in the policy may not exceed 20 days cumulative per year or the hourly equivalent. School districts may use excused and unexcused absences for purposes of the policy. Under LB 800, this policy requirement is eliminated.

If the child is absent more than 20 days per year or the hourly equivalent, the attendance officer must file a report with the county attorney of the county in which such person resides.

LB 152 extends the offense of truancy to all students enrolled in a public school regardless of age. Parents or guardians of a child under the age of 7 currently enrolled in a public school may discontinue enrollment by notifying the district in writing.

## **Section 2 - Attendance and Absences**

### ***Absences From School - Definitions***

1. **Excused Absences** Absences should be cleared with the teaching staff in advance whenever possible. Excused absences include illness and death in the family. All other absences may be considered unexcused.
2. **Unexcused Absences** If a student's absence is unexcused the student may be required to make up both the classwork and time missed from school.
3. **Excessive Absenteeism** A student who engages in excessive absences may be considered truant as per state law, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-201. Truancy is a violation of school rules. The consequence of such action includes: detention, suspension, retention, referral to Child Protective Services for parent neglect, referral to County Attorney's Office for parent neglect and violation of Nebraska State Law. Students who leave the school premises without permission during the school day will be considered truant.

**Reporting and Responding to Excessive Absenteeism** Any administrator, teacher, or member of the Board of Education who knows of any failure on the part of any child age 7 to 16 to attend school regularly without lawful reason, shall report such violation to the building Principal. The Principal shall immediately cause an investigation into any such report to be made. The Principal shall also investigate any case when of his or her personal knowledge, or by report or complaint from any resident of the district, the Principal believes that any child is unlawfully absent from school. The school shall render all services in its power to compel such child to attend some public, private, denominational, or parochial school, which the person having control of the child shall designate, in an attempt to remediate the child's truant behavior.

**Retention** Retention will be strongly considered when a child has excessive absenteeism. Excessive absenteeism shall mean excused and/or unexcused absences of 5 or more days per quarter or the hourly equivalent or when the number of excused and/or unexcused absences exceeds 20 days cumulatively per school year or the hourly equivalent. In cases of excessive absenteeism, the Valentine Community Schools Retention Procedure and Evaluation Process will not apply. In cases of excessive absenteeism, final authority for retention rests with the professional staff of Valentine Community Schools.

### **Section 3 - Tardiness**

It is important that students arrive at school and to all classes on time. Students who are tardy are responsible for making up any work missed. Habitual tardiness will be handled as outlined in the procedures for excessive absences.

**Tardy to School** Students will be considered tardy to school if they are not seated in their assigned class or ready and attentive in their assigned area when school is scheduled to begin.

### **Section 4 - Leaving School**

Students who must leave school for any reason during the school day must be cleared in advance by a note or phone call from the student's parent or legal guardian. No pupil is to leave school during school hours without permission from the teacher or Principal. Failure to notify the office constitutes a skip which is punishable by making up twice the time.

Students who leave without permission and without being excused in the proper manner will be considered truant. Repeated violations will be dealt with by the Administration.

### **Section 5 - Attendance is Required to Participate in Activities**

Students must be in school and remain all day the day of any scheduled school activity in order to participate in the activity. This includes sports contests, practices, music and drama performances, and dances. Failure to be in attendance at school on the day of a scheduled activity will result in a student being withheld from participation in the activity. The Principal retains the right to grant participation should exceptional circumstances prevail.

## ARTICLE 5 - SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

### Section 1 - Curriculum

Valentine Community Schools strive to provide a quality, comprehensive educational program. Students are assessed throughout the school year by a variety of assessment tools. The educational program is continually monitored and regularly revised.

**Reading** - The McMillan/McGraw reading series is the support for the curriculum. Instruction in reading utilizes the findings of the National Reading Panel and its recommendations for instruction and assessment in: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension.

**Language Arts** - The language arts program is based on the belief that spoken and written language are the tools by which children learn about themselves and the world around them. The program emphasizes language awareness, grammar, mechanics, and usage. The 6-Traits of Writing are taught at all levels.

**Spelling and Handwriting** - The spelling curriculum is arranged to enhance a child's natural progression as a speller. It presents development strategies in a logical and consistent manner beginning with words that follow phonetically regular patterns; then progressing to word structure; and on to more complex, derived forms. Cursive writing is introduced in second grade and reinforced through fifth grade.

**Math** - The math curriculum emphasizes problem solving and thinking mathematically while maintaining strong basic math skills. The program helps students to develop the confidence, knowledge, and techniques for using mathematics to solve everyday problems and to help them adapt to a world that is constantly changing. The Scott Foresman series is used in first through fifth grades. Grades 6-8 use McDougal-Littell Math courses 1, 2, and Pre-Algebra. The McDougal-Littell Algebra I course may be offered to those Eighth graders who have successfully completed a prerequisite Pre-Algebra course as Seventh Graders. Eighth graders earning at least an 85% will receive high school credit for this class at Valentine High School.

**Science/Health** - The Harcourt science series used in grades K-5 promotes the acquisition of skills to extend learning about our universe, our world, and our lives. Students refine and use thinking skills to make the most of the information and experiences that surround them. Hands on activities stimulate the child's curiosity to find answers to the why, how, and what of their world. Good mental, physical, and social health are keys to well adjusted students. The health curriculum supplements science and classroom guidance to form an essential knowledge of health and to maintain the good health behaviors that allow students to be well adjusted. Grades six, seven, and eight use *Science and Technology* published by Holt. It is an activity and inquiry based science program emphasizing concept and skill development. Students learn science by thinking, talking, and writing about what they discover. Units include Cells, Heredity, and Classification; Environmental Science; Weather and Climate; Astronomy; Introduction to Matter; Human Body Systems and Health; Inside the Restless Earth; Earth's Changing Surface; Interactions of Matter; and Forces, Motion, and Energy.

**Social Studies** - The social studies program provides a basis for an informed and knowledgeable citizenship. Students develop an appreciation of our social heritage, a perspective for evaluating contemporary issues, and an understanding of the democratic process. Fourth grade children study regional

and Nebraska history. Seventh grade students will study Nebraska Studies as well as American History. Geography and map skills are included for all grades.

**Art** - Art is taught in the regular classroom and often used to enrich the core disciplines. Students are exposed to a variety of art mediums to develop an appreciation for art and to learn about basic art history.

**Music** - The elementary music program builds a foundation incorporating opportunities that encourage self-expression, appreciation, and enjoyment. A variety of music materials are used in regularly scheduled activities.

**Physical Education** - The physical education program is an important part of a student's education, enhancing intellectual, emotional and social development, as well as the physical well-being of the student. All grades participate in regularly scheduled activities organized on a developmental continuum that will lead to the development of coordination, strength, skill, endurance, and improved self concept.

## **KINDERGARTEN**

Kindergarten is an integrated, interactive, hands-on program in which students develop social and academic skills. Academic emphasis is placed on readiness, reading, and math skills. Social skills promote peer cooperation, interest in school, and a love for learning. Students entering kindergarten must be five years old on or before the fifteenth of October.

### **Section 2 - Grading/Report Cards**

Report cards are distributed at the end of each quarter. Teachers are encouraged to notify parents whenever a student has had a drastic decline in grades. The kindergarten report card uses a checklist of skills. Report cards use the following grading scale:

A	93	-	100	S	-	Satisfactory
B	85	-	92	N	-	Needs improvement
C	77	-	84			
D	70	-	76			
F	0	-	69			

Music, P.E., Technology, and Handwriting are reported using the following scale:

S – Satisfactory

N – Needs Improvement

### **Section 3 - Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held twice each year. Teachers will schedule conferences with parents after the first quarter of school and at the end of the third quarter of school. Conferences with teachers, at any other time, are possible by calling the school and making arrangements with one or more teachers as needed.

### **Section 4 - Testing**

A variety of assessment programs/materials is used to monitor and guide student progress. Most curricular areas have testing and progress systems built into the teaching materials. All students in grades two through eight are given the NWEA achievement tests and the OLSAT. Students in kindergarten through second grades may be given NWEA skills tests. Students are assessed in accordance with State and Federal guidelines. Results from these tests are used for school and district information, feedback to parents and students, and may be used to determine qualification for special programs.

### **Section 5 - Promotion & Retention**

The professional staff of Valentine Community Schools will place students at the grade level and in the courses best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

Students will typically progress annually from grade to grade. A student, however, may be retained at a grade level when, in the judgment of the professional staff, retention is in the best interest of the student. Parents will be notified prior to the final decision. The final decision will rest with school authorities.

Retention MUST be considered when a child has excessive absenteeism. Excessive absenteeism is defined as a student missing more than twenty days during the school year or more than five days per quarter. In cases of excessive absenteeism the Valentine Community Schools Retention Procedure and Evaluation Process will not apply. In cases of excessive absenteeism, final authority for retention rests with school authorities.

## **ARTICLE 6 - SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

### **Section 1 - Counseling and Guidance Services**

Valentine Community Schools' guidance program is based upon the belief that growth and development during the early years of schooling are the most significant in the total education of the child. Counseling in the formative years assists in the development of social skills that are fundamental in everyday interaction with others. The focus of school guidance is to develop skills, prevent problems and assist in resolving conflicts. The counseling program provides individual and group counseling, classroom guidance, and support guidance based upon individual and school need. Student referrals to the Counselor may be made directly by parents, the student's teachers, or the building Principal.

### **Section 2 - Crisis Team**

The Crisis Team is a support service which helps our schools assess, plan, and intervene in crises affecting staff and students. A pre planned, organized approach has been shown to be effective in reducing the emotional and social impact of a crisis. The Valentine Community Schools' Crisis Team has had specialized training to assist building administrators in directing crisis resolution activities. The team is made up of staff members from the elementary, middle, and high school.

### **Section 3 - Enrichment**

Nebraska State Law requires that school districts identify learners with high ability. Valentine Community Schools have an education program that serves to enrich the curriculum for all students and to differentiate the curriculum for students with high ability. Classroom teachers will be assisted in their efforts to provide for individual learning needs as requested.

### **Section 4 - Library/Media**

Library/media services include research materials, general reading materials, and various technologies. Computers for students and teachers are used for word processing, instruction, and research. Other technology supported through the library/media center includes electronic research materials, access to the Internet, and video equipment.

### **Section 5 - Special Education**

Special Education is federally mandated and partially state funded program for any student in need of special assistance. Upon recommendation by the school's Student Assistance Team, a student will be tested. The Multidisciplinary Team then verifies the student. Parent involvement and permission for placement of a student in this program is required. Valentine Community Schools' program is designed to provide comprehensive services in the least restrictive environment for each verified student and to develop each student's skills to his/her maximum ability. The building Principal is the first contact regarding referrals to the special education program and resolution of special education disputes.

### **Section 6 - Student Assistance Team**

The Student Assistance Team (SAT) works in cooperation with classroom teachers and parents of a child who has exhibited a learning difficulty to implement intervention strategies for use in the regular

classroom. The student's performance is closely monitored and documented to determine whether instruction in the regular classroom is sufficient or if the student should be referred for special education evaluation. The building principal is the first contact regarding referrals for special education and resolution of special education disputes.

### **Section 7 - Speech and Language**

Speech therapy services are provided for eligible preschool and school-aged children exhibiting speech-language deficits. Upon recommendation of the Student Assistance Team, students are tested to determine eligibility. The speech-language pathologist's functions can include assessment, multidisciplinary team involvement, collaborative IEP development and implementation, direct therapy, and recommendation regarding appropriate placement of children. Additionally, consultation is extended to staff members and parents.

### **Section 8 - Title I**

Title I is a federally funded student assistance program designed to improve student learning. The plan is written locally according to state and federal guidelines. Valentine Elementary and Valentine Middle School run a school-wide Title I program.

### **Section 9 - Health and Safety Services**

Valentine Community Schools will maintain health and accident records and will oversee student possession and use of medication. The purpose of keeping health and accident records is to provide information for and support of a comprehensive safety education program for all children and district personnel. Accident reports promote the safe and efficient operation of the school system as well as the protection and education of the students. To ensure a safe school environment, Valentine Community Schools will use the guidance and assistance of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the Cherry County Clinic, and the Valentine Medical Clinic.

#### **Medical Information to be Provided to the District**

All parents/guardians must complete a health questionnaire for each student. If the student is allergic to certain medication, foods or substances, has asthma, or is prone to seizure or other illness, the student's parents, guardian, and/or physician shall provide the school, in writing, with the following information on or by the first day of school:

- A. Name of medications, foods or substances to which the student is allergic.
- B. The serious illness(es) to which the student is susceptible, the triggers, and initial symptoms.
- C. If the student is susceptible to an illness, or allergic reaction, the steps to be taken by school personnel in the event the illness or allergic reaction occurs.

#### **Student Illness or Injury**

School personnel will notify parents when a student needs to be sent home from school due to illness. Conditions requiring a student be sent home include: temperature greater than 100°F., vomiting, diarrhea, unexplained rashes, live head lice, or a determination that the child's condition prevents meaningful participation in the educational program, presents a health risk to the child or others, or that medical consultation is warranted unless the condition resolves. The student should not return to school until he/she has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (acetaminophen/ibuprofen, etc). If the student does not have a fever, he/she will be encouraged to stay in school. Should the student's condition deteriorate, their parent or guardian will be notified. Please include emergency daytime phone numbers when enrolling your child so that you or an emergency contact can be reached if your child becomes ill or injured while at school. Also, please inform the school of any health related information you feel is important for your student's success in the classroom and/or safety at

school. Parents who have students with asthma or severe allergies will be asked to provide more specific information to the School Nurse.

Unless an injury is of a minor nature, the student's parent(s) or guardian will be notified. If the parent(s) or guardian cannot be reached, the student's emergency contact person will be notified. If the student's parent(s) or their emergency contact person cannot be reached, the school shall decide if an ambulance is necessary. Any accident resulting in injury will be reported to the principal's office. The well-being of the students is our foremost concern. Should a medical situation arise, the school may call for an ambulance. Parents or the student's emergency contact will be notified.

### **Communicable Disease Guidelines**

**Chicken Pox** - Exclude for no less than 6 days\* after the appearance of first crop of vesicles and student is without fever and vesicles are dry.

**Colds** - May return if no fever.

**Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)** - May return when eye is normal in appearance or with written physician approval.

**Fifth's Disease** - Exclude until fever and malaise are gone. May return with rash with written physician approval.

**Impetigo** - Exclude until lesions are treated. May return with written documentation from physician.

**Lice (Head or Body)** - Exclude until verification of appropriate treatment method.

**Measles (Rubella)** - Exclude for duration of illness and for no less than 4 days\* after onset of rash.

**Measles - Three Day** - Exclude for duration of illness and for no less than 4 days after onset of rash.

**Mumps** - Exclude for duration of illness and until swelling has subsided (about 9 days).

**Ringworm** - Exclude until treatment is started.

**Strep Infections (Scarlet Fever, Scarletina, Strep Throat)** - Exclude until no fever and under treatment for 24 hours.

*\*Day of onset of specific symptoms is counted as day zero, the day after onset is day 1.*

### **Medications**

Whenever possible your child should be provided medications by you outside of school hours. In the event it is necessary that the child take or have medication available at school, the parent/guardian must provide a signed written consent for the child to be given medication at school. A consent form is available in the school office.

**Possession And Use of Medication** Prescribed medication shall not be brought to school unless a physician's written directions state that the prescribed medication must be taken during school hours or during school activities. Medication should be taken at home whenever possible.

**Prescribed Medication** The student or the student's parents or guardian must provide the Principal with a physician's written orders which prescribe the type and amount of medication. A current prescription label will satisfy the requirements of this paragraph. In addition, a written authorization permitting the use of the medication and giving the school permission to call the prescribing physician with questions must be signed by the student's parents or guardian and taken to the teacher along with the medication. This must be done each time prescribed medication is needed. The school nurse may limit medication dosages to levels listed in current drug reference publications.

**Non-prescribed/Over-the-Counter Medication** A written authorization permitting the use of the non-prescribed over-the-counter medication must be signed by the student's parents or guardian and provided to the teacher **along with the medication in the original box/container**. This must be done for each type of medication needed (i.e., cough drops, Tylenol, etc.). The school may also require a writ-

ten authorization signed by a physician giving the school permission to telephone that physician with questions.

**Taking of Non-prescribed/Over-the-Counter and Prescribed Medication** The ingestion, taking, or application of medication, including nebulizers, shall be performed under the direct supervision and observation of the teacher or the teacher's designee, and administered as directed by the student's parent or guardian for non-prescribed medication, and as directed by the student's physician in the case of prescribed medication.

**Medication Containers** Medications must be provided to the school by the parent/guardian in the pharmacy-labeled or manufacturer-labeled bottle/container. Repackaged medications will not be accepted.

**Custody and Storage of Medication** Medication delivered to the teacher shall be stored in the area designated by the teacher. The storage area shall either be locked or under the control of a designated school employee.

**Medication Quantity** No more than one week's supply of prescribed medication shall be provided or delivered to the school by the student or student parent or guardian, unless there is a written order by a physician requiring a greater supply.

**Transfer of Medication to Other Students** Students are prohibited from transferring or delivering any over-the-counter or prescribed medication to other students. Violation of this subsection will authorize the confiscation of the medication by the District, and subject the student to student discipline.

**Inhalers** Students may use inhalers without supervision or monitoring by the teacher. However, if the inhaler is a prescribed medication, the teacher will be advised by the student's parent, guardian, or physician in writing of the inhaler's frequency of use. If school personnel observe a student using an inhaler in excess of the directions on the inhaler or more frequently than would be considered reasonable, it shall be reported to the Principal's office in which case the student's future use of the inhaler shall be supervised by the teacher.

**Finger Stick Blood Test** Parents of students who have diabetes, and students with diabetes, should notify the school at the beginning of the school year and provide the school with all required information. Students who have been taught finger stick blood tests shall follow those procedures.

### **Immunization Requirements**

Students must show proof of immunization upon enrollment in Valentine Community Schools. Any student who does not comply with the immunization requirements will not be permitted to continue in school. **Please refer to the Summary of School Immunization Rules and Regulations below to determine compliance with Nebraska state law.** For students with medical reasons or sincerely held religious beliefs that do not allow immunizations, parents must provide a waiver statement with a doctor's signature stating that the immunization(s) would be medically risky or, in the case of refusal due to religious beliefs, a notarized affidavit stating that the immunization(s) conflict with the family's religious beliefs must be provided. Medical waiver and religious affidavit forms are available in the school office.

*Note: Students with a signed waiver statement may be excluded from school in the event of a disease outbreak.*

## Summary of the School Immunization Rules and Regulations 2011-2012

Student Age Group	Required Vaccines
Ages 2 through 5 years enrolled in a school based program not licensed as a child care provider	<p>4 doses of DTaP, DTP, or DT vaccine,</p> <p>3 doses of Polio vaccine,</p> <p>3 doses of Hib vaccine or 1 dose of Hib given at or after 15 months of age,</p> <p>3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine,</p> <p>1 dose of MMR or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age,</p> <p>1 dose of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age. Written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian, or health care provider will be accepted.</p> <p>4 doses of pneumococcal or 1 dose of pneumococcal given on or after 15 months of age</p>
Students from Kindergarten through 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade, including all transfer students from outside the State of Nebraska and any foreign students	<p>3 doses of DTaP, DTP, DT, or Td vaccine, one given on or after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday,</p> <p>3 doses of Polio vaccine,</p> <p>3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine or 2 doses of adolescent vaccine if student is 11-15 years of age.</p> <p>2 doses of MMR or MMRV vaccine, given on or after 12 months of age and separated by at least one month,</p> <p>2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age. Written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian, or health care provider will be accepted. If the child has had varicella disease, they do not need any varicella shots.</p>
Additionally, for 7 <sup>th</sup> grade only	<p>1 dose of Tdap (must contain Pertussis booster) – this dose can be received any time after 10 or 11 years of age depending on which brand of vaccine is received.</p>

### **Physical Examination Requirements**

Evidence of a physical examination by a qualified physician is required within six months prior to the entrance of the child into any Early Childhood Special Education classes, kindergarten and the seventh grade, or in the case of transfer from out of state to any other grade. The cost of such physical examination is to be borne by the parents or guardian of each child examined. A parent or guardian who objects may submit a written statement of refusal for his or her child. The statement will be kept with the student's records.

### **School Vision Evaluation**

A School Vision Evaluation **is required** for all children **within six months prior to entering** Nebraska schools for the first time (*includes beginner grades including Kindergartners, transfers, and other students new to Nebraska*) [Nebraska Statute] A parent or guardian who objects may submit a written statement of refusal for his or her child. The statement will be kept with the student's records.

### **School Health Screening**

Students are screened annually for vision, hearing, blood pressure, dental defects, height and weight by qualified Educational Service Unit (ESU) personnel. The screening program also incorporates scoliosis screening for sixth through eighth grades. Students about whom health concerns are identified to the school nurse may also be screened. Parents are notified of any health concerns as they are identified. Parents who do not want their child to participate in the school screening program must communicate this in writing to the school at the start of the school year. As Nebraska statutes require school-age screening, parents who remove their child from the screening program must submit findings from an alternate medical provider to the school by December 1.

### **Asthma-Severe Allergy Protocol**

If a student or staff member experiences a **life-threatening** asthma attack or systemic allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) anytime during the school day in the school building the following protocol will be implemented.

The protocol requires 911 be called first. After that call is made, an Epi-Pen injection will be given and then albuterol is provided through a nebulizer. An Epi-Pen is a small pre-filled automatic injection device that resembles a highlighter. It is used to deliver epinephrine. Epinephrine is a medication that is used to bring quick relief by improving breathing and lung function. Albuterol is another medication that is used to bring breathing relief (commonly found in rescue inhalers). The nebulizer is a machine that mixes the albuterol with air to provide a fine mist for inhaling through a mask or mouthpiece.

The protocol steps are designed to provide quick, effective care in order to prevent death due to a severe asthma attack or anaphylaxis. Staff members have been trained to recognize signs and symptoms of a life-threatening breathing emergency and to properly administer the medications. The protocol is a standing medical order that has been signed by a local physician.

If you know that your child has asthma or a known allergy, it is **critically important** that you communicate this information to our school nurses. In rural attendance centers parents must also notify the classroom teacher. A school health form is an ideal place to provide this basic information, and you will receive a more detailed form to fill out if more information is needed. For each student with a known severe allergy or asthma, you must provide the school with:

- 1) Specific information about the condition

- 2) Instructions
- 3) Medications as directed by a physician, PA, or APRN

In the event that your student experiences a life-threatening asthma attack or systemic allergic reaction, we will defer to the specific documents and medications that you have provided. If you do not have medical documentation and instructions on file with the school for your student, we will defer to the regulatory protocol described above.

If, for whatever reason, you do not want your student to receive the life-saving emergency treatment under the protocol, you must file your written objection with the school.

## **ARTICLE 7 - DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO**

### **Section 1 - Drug-Free Schools**

It shall be the policy of Valentine Community Schools, in addition to standards of student conduct elsewhere adopted by board policy or administrative regulations, to absolutely prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs, tobacco, or alcohol on school premises or as a part of any of the school's activities. This shall include such unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs, tobacco, and alcohol by any student of the District during regular school hours or after school hours, at school sponsored activities on school premises, or at school sponsored activities off school premises.

The District has implemented regulations and practices to ensure compliance with the Federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act and all regulations and rules promulgated pursuant thereto. The District's safe and drug-free schools program is established in accordance with principles of effectiveness as required by law to respond to such harmful effects.

**Drug and Alcohol Use and Prevention** By this handbook, each student of the District is hereby provided a copy of the standards of conduct for student behavior in the District which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol on school premises or as a part of any of the school's activities. Further, this District will have proper in-service orientation and training for all employed staff.

**Drug and Alcohol Education and Prevention Program of the District Pursuant to The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Laws and Regulations** All students are provided a comprehensive, age appropriate, developmentally-based drug and alcohol education and prevention program. It shall be the policy of the District to require instruction concerning the adverse effects resulting from the use of illicit drugs and alcohol. Such instruction shall be designed by affected classroom teachers or as otherwise directed by the Board to be appropriate to the age of the student exposed to such instruction. One of the primary objectives shall be the prevention of illicit drug and alcohol use by students. It shall further be the policy of the District to encourage the use of outside resource personnel such as law enforcement officers, medical personnel, and experts on the subject of drug and alcohol abuse, so that its economic, social, educational, and physiological consequences may be made known to the students of the District.

It shall further be the policy of the District, through the instruction earlier herein referred to, as well as by information and consistent enforcement of the Board's policy pertaining to student conduct as it relates to the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol, that drug and alcohol abuse is wrong and is harmful both to the student and the District, and its educational programs.

**Drug and Alcohol Counseling, Rehabilitation and Re-entry Programs** Information concerning drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation, and reentry programs is available to any student from the Guidance Counselor or other appropriate school personnel.

In the event of disciplinary proceedings against any student for any District policy pertaining to the prohibition against the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol, appropriate

school personnel shall confer with any such student and his or her parents or guardian concerning available drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation, and reentry programs that appropriate school personnel shall consider to be of benefit to any such student and his or her parent or parents or guardian.

**Standards of Student Conduct Pertaining to the Unlawful Possession, Use, or Distribution of Illicit Drugs or Alcohol on School Premises or as a Part of Any of the School's Activities** In addition to standards of student conduct elsewhere adopted by board policy or administrative regulation to absolutely prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol on school premises or as a part of any of the school's activities. This shall include such unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by any student of the District during regular school hours or after school hours at school sponsored activities on school premises, at school sponsored activities off school premises.

Conduct prohibited at places and activities as herein above described shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Possession of any controlled substance, possession of which is prohibited by law.
2. Possession of any prescription drug in an unlawful fashion.
3. Possession of alcohol and/or tobacco or tobacco products on school premises or as a part of any of the school's activities.
4. Use of any illicit drug.
5. Distribution of any illicit drug.
6. Use of any drug in an unlawful fashion.
7. Distribution of any drug or controlled substance when such distribution is unlawful.
8. The possession, use, or distribution of alcohol.

It shall further be the policy of the district that violation of any of the above prohibited acts will result in disciplinary sanction being taken within the bounds of applicable law, up to and including short term suspension, long term suspension, expulsion, and referral to appropriate authorities for criminal prosecution.

#### **Drugs and Alcohol Prohibited - Standards of Conduct for Students and Employed Staff**

The manufacture, possession, selling, dispensing, use or being under the influence of alcohol or any alcoholic beverage or alcoholic liquor on school grounds, or during an educational function, or event off school grounds, or off school grounds if there is a substantial interference with school purposes, is prohibited.

The possession, selling, dispensing, use or being under the influence of any controlled substance or drug, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, any hallucinogen, any stimulant, or any depressant on school grounds, or during the educational function or event off school grounds, or off school grounds if there is a substantial interference with school purposes, is prohibited.

The possession, selling, dispensing, use or being under the influence of any abusable glue or aerosol paint or any other chemical substance for inhalation, including but not limited to lighter fluid, whiteout, and reproduction fluid, when such activity constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes on school grounds or during and educational function, or event off school grounds, is prohibited.

The possession, selling, dispensing or use of any look-alike drug or look-alike controlled substance when such activity constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes on school grounds or during an educational function, or event off school grounds, is prohibited.

Any prescription or nonprescription drug, medicine, vitamin or other chemical may not be taken unless authorized as stated in the next section on AUTHORIZED USE.

**AUTHORIZED USE** Any student whose parent or guardian requests that he or she be given any prescription or nonprescription medicine, drug, or vitamin shall provide signed permission by parent or physician.

**Disciplinary Sanctions.**

1. Violation of this policy may result in suspension or expulsion. Prohibited substances will be confiscated and could be turned over to law enforcement authorities. The student may be referred for counseling or treatment. Parents or legal guardian will be notified.
2. If the student is observed to be violating this policy, the student will be escorted to the Principal/Superintendent's office immediately, or if not feasible, the Principal/Superintendent will be notified. The student's parents or legal guardian will be requested to pick up the student. If it appears there is imminent danger to other students, school personnel, or students involved, the Principal/Superintendent, or such other personnel as authorized by the Principal/Superintendent, may have the student removed by authorized medical or law enforcement personnel.
3. Parents and students shall be given a copy of the standards of conduct and disciplinary sanctions required and shall be notified that compliance with the standards of conduct is mandatory.

**Intervention** The Valentine Community Schools District does not have the authority or responsibility to make medical or health determinations regarding chemical dependency. However, when observed behavior indicates that a problem exists which may affect the student's ability to learn or function in the educational climate or activity, the school then has the right and responsibility to refer the student for a formal chemical dependency diagnosis based on behavior observed by school staff. The school will issue a statement to all students and employed staff that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol is wrong and harmful. The school shall make available to students and employed staff information about any drug and alcohol counseling, and rehabilitation and reentry programs, which are available to students.

**Administration** The Administration of Valentine Community Schools is authorized to adopt such administrative rules, regulations or practices necessary to properly implement this policy. Such regulations, rules or practices may vary the procedures set forth herein to the extent necessary to fit the circumstances of an individual situation. Such rules, regulations and practices may include administrative forms, such as checklists to be used by staff to record observed behavior and to determine the proper plan of action.

**Safe and Drug-Free Schools – Parental Notice** Pursuant to the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act, if upon receipt of information regarding the content of safe and drug free school programs and activities other than classroom instruction, a parent who objects to the participation of their child in such programs and activities may notify the School District of such objection in writing. Upon receipt of such notice, the student will be withdrawn from the program or activity to which parental objection has been made. **Note: Written parent requests to have a student excused from testing, classroom instruction, and other school experiences may be granted when possible and educationally appropriate. Requests should be submitted to the school administration within a reasonable time prior to the testing, classroom instruction, or other school experience, and should be accompanied by a written explanation for the request. A plan for an acceptable alternative shall be approved by the administration prior to, or as a part of, the granting of any parent request.**

**ARTICLE 8 - STUDENT RIGHTS, CONDUCT, RULES AND REGULATIONS**

**Section 1 - Student Conduct and Discipline Policies**

Good discipline originates in the home. The parent is the first teacher of a child and should help the child to develop good behavior habits and proper attitudes toward school. A parent should:

- Recognize that the student's discipline at school is the school's responsibility.
- Teach the child respect for law, authority, the rights of others, and for private and public property.
- Arrange for prompt and regular school attendance and comply with attendance rules and procedures.
- Work with the school in carrying out recommendations made in the best interest of the child.
- Talk with the child about school activities; show an active interest in report cards and progress.

Valentine Community Schools feels it is important to maintain contact with parents concerning student behavior.

The common goal of students, parents, faculty and administration of Valentine Community Schools is to maintain a school atmosphere which is conducive to learning. In order to achieve this, Valentine Community Schools will continue to review and distribute a set of reasonable and fair rules and policies. **VIOLATIONS OF THE VALENTINE COMMUNITY SCHOOL'S RULES AND POLICIES WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION.**

### **Part 1: Forms of School Discipline**

**Short-Term Suspension** Students may be excluded by the Principal or his designee from school or any school function for a period of up to five school days (short-term suspension) on the following grounds:

1. Conduct constituting grounds for expulsion as hereinafter set forth; or,
2. Other violations of rules and standards of behavior adopted by the Valentine Community Schools Board of Education or the administrative or teaching staff of the school, which occur on or off school grounds, if such conduct interferes with school purposes or there is a nexus between such conduct and school.

The following process will apply to short-term suspensions:

1. The Principal or the Principal's designee shall make a reasonable investigation of the facts and circumstances. In addition, such short-term suspension will be made only after a determination that the suspension is necessary to help any student, to further school purposes, or to prevent an interference with school purposes.
2. Prior to commencement of the short-term suspension, the student will be given oral or written notice of the charges against the student. The student will be advised of what the student is accused of having done, an explanation of the evidence the authorities have, and be afforded an opportunity to explain the student's version of the facts.
3. Within 24 hours or such additional time as is reasonably necessary following the suspension, the Principal or administrator will send a written statement to the student, and the student's parent or guardian, describing the student's conduct, misconduct or violation of the rule or standard and the reasons for the action taken. An opportunity will be given to the student, and the student's parent or guardian, to have a conference with the Principal or Administrator ordering the short-term suspension before or at the time the student returns to school. The Principal or Administrator shall determine who in addition to the parent or guardian is to attend the conference.
4. Students must complete all school work before returning to class and credit is given.

**Long-Term Suspension** Students may be excluded by the Principal or the Principal's designee from school or any school function for a period of more than five school days but less than twenty school days on (long-term suspension) the conduct constituting grounds for expulsion as hereinafter set forth. The process for long-term suspension is hereinafter set forth.

## Expulsion

1. **Meaning of Expulsion** Expulsion shall mean exclusion from attendance in all schools, grounds and activities of or within the system for a period not to exceed the remainder of the semester in which it took effect unless the misconduct occurred (a) within ten school days prior to the end of the first semester, in which case the expulsion shall remain in effect through the second semester, or (b) within ten school days prior to the end of the second semester, in which case the expulsion shall remain in effect for summer school and the first semester of the following school year, or (c) unless the expulsion is for conduct specified in these rules or in law as permitting or requiring a longer removal, in which case the expulsion shall remain in effect for the period specified therein. Such action may be modified or terminated by the school district at any time during the expulsion period.
2. **Summer Review** Any expulsion that will remain in effect during the first semester of the following school year will be automatically scheduled for review before the beginning of the school year. The review will be conducted by the hearing officer who conducted the initial expulsion hearing, or a hearing officer appointed by the Superintendent in the event no hearing was previously held or the initial hearing officer is no longer available or willing to serve, after the hearing officer has given notice of the review to the student and the student's parent or guardian. This review shall be limited to newly discovered evidence or evidence of changes in the student's circumstances occurring since the original hearing. This review may lead to a recommendation by the hearing officer that the student be readmitted for the upcoming school year. If the school board or board of education or a committee of such board took the final action to expel the student, the student may be readmitted only by action of the board. Otherwise the student may be readmitted by action of the Superintendent.
3. **Suspension of Enforcement of an Expulsion** Enforcement of an expulsion action may be suspended (i.e., "stayed") for a period of not more than one full semester in addition to the balance of the semester in which the expulsion takes effect, and as a condition of such suspended action, the student may be assigned to a school, class, or program and to such other consequences which the school district deems appropriate. In lieu of other authorized educational programs to which the student may be assigned, such school, class, or program may be offered as a community-centered classroom and may include experiences for the student as an observer or aide in governmental functions, as an on-the-job trainee, and as a participant in specialized tutorial experiences or individually prescribed educational and counseling programs. Such programs shall include an individualized learning program to enable the student to continue academic work for credit toward graduation. At the conclusion of the designated period: (1) if the student has satisfactorily participated in the school, class, or program to which such student has been assigned the student shall be reinstated and permitted to return to the school of former attendance or to attend other programs offered by the district, and action to expunge the record of the expulsion action may be taken at the discretion of the Superintendent or his or her designee, or (2) if the student's conduct has been unsatisfactory, the expulsion action shall be enforced. The determination of whether the students' participation and conduct has been satisfactory or not shall be made by Principal or the Principal's designee.
4. **Students Subject to Juvenile or Court Probation** Prior to the readmission to school of any student who is less than nineteen years of age and who is subject to the supervision of a juvenile probation officer or an adult probation officer pursuant to the order of the District Court, Court, or Juvenile Court, who chooses to meet conditions of probation by attending school, and who has previously been expelled from school, the Principal or the Principal's designee shall meet with the student's probation officer and assist in developing conditions of probation that will provide specific guidelines for behavior and consequences for misbehavior at school (including conduct

on school grounds and conduct during an educational function or event off school grounds) as well as educational objectives that must be achieved. If the guidelines, consequences, and objectives provided by the Principal or the Principal's designee are agreed to by the probation officer and the student, and the court permits the student to return to school under the agreed to conditions, the student may be permitted to return to school. The student may with proper consent, upon such return, be evaluated by the school for possible disabilities and may be referred for evaluation for possible placement in a special education program. The student may be expelled or otherwise disciplined for subsequent conduct as provided in Board policy and state statute.

**Other Forms of Student Discipline** Administrative and teaching personnel may also take actions regarding student behavior, other than removal of students from school, which are reasonably necessary to aid the student, further school purposes, or prevent interference with the educational process. Such actions may include, but need not be limited to, counseling of students, parent conferences, rearrangement of schedules, requirements that a student remain in school after regular hours to do additional work, restriction of extracurricular activity, or requirements that a student receive counseling, psychological evaluation, or psychiatric evaluation upon the written consent of a parent or guardian to such counseling or evaluation. The actions may also include in-school suspensions during the day. When in-school suspensions, after-school assignments, or other disciplinary measures are assigned, the student is responsible for complying with such disciplinary measures and a failure to serve such assigned discipline as directed will serve as grounds for further discipline, up to expulsion from school.

## **Part 2: Grounds for Student Discipline**

Students have an opportunity to learn by sharing some of the responsibility for creating a good learning environment. To help maintain a quality instructional environment for all students attending Valentine Community Schools, are expected to refrain from the following conduct.

### **Grounds for Short-Term Suspension, Long-Term Suspension, Expulsion or Mandatory Reassignment**

The failure to refrain from the following conduct shall constitute grounds for long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment, subject to the procedural provisions of the Student Discipline Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-254 through 79-296, when such activity occurs on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event:

1. Use of violence, force, coercion, threat, intimidation, or similar conduct in a manner that constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes;
2. Willfully causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to property, stealing or attempting to steal property of substantial value, or repeated damage or theft involving property;
3. Causing or attempting to cause personal injury to a school employee, to a school volunteer, or to any student. Personal injury caused by accident, self-defense, or other action undertaken on the reasonable belief that it was necessary to protect some other person shall not constitute a violation of this subdivision;
4. Threatening or intimidating any student for the purpose of or with the intent of obtaining money or anything of value from such student;
5. Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon;
6. Engaging in the possession, selling, dispensing, or use of a controlled substance or an imitation controlled substance, as defined in section 28-401, a substance represented to be a controlled substance, or alcoholic liquor as defined in section 53-103 or being under the influence of a con-

trolled substance or alcoholic liquor (note: the term “under the influence” for school purposes has a less strict meaning than it does under criminal law; for school purposes, the term means any level of impairment and includes even the odor of alcohol on the breath or person of a student; also, it includes being impaired by reason of the abuse of any material used as a stimulant);

7. Public indecency;
8. Engaging in bullying as defined in section 79-2,137;
9. Sexually assaulting or attempting to sexually assault any person. In addition, if a complaint has been filed by a prosecutor in a court of competent jurisdiction alleging that the student has sexually assaulted or attempted to sexually assault any person, including sexual assaults or attempted sexual assaults, the student is subject to suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment regardless of where the conduct took place. For purposes of this subdivision, sexual assault shall mean sexual assault in the first degree and sexual assault in the second degree as defined in sections 28-319 and 28-320, as such sections now provide or may hereafter from time to time be amended;
10. Excessive absenteeism or failure to attend assigned classes or assigned activities;
11. Tardiness to school, assigned classes or assigned activities;
12. The use of language, written or oral, or conduct, including gestures, which is profane or abusive to students or staff members. Profane or abusive language or conduct includes, but is not limited to, that which is commonly understood and intended to be derogatory toward a group or individual based upon race, gender, national origin, or religion;
13. Dressing in a manner which is dangerous to the student’s health and safety, a danger to the health and safety of others, or which is disruptive, distracting or indecent to the extent that it interferes with the learning and educational process. (Further dress code information is provided in a later section).
14. Willfully violating the behavioral expectations for students in Valentine Community Schools.
15. Engaging in any other activity forbidden by the laws of the State of Nebraska which activity constitutes a danger to other students or interferes with school purposes; or
16. A repeated violation of any rules and standards validly established by the Board of Education or school officials if such violations constitute a substantial interference with school purposes.
17. In addition, a student who engages in the following conduct occurs on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event shall be expelled for the remainder of the school year in which it took effect if the misconduct occurs during the first semester, and if the expulsion for such conduct takes place during the second semester, the expulsion shall remain in effect for the first semester of the following school year, with the condition that such action may be modified or terminated by the school district during the expulsion period on such terms as the administration may establish:
  - a. The knowing and intentional use of force in causing or attempting to cause personal injury to a school employee, school volunteer, or student, except if caused by accident, self-defense, or on the reasonable belief that the force used was necessary to protect some other person and the extent of force used was reasonably believed to be necessary, or,
  - b. The knowing and intentional possession, use, or transmission of a dangerous weapon other than a firearm.
18. In addition, a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school, or to have pos-

sessed a firearm at school, shall be expelled from school for a period of not less than one year. The Superintendent may modify such one year expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis, provided that such modification is in writing. The term “to school” or “at school” means on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event.

Bringing a firearm or other dangerous weapon to school for any reason is discouraged; however, a student will not be subject to disciplinary action if the item is brought or possessed under the following conditions:

- a. Prior written permission to bring the firearm or other dangerous weapon to school is obtained from the student’s teacher, building administrator and parent.
- b. The purpose of having the firearm or other dangerous weapon in school is for a legitimate educational function.
- c. A plan for its transportation into and from the school, its storage while in the school building and how it will be displayed must be developed with the prior written approval by the teacher and building administrator. Such plan shall require that such item will be in the possession of an adult staff member at all times except for such limited time as is necessary to fulfill the educational function.
- d. The firearm or other dangerous weapon shall be in an inoperable condition while it is on school grounds.

### **Additional Student Conduct Rules**

The following additional student conduct rules are established. Failure to comply with such rules is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, as further specified in these rules. These rules govern student conduct on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event.

**18. Student Appearance Policy** Valentine Community Schools takes pride in the appearance of our students. Dress reflects the quality of the school, of conduct, and of school work. All students are expected to dress and groom themselves neatly in clothes that are suitable for school. Wearing apparel shall be neat, clean, and safe. Wearing apparel shall not disrupt or interfere with the school environment or activity and/or educational objectives. Students should not dress in a manner that is dangerous to the health and safety of anyone or interferes with the learning environment or teaching process in our school. Shoes must be worn at all times. A list of attire that will not be permitted in the school setting follows. This list is not exclusive. The Principal, Superintendent, or Administration designee is responsible for making the final determination of whether or not a student’s attire and grooming is appropriate for the school setting.

- Oversized clothing. Criteria: T-shirts, sports jerseys, sweatshirts, or sweaters that are long or extremely loose-fitting.
- Apparel that is sexually suggestive; features crude, vulgar or profane language; depicts tobacco, alcohol or other drugs; displays racial or ethnic slurs or portrays any type of gang affiliation.
- Clothing which is unnecessarily distracting to the learning environment. Criteria: Cut-up jeans, mesh shirts with no undershirt, exposed midriffs, hats or caps on in the building or at school events, short shorts, short skirts or dresses, biking tights/shorts. Sleeveless garments must extend to the end of the shoulder and fit closely under the arm.

- Bagging and sagging pants. Criteria: Pants are to be worn on the waist. If pants are worn properly, a student's, underwear should not be visible. Pants which touch or drag on the floor are unacceptable.
- Jeans or pants that are cut up or have holes above the knees are not permitted.
- Apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook, or manner of grooming, which by the nature of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute, denotes membership in any group that advocates the use of drugs or disruptive behavior will not be permitted. Such group's clothing may vary from school to school, and may change from year to year; therefore, it is the responsibility of the administration to determine appropriateness of clothing or accessories.
  - a. The wearing or displaying of gang-related apparel, such as hair nets or bandanas is not permitted.
  - b. The wearing of any type of tattoo is not permitted. Visible, temporary, or suggestive tattoos that are gang-related, sexually suggestive, crude, vulgar, use profane language, and/or depict tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs will not be tolerated.
  - c. Chains are not permitted and will be confiscated.
  - d. Overalls with unfastened straps and pants that are cut off below the knees are not permitted.
  - e. Belts which are extra long with the excess hanging loosely are prohibited. All belts are to be tucked in the belt loops and worn around the waist.
- Jewelry may be worn as long as it is not a distraction to the educational environment.

Consideration will be given students who wear special clothing as required by religious beliefs, disability, or to convey a particularized message protected by law. The final decision regarding attire and grooming will be made by the Principal or Superintendent. In the event a student is uncertain as to whether a particular item or method of grooming is consistent with the school's guidelines, the student may review additional postings of prohibited items or grooming as may be available in the Principal's office or contact the Principal directly for approval.

Coaches, activity sponsors, and teachers may have additional dress requirements for students who are in special lab classes, participating in performing groups or representing the school as part of an extracurricular activity program.

On the first violation of the dress code, the student may telephone home for proper apparel to be brought to school for changing. If clothes cannot be brought to school for the student to change into, the student will be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day. Students will not be permitted to leave school to change clothes. Continual violations of the dress code will result in disciplinary actions under the Student Code of Conduct above. Further, in the event the dress code violation is determined to also violate other student conduct rules (e.g., public indecency, insubordination, expression of profanity, and the like), the first violation may result in discipline, up to expulsion.

**19. Harassment, Bullying, and Dating Violence Policy** It is the policy of Valentine Community Schools that "bullying" type behavior is not to be permitted. These guidelines are established to respond specifically to bullying behavior. Students and parents are advised that other response measures are also in place and set forth in this handbook for behavior which is discriminatory or harassing on unlawful grounds (e.g., sexual harassment, sexting, cyber bullying, harassment of students with disabilities, race harassment, etc.). Dating violence, as that term is defined by Nebraska law, will not be tolerated by the school district. Students who engage in dating violence

on school grounds, in a school vehicle, or at a school activity or that otherwise violates the Nebraska Student Discipline Act will receive consequences consistent with the Act and the district's student discipline policies.

20. **Public Displays of Affection** Public displays of affection will not be tolerated on school property or at school activities. Such conduct includes: hugging, kissing or any other types of affection that would be considered inappropriate or an undue distraction to others. Students will face the following consequences if this type of behavior occurs.
  - a. 1st Offense: Student will be confronted and directed to cease.
  - b. 2nd Offense: Student will be confronted, directed to cease, and parents will be notified.
  - c. 3rd Offense: Students will be suspended from school for a minimum of 1 day, and parents and student will be required to meet with Administrator (s) and counselor.
  - d. If this type of behavior continues, the student could face long-term suspension or expulsion.
21. **Specific Rule Items** The following conduct may result in disciplinary action which, in repeated violations, may result in discipline up to and including expulsion:
  - **Class Work** - Students are expected to complete and submit class work on time. When a teacher keeps a student after school for more than 10 minutes to complete class work, the student or teacher will try to notify parents. The school reserves the right to keep a student for ½ hour after school.
  - **Cheating** - Students who cheat or help other students cheat will repeat the exam, paper, or assignment. Students will serve detention. Students learn by doing their own work. Parents will be notified.
  - **Rocks/Snowballs** - Throwing snowballs or rocks on school grounds at any time or under any circumstances is prohibited. School grounds are defined to include any territory within the school block, including the streets immediately surrounding the block.
  - **Fighting** - Fighting on school grounds at any time or under any circumstances is prohibited. School grounds are defined as above. Fighting that occurs while students are moving to and from school and is not on school grounds will be reported to local law enforcement authorities.
  - **School Property** - School property and all other public property belongs to the taxpayers, the parents. Any willful destruction or damage to school property will be repaired or replaced by the people involved. Lockers and desks are school property and are subject to inspection at any time by school personnel who are authorized to remove any objectionable items.
  - **Weapons** - No weapons, including knives, air/spring guns, and laser pointers, will be allowed.
  - **Halls** - The halls are to be orderly and quiet at all times. Students should refrain from pushing, shoving, or any loud or unruly behavior. All school personnel shall have authority to discipline students who ignore this rule.
  - **Fire Alarm** - There will be an automatic three day suspension from school and charges brought against any student caught pulling a false fire alarm. This is a very serious offense in that lives of students are at stake. All efforts will be made to insure the full punishment for any person committing this offense.
  - **Authorities** - A student shall comply with directions of teachers, student teachers, substitute teachers, teacher aides, principals, or other school personnel during any period of time when the student is properly under the authority of school personnel.

- **Respect** - Students are expected to show respect to other students, teachers, school officials, and other employees. Students may not distribute personal invitations at school unless all classmates are included.
- **Language** - Students will not be allowed to use inappropriate language.
- **Behavior** - Students shall not engage in any behavior that seriously interferes with class work or activities of the school.
- **Tobacco, etc.** - The use or possession of tobacco, alcohol, or any other controlled substance is prohibited on school grounds and/ or at any school sponsored event.
- **Theft** - Taking things belonging to the school, school personnel or other students is prohibited.
- **Dress Code** - Students at Valentine Community Schools take pride in their appearance and, therefore, are expected to adhere to the Student Dress Code.
- **Arrival** - Once a student arrives at school they are not permitted to return home for forgotten items. If they have forgotten an essential item they will be allowed to call home.
- **Animals** - No animal of any kind is to be brought into a classroom, unless special approval has been granted by the classroom teacher.
- **Gum/Candy/Food** - Gum is not allowed, and candy or food of any kind will not be permitted, except under the rules and regulations of the building.
- **Technology** - Students who commit major violations of the school's technology rules will be subject to suspension and/or expulsion.
- **Show & Tell** - It is difficult to make a blanket policy on small items that students bring to school to show to their teacher and classmates. Students may bring those items if they serve a school purpose. However, it is the student's responsibility to bring and return these items safely. The school or teacher cannot accept responsibility for such items becoming broken or stolen. If small items become classroom nuisances, they will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school year.
- **Toys** - Students may not bring toys or other nuisance items to school including: roller skates, inline skates, skateboards, scooters, balls, bats, water pistols, and firecrackers.
- **Bicycles** - Students riding bicycles to school should park them in the area provided upon arrival. There is to be no bicycle riding on school grounds. Only 3rd - 8th students are allowed to ride bicycles to school.
- **Solicitation** - Students shall not solicit school personnel on school grounds for money making projects.
- **Communication/Electronic Devices** - Portable communications devices such as iPods, MP3 players, beepers, pagers, and handheld or cellular phones are to be turned off and placed in the student's book bag during the regular school day. If a student is found using their communication device or it is on, the matter will be addressed as follows: Communicating devices will be confiscated by staff on all occasions and turned over to the office. First occurrence—the student will not get the device back until they serve a 30-minute detention and conduct report will be filed. Second occurrence--the student will serve a 30-minute detention, conduct report will be filed, and the device will only be returned to a parent. Third occurrence—the device will only be returned to the parent and the student will be issued a suspension, length determined by cooperation. Parent will be notified by mail. Any subsequent occurrences will result in a suspension of some kind.

- **Playground** - Students will not be permitted to play on the playground the first one-half hour after school. There is no supervision on the playground except during school recess or P.E. We ask that students do not play on the lawn or in the school doorways. Students are not to leave the playground unless excused by the teacher or the playground monitor.

**Swings** - Only one student should be in a swing at one time. Standing up in the swings while swinging shall not be permitted.

**Tire Swings** - No more than 3 students in grades K-2 or 2 students in grades 3-5 can be on a tire swing at a time.

**Horizontal Ladder** - Those using this piece of equipment should be traveling in the same direction. No sitting on the top or walking on top.

**Merry-go-Round** - Stay on the merry-go-round while it is moving. Only two or three students should push the merry-go-round at one time. Sit on the floor of the merry-go-round, not on the bars while it is in motion. No standing.

**Teeter-Totter** - Only one person on a side at one time. Remain on the teeter-totter until your partner has his/her feet on the ground. No bumping.

**Slide** - Only one person at a time may go down the slide. Only one person on the ladder at a time. Wait until the person ahead of you is down and out of the way before going down. Go down feet first. Rocks and snow are not allowed on the slide.

**Play Structure** - Only one person at a time on the rings and one way traffic. Running is not permitted. Sitting on the bridge rails and walking up the slide are not permitted.

**Balls** - All balls must be returned.

**Sidewalks** - Walk on the sidewalks.

**Additional Rules** - Football or any other type of tackle game is not permitted. Games, including tag, are not allowed where children will be pulling on each other's clothing. Throwing rocks and snowballs is not permitted.

**Snow Boots** - During inclement weather, students must wear boots, or they will be required to stand on the sidewalk.

- **Lunchroom** - It is the school's desire to provide a safe and relaxing atmosphere during lunch where students can enjoy the company of their classmates; therefore, students will be orderly and refrain from inappropriate or disruptive behavior.
- **Library/Media** -
  1. Students may use the library to do reports or projects requiring library materials, to read magazines or library books. Other activities will be allowable as determined by the teacher.
  2. Books may be checked out for two weeks and may be renewed for an additional two weeks. The date on the "Date Due" slip in the book indicates the date the book must be returned or renewed. Magazines may be checked out overnight.

## 22. Network, E-Mail, Internet and Other Computer Use Rules

**Policy and Rules for Acceptable Use of Computers and the Network.** Valentine Community Schools will provide access to networked information resources for qualified individuals when such information is consistent with educational philosophy and goals of the district. The district supports research and educational use as well as collaboration with other individuals and groups. The Internet will provide a connection to this global community, promoting educational excellence.

The faculty will blend thoughtful use of network resources and the Internet throughout the curriculum, utilizing them to facilitate innovation and communication. By providing valuable electronic experiences, educators are building a community of lifelong learners. With parental and student assistance, the district will help students make good decisions regarding the use of these resources.

To ensure quality use of district networks and the Internet, the following guidelines have been established:

- **Training** Students will be required to participate in basic awareness training sessions and internet safety.
- **Network Ethics** To demonstrate politeness on the Internet and district networks, the user will abide by the generally accepted rules of network ethics.
- Users will log in and out correctly, using their own names and passwords.
- Users will not lend their network passwords or privileges to others. Users will not borrow these resources from others.
- Users will respect copyright laws.
- The following are strictly prohibited:
  - *transmission and/or storage of material that is obscene, vulgar, abusive or otherwise offensive.*
  - *harassment (persistent annoyance of another user).*
  - *attempts to access or destroy the data of another user, including but not limited to computer viruses, altering system software, and altering or deleting user files.*
- Security Students accessing the district network services must assist in maintaining a secure system. *Users of the school district network services must understand and accept the following:*
  - Confidentiality of data files cannot be guaranteed. While every effort will be made to keep information secure, users must remember that electronic information can be accessed by others.
  - Data files stored on district servers and computers are the same as other school property (i.e. lockers and desks). In the event of suspicious activities, files and messages can be opened and viewed by appropriate school personnel.
  - Addresses, phone numbers, password, or personal information that would violate user privacy or privacy of others should never be revealed.
  - Users will only attempt to access files that are available to them.
  - Users noticing a security problem or ethics problem, must notify the supervisor/administrator immediately without alerting others.
  - No personal computer disks or devices will be used without permission.
- **Enforcement of the Policy** Valentine Community Schools uses a technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access to block access to some Internet sites that are not in accordance with District policy. The technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access may be disabled by a staff member for bona fide research purposes by an adult. A staff member may override the technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access for a student access to a site with legitimate educational value that is blocked by the technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access.

- **Consequences** Internet and district network access is a privilege, not a right. It involves responsibility on the part of the user. Any user violating district rules or state or federal laws is subject to the loss of privileges or any other disciplinary options. Consequences for misuse or abuse of network services are as follows:
  - Verbal or written warning
  - Loss of privileges to use the district networks and/or the Internet
  - Loss of credit for the network related assignment
  - Referral to the administration for discipline and/or parent conference
  - Loss of computer privileges within the school district

Depending upon the severity of the situation, the disciplinary process may include combinations of these consequences. Data files or messages relating to illegal activities may involve law enforcement agencies.

The building administrator will determine the severity of the violation and issue consequences. Generally, the following will be the consequences assigned to situations of misuse or abuse.

**First Violation:**

A student shall lose access privileges to Internet and use of the technology room for 30 calendar days. After the 30 days, that student will have probationary status for the next 30 days. During this time, the system administrator may, without notice, examine files created and stored by the student.

**Second Violation:**

A student who commits a second violation shall lose technology rights for the remainder of the school year.

A student who has had district network or Internet access privileges revoked may be issued a special account where that individual may be provided district network and/or Internet access by request of the classroom teacher. These accounts will only be available while the classroom instructor is in attendance.

**Valentine Community Schools will not be responsible for financial obligations by users of the districts network or Internet systems. The district will not accept responsibility for how students use knowledge of the Internet, nor the quality of information obtained. Any damages a user may suffer, including loss of data, will not be the responsibility of the district. All users assume full liability, legal, financial, or otherwise, for their actions. Users may encounter material which is controversial. This information may be considered inappropriate or offensive by the student, parents, or staff. However, on the Internet, it is impossible to control the content of the data. It is the user's responsibility to initiate access to appropriate materials. *\*\*Parent and student signatures required indicating agreement with policy.***

**Part 3 - Reporting Student Law Violations**

- (1) Cases of law violations or suspected law violations by students will be reported to the police and to the student's parents or guardian as soon as possible.
- (2) When a Principal or other school official releases a minor student to a peace officer (e.g., police officer, sheriff, and all other persons with similar authority to make arrests) for the purpose of removing the minor from the school premises, the Principal or other school official shall take immediate steps to notify the parent, guardian, or responsible relative of the minor regarding the release of the minor to the officer and regarding the place to which the minor is reportedly being taken, except when a minor has been taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse, in which case the Principal or other school official shall provide the peace officer with the address and telephone number of the minor's parents or guardian.
- (3) In an effort to demonstrate that student behavior is always subject to possible legal sanctions re-

ardless of where the behavior occurs it shall be the policy of the Valentine Community Schools to notify the proper legal authorities when a student engages in any of the following behaviors on school grounds or at a school sponsored event:

- (a) Knowingly possessing illegal drugs or alcohol.
- (b) Assault.
- (c) Vandalism resulting in significant property damage.
- (d) Theft of school or personal property of a significant nature.
- (e) Automobile accident.
- (f) Any other behavior which significantly threatens the health or safety of students, staff or other persons or which is required by law to be reported.

#### **Part 4 - Due Process Procedure**

Procedures for Long-Term Suspension, Expulsion or Mandatory Reassignment: The following procedures shall be followed with regard to any long-term suspension, expulsion or mandatory reassignment.

1. The Principal shall prepare a written summary of the alleged violation and the evidence supporting the alleged violation with the Superintendent or his or her designee.
2. If the Principal determines that the student must be suspended immediately to prevent or substantially reduce the risk of (a) interference with an educational function or school purpose or (b) a personal injury to the student himself or herself, other students, school employees, or school volunteers, and a notice of intent to discipline the student by long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment is filed with the Superintendent or his or her designee, the student may be suspended by the Principal until the date the long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment takes effect if no hearing is requested or, if a hearing is requested, the date the hearing examiner makes the report of his or her findings and a recommendation of the action to be taken to the Superintendent.
3. The Principal or his or her designee shall serve by registered or certified mail or by personal service the student and the student's parents or guardian with a written notice within two school days of the date of the decision to recommend long-term suspension or expulsion. Said notice shall include the following:
  - (a) The rule or standard of conduct allegedly violated and the acts of the student alleged to constitute a cause for long-term suspension or expulsion including a summary of the evidence to be presented against the student as submitted by the Principal or assistant Principal.
  - (b) The penalties to which the student may be subjected and the penalty which the Principal, or his or her designee has recommended in the charge.
  - (c) A statement explaining the student's right to a hearing upon request on the specified charges.
  - (d) A description of the hearing procedures provided by these policies along with procedures for appealing any decision rendered at the hearing.
  - (e) A statement that the administrative representative, legal counsel for school, the student, the student's parents, or the student's representative or guardian shall have the right to examine the student's academic and disciplinary records and any affidavits to be used at the hearing concerning the alleged misconduct, and the right to know the identity of the witnesses to appear at the hearing and the substance of their testimony.
  - (f) A form or a request for hearing to be signed by such parties and delivered to the Principal or his or her designee in person or by registered or certified mail.

4. Nothing in this policy shall preclude the student, student's parents, guardian or representative from discussing and settling the matter with appropriate school personnel prior to the hearing stage.
5. In the event that the Principal has not received a request for hearing within five school days following receipt of the written notice, the punishment recommended in the charge by the Principal, or his or her designee shall automatically go into effect.
6. If a hearing is requested more than five school days following the actual receipt of the written notice, but not more than thirty calendar days after actual receipt, the student shall be entitled to a hearing but the punishment imposed may continue in effect pending final determination.
7. If a request for hearing is not received within thirty calendar days following the mailing or delivery of the written notice, the student shall not be entitled to a hearing.
8. In the event that a hearing is required to be provided, the Superintendent shall appoint a hearing officer.

### **Hearing Procedure:**

1. **Hearing Officer** The hearing officer shall be any person designated by the Superintendent. The hearing officer shall be an individual who has had no involvement in the charge, will not be a witness at the hearing and who has not brought the charges against the student. It shall be the duty of the hearing officer to remain impartial throughout all deliberations. The hearing officer shall be available prior to any hearing held pursuant to this policy to answer any questions the administrative representative, the student, the student's parents, or guardian, may have regarding the nature and conduct of the hearing.
2. **Administrative Representative** The Principal may appoint an administrative representative to present the facts and evidence. Such administrative representative may be an attorney or may be represented by an attorney, but any such attorney shall not advise the hearing officer or parties who may review the proceedings as their counsel.
3. **Notice of Hearing** If a hearing is requested within five school days of receipt of the notice, the hearing officer shall, within two school days after being appointed, give written notice to the administrative representative, and the student, the student's parents or guardian of the time and place for the hearing. The hearing shall be scheduled within a period of five school days after it is requested. No hearing shall be held upon less than two school days' actual notice to the administrative representative, and the student, the student's parents, or guardian, except with the consent of all of the parties.
4. **Continuance** Upon written request of the student or the student's parents or guardian, the hearing officer shall have the discretionary authority to continue from time to time the hearing. In addition, the hearing officer may continue the hearing upon any good cause.
5. **Access to Records** The administrative representative, the student, the student's parent or guardian and the legal counsel of the student shall have the right to examine the records and affidavits and the statements of any witnesses in the possession of the Valentine Community Schools' Board of Education at any reasonable time prior to the hearing.
6. **Hearing Procedure** The hearing shall be attended by the hearing officer, the student, the student's parents, or guardian, the student's representative if any, and the administrative representative. Witnesses shall be present only when they are giving information at the hearing or with the consent of both parties. The student may be excluded at the discretion of the hearing officer at times when the student's psychological evaluation or emotional problems are being discussed. The student or the student's parents or guardian or both may be represented by legal counsel. The hearing examiner may exclude anyone from the hearing when his/her actions substantially

disrupt an orderly hearing. The formal rules of evidence shall not apply at the hearing. The administrative representative shall present to the hearing officer statements, in affidavit form, of any person having information about the student's conduct and the student's records, but not unless such statements and records have been made available to the student, the student's parents, guardian or representative prior to the hearing. The information contained in such records shall be explained and interpreted prior to or at the hearing to the student, parents or guardian, or representative at their request, by appropriate school personnel. The student, the student's parents, guardian, or representative, the administrative representative or the hearing officer may ask witnesses to testify at the hearing. Such testimony shall be under oath and the hearing officer shall be authorized to administer the oath. The student, parent, guardian, or representative, administrative representative, or the hearing officer shall have the right to question any witness giving information at the hearing, the student may testify in his/her own defense in which case he/she shall be subject to cross-examination nor will any conclusion be drawn therefrom. Any person giving evidence by written statement or in person at a hearing shall be given the same immunity from liability as a person testifying in a court case. A single hearing may be conducted for more than one student if in the discretion of the hearing examiner a single hearing is not likely to result in confusion or prejudice to the interest of any of the students involved. If during the conduct of such a hearing, the hearing examiner concludes that any of such student's interests will be substantially prejudiced by a group hearing, or that confusion is resulting, the hearing examiner may order a separate hearing for each or any of said students.

7. **Availability of Witnesses** The hearing officer will have the authority to subpoena any witnesses to the hearing and shall make reasonable efforts to assist in obtaining the attendance of any witnesses requested by the student, student's parents or guardian or their legal representative.
8. **Record** The proceedings of the hearing shall be recorded at the expense of the school district.
9. **Findings** Within a reasonable time after the conclusion of the hearing, the hearing officer shall prepare and submit to the Superintendent of schools his/her written findings and recommendation as to disposition. This report shall explain, in terms of the needs of both the student and the school board, the reasons for the particular action recommended. Such recommendation may range from no action, through the entire field of counseling, to long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment.
10. **Review by Superintendent** The Superintendent of schools shall review the findings and recommendations of the hearing officer and in his/her discretion may also review any of the facts and evidence presented at the hearing and based upon such report and the facts shall determine the sanctions to be imposed. However, the Superintendent may not impose a more severe sanction than that imposed by the hearing officer.
11. **Notice of Determination** Written notice of the findings and recommendations of the hearing officer and the determination of the Superintendent of schools shall be made by certified registered mail or by personal delivery to the student, the student's parents or guardian. Upon receipt of such written notice by the student and/or parents and guardian, the determination of the Superintendent shall take immediate effect.
12. **Appeal to Board** The student, student's parents or guardian may, within seven school days following the receipt of the Superintendent's decision, submit to additional evidence, the Board of Education or committee thereof may require the hearing to receive such evidence, subject to the right of all parties to be present. A record of any such new or additional evidence shall be made and shall be considered as a part of the record and based upon the evidence presented at the hearing before the hearing officer, and such new or additional evidence, the Board of Education or the committee shall make a final disposition of the matter. The board the Superintendent of

schools a written request for a hearing before the Board of Education.

13. **Review by Board of Education** Upon receipt of the request for review of the Superintendent's determination, the Board of Education or a committee of not less than three members shall, within ten school days, hold a hearing on the matter. Such hearing shall be made on the record except that the board may admit new or additional evidence to avoid substantial threat of unfairness. Such new evidence shall be recorded. The Board of Education or committee thereof may withdraw to deliberate privately upon the record and new evidence. Any such deliberation shall be held in the presence only of board members in attendance at the appeal proceeding, but may be held in the presence of legal counsel who has not previously acted as the administrative representative in presenting the school's case before the hearing officer. If any questions arise during such deliberations which require may alter the Superintendent's disposition of the case if it finds his/her decision to be too severe, but it may not impose a more severe sanction. A designated method of Board review shall be by posting on the schoolhouse door.
14. **Final Decision of Board of Education** The final decision of board shall be delivered to the student and parents or legal guardian of the student by personally delivering the same or by mailing the same by certified or registered mail.

## ARTICLE 9 - STUDENT FEES POLICY

### Section 1 - Student Fees Policy

The following Student Fees Policy has been adopted by the Board of Education in accordance with the Nebraska Public Elementary and Secondary Student Fee Authorization Act:

The school district shall provide free instruction in accordance with the Nebraska State Constitution and the Nebraska statutes. The district also provides activities, programs, and services that extend beyond the minimum level of constitutionally required free instruction. Under the Public Elementary and Secondary Student Fee Authorization Act, the district is permitted to charge students fees for these activities or to require students to provide specialized equipment and attire for certain purposes. This policy is subject to further interpretation or guidance by administrative or board regulations. Students are encouraged to contact their building administration, their teachers or their coaches, and sponsors for further specifics.

#### A. Definitions:

1. "Students" means students, their parents, guardians or other legal representatives.
2. "Extracurricular activities" means student activities or organizations that (1) are supervised or administered by the district; (2) do not count toward graduation or advancement between grades; and (3) are not otherwise required by the district.
3. "Post-secondary education costs" means tuition and other fees associated with obtaining credit from a post-secondary educational institution.

#### B. Listing of Fees Charged by this District

1. Guidelines for Clothing Required for Specified Courses and Activities.

Students are responsible for complying with the district's grooming and attire guidelines and for furnishing all clothing required for any special programs, courses, or activities in which they participate. The teacher, coach, or sponsor of the activity will provide students with written guidelines that detail any special clothing requirements and explain why the special clothing is required for the specific program, course, or activity.

2. Safety Equipment and Attire

The district will provide students with all safety equipment and attire that is required by law. Building administrators will assure that (a) such equipment is available in the appropriate classes and areas of the school buildings (b) teachers are directed to instruct students in the use of such devices, and (c) students use the devices as required. Students are responsible for using the devices safely and as instructed.

3. Personal or Consumable Items

The district will provide students with personal or consumable items for Participation in courses and activities including, but not limited to, pencils, paper, pens, and notebooks. Students who wish to supply their own personal or consumable items may do so, as long as those items comply with the requirements of the district. The district will provide students with facilities, equipment, materials, and supplies, including books. Students are responsible for the careful and appropriate use of such property. Students will be charged for damage to school property caused by students and will be held responsible for the reasonable replacement cost of any school property that they lose, damage, or destroy.

4. Materials Required for Course Projects

The district will provide students with the materials necessary to complete All curricular projects. In courses where students produce a project that requires more than mi-

minimal cost for materials, the finished project will remain the property of the district unless the students either furnish or pay for the reasonable cost of materials required for the course project.

### **5. Extracurricular Activities**

The district may charge students a fee to participate in extracurricular Activities to cover the district's reasonable costs in offering such activities. The District may require students to furnish specialized equipment and clothing that is

Required for participation in extracurricular activities, or may charge a reasonable fee for the use of district-owned equipment or attire. The coach or sponsor will provide a list of the fees charged. The guidelines will explain the reasons that fees, equipment and/or clothing are required for participation for the activity.

The following list details the maximum dollar amount of all extracurricular activities fees and specifications for any equipment or attire required for participation in extracurricular activities:

- High School Student Activity Card                 \$25.00
- Middle School Student Activity Card             \$10.00
- National Honor Society                             \$ 5.00
- Cheerleading, Drill Team, Flag Corps           \$100.00

(Students must purchase uniforms and shoes selected by the sponsor and/or student group. The maximum dollar amount charged by the school district for these will be \$100.00)

- Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Wrestling, Track, and Cross Country – Students must provide their own shoes and undergarments.
- Golf – Students must provide their own shoes and undergarments.
- Future Farmers of America – Students must purchase their own jacket and pay dues of \$5.00.

### **6. Post-Secondary Education Costs**

Some students enroll in postsecondary courses while still enrolled in the district's high school. As a general rule, students must pay all costs associated with such post-secondary courses. However, for a course in which student received high school credit or a course being taken as a part of an accelerated or differentiated curriculum program, the district shall offer the course without charge for tuition, transportation, books or other fees. Students who chose to apply for post secondary education credit for these courses must pay tuition and all other fees associated with obtaining credits from a post secondary educational institution.

### **7. Transportation Costs**

The district will charge students reasonable fees for transportation services provided by the district to the extent permitted by federal and state statutes and regulations.

### **8. Copies of Student Files or Records**

The district will charge a fee for making copies of a student's files or records for the parents or guardians of such students. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee shall establish a schedule of student records fees. Parents of the students have the right to inspect and review the student's files or records without a payment of a fee, and the district shall not charge a fee to search for or retrieve any student's files or records.

The district will charge \$0.25 per page for reproduction of student records.

### **9. Charges for Food Consumed by Students**

The district will charge for items that students purchase from the district's breakfast and lunch programs. The fees charged for these items will be set according to applicable federal and state statutes and regulations. The district will charge students for the cost of food, beverages, and the like that student purchase from a school store, vending machine, booster club, or similar sources. Students may be required to bring money or food for field trip lunches

and similar activities.

Charges for Breakfast and Lunch are as follow:

Breakfast

High School Regular priced	\$1.40 per meal
Middle and Elementary Regular priced	\$1.40 per meal
Extra Breakfast Entrée	\$1.00 per entrée
Reduced	\$0.30 per meal

Lunch

High School Regular	\$2.55 per meal
Middle Regular priced	\$2.55 per meal
Elementary Regular priced	\$2.45 per meal
Extra Entrée	\$1.55 per entrée
Extra Branded Pizza (HS & MS only)	\$1.75 per entrée
Reduced	\$0.40 per meal

Extra 8 oz juice (MS only)	\$0.50
Extra Milk	\$0.45
Special Milk	\$0.40

**10. Charges for Musical Extra Curricular Activities**

Students who qualify for fee waivers under this policy will be provided, at not charge, the use of a musical instrument in optional courses that are not extracurricular. For musical extracurricular activities, the school district will require students to provide the following:

**Band** – Students must provide their own instrument and marching band shoes which must be white & rubber soles.

**Swing Choir** – Students must purchase outfits and shoes selected by the sponsor and/or group. The maximum dollar amount charged by the district will be \$200.00

**WAIVER POLICY**

Students who qualify for free and reduced priced lunches under United States Department of Agriculture child nutrition programs shall be provided a fee waiver or be provided the necessary materials or equipment without charge for (1) participation in extracurricular activities, (2) materials for course projects, and (3) the use of a musical instrument in optional music courses that are not extracurricular activities. Actual participation in the free or reduced price lunch program is not required to qualify for the waiver provided in this section. The district is not obligated to provide any particular type or quality of equipment or other materials to eligible students. Students who wish to be considered for waiver of a particular fee must submit a completed fee waiver application to their building administrator.

## **POLICY DISTRIBUTION**

This policy will be published in an addendum to the Student Handbook which will be provided to the student at no cost.

## **VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEFRAY COSTS**

The district will, when appropriate, request donations of money, materials, equipment or attire from parents, guardians, and other members of the community to defray costs of providing certain services and activities to students. These requests are not requirements and staff members of the district are directed to clearly communicate that fact to students, parents, and patrons.

## **STUDENT FEE FUND**

The school board hereby established a Student Fee Fund. The Student Fee Fund shall be a separate school district fund that will not be funded by tax revenue, and that will serve as a depository for all monies collected from students for (1) participation in extracurricular activities, (2) post-secondary education costs, and (3) summer school and or night courses. Monies in the Student Fee Fund shall be expended only for the purpose for which they were collected from students.

## **ARTICLE 10 - GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Section 1 - Balloon and Flower Deliveries to School**

Parents are discouraged from sending balloon and flower deliveries for students any time during the school day. However, if a delivery is received, students will leave these items with the teacher until school dismissal time at which time they may take them home with them.

### **Section 2 - Change of Address, Telephone Number, or Email Address**

Any change of mailing or physical address or email address of the student/parent or of telephone number where a parent or guardian may be reached during the day should be immediately reported to the administrative office. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian to provide the school with the name and telephone number of an emergency contact person for their child in the event that the school is unable to reach the parent(s)/guardian when a student is ill.

### **Section 3 - Enrolling In School**

Basic requirements for new student enrollment:

1. Proof of residence in the district
2. A certified copy of the student's birth certificate, or other reliable proof of the student's identity and age
3. Copy of immunization records and physical examination (see health guidelines) and vision evaluation.
4. Complete the enrollment form, including race and ethnicity. Please note that the District must report for each student.

Student records and transcripts will be requested from the student's former school by Valentine Community Schools based upon information provided by the parent/guardian of the student.

**Birth Certificate Requirements** State law requires that a certified copy of a student's birth certificate be used when enrolling a new student in school. If your child is registering with Valentine Community Schools for the first time, you may obtain this document from the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the state in which your child was born. Assistance in obtaining birth certificates may be obtained from

Health Records Management, P.O. Box 95065, Lincoln, NE 68509-5065. There is a fee per certificate. *Please note: The document parents receive from the hospital looks like a birth certificate, but it is not a certified copy. A certified copy has the raised seal of the state of Nebraska on it and is signed by the Director of Vital Statistics.*

If a birth certificate is unavailable, other reliable proof of a student's identity may be used. These documents could include naturalization or immigration documents showing date of birth or official hospital birth records, a passport, or a translation of a birth certificate from another country. The documents must be accompanied by an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate.

#### **Section 4 - Parent Involvement in the Schools**

Valentine Community Schools welcome and support parent involvement. A student's education is a joint partnership. Parents and teachers should work closely together to ensure student success. Teachers are encouraged to involve parents in some way during the school year.

#### **WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN**

- Start each day on a positive note; a calm beginning at home makes the school day much better.
- Encourage your child to have a good breakfast and lunch. Make certain that your child sleeps at least eight hours each night.
- Have a special place to put school work or whatever is brought home. Praise your child each day for something he/she has done.
- Encourage positive conversation about your child's school experiences and respect for your child's teachers. Listen attentively to what is said about your child's school day experiences.
- Stress attendance. If the child is ill, home is the best place; otherwise, your child needs to take advantage of every school day.
- Keep the lines of communication open between yourself and your child's teacher. Inform the teacher of any family situation which could influence your child's behavior. Also, if he/she is reluctant to go to school, let the teacher know so that together you can find the reason.
- Take your child to the library and encourage reading for pleasure.
- Stress organization of school notebooks, materials, etc.
- Provide pencils, glue, scissors, paper, etc. for your child to use.
- Work at home with skills taught at school.

#### **Section 5 - Student Records and Work**

**Records** School records of all enrolled pupils are confidential. No school information (grades, health data, family information, psychological information, free meal application, etc.) shall be given to any person except those directly involved in teaching the students. A written permission form from the parents is required before any records may be given to any outside persons or organizations. Nebraska School Laws will be followed concerning confidentiality of school records.

**Student Work** Valentine Community Schools may display the products or results of students' school related academic, athletic, musical, and/or art work in public places, including but not limited to school buildings and functions; public places in the community, school, local, state, and national publications, on web pages produced and operated by Valentine Community Schools, and other terms of media. Student photographs or other likenesses and names may be displayed/published to promote student recognition or community involvement. **Parents who wish to deny this authorization must notify the office in writing by September 1**

## ARTICLE 11 - STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS

### Section 1 - Notice of Nondiscrimination

Valentine Community Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, marital status, disability, or age or in admission or access to, or treatment of employment or educational programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning Valentine Community Schools' compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504 is directed to contact Superintendent Isom in writing at 431 N. Green St, Valentine, NE 69201, or by telephone at 402-376-1780. Any person may also contact the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, in writing at 8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037, Kansas City, Missouri 64114-3302 or by telephone at (816) 268-0550, regarding compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504.

### Section 2 - Designation of Coordinator(s)

Any person having inquiries concerning this district's compliance with anti-discrimination laws or policies or other programs should contact or notify the following person(s) who are designated as the coordinator for such laws, policies or programs:

Jamie S. Isom, Superintendent  
Valentine Community Schools  
431 N. Green Street  
Valentine, NE 69201  
Telephone: 402-376-1780

Law, Policy or Program	Issue or Concern	Coordinator
Title VI	Discrimination or harassment based on race, color, or national origin; harassment	Superintendent Jamie S. Isom
Title IX	Discrimination or harassment based on sex; gender equity	Superintendent Jamie S. Isom
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA)	Discrimination, harassment or reasonable accommodations of persons with disabilities	Superintendent Jamie S. Isom
Homeless student laws	Children who are homeless	Superintendent Jamie S. Isom
Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities	Safe and drug free schools	Superintendent Jamie S. Isom

Parents, employees, and students who do not feel that their complaints regarding Title IX, Title VI, and Section 504 have met with resolution at the local level, they may appeal their grievances to the regional Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. This would be their final opportunity for resolution. The address for the Office of Civil Rights in this area is

U. S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037  
Kansas City, MO 64114  
TELEPHONE: 816-268-0550  
FAX: 816-823-1404; TDD: 800-437-083

### Section 3 - Antidiscrimination and Harassment Policy

**Elimination of Discrimination** The Valentine Community Schools hereby gives this statement of compliance and intent to comply with all state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination or harassment and requiring accommodations. This school district intends to take necessary measures to assure compliance with such laws against any prohibited form of discrimination or harassment or which require accommodations.

### **Preventing Harassment and Discrimination.**

**Purpose** Valentine Community Schools is committed to offering employment and educational opportunity to its employees and students in a climate free of discrimination. Accordingly, unlawful discrimination or harassment of any kind by administrators, teachers, coworkers, students or other persons is prohibited. In addition, the Valentine Community Schools will try to protect employees and students from reported discrimination or harassment by non-employees or others in the work place and educational environment.

For purposes of this policy, discrimination or harassment based on a person's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age is prohibited. The following are general definitions of what might constitute prohibited harassment.

In general, ethnic or racial slurs or other verbal or physical conduct relating to a person's race, color, religion, disability or national origin constitute harassment when they unreasonably interfere with the person's work performance or create an intimidating work, instructional or educational environment.

Age harassment (40 years of age and higher) has been defined by federal regulations as a form of age discrimination. It can consist of demeaning jokes, insults or intimidation based on a person's age.

Sexual harassment is defined by federal and state regulations as a form of sex discrimination. It can consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature by supervisors or others in the work place, classroom or educational environment.

Sexual harassment may exist when:

- Submission to such conduct is either an explicit or implicit term and condition of employment or of participation and enjoyment of the school's programs and activities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used or threatened as a basis for employment related decisions, such as promotion, performance, evaluation, pay adjustment, discipline, work assignment, etc., or school program or activity decisions, such as admission, credits, grades, school assignments or playing time.
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, class room or educational environment.

Sexual harassment may include explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented "kidding" or "teasing", "practical jokes", jokes about gender-specific traits, foul or obscene language or gestures, displays of foul or obscene printed or visual material, and physical contact, such as patting, pinching or brushing against another's body.

### **Complaint and Grievance Procedures**

Employees or students should initially report all instances of discrimination or harassment to their immediate supervisor or classroom teacher. However, if the employee or student is uncomfortable in presenting the problem to the supervisor or teacher, or if the supervisor or teacher is the problem, the employee or student is encouraged to go to the next level of supervision. In the case of a student, the Principal would be the next or alternative person to contact.

If the employee or student's complaint is not resolved to his or her satisfaction within five (5) to ten (10) calendar days, or if the discrimination or harassment continues, or if as a student you feel you need

immediate help for any reason, please report your complaint to the Superintendent of Valentine Community Schools. If a satisfactory arrangement cannot be obtained through the Superintendent of Valentine Community Schools, the complaint may be processed to the Board of Education.

The supervisor, teacher or the Superintendent of Valentine Community Schools will thoroughly investigate all complaints. These situations will be treated with the utmost confidence, consistent with resolution of the problem. Based on the results of the investigation, appropriate corrective action, up to and including discharge of offending employees, and disciplinary action up to expulsion against a harassing student, may be taken. Under no circumstances will any threats or retaliation be permitted to be made against an employee or student for alleging in good faith a violation of this policy.

NOTE: In no way is the grievance procedure meant to lessen the legal authority of the school officials to deal with disruptive students. Rather, it is a means of inviting student communication on matters of concern to the school and its students, short of having to engage in disruptive behavior in order to be noticed and to have grievance redressed. A grievance form may be obtained at the principal's office.

#### **Section 4 - Notice to Parents of Rights Afforded by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

The following is a description of the rights granted by federal law to qualifying students with disabilities. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning the decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions. You have the right to:

1. Have your child take part in, and receive benefits from, public education programs without discrimination because of his/her disabling condition.
2. Have the school district advise you of your rights under federal law.
3. Receive notice with respect to Section 504 identification, evaluation and/or placement of your child.
4. Have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate. It also includes the right to have the school district make reasonable accommodations to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities.
5. Have your child educated in facilities and receive services which are comparable to those provided to nondisabled students.
6. Have your child receive exceptional education and related services if he/she is found to be eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 USC Chapter 33, PL 101-4761).
7. Have an evaluation, educational recommendation and placement decision developed by a team of persons who are knowledgeable of the student, the assessment data and any placement options.
8. Have transportation provided to and from an alternative placement setting (if the setting is a program not operated by the district) at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student were placed in a program operated by the district.
9. Have your child be given an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the district.
10. Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's Section 504 identification, evaluation educational program and placement.
11. Obtain copies of educational records at a reasonable cost unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records.
12. Obtain a response from the school district to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of your child's records.

13. Request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe that they are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child. If the school district refuses this request for amendment, it shall notify you of your right to an impartial hearing.
14. Request mediation or file a grievance in accordance with the school district's Section 504 grievance procedures.
15. Request an impartial hearing regarding the Section 504 identification, evaluation or placement of your child. You and the student may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you.
16. File a formal complaint with the U.S. Department of Education.

### **Section 5 - Notification of Rights Under FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school district to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the district discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
 U.S. Department of Education  
 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.

## **NOTICE CONCERNING DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The district may disclose directory information. The types of personally identifiable information that the district has designated as directory information are as follows: student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date of and place of birth, major fields of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status (e.g., undergraduate or graduate, full-time or part-time), participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and most recent previous educational agency or institution attended. A parent or eligible student has the right to refuse to let the district designate any or all of those types of information about the student as directory information. The period of time within which a parent or eligible student has to notify the district in writing that he or she does not want any or all of those types of information about the student designated as directory information is as follows: two weeks from the time this information is first received. The district may disclose information about former students without meeting the conditions in this section.

## **ADDITIONAL NOTICE CONCERNING DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The district's policy is for education records to be kept confidential except as permitted by the FERPA law, and the district does not approve any practice which involves an unauthorized disclosure of education records. In some courses student work may be displayed or made available to others. Also, some teachers may have persons other than the teacher or school staff, such as volunteers or fellow students, assist with the task of grading student work and returning graded work to students. The district does not either approve or disapprove such teaching practices, and designates such student work as directory information and as non-education records. Each parent and eligible student shall be presumed to have accepted this designation in the absence of the parent or eligible student giving notification to the district in writing in the manner set forth above pertaining to the designation of directory information. Consent will be presumed to have been given in the absence of such a notification from the parent or eligible student.

### **Section 6 - Notice Concerning Disclosure of Student Recruiting Information**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires Valentine Community Schools to provide military recruiters and institutions of higher education access to secondary school students' names, addresses, and telephone listings. Parents and secondary students have the right to request that Valentine Community Schools not provide this information (i.e., not provide the student's name, address, and telephone listing) to military recruiters or institutions of higher education, without their prior written parental consent. Valentine Community Schools will comply with any such request.

### **Section 7 - Notice Concerning Staff Qualifications**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 gives parents/guardians the right to get information about the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers. Upon request, Valentine Community Schools will give parents/guardians the following information about their child's classroom teacher:

1. Whether the teacher has met State qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
2. Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or provisional teaching certificate.
3. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher. You may also get information about other graduate certification or degrees held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree. We will also, upon request, tell parents/guardians whether their child is being provided services by a paraprofessional and, if so, the qualifications of the paraprofessional. The request for information should be made to an administrator in your child's school building. The information will be provided to you in a timely manner. Finally, Valentine Community Schools will give

timely notice to you if your child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet the requirements of the Act.

## **Section 8 - Student Privacy Protection Policy**

It is the policy of Valentine Community Schools to develop and implement policies which protect the privacy of students in accordance with applicable laws. The District's policies in this regard include the following:

**Right of Parents to Inspect Surveys Funded or Administered by the United States Department of Education or Third Parties** Parents shall have the right to inspect, upon the parent's request, a survey created by and administered by either the United States Department of Education or a third party (a group or person other than the District) before the survey is administered or distributed by the school to the parent's child.

**Protection of Student Privacy in Regard to Surveys of Matters Deemed to be Sensitive** The District will require, for any survey of students which contain one or more matters deemed to be sensitive (see section headed "Definition of Surveys of Matters Deemed to be Sensitive"), that suitable arrangements be made to protect student privacy (that is, the name or other identifying information about a particular student). For such surveys, the District will also follow the procedures set forth in the section entitled: "Notification of and Right to Opt Out of Specific Events."

**Right of Parents to Inspect Instructional Materials** Parents shall have the right to inspect, upon reasonable request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for their child. Reasonable requests for inspection of instructional materials shall be granted within a reasonable period of time after the request is received. Parents shall not have the right to access academic tests or academic assessments, as such are not within the meaning of the term "instructional materials" for purposes of this policy. The procedures for making and granting a request to inspect instructional materials are as follows: the parent shall make the request, with reasonable specificity, directly to the building principal. The building principal, within five (5) school days, shall consult with the teacher or other educator responsible for the curriculum materials. In the event the request can be accommodated, the building principal shall make the materials available for inspection or review by the parent, at such reasonable times and place as will not interfere with the educator's intended use of the materials. In the event there is a question as to the nature of the curriculum materials requested or as to whether the materials are required to be provided, the building principal shall notify the parent of such concern, and assist the parent with forming a request which can reasonably be accommodated. If the parent does not formulate such a request, and continues to desire certain curriculum materials, the parent shall be asked to make their request to the Superintendent.

**Rights of Parents to be Notified of and to Opt Out of Certain Physical Examinations or Screenings** The general policy and practice of the District is to not administer physical examinations or screenings of students which require advance notice or parental opt-out rights under the applicable federal laws, for the reason that the physical examinations or screenings to be conducted by the District will usually fit into one of the following exceptions: (1) hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings; (2) physical examinations or screenings that are permitted or required by an applicable State law; and (3) surveys administered to students in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. For physical examinations or screenings which do not fit into the applicable exceptions, the District will follow the procedures set forth in the section entitled: "Notification of and Right to Opt Out of Specific Events."

**Protection of Student Privacy in Regard to Personal Information Collected from Students** The general policy and practice of the District is to not engage in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information. The District will make reasonable arrangements to protect student privacy to the extent possible in the

event of any such collection, disclosure, or use of personal information. “Personal information” for purposes of this policy means individually identifiable information about a student including: (1) a student or parent’s first and last name, (2) home address, (3) telephone number, and (4) social security number. The term “personal information,” for purposes of this policy, does not include information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions. This exception includes the following examples: (i) college or post secondary education recruitment, or military recruitment; (ii) book clubs, magazines, and programs providing access to low-cost literary products; (iii) curriculum and instructional materials used by elementary schools and secondary schools; (iv) tests and assessments used by elementary schools and secondary schools to provide cognitive, evaluative, diagnostic, clinical, aptitude, or achievement information about student, or to generate other statistically useful data for the purpose of securing such tests and assessments, and the subsequent analysis and public release of the aggregate data from such tests and assessments; (v) the sale by student of products or services to raise funds for school-related or education-related activities; (vi) student recognition programs.

**Parental Access to Instruments used in the Collection of Personal Information** While the general practice of the District is to not engage in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information, parents shall have the right to inspect, upon reasonable request, any instrument which may be administered or distributed to a student for such purposes. Reasonable requests for inspection shall be granted within a reasonable period of time after the request is received. The procedures for making and granting such a request are as follows: the parent shall make the request, with reasonable specificity, directly to the building principal and shall identify the specific act and the school staff member or program responsible for the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information from students for the purpose of marketing that information. The building principal, within five (5) school days, shall consult with the school staff member or person responsible for the program which has been reported by the parent to be responsible for the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information from students. In the event such collection, disclosure, or use of personal information is occurring or there is a plan for such to occur, the building principal shall consult with the Superintendent for determination of whether the action shall be allowed to continue. If not, the instrument for the collection of personal information shall not be given to any students. If it is to be allowed, such instrument shall be provided to the requesting parent as soon as such instrument can be reasonably obtained.

**Annual Parental Notification of Student Privacy Protection Policy** The District shall provide parents with reasonable notice of the adoption or continued use of this policy and other policies related to student privacy. Such notice shall be given to parents of students enrolled in the District at least annually, at the beginning of the school year, and within a reasonable period of time after any substantive change in such policies.

**Notification to Parents of Dates of and Right to Opt Out of Specific Events** The District shall directly notify the parents of the affected children, at least annually at the beginning of the school year, of the specific or approximate dates during the school year when any of the following activities are scheduled, or are expected to be scheduled:

The collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information. (Note: the general practice of the District is to not engage in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information).

Surveys of students involving one or more matters deemed to be sensitive in accordance with the law and this policy; and,

Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is required as a condition of attendance; administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance; and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student or of other students. (Note: the general practice of the District is to not engage in physical examinations or screenings which require advance notice, for the reason that the physical examinations or screenings to be conducted by the District will usually fit into one of the following exceptions to the advance notice requirement and parental opt-out right: (1) hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings; (2) physical examinations or screenings that are permitted or required by an applicable State law, and (3) surveys administered to students in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ).

Parents shall be offered an opportunity in advance to opt their child out of participation in any of the above listed activities.

In the case of a student of an appropriate age (that is, a student who has reached the age of 18, or a legally emancipated student), the notice and opt-out right shall belong to the student.

**Definition of Surveys of Matters Deemed to be Sensitive** Any survey containing one or more of the following matters shall be deemed to be “sensitive” for purposes of this policy:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s parent;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the student has close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the students or the student’s parent;
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

## **Section 9 - Parental Involvement Policies**

### **A. General - Parental/Community Involvement in Schools:**

Valentine Community Schools welcomes parental involvement in the education of their children. We recognize that parental involvement increases student success. It is Valentine Community Schools’ policy to foster and facilitate, to the extent appropriate and in their primary language, parental information about, and involvement in, the education of their children. Policies and regulations are established to protect the emotional, physical and social well-being of all students.

1. Parental involvement is a part of the ongoing and timely planning, review and improvement of district and building programs.
2. Parents are encouraged to support the implementation of district policies and regulations.
3. Parents are encouraged to monitor their student’s progress by reviewing quarterly report cards and attending parent-teacher conferences.
4. Textbooks, tests and other curriculum materials used in the district are available for review by parents upon request.
5. Parents are provided access to records of students according to law and school policy.
6. Parents are encouraged to attend courses, assemblies, counseling sessions and other instructional activities with prior approval of the proper teacher or counselor and administrator. Parents’ continued attendance at such activities will be based on the students’ well-being.
7. Testing occurs in this school district as determined to be appropriate by district staff to assure proper measurement of educational progress and achievement.
8. Parents submitting written requests to have their student excused from testing, classroom instruction and other school experiences will be granted that request when possible and educationally

appropriate. Requests should be submitted to the proper teacher or administrator within a reasonable time prior to the testing, classroom instruction or other school experience and should be accompanied by a written explanation for the request. A plan for an acceptable alternative shall be approved by the proper teacher and administrator prior to, or as a part of, the granting of any parent request.

9. Participation in surveys of students occurs in this district when determined appropriate by district staff for educational purposes. Parents will be notified prior to the administration of surveys in accordance with district policy. Timely written parental requests to remove students from such surveys will be granted in accordance with district policy and law. In some cases, parental permission must be given before the survey is administered.
10. Parents are invited to express their concerns, share their ideas and advocate for their children's education with board members, administrators and staff.
11. School district staff and parents will participate in an annual evaluation and revision, if needed, of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy.

#### **B. Title I Parental Involvement Policy:**

This Title I Parental Involvement Policy is established in compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Valentine Community Schools has a parental involvement policy applicable to parents of all children. The parental involvement policy applicable to parents of all children is not replaced by this Title I Parental Involvement Policy and shall continue to be applicable to all parents, including parents participating in Title I programs.

It is the policy of Valentine Community Schools to implement programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in Title I programs consistent with the Title I laws. Such programs, activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.

**Expectations for Parental Involvement** It is the expectation of Valentine Community Schools that parents of participating children will have opportunities available for parental involvement in the programs, activities, and procedures of the District's Title I program. The term "parental involvement" means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring – (A) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; (B) that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; (C) that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and (D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in this parental involvement policy. The District intends to meet this expectation through the following activities:

1. Involving parents in the joint development of the District's Title I plan and the processes of school review and school improvement.
2. Providing coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance.
3. Building the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement.
4. Coordinating and integrating parental involvement strategies under Title I with parental involvement strategies under other programs.
5. Conducting, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under the Title I program, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in Title I programs, with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic mi-

nority background, and use the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parental involvement policies of the District.

6. Involving parents in the activities of the schools served under Title I Policy Involvement: Each school served under the Title I program shall:
  - a. Convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation under the Title I program and to explain the requirements of the Title I program.
  - b. Offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening. If sufficient funds are provided for this purpose, the District may assist parental involvement in such meetings by offering transportation, child care, or home visits.
  - c. Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs.
  - d. Provide parents of participating children: (1) timely information about programs under Title I, (2) a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet; and (3) if requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.
  - e. If the District operates a school wide program under Title I and such plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parental comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the District.

**Shared Responsibilities for High Student Academic Achievement** As a component of the District's parental involvement policy, each school served under the Title I program shall jointly develop with parents for all children served under the Title I program a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the school, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards. Such compact shall: (1) describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under Title I to meet the State's student academic achievement standards and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time; and (2) address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum: (i) parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement; (ii) frequent reports to parents on their children's progress; and (iii) reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities.

**Building Capacity for Involvement** To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the District, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, each school participating in the Title I program and the District: (1) shall provide assistance to participating parents, as appropriate, in understanding such topics as the State's academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, State and local academic assessments, the requirements of Title I and how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children; (2) shall provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement; (3) shall educate teachers, student service personnel, principals, and other

staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school; (4) shall, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, the Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teacher Program, and public preschool and other programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children; (5) shall ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format, and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand; (6) may involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training; (7) may provide necessary literacy training from funds received under Title I if the District has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training; (8) may pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions; (9) may train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents; (10) may arrange school meetings at a variety of times, or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school, in order to maximize parental involvement and participation; (11) may adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement; (12) may establish a district-wide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in programs supported under Title I; (13) may develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities; and (14) shall provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under Title I as parents may request.

**Accessibility** In carrying out the parental involvement activities for this Title I Parental Involvement policy, the District shall provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under Title I in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand.

**Use, Distribution, and Updating of this Policy** This Title I Parental Involvement Policy shall be incorporated into the District's Title I plan, shall be distributed to parents of participating children, shall be made available to the local community, and shall be updated periodically to meet the changing needs of the parents and the school.

### **Section 10 - Homeless Students Policy**

Homeless children for purposes of this Policy generally include children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, as further defined by applicable federal and state law.

**No Stigmatization or Segregation of Homeless Students** It is the District's policy and practice to ensure that homeless children are not stigmatized or segregated by the District on the basis of their status as homeless.

**Homeless Coordinator** The Superintendent shall serve as the District's designated Homeless Coordinator. The Homeless Coordinator shall serve as the school liaison for homeless children and youth and shall ensure that: (1) homeless children are identified by school personnel; (2) homeless children enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, school; (3) homeless children and their families receive educational service for which they are eligible and referrals to health, dental, and mental health services and other appropriate services; (4) the parents or guardians of homeless children are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children; (5) public notice of the educational rights of

homeless children is disseminated where such children receive services under the federal homeless children laws, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens; (6) enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law; and (7) the parents or guardians of homeless children, and any unaccompanied youth, are fully informed of transportation services available under law. The Homeless Coordinator shall coordinate with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provisions of education and related services to homeless children. The Homeless Coordinator may designate duties here under as the Homeless Coordinator determines to be appropriate.

The process to resolve disputes concerning the enrollment or placement of a homeless child is as follows:

1. The homeless child and the parent, guardian or other person having legal or actual charge or control of the homeless child shall be referred to the Homeless Coordinator. The Homeless Coordinator shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. The dispute resolution process is as follows:
  - a. The homeless child and parent/guardian will submit a written dispute statement to the Homeless Coordinator. The District's Dispute Resolution Form shall be used if such is available.
  - b. When it is determined that additional information would be helpful, the Homeless Coordinator will schedule a meeting within 10 days, or such time as practicable, at which time the homeless child and parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to provide information in support of their position.
  - c. The Homeless Coordinator will contact school officials and others as determined appropriate to obtain information to corroborate the information provided in support of the positions of the homeless child and parent/guardian and the District.
  - d. The Homeless Coordinator will provide a written response and explanation of a decision regarding the dispute within 30 calendar days after receiving the dispute statement.
  - e. The written response and explanation of the decision will include a notice of the right to appeal using the appeal process provided for in the Nebraska Department of Education Rule 19.
2. In the event of an enrollment dispute, the homeless child's placement shall be at the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute in accordance with the dispute resolution process. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

**Enrollment of and Services to Homeless Children** A homeless child shall be enrolled in compliance with law and be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school in which the homeless child has been placed. Placement of a homeless child is determined based on the child's "school of origin" and the "best interests" of the child. The "school of origin" means the school that the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled. Placement decisions shall be made according to the District's determination of the child's best interests, and shall be at either: (1) the child's school of origin for the duration of the child's homelessness (or, if the child becomes permanently housed during the school year, for the remainder of that school year) or (2) the school of the attendance area where the child is actually living. To the extent feasible, the placement shall be in the school of origin, except when such is contrary to the wishes of the homeless child's parent or legal guardian. If the placement is not in the school of origin or a school requested by the

homeless child's parent or legal guardian, the District shall provide a written explanation of the placement decision and a statement of appeal rights to the parent or guardian. If the homeless child is an unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Coordinator shall assist in the placement decision, consider the views of the unaccompanied youth, and provide the unaccompanied youth with notice of the right to appeal. In the event of an enrollment dispute, the placement shall be at the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute in accordance with the dispute resolution process. The homeless child shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which the District has determined to place the child, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation. The District shall immediately contact the school last attended by the homeless child to obtain relevant academic and other records. If the homeless child needs to obtain immunizations or medical records, the District shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the homeless child to the Homeless Coordinator, who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations or medical records. The District may nonetheless require the parent or guardian of the homeless child to submit contact information.

Transportation will be provided to homeless students, to the extent required by law and comparable to that provided to students who are not homeless, upon request of the parent or guardian of the homeless child, or by the Homeless Coordinator in the case of an unaccompanied youth, as follows: (1) if the homeless child's school of origin is in the Valentine Community Schools, and the homeless child continues to live in the Valentine Community Schools' District, transportation to and from the school or origin shall be provided by Valentine Community Schools; and (2) if the homeless child lives in a school other than the Valentine Community Schools, but continues to attend the Valentine Community Schools based on it being the school of origin, the new school and the Valentine Community Schools shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin and, if they are unable to agree, the responsibility and cost for transportation shall be shared equally.

#### **Section 11 - Annual Notification of Asbestos Management Plan Availability**

Federal regulations require all schools to inventory asbestos containing materials and develop management plans to identify and control asbestos containing materials in their buildings.

The presence of asbestos in a building does not mean that the health of building occupants is necessarily endangered. As long as asbestos containing material remains in good condition and is not disturbed, exposure is unlikely.

The plan is available for review in the school administrative office during normal business hours.

At least once each six months periodic surveillance is being conducted on all asbestos containing material and suspect material assumed to contain asbestos.

A reinspection is being conducted every three years in all schools that have asbestos containing material.

From time to time operations and maintenance activities may be conducted to maintain all material in good condition.

For more information please contact: Robert Krepel Jr, ESU #8, Box 89, Neligh, NE 68756. Phone (402) 887-5041.

#### **WAIVER OF PHYSICAL EXAMINATION/VISUAL EVALUATION REQUIREMENT**

To Parent or Guardian: Please complete and return to the school office as soon as possible if you wish to have your child waived from these requirements as allowed by Nebraska law.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer not to have my student have the following required examination(s) done:

\_\_\_\_\_ Physical examination by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or advance nurse practitioner within six months prior to school entry (applies to seventh grade and out-of-state transfers regardless of grade).

\_\_\_\_\_ Visual evaluation by a licensed physician, physician assistant, advance nurse practitioner, or vision professional (optometrist or ophthalmologist) within six months prior to school entry (applies to out-of-state transfer, any grade)

SIGNATURE OF  
PARENT OR GUARDIAN \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**RECEIPT OF 2011-2012 PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
**Valentine Community Schools**

**RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK:** *"I, the undersigned parent, acknowledge receipt of the 2011-12 Parent-Student Handbook of the Valentine Community Schools. I understand that the handbook contains student conduct and discipline rules. The undersigned student agrees to follow such conduct and discipline rules. Furthermore, I understand the District's policies of non-discrimination and equity, and that specific complaint and grievance procedures exist in the handbook which should be used in responding to harassment or discrimination."*

**INTERNET USE:** *"I, the undersigned parent,  DO,  DO NOT (check one) give my child(ren) permission to use the internet at school in a supervised setting, and furthermore acknowledge the consequences outlined in the handbook for improper use of the computer."*

**DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS STATEMENT:** *"I, the undersigned parent of a student attending a district of the Valentine Community Schools, have received notice of this district's standards of conduct expected of students concerning the absolute prohibition against the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol on school premises or as part of any of the school's activities as described in Board policy or administrative regulation. This notice is being provided pursuant to the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Law and 34 C.F.R. Part 86, both federal legal requirements for the district to obtain federal financial assistance. My signature on this receipt acknowledges that I and my child or children who are students attending this district fully understand the District's position absolutely prohibiting the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and the possession, use or distribution of alcohol or tobacco on school premises or as part of the school's activities as herein described and that compliance with these standards is mandatory. Any non-compliance with these standards can and will result in punitive measures being taken against any student failing to comply with these standards."*

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature

Parent or Legal Guardian's Signature

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature

Please return within 1 week to your child's teacher.