

**Norway-Vulcan Area Schools
Staff Handbook
2019-2020**



Forward

District Mission: **The Mission of Norway-Vulcan Area Schools is to create a learning environment where all students can reach their potential.**

While our Mission Statement is simple, it was derived with much thought. The team that created the statement wanted something that was clear, inclusive of all students, to the point, and focused on what our mission is. Our mission statement makes clear that we are an organization whose primary function is to provide the education necessary for optimal success following graduation.

The function of this handbook is to provide resources for staff members regarding the many, many strands that contribute to student learning, student well-being, and student success. This handbook also contains references for staff members regarding staff procedures and staff functions.

Is it inclusive of every situation any of us might face? Hardly. Our profession has long ago taught me that, though I've been around for a while now, I've not seen everything under the sun. It never fails that, pretty much annually, something happens that neither I, nor anyone else on our staff has dealt with before.

Communication is the key to successfully navigating any school year. From our newest to our most experienced staff members, each of us may find ourselves unexpectedly confronting the unfamiliar. I encourage you to communicate when you find yourself in doubt about what to do. The best way of avoiding unwanted complications is to confront and communicate about them at their earliest onset.

This District Handbook is intended to help with items that apply across our Norway-Vulcan Area Schools. Specific building guidelines and procedures can additionally be obtained from their respective building offices and administrators.

Thank you for all you do for Norway-Vulcan Area Schools students and families. When one endeavors to sit down and write all of the things that school staff do, it quickly becomes apparent that our roles in children's lives are hugely important and of large responsibility. While the home is the first influence on a child, schools are likely a not-too-distant second. There will no doubt be days and students that will test us; there will also be times of the gratification of seeing a student "get it" after struggling with a task, or in seeing a student faced with challenges rise above them as well as many other rewarding moments.

To reflect back then upon the District mission statement, our roles are complex, important, influential, meaningful and challenging. You are an important piece in the lives of children. Your efforts on their behalf are deservedly, much appreciated!

One final note before moving on--this version of our Handbook has been written with an eye on the fact that we are at a point in the District's history when we are seeing a large turnover in staffing. This is why, where appropriate, I've included a narrative about the

philosophy and reasons behind some of the topics herein. Hopefully this will help folks new to our District better understand our history while experienced staff members grant a bit of patience and bear with the narrative.

Who's Who?

The most important thing in knowing whom to ask what is to know what their general responsibilities are. For a list of specific names and extensions, please see the Staff Directory at the end of the Handbook.

Teachers: While grades, curriculum, standards and expectations certainly vary based upon the aforementioned, generally speaking teachers are responsible for day to day lesson planning, student safety, organization, structure, delivery, and assessment of appropriately specific learning objectives in their classes and classrooms. Teachers are also the primary line of communication between students and the home in regard to student academic progress and behavior. Teachers also have additional responsibilities including, but not limited to, reporting attendance, abiding by state laws, rules and regulations as well as abiding by specific district policies, guidelines, and contractual obligations.

Support Staff: Support staff have varied assignments ranging from classroom aid, maintenance, custodial, food service, secretarial, transportation and other potential responsibilities. Because of the variety of responsibilities covered by support staff, it is not reasonable to list them all here. Support staff are an essential part of our education team whose service in a myriad of roles help to make student success possible. Like all District employees, they share responsibility for student safety and conduct.

Counseling and Social Worker: It is a grand oversimplification, but our counselor and social worker are here to help our students with emotional and life needs that are not handled in the course of a regular classroom. These needs certainly range from mild to more concerning and may require the counselor or social worker to collaborate with teachers, administrators, parents, and outside support and even legal agencies. Our social worker and counselor can be an important resource for teaching, support, and administrative staff in understanding and responding to behavioral needs that may need to be met in the day to day function involving particular students. While all staff members are required reporters (more on this later), the counselor or social worker may be helpful to staff should they have questions as to what is required to be reported to an outside agency and as to how to make such a report.

Counseling is also charged with helping students navigate the possibilities of what they will do upon graduation. To this end the counselor may help with career and college planning, applying to post-high school experiences, and the planning of trips and meetings with colleges, recruiters and companies with opportunities for NVAS students.

Building Administrators: Building administrators are responsible for the day-to-day function of the building(s) and responsibilities assigned to them. Administrators are responsible for the creation of a daily schedule and the assignment of any staff responsible to carry out said schedule. Additionally, they are responsible for the

evaluation of staff, and should need arise, for carrying out corrective action should need arise in the realm of staff function. Building administrators collaborate with teachers, parents, and other concerned staff and/or agencies in cases involving student conduct and are responsible for determining appropriate responses to student behaviors. They are the primary communication point for questions specific to their assigned grades and the first in the chain of command should an assigned staff member have a question about how to handle specific needs, responsibilities and questions.

Each building has an assigned budget over which the appropriate administrator has responsibility for. As with any of our roles in our district, it is not reasonable to expect a list of all possible responsibilities a building administrator may have. As I indicated in the forward to this handbook, communication is key! If you have a question about what to do, the appropriate building administrator is often the first resource to turn to.

Technology and Technology Director: NVAS is very proud of the abundant technological resources available to staff and students. Because tech evolves constantly, the Tech Director is responsible for keeping up with and updating District technology. Questions regarding technology should be directed to the Tech Director. The Tech Director's office is in the High School main office.

Maintenance/Custodial Director: Our maintenance/custodial Director is in charge of assigning the staff under his direction to their various tasks. If you have a question or problem that is of a maintenance/custodial nature, questions should be directed to our Director. Again, because our district is small, our Director tends to be at various places on our campus attending to needs. A message can be left in the Board Office for the Director.

Food Service: Our Middle School gymnasium also serves as our cafeteria on school days. The Head Cook's office is located in the kitchen area of the Middle School gym. For specific cafeteria procedures, see guidelines specific to your school.

Business Office: NVAS is part of a business consortium within our Intermediate School District. Our Business Manager's main office is at Woodland School in the Breitung Township district. She is also normally here in the mornings on Mondays. Our business office is responsible for payroll, budgets, and the other financial needs of the District. Questions about payroll should be directed to the Business Office.

Board Office: The District's Executive Secretary and the Superintendent are located in the Board Office, which is located in the middle of our building near the Media Center and Middle School Gym. Personnel records, hiring, budgeting information, Board information, and curriculum all flow through the Board office at one level or another. Student IDs, building keys, and Food Service also run through the Board office via the Executive Secretary. For District level information, the Executive Secretary is a fine place to start a question with.

Executive Secretary: In addition to serving as the Board and Superintendent secretary, the executive secretary also handles lunch IDs, free and reduced lunch applications, bank deposits, and keys for district facilities.

Superintendent: The Superintendent is responsible for communication with Board members and for the day-to-day function of the District as a whole. The Superintendent determines how various duties are delegated and carried out and sees that Board Policies and Guidelines are followed. The Superintendent is responsible for overseeing the District budget as approved by the Board.

Personnel and Human Resources fall directly under the Superintendent's responsibilities. The Superintendent recommends candidates to the Board for hiring. In the case of serious discipline matters involving staff or students, the Superintendent is involved in determining courses of action and potential Board recommendations as well.

The Superintendent is also responsible for communication outside the District with various local and state agencies and is responsible for communication with the media in cases involving Board, legal, or controversial matters.

Because our District is not large, the Superintendent may also be involved in filling in for administrators when they are absent.

Chain of Command

NVAS follows and adheres to a clear chain of command that runs from the classroom to the Board Office. Classroom level concerns will first be referred to the responsible teacher or other responsible staff member. Normal chain of command would expect that a question about a classroom matter to a principal or to the superintendent would first be referred back to the teacher. This is done in order to make it clear that the teacher is the authority in the classroom. Most concerns are often taken care of with communication between the classroom and the home.

The second step in the chain of command is the principal of their respective buildings. A principal may become involved in student behavior if efforts in the classroom have not been productive and/or in cases where the behavior in question is of such a nature that removal from the classroom is necessary. A principal may also conduct meetings with teachers and parents with the hope of making the classroom a productive place for the student.

Principals are also the first step for staff in matters of concern about procedures, policies, and school rules. As mentioned before, principals also have responsibility for their building budgets and decisions based on those budgets. Principals are also normally the link in the chain of command between the building and the superintendent's office as well.

The superintendent follows building principals in the chain of command. Discipline of a nature that cannot be resolved at the building level may move to the superintendent's office. For students this may mean that a recommendation for a long term suspension or expulsion may be made from the superintendent's office to the Board. For staff this may mean that discipline stronger than a written reprimand is in order and, in serious cases, Board involvement may be necessary.

The Board only becomes involved in student or staff discipline matters of a serious nature. The superintendent is responsible for informing and advising the Board in matters that are of a Board level in this aspect of the chain of command.

All of the above about chain of command may lead you to wonder why it is so important that the chain be followed. In having worked in environments where the chain of command was clear and followed as well as in environments where it was not, I have learned that having this clear structure provides the best support for each District employee in their respective roles. When the chain of command becomes inconsistent or unclear, confusion may reign.

Maintaining this structure also provides the support each of us needs to be certain that the proper steps and procedures were followed. Imagine if, upon hearing a complaint about a particular classroom, an administrator made decisions about what to do based solely on said complaint. If this happens the teacher's role in the classroom becomes undermined by the administrator and the administrator then becomes the de facto authority figure in that classroom. Important also in this example would be that the teacher has been kept entirely out of the loop in terms of her/his own classroom.

Instead, when a concern is brought to an administrator, the first response should be to ask if the complainant has spoken with the teacher first. Experience has taught me that what a child says happened in a classroom and what actually happened may be quite different. Very often this can be settled with a conversation between the teacher and the relevant parent or guardian. Maintaining this chain of command helps to provide staff members with the support they need from one another. It also helps to prevent any of us being blindsided by a particular topic. Remember, communication is key!

School Board

What then are the roles and responsibilities of the School Board and of individual Board members? Broadly stated, the purpose of the Board of Education is defined in its Policies and Bylaws as, "The Board of Education exists for the purpose of providing a system of free, public education for children in grades K-12."

That's pretty broad and the full duties and actions of the Board may be found in our Board Policies and Bylaws which is available online at: <http://www.neola.com/norwayvulcan-mi/>. School Boards accept the responsibility for overseeing the public education system in their local districts while at the same time recognizing that ultimate authority rests with the State. School Boards then operate under that State granted authority. I'll stick to the basics of what a Board does and the actions a Board undertakes that are of the most frequent effect in our schools.

A Board is a group of locally elected members who collectively serve as the supervising authority of the District. As with our local, state, and federal governments, the Board speaks through its collective action via the majority vote of its members. Most easily this can be remembered as, "The Board speaks through its votes." While Board members

have unique and individual thoughts and voices, the Board operates as a whole via voting at public sessions.

The actions that School Boards take that are most frequent and apparent include, determining District Bylaws and Policies; reviewing budget reports and determining action based upon the overall financial health of the District; receiving recommendations for hiring from the Superintendent and taking action on the same; receiving recommendations from the Superintendent regarding disciplinary matters and taking action on the same; approving curriculum adoptions and assuring that State curriculums are followed; hearing about the academic progress of the District and making decisions based upon the same; and hiring and evaluating the superintendent. This is by no means an all inclusive list!

In cases where a matter rises to being of Board concern, the Board is a part of the chain of command as well. In such matters the Board is the final local link in the chain.

Board Policy directs that communication between employees and the Board goes through the Superintendent. While employees may know individual Board members socially, or even as family, employees and Board members are not allowed to discuss Board business, Board relationships, or other matters of Board concern or potential action. Discussing one's hopes for a successful season for the basketball team is fine. Discussing one's thoughts or feelings regarding District policy, administrative decisions, evaluations, other staff members, budget thoughts or recommendations, or student matters is prohibited. In short, if in doubt, don't discuss it. Questions regarding this should be brought to the Superintendent.

Students and Employee/Student Relationships

There are a number of items to bear in mind in regard to students and our professional relationships with students. I have had to be involved in instances where an employee stepped over the line between professional conduct and proper employee/student relationships. It is my sincere wish to never have to be involved in such matters again. All District employees must constantly bear in mind that they are legal adults with specific responsibilities and expected behaviors in regard to our students. This is true of all students, including any who may be of legal adult age.

We should all bear in mind, all the time that our clients are, insofar as the law is concerned for District staff, all children. The District will maintain this point of view as well. District employees having any questions about proper behavior and students, would be best to ask an administrator prior to making any unfortunate decisions.

Our main role in students' lives is to help them attain their highest potential academically and personally. When it comes to students' social lives, we may be club sponsors, coaches, chaperones, and other supervisory roles, but we are always the professional and the adult in the room, on the playground, in the athletic venue, etc. District employees serving our students in any manner are expected to maintain the highest degree of professionalism and conduct and to follow all rules, policies, administrative guidelines, and laws of local, State and Federal governments.

“I thought we were friends”

Many of us have heard this utterance from a student at some time or another. Students and staff members are not friends. While all staff members are expected to be friendly, approachable, and courteous toward our students, we are not their friends.

If it helps, here is what I told students who confused what our relationship was, “I appreciate that you feel that I am important to you. You are important to me too. However, it is my job to assess your progress in my class, give you a grade based upon my assessment, give you a citizenship score, and report any concerns I have about you to your parents and/or administrators and outside agencies if need be. I promise you that I will do all of these things, whether you would like me to or not, because that is my job. Are your friends responsible for these things and would you want them to be?” I never had a student tell me that they wanted a friend who would carry out each of those roles.

Electronic Communication and Social Media

While electronic communication and social media may be a part of a teacher’s toolkit, staff are strongly cautioned to make certain that all electronic communication takes place on classroom sites and that it pertain only to school, educational matters. Staff are warned not to “friend” students for social, non-school related purposes. In order to keep this a clear line of demarcation, I always advise staff to not use school email or sites for personal material. All employees are reminded that they have no reasonable expectation of privacy when using school hardware, software, media, or other forms of school identified electronic or social media. Specifically in regard to your District provided email, it may be reviewed at any time by District administration without your permission or your knowledge. The same goes for any electronically accessible site an employee creates or maintains for educational purposes. It is strongly recommended that employees maintain a strict line between their school and personal online and electronic identities.

Mandated Reporting and Mandated Reporters

Michigan law designates school employees as mandatory reporters in the case of suspected child abuse or neglect. This means that upon learning of or suspecting child abuse or neglect, District employees are required to report this to Child Protective Services, immediately.

The centralized intake hotline is (855) 444-3911. This hotline functions 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you have a reason to report child abuse or neglect and have questions about how to do so, you may see our counselor, our social worker, or any of our school administrators. Michigan law requires that the person suspecting or witnessing the abuse make the report. I have had to make such a report. It is quite simple to do. Know that the line may have a queue. The automated system will tell you where you are in the queue. If you anticipate needing help, timewise, please contact your administrator or our counselor or social worker.

You will need to have the child's name and description of what you suspect or see on hand to report to the intake employee. It is important to remind school employees that they are mandated reporters at any time when witnessing or learning of child abuse or neglect and that this is not simply limited to school property, school hours, or school functions. Again, if you have a question about this in regard to a child, it is best to ask right away. You may read more about Michigan laws and guidelines for this at: https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73971_7119_50648_7193---,00.html

The appropriate building administrator should be notified when a report of suspected child abuse or neglect occurs.

Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC), Title IX and Considerations Therein

I need to take a moment to be very clear on matters pertaining to any suspicion that a student has been a victim of any sort of sexual harassment or conduct. If you suspect there has been any such conduct that any student has been a victim of, whether it has occurred in or on school property or at school events or outside of school anywhere you must report this immediately.

If a student reports any specific concerns or details to you, be certain to make clear notation of what you were told, when you were told it, by whom, and any details that are shared with you. You must retain these notes until they are delivered to school administrators and/or legal personnel.

Of special note in our technology saturated day and age are electronic devices that may contain information or pictures regarding what would amount to criminal sexual misconduct or harassment. Should a student present you with an electronic device that s/he asserts has evidence stored on it, retain the device right away. If the student will not relinquish the device please contact an administrator immediately. Try to keep the device in plain view so that any evidence cannot be erased. DO NOT view or download or search the device for evidence. This action falls to law enforcement. Remember, the transfer of data that may be considered child pornography and is a crime. School officials will contact legal authorities for how to deal with any retained information or device.

It is very important to reiterate that the immediate notification of administration happen if you suspect some form of CSC may have occurred.

Witnessing or Having Knowledge of Abusive Behavior by Another Employee

Though it is deeply hoped that it never occur that any staff member be inappropriate with any child, it must be made clear that should an employee suspect that a fellow staff member is behaving inappropriately with any child, whether they are a student of this district or not, the mandated reporter law does not exclude fellow employees from reporting. Should you suspect that a fellow employee has been inappropriate or abusive toward any child in any way, your responsibility as a mandated reporter remains the same. Understandably, this would be a most uncomfortable reality. Should you suspect

a fellow employee of child abuse, neglect, or inappropriate or illegal behavior toward a minor, you are a mandated reporter. Under such a circumstance you should reach out to your building administrator immediately. If that administrator is absent or not available, contact either the superintendent or a different administrator. Do not allow someone else's illicit behavior to make you complicit to what may be a crime.

Attendance

Attendance is to be taken daily per the procedures laid out in each of our three schools. Please remember that attendance is not only a District requirement, *it is a legal document and record for the State of Michigan as well*. I have had my attendance records subpoenaed for a student who was being investigated by legal authorities. It is not uncommon for parties in a custodial conflict to subpoena attendance records. One never knows what may become important at some point. Taking accurate daily attendance per building guidelines is an important and required part of record keeping. Failure to take the required attendance violates both District Policy and State of Michigan requirements.

Please do not have students take attendance and record the same for you. Remembering that your students are minors, records in regard to them are confidential and not to be shared improperly with other students.

Grades and Academic Records

Like attendance, grades are information that should not be shared with other students. Truly, the only folks with whom a child's grade(s) should be discussed is the child, their parents or guardians, appropriate District staff, and outside agencies if proper and necessary.

Grades are a reflection of a student's ability and level of competence in a given and specific area. The purpose of grades is to reflect a measurement that allows for discussion of and understanding of a measured content strand.

It helps to envision a grade as a specific measurement not unlike other scientific measurements. Grades are not a direct reflection of a student's personality, behavior, or likability and grades should never be used as punishment. Student misbehavior and like concerns belong in the realm of classroom management and/or of disciplinary matters.

While a student's personality or some behavioral reason may be a part of a student not doing work satisfactorily or even at all, the grade is a reflection of what is being measured academically and not a direct commentary on the student's personality or behavior. For students who are not complying with classroom directives or assignments there is a separate section regarding student discipline. Parents should be notified if a student is not turning in work.

The simplest advice I ever received on grades was during training for being an Advanced Placement reader. While students may have believed that the scoring of exam essays was a subtraction process, exam graders were specifically directed not to think that

way. Scoring, we were apprised, is better viewed as an addition process. A score reflects what a student is doing well and is a measurement of those same aspects. This simple advice alone causes a change in mindset. I used this in class in order to change the conversation to, “Here is what you are doing well and here is how that ends up in a measurement,” and away from “Here are a bunch of things you are doing wrong and you need to start doing all of these things right.” Just this change in approach made for much better and more collaborative conversations with my students. It allowed us to say, “Here is where we are,” and then discuss what was needed to rise higher. When paired with clear rubrics, students were more receptive to and understanding of these conversations. If you find this approach to thinking helps in your grading, feel free to steal it!

Grading is different between our different buildings due to the ages of the students and what is recorded at an assessed level. Specifics on those levels should be addressed at those levels with the building administrator.

For staff members who rely on a point system for grades rather than letter grades for each assignment, points for work turned in should never be less than 50 points. A score of less than 50 points is lower than an F whose range is 50-59. Teachers may make note of low scores in order to document what misunderstandings students are having on completed work. They should not use less than 50 points for turned in work in the calculation of a grade for a course.

Bullying

State of Michigan law requires districts to have a bullying policy and reporting procedures for bullying for students. NVAS’ anti-bullying policy may be accessed here: <http://www.neola.com/norwayvulcan-mi/> and is listed under Policy 5517.01.

Students may also report bullying via the State of Michigan website at: <https://www.michigan.gov/ok2say/>

Staff witnessing bullying should work to ameliorate the situation rapidly and be certain that both the victim and the guilty party are given due attention. Should the staff member determine that the nature of the bullying is beyond addressing at the classroom level, an administrator should be notified right away.

Classroom Management and Student Discipline

In writing about classroom management and discipline I am first going to address student behavior in a general sense and then be more specific to our District.

During the spring of 2018 a Discipline Committee met to discuss student discipline and student behavior as well as approaches to the same. We read the text *Discipline with Dignity: New Challenges, New Solutions* by Richard L. Curwin, Allen N. Mendler, and Brian D. Mendler. Discussions were centered around the theories of addressing student behavior in the book in order to be conversant on current best practices.

Additionally, the State of Michigan has recently issued expectations for schools that include Restorative Practices as well as an aim of decreasing the number of suspensions of school students. In doing so the State has recognized that students who are not in school miss learning. Students who miss learning tend to fall behind and this too often leads to a cycle of suspensions and academic low achievement or even failure.

In reading *Discipline with Dignity* and then in our committee, we discussed the importance of first defining values or principles with students when setting classroom rules and procedures. The contrast between rules/procedures and values/principles as defined in *Discipline with Dignity* is, “Rules need to define *what to do and how to do it*. *Values* define *why we do it this way*.” (p. 35).

Staff are encouraged to discuss school and classroom values with their students in the course of discussing classroom rules and procedures. Values are an important point in establishing a positive relationship between teachers and their students. Values state why every student is important and why learning is important.

Dealing with classroom behaviors and student misconduct goes with the role of endeavoring to teach children. It can help to remember that all of our students are children at varying stages of development. Inappropriate behavior may also have been learned outside of the school environment. If the appropriate behavior has not been taught or positively reinforced outside of school, it will need to be taught inside our school and our classrooms.

Most classroom misbehavior can be handled at the classroom level. When a child’s misbehavior is not be successfully resolved by teacher intervention, the next step is for there to be contact between the instructor and the parent/guardian or with the relevant building administrator if the behavior is severe enough that it warrants immediate attention. Examples of items needing immediate attention include, threats, physical aggression toward a student or staff member, disruptive defiance to follow a directive.

Contracts

Most employees are covered by one of two contracts, either the Education Association contract or the Support Personnel contract. It is recommended that employees read and be familiar with their contracts and know where to turn with questions.

The contracts with our two associations each have leadership teams representing their respective organizations. The leaders of those contracts may be a source of explanation. Administrators in both the buildings and the District office are also available for specific contract questions.

One item that has needed emphasis in recent years has been the requirement for teachers to give timely notification of anticipated changes in Lanes by June 1 of the given year. This is done so that the Board and Business offices may build accurate budgets for the coming school year. In order for a change in Lanes to become official, a college transcript showing successful completion is required prior to a wage increase being granted.

Evaluation

Michigan law requires that the District use one of several identified vendors for evaluation purposes. Districts across the Dickinson-Iron ISD have chosen to use the Marzano format for evaluations.

Incoming staff will receive orientation on the use of Marzano.

Marzano was selected because many of its core principles about best educational practice align with the District's. This will be covered in orientation.

At the beginning of the school year teaching staff who will be evaluated will be assigned an evaluator. The evaluator will help her/his evaluatees to set goals for the school year and will conduct evaluations during the school year.

Michigan law further requires that teaching staff being evaluated be scored as highly effective, effective, minimally effective, or ineffective. This rating is required to be reported to the State Department of Education at the end of the respective school year.

If you have questions about your evaluation, please contact your evaluator right away. If you do not know who your evaluator is, please see the superintendent.

Absence Reporting for Teachers

Norway-Vulcan Area Schools contracts through Frontline Education for the reporting of absences and substitute teacher assignment if necessary. New staff members will be given information on how to utilize the system from the Board office.

Staff should leave lesson plans for substitute teachers as designated in their specific building. While it is always hoped that the course of instruction continue in the absence of the regular classroom instructor, it is also recognized that this is not always possible. For this reason each teacher should develop several days worth of emergency plans to be used in cases where either the lesson(s) cannot be continued or when the absence is of such a nature that the instructor is unable to communicate plans.

Staff members who find that they will out for an extended period of time should contact their administrator right away.

Copiers

Copiers are located in each building and in the Board office. There is also a color copier in the Media Center. Staff are asked to limit color copies especially as they are much more expensive than black and white copies.

If a copier is jammed or otherwise out of order, please report it right away to the office secretary. Please do not leave a copier jammed and walk away without reporting it.

Crisis Alert Plan

In the event of a crisis staff will be given instruction in a manner most conducive to communicating what is needed with respect to the crisis. Staff members should follow instructions given respective of the crisis in question.

Whether a crisis has to do with the passing of a student or staff member, or some other event, it is important to remember that our communication outside the district is critical. Please be extremely cognizant of any comments about any crisis as there may be more involved than meets the eye and some situations will evolve on a moments notice. Media should always be referred to the superintendent.

Common means of communication may include in class phone calls, email, or text messages.

Drug and Tobacco Free Workplace

NVAS is a drug and tobacco free workplace. Employees should report any suspected student drug or tobacco use to an administrator right away.

Equal Opportunity Employer

Norway-Vulcan Area Schools does not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, membership in an employee organization, retaliation, parental status, military service, or other non-merit factor.

Fire and Emergency Drills

State of Michigan Law requires that schools conduct five fire drills, three lockdown drills, and two tornado drills.

Staff members will receive directions on where to go for fire and tornado drills from their respective buildings.

The nature of lockdowns is such that if a situation were to arise instructions would be given that would be responsive to the level of threat and nature of the same.

Generally speaking there are two general directions for a lockdown drill, shelter in place and full lockdown procedures.

Shelter in Place: a shelter in place direction means that teachers are to lock their doors and keep students in classrooms, but they may continue with teaching activities. Shelter in place may be given in cases where law enforcement has asked us to secure the building due to an occurrence in our area or in the case of some other danger outside our building, a chemical spill, for example. In a shelter in place procedure staff will be instructed that the building is under shelter in place procedures. Staff should maintain the lockdown until an all clear message is given.

Full lockdown: in such an instance where it is deemed that it may not be safe for students and staff to be in the hallways, staff will be instructed to implement full lockdown procedures. Such procedures include locking doors and getting students away from entrances and windows, shutting off lights, and maintaining quiet. Students should not be permitted to leave classrooms for any reason during such a drill or occurrence. Staff should maintain the lockdown until further instructions or an all clear are given.

In any lockdown if you see a student in the hallway as you are activating your procedures, you should move them quickly into your classroom whether they are your student or not.

Guests

Guests to classrooms should be for academic and educational purposes. Teachers who expect a guest to their classrooms should let their main office know the date and time of the guest. Guests must stop by the respective building office and sign in and receive a Guest ID from the office.

If you have a question about the appropriateness of a guest, please see your administrator.

The safety of all staff and students relies on guests following reporting procedures before moving on to classrooms.

Harassment

It is a violation of law and of District policy for any student or staff member to harass or intimidate another student or staff member. Harassment can take many forms but may include, but is not limited to: unwanted sexual comments or actions; comments or threatening actions regarding a person's race, gender, religion, ethnic group, orientation, or disability.

A student experiencing harassment should report it to a staff member immediately who will report it immediately to an administrator. A staff member witnessing the harassment of a student should report it to an administrator immediately whether the staff member believes the student has or will report it.

Staff members who experience harassment should report it to their administrator immediately. If a staff member feels uncomfortable reporting it to their administrator, the District has designated Joe Tinti and Susie Neuens as persons to whom it may be reported.

Inclement Weather

The determination to close due to inclement weather is made by the superintendent or, in the absence of the superintendent, the transportation director.

Notice of closing is communicated via staff email, text (if opted into), phone call via our automated system, on Facebook, and via TV6 Marquette.

Leaving the Building-Staff

Should a staff member need to leave the building for a period of time that will impact students, the staff member should contact an administrator right away.

Mail

There are designated staff mailboxes in each building office. U.S. Mail and inner district communications may utilize staff mailboxes.

Should staff need to mail out materials pertaining to school business, the U.S. Postal machine for the District is located in the Board office.

Media

Staff are encouraged to share positive classroom, team, or individual accomplishments via the sharing of information with local media. Staff sharing such information should be advised to be aware of any students under their care whose parents have forbid them to be in pictures or articles about school happenings. News shared with media should also be shared with the appropriate administrator and the superintendent.

Staff should maintain a strict “no comment” stance toward all media when it comes to news media when it comes to any item of concern or controversy regarding a student or specific events that may prompt media attention. In such situations staff should refer reporters or others connected with the media to the superintendent.

It is important to remember by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (commonly referred to as FERPA). This is why it is important for staff to not engage with the media on issues that are not related to the reporting of positive news.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Staff are required to attend Parent-Teacher Conferences as designated by Contract on scheduled dates.

Pre-Planned Personal Days

Forms are available in building offices for the reporting of pre-planned personal days. Said completed forms should be turned in to the Board office.

Professional Dress Code

Staff are expected to dress in a professional manner according to their duties. Business casual attire is acceptable.

Individual buildings have established Fridays as a Dress Down day and have allowed jeans and a staff shirt with a donation. This is determined on a building by building basis.

Staff Meetings

District-wide and building staff meetings may be called as need is determined. District-wide meetings will be held in the Media Center unless otherwise designated.

Threats

Staff members who hear, see, or who learn of threats to students, staff, or to the school as a part or a whole should report the threat to a school or district administrator immediately.

If a threat is delivered electronically, the staff member should take care to save the threat and not erase or delete it. The threat should be shared with building and/or district administration immediately. If the threat is on a student device, the staff member should

seek to secure the device and/or seek administrator help in securing the same. Such electronic evidence may well be used as evidence.

If a threat is received via phone, the staff member should seek to keep the threatening person on the phone and to get as much information as possible from the caller. Questions may include against whom the threat is being made, where it will occur, when it will occur, how the threat will be carried out, why it will happen, etc. Caller identification may also reveal who made the call and/or from where. This information should be shared with administration immediately.

Should a staff member be threatened by a parent, guardian, or another person relative to the fulfillment of their duties as a District employee, the staff member should report the threat to a school or district administrator immediately. If the threat is of an immediate nature and outside of regular school hours, the staff member is advised to contact the police and report the threat to a school or district administrator as soon as possible.

Equal Opportunity Statement

The Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, (including sexual orientation or transgender identity), disability, age religion, height, weight, marital or family status, military status, ancestry, genetic information or any other legally protected category, (collectively, “Protected Classes”), in its programs and activities, including employment opportunities.

Works Cited

Curwin, Richard L., et al. *Discipline with Dignity: New Challenges, New Solutions*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2008.

Norway-Vulcan Area Schools
2019-20

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