

Welcome to Vinalhaven School



During a year-long exploration with a working artist at the Farnsworth, this collaboration piece was created by this year's 9th grade VS students, when they were in 7th grade. The piece hung in a gallery at the Farnsworth last year and was recently returned to the students.

Parent and Student Handbook 2025-2026

Welcome to the Vinalhaven School Community!

We are excited to begin another year of learning, growth, and connection together. At Vinalhaven School, our mission is rooted in creating a safe, supportive, and engaging environment where every student feels valued and has the opportunity to thrive. We believe that learning is a shared journey; one that involves students, families, staff, and our wider community working hand-in-hand to nurture curiosity, resilience, and lifelong learning.

Our handbook is designed to serve as a guide for students and families, outlining our expectations, resources, and opportunities. Within these pages, you will find information that reflects our commitment to high standards, mutual respect, and strong communication. We encourage you to use it as a reference throughout the year, and more importantly, as a reminder that you are an integral part of our school's vision. Together, we will continue to support our students in becoming effective communicators, creative problem solvers, and responsible citizens ready to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world.

As principal, I am excited to partner with each of you in the year ahead. I look forward to watching our students grow, celebrating their successes, and supporting them as they strive to become the best versions of themselves.

Warmly,
Jon Millett
Principal

Our Vision: The members of the Vinalhaven School community are committed to creating a safe and healthy learning environment of which we can be proud. We strive to be effective communicators, creative problem solvers, and lifelong learners. We respect differences and work together to fulfill individual and community potential. We understand that the school community is constantly evolving. We challenge ourselves to constantly reassess our goals, beliefs, and performance.

Our Belief Statement:

A good educational environment:

- ◆ Is the shared responsibility of students, parents, school staff and community
- ◆ Is based on trust, mutual respect, and acceptance of individual responsibility
- ◆ Includes students as an integral part of the community
- ◆ Helps all students experience success and appreciation in their learning regardless of their interests, abilities, and aspirations
- ◆ Uses experience to enhance the learning process
- ◆ Relates learning to real life
- ◆ Appreciates the interrelationship of process and product
- ◆ Raises awareness of one's place in the global community
- ◆ Develops responsible citizens

- ◆ Provides high expectations and instills an appreciation for the rigors of learning
- ◆ Encourages risk-taking
- ◆ Fosters creativity and encourages independent thinking
- ◆ Inspires courage and self-confidence
- ◆ Is engaging

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
School Calendar	4
Staff (updated 7/24)	5
Communication	5
Student Information System: PowerSchool	6
Attendance and Tardiness	6
Transportation	8
Academic Programs	10
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM	10
MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM	10
HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM	11
(Policy IKF)	12
Grading and Credit Policy	12
Post-secondary Enrollment Options	13
Exemption From Required Instruction	14
Assessments	15
Student Health	16
Student Wellness	18
Children with Disabilities	19
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	21
Title 1	22
Notification of Rights Under FERPA	23
Vinalhaven School Behavior Expectations	26
Student Discipline	26
Bullying	27
Pre K-12 Dress Code	28
Student Use of Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices	28
Student Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Use	29
<i>Live Links</i>	<i>30</i>

School Calendar

2025-2026 VINALHAVEN SCHOOL CALENDAR *updated 4/22*

2025	2026	
JULY S M T W T F S 1 2 3 H 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	JANUARY (19) S M T W T F S H V 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 H 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	
AUGUST S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 W W 29 30 31	FEBRUARY (15) S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 H V V V V 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
SEPTEMBER (21) S M T W T F S H 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	MARCH (21) S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 W 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	
OCTOBER (21) S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 W 11 12 H 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	APRIL (17) S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 E 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 H V V V V 25 26 27 28 29 30	
NOVEMBER (15) S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 W H 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 E 22 23 24 25 V H H 29 30	MAY (20) S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 E 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 H 26 27 28 29 30 31	
DECEMBER (15) S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 E 20 21 V V V H V 27 28 V V V	JUNE (11) S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 G 14 S S E 18 H 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	SCHOOL HOLIDAYS Quarter 1 8/27-28 - Teacher Workshops 8/28 - New Teacher Orientation 9/1 - Labor Day 9/2 - First Day of School 9/9 - Open House 10/10 - Teacher Workshop 10/13 - Indigenous Peoples' Day 10/31 - End of Quarter 1 (42 days) Quarter 2 11/3-11/7 - Book Fair 11/10 - Teacher Workshop 11/11 - Veterans Day 11/20 - P/T Conferences 11/21 - P/T Conferences (12pm) 11/25 - End of Trimester 1 (57 days) 11/26-28 - Thanksgiving Break 12/19 - Early Release (12pm) 12/22-1/2 - Holiday Break 1/19 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 1/23 - End of Quarter 2 (44 days) Quarter 3 2/12 - 100 th Day of School 2/16 - Presidents' Day 2/16-2/20 - February Break 3/12 - End of Trimester 2 (58 days) 3/13 - Teacher Workshop 4/3 - End of Quarter 3 (44 days) Quarter 4 4/9 - P/T Conferences 4/10 - P/T Conferences (12pm) 4/20 - Patriots' Day 4/20-4/24 - April Break 5/15 - Early Release (12pm) 5/25 - Memorial Day 6/13 - Graduation 6/17 - Last Student Day* 6/19 - Dismissed (12pm) (Q45/T60 days) 6/19 - Juneteenth * Last Student Day includes snow days. Unused days will be dropped from the calendar. 175 student days 5 teacher workshop days KEY E = Early Release at noon G = Graduation H = Legal Holiday S = Make Up Snow Day V = Vacation W = Workshop Day

Staff (updated 9/5/25)

Staff List 2025-26

The following table shows the structure of the Vinalhaven School and the hierarchy of decision-making. In matters pertaining to your child, always speak first with the teacher. If your issue cannot be resolved at that level, you may then discuss the matter with the Assistant Principal and/or Principal, followed by the Superintendent, and finally, the School Board. We encourage you to follow this pathway of communication.

Teacher
Principal
Superintendent
School Board
State and Federal Government

Communication

Keeping our families informed is critical to achieving our goals. Timely communication helps establish a partnership between the school and families. It is when the school and families work together that a student has the best opportunity for growth. We strive to make families feel welcomed, valued, and connected to the school community.

Facebook page:

The Vinalhaven School Facebook Page is updated regularly. Please follow it to get the most up to date information.

School Newsletter:

Our school newsletter will be sent via email each month. The newsletter contains important information we feel you should have. It will be sent out to the parent email list starting in September. If you do not receive a newsletter, please call the office. You may also view the newsletter on our web site.

School Cancellation/Early Dismissal/Late Start Announcements:

During the winter months, there may be an occasion when the weather conditions will require the cancellation or delayed start of school. Road conditions are often the determining factor, and our priority is the safety of the children. When a storm hits while school is in session, it is often best to continue the day's classes to give the road crews time to condition the roads for safer travel. When weather conditions arise we will stay in close communication with the people responsible for our roads and rely on their recommendations.

All "no school" announcements will be made as early as possible for your convenience. A call will go out over the "Call 'em All" System. Staff will receive an email of the script that is read on the call. The message will also be posted on the Vinalhaven School Facebook page.

Messages for Students: We ask that all necessary after-school arrangements be made at home so phone calls to the school are not necessary. However, we realize that occasionally real emergencies do arise. In such cases, the school secretary will deliver parent/guardian messages to the child's teacher.

Communication Guidelines for Parents:

- Phone messages can be called into the school secretary.
- E-mail is a great way to communicate basic information or ask straight forward questions of a teacher. Please set up a meeting for more in depth conversations and concerns.

Student Information System: PowerSchool

Power School is used to record daily attendance and graded events. Power School simplifies data-driven decision-making by providing real-time information to all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, and administrators) in the education process via the Internet. Administrators get the most accurate information to make more effective decisions. Teachers gain time-saving administrative tools, parents gain immediate access to their children's grades, and students can track their progress.

Students in grades 6-12 will be given access to Power School by their homeroom teachers.

For parent access, please contact Mr. Pitts at randy.pitts@vinalhavenschool.org or Amanda Wentworth at amanda.wentworth@vinalhavenschool.org.

Teachers will make every effort to ensure student grades are up to date. Students should check their grades regularly and contact teachers if they have questions or need help.

Attendance and Tardiness

(Policy [JEA](#))

Regular attendance at school is essential for students' academic and social growth. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, all schools must meet average daily attendance (ADA) goals set by the state and federal governments. Schools that fail to meet ADA goals are placed on the continuing improvement list and subject to state and federal sanctions.

According to Maine state law, attendance at school is required of all persons between 6 and 17 years of age with a few, limited exceptions. For all of these reasons, and most importantly in response to the negative effects of absenteeism on academic achievement, Vinalhaven School

takes regular attendance very seriously. This is outlined in the school Compulsory Attendance policy [JEA](#).

By state law, unexcused absences that result in truancy must be documented and escalated through a process that can lead to reporting to DHHS and/or law enforcement. State law defines truancy at two levels:

- Students who have completed up to grade 6: Unexcused absences of 10 full days (in a school year) or 7 consecutive days.
- Students at least 7 years of age and have not completed grade 6: Unexcused absences of 7 full days (in a school year) or 5 consecutive days.

Vinalhaven School will abide by state laws and pursue administrative and legal steps to address truancy. Parents and/or guardians must be responsible for having their children attend school on a regular basis and take steps to limit absences.

For all absences, even sports and field trips, a student will fill out a High School [Planned Absence](#) form or a Middle School [Planned Absence](#) form. Excused absences can include:

- Personal illness;
- An appointment with a health professional that must be made during the regular school day;
- Observance of a recognized religious holiday when the observance is required during the regular school day;
- A family emergency
- A pre-approved planned family absence for a personal or educational purpose.*

**If parents plan for their student to be absent for an extended period of time (5 days or more), they must contact the principal, who will set up a meeting with the parents and the teachers to develop a plan to get the student on pace with the rest of their classmates within an agreed upon timeframe.*

When a student must be absent from school a note and/or phone call is required from the student's parent or guardian stating the date of the absence, the reason for the absence, and the signature of the parent or guardian. Please inform school officials as soon as possible that your child will be absent from school.

If the school does not hear from a parent/guardian prior to a student's return to school the absence will be considered unexcused. Any absence that does not meet the criteria set by the state law for an excused absence will be considered unexcused.

Leaving During the School Day: Students who are leaving school early must bring in a note from a parent/ guardian or have a parent/guardian contact the school. Students leaving school early, without permission, will receive consequences that may include an in-school suspension. All students are required to check out with the school secretary when leaving early.

Transportation

Drop-Off Guidelines

- Students who arrive on the first morning bus and who depart on the second afternoon bus will have supervision in the playground area.
- Parents may drop off students anytime after 7:40, when regular playground supervision begins. At 7:40, middle and high school students will move indoors.
- On good weather days, elementary school students should be dropped off in front of the playground. Middle and high school students should be dropped off in front of the entrance to the school building.
- On bad weather days, all students should be dropped off in front of the entrance to the school building.

Pick-Up Guidelines

- We kindly ask parents to wait on the Basketball Court or on the porch area to meet their children for pick-up.

Parking

- Parents who wish to accompany their children onto the playground or into the school building must park in the parking lot. The traffic circle in front of the school is intended for the bus and for cars dropping off and picking up students only.
- There is no parking in the traffic circle. At no time should a vehicle be left unattended. All drivers in the traffic circle should use extreme care as the playground is very close to the traffic circle.
- The privilege of operating a vehicle and parking on school property may be revoked if the driver operates in such a manner to endanger life and/or property.

***PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY AROUND THE TRAFFIC CIRCLE.
DO NOT PASS OTHER VEHICLES WHILE IN THE TRAFFIC CIRCLE UNLESS
DIRECTED BY SCHOOL STAFF***

Other Transportation and After-School Guidelines

After-School Plans for Elementary School Students

- Teachers will follow the transportation plan that parents/guardians completed for their child the first week of school. Each child needs a note if s/he is to go someplace other than the location designated on the transportation plan after school. Please make sure notes come in with each child and are given to the child's teacher before school starts. A "blanket note" may be sent for regularly scheduled events.

- A student who plans to go to another student's house after school must bring in a note saying so. Students may not call parents to get permission for one child to go to another child's house. These types of plans must be made before or after, but not during school.
- Elementary-aged children who want to attend an after school activity, as a spectator, must be supervised by their parents/guardians. During school hours *all* students may attend with a parent or guardian present.

Closed Campus: In accordance with school policy, Vinalhaven School maintains a closed campus. Consequently, all students must remain on school grounds for the entire school day. This does not include students who have work study or alternate plans approved by administration.

Bicycles: Bicycles can be ridden to school, but the owner is accepting risk when leaving bikes on school property. Bicycles should be kept in the bike rack near the middle school wing.

Student Visitors: Students not enrolled in Vinalhaven School are not permitted on school premises during the school day. Permission may be granted, in special circumstances, by the Superintendent or Principal for students to participate in class. Two weeks notice is requested. All school visitors must check in with the school secretary and obtain a visitor's pass upon arrival.

School Bus/Van Transportation

M.S.A.D. # 8 is required by law to provide transportation to the school grounds. To accommodate students, bus/van stops are planned for several key pick-up spots throughout the town. But, legal school supervision doesn't begin until the student is on the bus/van. Parents are responsible for their children until they step on the bus/van and when they exit the bus/van. To help improve the ride to school, we urge parents to discuss proper school bus/van behavior with their children. The school bus/van is considered school grounds, and disruptive, disrespectful or unsafe behavior may result in suspension from riding the bus/van or other punishment according to the Code of Conduct. All school rules apply to the bus/van. If your child reports an incident that occurred on the bus/van to you, please contact the school immediately.

Bus/van routes will be determined considering:

- Pick up and drop off location safety and accessibility.
- Road conditions.
- The time it takes to complete a run.

The Vinalhaven School provides students with bus/van service for their convenience and safety. In order to keep the ride to and from school safe for everyone, students must behave in a responsible and respectful manner. Following the rules below will help to keep our bus/van safe and comfortable for everyone.

- Be at the bus/van stop early and wait respectfully for the bus/van in a safe place away from the road
- Be respectful to the bus/van driver and follow his/her directions
- Be respectful to other students and talk quietly with others
- Stay seated at all times when the bus/van is moving

- Keep hands, arms and head inside of bus/van at all times
- When leaving the bus/van, do not walk close to the front - be sure the bus/van driver can see you
- Look both ways before you cross the road
- If you forget something, do not go back and get it. The bus/van driver can't see you if you are too close to the front of the bus/van.
- If you need to cross the street, cross ten feet in front of the bus/van when the driver directs you to move.
- No animal is permitted to be on the bus/van.
- Food and drink are not permitted to be open on the bus/van.
- All discipline problems will be communicated to the Assistant Principal.
- No flammable or combustible materials should be taken on the bus/van.
- No smoking on the bus/van.

Academic Programs

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM

- The Vinalhaven Elementary School serves students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth in two wings of our school. The Elementary School academic program includes instruction in math, literacy, science, and social studies.
- Vinalhaven School utilizes the Maine Learning Results and Next Generation Science Standards to guide our instructional practices. Standards define what our students should know and be able to do before being promoted to the next grade level. The staff is committed to ensuring that all students achieve these standards. VS is committed to teaching students a variety of material in order to gain a wealth of knowledge. VS teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms.
- Curriculum instruction is primarily provided by grade level teachers as well as other teachers in grade level teams, special educators, various specialists, and is supported by educational technicians. Instruction is delivered in a variety of ways such as whole and small group lessons in grade level classrooms, in multi-age groups within grade level teams, and in small groups with special educators.
- Elementary school students also participate in art, drama, French, health, library, music, and physical education classes. In addition to developmentally appropriate social skills instruction within their grade level teams, students participate in student-led elementary school assemblies showcasing curriculum work, songs, and celebrating achievements.
- Our curriculum is enhanced by a variety of field trips, guest speakers, and special events such as Read Across America, Winter Holiday Celebration, jump rope for Heart, and Poetry Festival.
- For students in grades K-2 report cards are issued at the end of each trimester (3 times a year). Report cards will be sent to parent(s)/guardian(s) in the mail. An electronic copy of report cards will be made available upon request. Parent(s)/guardian(s) with concerns are encouraged to call and/or arrange a conference with any or all of their child's teachers at any time during the school year.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM

- The Vinalhaven Middle School provides students in grades six through eight with a program of learning that is developmentally responsive, challenging, empowering, and equitable. Students receive instruction in the core disciplines of math, literacy, and writing, science, and social studies as well as art, drama, French, health, music, and physical education.
- Vinalhaven School utilizes the Maine Learning Results and Next Generation Science Standards to guide our instructional practices. Standards define what our students should know and be able to do before being promoted to the next grade level. The staff is committed to ensuring that all students achieve these standards. VS is committed to teaching students a variety of material in order to gain a wealth of knowledge. VS teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms.
- Student learning occurs in many configurations ranging from whole and small group lessons in grade level classrooms, multi-age groups, and small groups with special educators. A special emphasis is given to hands-on instruction with real world applications and learning frequently occurs in the natural world, in our community and also on occasional adventures on the mainland including trips to Tanglewood, Camp Kieve and other trips sponsored by the Vinalhaven Land Trust.
- For students in grades 3-8 report cards are issued at the end of each trimester (3 times a year). Report cards will be sent to parent(s)/guardian(s) in the mail. An electronic copy of report cards will be made available upon request. Parent(s)/guardian(s) with concerns are encouraged to call and/or arrange a conference with any or all of their child's teachers at any time during the school year.

HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM

- The Principal will inform students and parents as soon as practicable of any State-imposed proficiency standards/requirements that must be met before students may be awarded a high school diploma.
- Vinalhaven School utilizes the Maine Learning Results and Next Generation Science Standards to guide our instructional practices. Standards define what our students should know and be able to do before being promoted to the next grade level. The staff is committed to ensuring that all students achieve these standards. VS is committed to teaching students a variety of material in order to gain a wealth of knowledge. VS teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms.
- Students are required to demonstrate proficiency in the graduation standards and associated indicators as published in the school's proficiency based curriculum documents. The calculation of proficiency is defined in Policy IKA-1 and detailed in the Student Handbook and will be determined by the appropriate high school subject/content teacher regardless of the approved pathway used to meet the graduation standard.
- Vinalhaven School's high school educational program is designed to enable students to satisfy graduation requirements in four years through a sequence of educational courses providing opportunities to gain and demonstrate proficiency in school graduation standards.

- For high school students report cards are issued at the end of each quarter (4 times a year). Report cards are issued at the end of each trimester (3 times a year). Report cards will be sent to parent(s)/guardian(s) in the mail. An electronic copy of report cards will be made available upon request. Parent(s)/guardian(s) with concerns are encouraged to call and/or arrange a conference with any or all of their child's teachers at any time during the school year.
- The Portrait of a Graduate Work was completed in 2024. While many of the ideas are in place, we continue to revisit this input and work to elevate pride within the students, school, staff and community.

(Policy [IKF](#))

Grading and Credit Policy

(Policy [IJA-1](#))

The intent of this policy is to establish the grading scale to be used by classroom teachers and layout methods to determine if a student will receive credit for a course.

Credit can be earned in a given content area by meeting the content standards assessed during a course. A content standard is the top level standard in a hierarchy of learning targets and its value is derived from the subordinate graduation standards and performance indicators. There are two methods of meeting the content standards:

1) The average of the content standard must equal 75 or above and no graduation standard will be below 41.

OR

2) The average of the content standard must equal 75 or above, no graduation standard assessed will be below 41), **AND** specific graduation standards and performance indicators, as identified by the teacher, must be met in accordance with the course syllabus.

*In this case, the teacher will identify and publish a list of standards that must be met for the given course. This list will be approved by the Principal, and any modifications will be staffed accordingly. Students will be provided specific grading practices at the beginning of a course.

In the absence of the teacher identifying specific standards, successful completion will be evaluated under the first rule.

In a standards based grading system the teacher has great latitude to determine whether a student has met standards. The teacher will weigh evidence acquired over the course of the term to determine the final assessed grades. While our student information system provides in-progress proficiency estimates based on recorded grades, the teacher has the authority to override these estimates at the end of a grading term when grades are being posted.

Failing Grades:

- Students will be provided opportunities to remedy unsatisfactory grades, regardless of the term or year they were assigned. Upon completion of a grading term students will be made aware of failing grades and the content area teacher will reach out to the student to coordinate support, identify shortfalls, and establish a learning plan that will help the student meet standards. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to complete the learning plan, although they will do so with whatever support is necessary.
- In some cases it may be necessary for a student to repeat a class. As a general rule, if a student has failed to meet the content standard and over 540% of the graduation standards assessed in a given course of instruction it may be in the students best interests to receive a level of remedial instruction only available through a full term course. This decision will be made on a case-by-case basis by the school Principal with input provided from the teacher, guidance counselor, parent and student.
- Once the content area teacher has determined that a student has successfully mastered standards they had earlier not met or only partially met, they will formally notify the Assistant Principal so that assessed grades can be updated in the Student Information System and student transcripts.

Post-secondary Enrollment Options

(Policy [IHCD A](#))

This policy intends to establish the requirements for student enrollment in post-secondary courses taken before high school graduation.

Eligible Institutions

- Students may take courses at eligible post-secondary institutions within Maine, which include the University of Maine System, the Vocational Technical College System, and Maine Maritime Academy.
- Students may be allowed to take courses at private colleges or other institutions. Any such requests shall be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be approved prior to enrollment.

Student Eligibility Requirements

- A student must be in grade 11 or 12 and may take no more than one course per semester and two courses per academic year. Courses taken in excess of this will not be considered for credit. If students and parent/guardian request an exception to this requirement, administration will consult with content area teachers and approve only if it is clearly in the best interest of the student.
- A student must meet the following criteria prior to enrolling in a post-secondary course:
 - a. Meets or exceeds all graduation standards in the relevant subject as demonstrated on the transcript and in-progress grades and is on track to meet all VS graduation requirements;

- b. Meets the course admission standards of the eligible institution;
- c. Provide evidence of parent/guardian approval for taking the course;
- d. Obtain approval from the principal as recommended by the content area specialist and guidance counselor. The student must meet with his/her guidance counselor to develop a plan describing how the course will help the student meet graduation requirements in order to obtain approval.

[Early College Request Form](#)

Exemption From Required Instruction

(Policy [IMDB](#))

The curriculum of the school unit is designed to reflect the learning expectations for all students in all content areas of the system of Maine Learning Results, as well as other statutory and regulatory requirements and content areas specified by the Board.

The Board acknowledges that from time to time individual students may be exposed to some ideas and materials with which they or their parent(s)/legal guardian disagree.

Students and their parent(s)/legal guardian cannot be required to adopt ideas with which they disagree, but such disagreement alone is not a sufficient basis to exempt a student from the prescribed curriculum. Exemptions from the required curriculum should be minimized because they can detract from the overall instruction provided to the class as a whole and the educational objectives sought to be achieved by the curriculum.

The Board recognizes, however, that there could be topics in the curriculum which may be objectionable to individual students and/or parent(s)/legal guardian based on their particular sincerely held religious, moral or philosophical beliefs. Exemption from instruction which infringes on such beliefs may be requested by the parent(s)/legal guardian.

Requests for exemption from instruction must be made in writing to the building Principal and are subject to the approval of the Principal. The Principal shall notify the Superintendent as soon as practicable of any request for exemption from instruction and of his/her decision. If the Principal denies an exemption request, the parent(s)/legal guardian may appeal to the Superintendent.

In considering requests for exemption, factors that the Principal should consider may include:

- The alignment of the curriculum with the system of Learning Results;
- Whether the course or content area is required by state law or Board policy;
- The educational importance of the material or instruction from which exemption is requested;

- Evidence regarding the sincerity of the belief on which the request is based;
- Whether the school has a legal obligation to accommodate the exemption request;
- The effect of exemption or accommodation on the validity of the local assessment system; and
- Other factors that bear upon the particular request.

Exemption from required instruction does not excuse the student from meeting the requirements of the Learning Results or from total credit hours or other requirements for graduation, or from performing alternative work.

When the Principal determines that the curriculum that has been aligned with the system of Learning Results conflicts with sincerely held religious beliefs of a student or his/her parent or legal guardian, reasonable accommodation in the curriculum shall be made for the student, within the scope of existing resources. Alternative instruction may be provided by the school or through approved independent study. Any alternative instruction shall be approved in advance by the Principal in consultation with appropriate instructional staff and shall meet the standards and objectives of the part of the curriculum that is being replaced.

When requests for exemption from required curriculum are made for religious reasons, a parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Principal's decision may appeal to the Superintendent. If the accommodation in the curriculum that is requested is so great that the validity of the local assessment system is compromised, the Superintendent will determine how to address the situation, subject to the approval of the Commissioner.

When a student is exempted from any portion of the regular curriculum for other than religious reasons (exemption based on sincere philosophical or moral beliefs), the staff will make reasonable efforts, within the scope of existing resources, to accommodate alternative instruction for the student. Alternative instruction may be provided by the school or through approved independent study. Any alternative instruction shall be approved in advance by the Principal in consultation with the classroom teacher, and shall meet the standards and objectives of the part of the curriculum that is being replaced. When requests for exemption are made for philosophical or moral reasons, a parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Principal's decision may appeal to the Superintendent, whose decision shall be final.

Assessments

(Policy [ILA](#))

Vinalhaven School uses a range of academic assessments for the purposes of determining a student's progress and placement. These include:

- Northwestern Education Assessment (NWEA):
 - The NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MTYA) are state-aligned computerized adaptive assessments that provide accurate, useful information about student achievement and growth.

- NWEA's are administered to students Grades 1-12 in the fall and in the spring to measure student academic growth. Sometimes more data is needed and NWEA's can be administered in the winter.
- It is extremely important that students attend school on the days that the NWEA is administered, and that students put forth their best effort so a true reflection of the progress can be used to inform the instruction in the classroom.
- Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
 - SAT Reasoning Test (SAT I) and SAT Subject Tests (SAT II) will be offered at Vinalhaven School on dates to be announced. See the Guidance Counselor for additional registration and testing information.
 - Resources for preparing for the SAT and information about fee waivers are available at the guidance office.
- Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)
 - The PSAT is offered to all sophomores and juniors in October of each year. The State of Maine pays for all 10th-grade students to take the PSAT. 11th graders are strongly encouraged to take the PSAT.
 - Information about the PSAT, preparation materials, registration forms, and information about fee waivers are available from the Guidance Office.

Assessment Calendar

A transparent system for student assessment and accountability allows the State and nation to ensure that every student has appropriate and adequate access to education. It also provides schools with the tools for self-evaluation and improvement as they evolve alongside an ever-changing student demographic, advances in technology, and emerging teaching practices.

The federal Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires all states, school districts, and schools to provide annual report cards to parents and communities that include the Maine Comprehensive Assessment System data, attendance, and graduation rates, status of ESEA accountability, and information on highly qualified teachers. VS's data can be accessed via the [ESEA Dashboard](#).

Maine DOE: ["Why Participation Matters" flyer](#): We believe taking the state assessments is important. Please read our information to find out how these tests can help our students and our schools.

Standardized Testing Results: Once we receive your child's Maine Educational Assessment Individual Student Report (ISR), we will send a copy home to you. If you would like more information on how to interpret the report, please contact your child's teacher or principal.

Opting Out of State Assessments: Vinalhaven School utilizes all assessment data to help inform our instructional practices at the school, classroom, and individual levels for our students. Although we encourage students and parents to participate fully in our assessment program, it is important to note that parents/guardians may opt their child(ren) out of state testing. If you are

interested in doing so, please reach out to your child's principal to complete the required forms: [Parent Opt Out Information Letter and Opt Out Documentation Form](#).

Parent Teacher Qualification/Right to Know Letter: The Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2015. In accordance with ESSA, school districts who receive Title 1 funds to support students' academic success are required to notify families they have the right to request, and receive in a timely manner, information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers, including, at a minimum, the following:

1. Whether the student's teacher -
 - a. has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
 - b. is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
 - c. is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and, if so, their qualification. In addition to the information stated above, parents of students in schools that receive funds under this part may request -
 - a. information on the level of achievement and academic growth of the student, if applicable and available, on each of the State academic assessments required for this part; and
 - b. timely notice that the student has been assigned, or has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirement at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

Student Health

School Health Center: Our School Based Health Center (SBHC) is a collaborative effort between Vinalhaven School and Islands Community Medical Center (ICMC). Local health care professionals provide students with improved access to healthcare, participate in health education, and encourage collaboration between teachers and health care providers to create the best learning environment possible. If you are interested in scheduling an appointment at the SBHC, call the ICMC at 863-4341.

Mental Health: Students and families can receive ongoing confidential counseling services without having to travel to the mainland provided by an ICMS school based social worker. For more information on this service, or to make a referral, please contact the school Social Worker.

Medication: No student is allowed to keep medication of any kind with them or in school desks or lockers (with the exception of inhaled asthma medication or an epinephrine auto-injector if the student has written permission from the parent/guardian or physician). Prescribed medications must be kept with the school secretary in the school office. The School Board strongly discourages the administration of drugs in school. Whenever possible, we ask that medications

be taken at home. When medications must be administered during the school day it must be administered in compliance with the following guidelines:

Physicals and Screenings: Physical examinations are given each year at the Medical Center. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to contact the Medical Center to arrange the appointment(s) for their child(ren). Required:

- Complete school physical - all students in grades 2, 5, 8, & 11.
- Sports Physicals for students participating in sports programs.
- Vision screening - all students in grades K, 1, 3, 5, 7 & 9. The Lion's Club Sight Program makes eyeglasses available to those students whose family is in need. A recommendation from the Principal is required.
- Hearing tests - all students in grades K, 1, 3, 5 & 11.

8. Illness at School

- There are a number of infectious diseases common to school aged children. In order to protect the student body from infection, please abide by the following guidelines regarding the following illnesses: Call the school and/or your health care provider if you have any questions.
- If your child is sick, please keep him/her home. Do not give sick children Tylenol or other symptom suppressing medication and send them to school.
- Due to current COVID recommendations, please be extra cautious with children feeling under the weather as well as others in the household. PLEASE reach out to the school with any questions!

9. Colds and Seasonal Influenza: For your child's welfare and for the protection of others, it is important to keep your child at home if s/he has:

- A fever over 100 degrees during the past 24 hours;
- A cold in the active stages;
- A sore throat and/or swollen glands;
- An undiagnosed rash or skin eruptions;
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours

Chicken Pox: A student may return to school after all pox marks have been scabbed over as determined by a health professional; otherwise the student will be sent home. Please submit written evidence to the school office prior to sending your child to school.

Head Lice: From time-to-time, head lice may appear in school. If a teacher suspects lice, s/he will notify the administration in order to verify the case and the staff will do a general "as needed" check. The school staff will contact the parents of the confirmed cases in order for treatment to commence immediately. A note will go home to parents of students in the same wing (Elementary, Middle, or High) when there is a confirmed case of head lice.

Pink Eye: Students may return to school 24 hours after treatment has begun for pink eye.

Drinks in school: Students in grades 9-12 are able to have beverages in school provided they are in a resealable container. Water, coffee, tea, and Gatorade are acceptable with teacher permission. Energy drinks and soda are NOT allowed at any time during the school day.

Student Wellness

(Policy [JL](#))

The Board recognizes that student wellness and good nutrition are related to students' physical and psychological well-being and their readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that supports student wellness, healthy food choices, nutrition education, and regular physical activity. The Board believes that students who learn and practice healthy lifestyles in their formative years may be more likely to be conscious of the importance of good nutrition and exercise as adults, practice healthy habits, and reduce their risk of obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases.

Nutrition Standards

- The school unit will ensure that meals provided by its Food Services Program meet the nutrition standards established by federal regulations.
- Other foods and beverages sold or available to students during the school day ("competitive foods") will meet the federal Smart Snacks guidelines.

Nutrition Education: Nutrition education will be integrated into the instructional program through the health education program and/or the curriculum as aligned with the content standards of Maine's system of Learning Results. Nutrition education should focus on skills students need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors. Students should receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the schools, including classrooms, cafeteria, and school-home communications.

Annual Notification of Policy: The school will annually inform families and the public of basic information about the wellness policy, including its content, any updates, and implementation status. This information will be made available on the school unit's website. It will include the contact information for the person coordinating the wellness committee as well as information about opportunities for the public to get involved with the wellness committee.

Parent Communications: The school will inform parents of improvements that have been made to school meal standards; availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply; the school unit's meal charging policy; and a list of healthy celebration party ideas (including a list of foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks standards).

Appointment and Role of the Wellness Committee: The Board shall appoint a district-wide Wellness Committee comprised of at least one of each of the following:

- Board member
- School administrator
- Food Services Director/designee

- Student representative
- Parent representative
- Community representative

The Wellness Committee may also include:

- School nurse
- Teacher(s)
- Guidance counselor
- Social worker
- Community organization or agency representative
- Other staff, as designated by the Board
- Other persons, as designated by the Board

The Wellness Committee shall serve as an advisory committee in regard to student wellness issues and will be responsible for making recommendations related to the wellness policy, wellness goals, administrative or school regulations and practices, or raising awareness of student health issues.

With the prior approval of the Superintendent/designee, the Wellness Committee may survey parents, students and the community and/or conduct focus groups or community forums.

The Wellness Committee shall provide periodic reports to the Superintendent/designee and, as requested, to the Board.

Children with Disabilities

Referral/Pre-Referral of Students with Disabilities: It shall be the policy of the Vinalhaven School Department to refer all school-age students suspected of having a disability that requires special education to the pupil evaluation team (“PET”) for an evaluation in the suspected areas of disability. Referrals of students to the PET may be made by professional school staff, by parents, and by other persons knowledgeable about the child’s educational needs.

Child Find

(Policy [IHBAC](#))

MSAD#8-Vinalhaven seeks to ensure that all students within its jurisdiction are identified, located and evaluated who are school-age 5 through the school year in which they turn 20 and who are in need of special education and supportive assistance -- including state wards, state agency clients, students who have been suspended or expelled, children attending private schools and home schools, institutional residents, highly mobile children with disabilities, and children who are suspected of being disabled and in need of special education and supportive assistance even though they are advancing from grade to grade.

This child find responsibility shall be accomplished through a District-wide process which, while not a definitive or final judgment of a student's capabilities or disability, is a possible indicator of special education needs. Final identification of students with disabilities and programming for such students occurs only after an appropriate evaluation and a determination by the Pupil Evaluation Team.

Special Education Referral

School staff, parents, or agency representatives or other individuals with knowledge of the child may refer children to the IEP team if they believe that the student, because of a disability, may be in need of special education and supportive services in order to benefit from regular education. Such a referral should follow the school unit's pre-referral and referral policy.

It shall be the policy of Vinalhaven School SAD#8 to refer all school-age students suspected of having a disability that requires special education to the IEP Team for an evaluation in the suspected areas of disability. A referral of a student to the IEP Team may be made by parents at any time, and by professional school staff, and by other persons knowledgeable about the child's educational needs. Any such referral should be made in accordance with procedures that may be approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

Regardless of the source of the referral, a referral will be considered received by the school unit on the date that the written referral is received by the Office of the Director of Special Education. It shall be signed and dated by the Special Education Director or designee, thereby indicating the date of the receipt of that referral.

The Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the Director of Special Education, may develop procedures for referral and the use of pre-referral interventions within the local school unit, and may from time to time amend those procedures as necessary.

Individualized Education Plans (IEP)

(Policy [IHBA](#))

1. It shall be the policy of Vinalhaven School, SAD#8 to maintain a complete individualized education program ("IEP") for each student who has been identified with a disability and in need of special education services under state and federal special education laws, and who is in attendance at Vinalhaven School, SAD#8 public schools. Vinalhaven School SAD#8 shall develop these IEPs in a manner consistent with the procedural requirements of state and federal special education laws.

2. Student IEPs shall be reasonably calculated to provide the identified student with educational benefits in the least restrictive educational environment. Vinalhaven School SAD#8 shall ensure that such IEPs are in effect within 30 days of when a student is first identified as in need of special education services, and in effect no later than the beginning of each school year for subsequent IEPs. All IEPs must be reviewed at least annually, as prescribed by state and federal special education laws.

3. Students who are Currently Identified with Special Needs: Classroom teachers will receive a list of modifications and copies of a student's IEP from the Special Education department for students who have an IEP. This information is covered under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

(Policies [JKG](#) and [JKAA-R](#))

Employee Awareness: The plan will be accessible to employees through annual training and copies of the plan are available either through the main office or on the school website.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Parent/Student Rights

The following is a description of the rights granted by the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) to students identified as disabled under that law. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions.

You have the right to:

- Have your child take part in, and receive benefits from public education programs without discrimination because of his/her disability;
- Have the school district advise you of your rights under federal law;
- Receive notice from the school with respect to identification, evaluation, educational program or placement of your child or the filing of a due process hearing;
- Receive all information in the parent's/guardian's native language and primary mode of communication;
- Have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with non-handicapped students to the maximum extent appropriate. It also includes the right to have the school district make reasonable accommodations necessary for your child to benefit from his or her educational program;
- Have your child educated in comparable facilities and receive comparable services to those provided non-disabled students;
- Have your child receive special education and related services if your child is found to be eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act;
- Have evaluation, educational, and placement decisions based upon a variety of information sources, and made by persons familiar with the student, the evaluation data, and placement options;
- Have re-evaluation of your child, to the extent needed, when deciding upon significant changes in your child's educational program;
- Have your child receive an equal opportunity to participate in extra-curricular school activities;
- Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, and placement;

- Obtain copies of educational records at a reasonable cost unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records;
- A response from the school district to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of your child's records;
- Request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe 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 within a reasonable time, and advise you of the right to a hearing;
- File a grievance through local grievance procedures, file a complaint with the federal Office for Civil Rights, or request an impartial hearing on decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program or placement. You and the student may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you. Questions about how to request a hearing may be forwarded to Superintendent Katrina Kane at (207) 863-4800 or katrina.kane@vinalhavenschool.org;
- Have the decisions made by hearing officers or others reviewed in state or federal court;
- Information concerning low-cost or free legal counseling

The staff members in this district who are responsible for assuring that the district complies with Section 504 is Jennifer Feezor, who can be reached at (207)863-4800 or jennifer.feezor@vinalhavenschool.org.

Upon request, this notice is available in large print and on audio tape from the ADA/504 compliance coordinators.

Title 1

Title I is a federal program that provides funds to school districts and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children who are disadvantaged to support a variety of services. Its overall purpose is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and assessments. Critical program elements include:

- *District Parent/Family Involvement Policy*

Parents play a primary role in accelerating the achievement of their children and, as such, the VS encourages parent participation of all children in activities and conversations that will enhance the home school relationship, will extend the ability of parents to support academic opportunities, and will encourage involvement in their child's learning. Parents are encouraged to contact the school to review opportunities for home-school involvement and to review the Parent Involvement Policy.

- *School and ParentFamily Compact*

Each year the Parent Family Compact is reviewed by school leadership, Title 1 staff, and parents. Any feedback is considered and revisions are shared.

- *Title I Parent/Family Involvement Plan*

Under Title I, Part A, schools must convene an annual meeting to inform parents of their school's participation in Title I, Part A programs, to explain the Title I, Part A requirements, how the Title I students will be assessed, how the parents will be kept informed, and the right of parents to be involved in those programs.

Parent school connections are a primary component of schoolwide programs. Schools hold parent teacher conferences annually although conferences are available to parents during the year at mutually convenient times.

- *Title I Parent/Family Notification*

Title I can help our students to meet the high standards of Maine's state assessment in reading and math. Vinalhaven School has a Schoolwide Title I Program in which Title I, Part A funds are used to upgrade the entire educational program in the school so all students may benefit.

Activities and intervention are a part of the approved schoolwide plan or Comprehensive Needs Assessments,(CNA) and support an identified academic need through the school's CNA Plan. The Comprehensive Needs Assessment will be presented at the August Board meeting outlining last year's progress and next year's goals. The funds that Vinalhaven receives are based on the number of students enrolled in the school and the percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced price meals.

There are three federal grants that our schools will apply for this year - Title I, Title II, and Title IV.

- Title I provides supplemental funds to help students reach proficiency in reading and math. Students are chosen for Title I services based on assessments.
- Title II provides supplemental funds to provide professional development for staff. The training topics are chosen based on student achievement and teachers' and administrators' assessments of need.
- Title IV is intended to support well rounded education programs, safe and healthy students, and technology integration. Usually all Title IV funds are transferred into Title I and Title II because they support the same school initiatives.

The Continued Goals for 2025-26 school year:

- *Math: Targeted students will achieve 5% growth on the math Maine Through Year Assessment (NWEA) by spring 2025.*
- *Reading: Targeted students will achieve 5% growth on the reading Maine Through Year Assessment (NWEA) by spring 2025.*
- *Attendance: The Vinalhaven School students will achieve a 5% reduction in chronic absenteeism by spring 2025. Our consultant works with us to track the data and gives us a summary at the end of the year.*

If you would like to learn more about the ESEA Grants, have a conversation about the grants, or if you would like to give feedback about how the grants are used, please email Robb Warren at robert.warren@vinalhavenschool.org.

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:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the MSAD#8 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.
- 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 MSAD#8 to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school Principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.
 - If the MSAD#8 decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the MSAD#8 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.
- The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
 - One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school unit 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 school unit 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/her tasks.
 - A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility.
 - Upon request, the MSAD#8 discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by MSAD#8 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.
Washington, DC 20202-4605

- The MSAD#8 may make public at its discretion personally identifiable information from the education records of a student without parental consent if that information has been designated as directory information by the school. This school unit has designated the following information as directory information: the student's name, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of athletes, and honors and awards received.
 - Such information will not be disclosed if the parent of the student informs the school unit in writing within 10 days of the first student day of the school year or within 10 days after enrollment, that such information is not to be designated as directory information with respect to that student. Any such notice should be sent to the Superintendent of Schools at the following address:
MSAD#8-Supt of Schools
22 Arcola Lane
Vinalhaven, ME 04863
 - Federal law permits military recruiters and institutions of higher learning to request and receive the names, addresses and telephone numbers of high school students upon request, unless the student's parent or eligible student notifies the school unit that he/she does not want such information released. Such information will not be disclosed if the student's parent or eligible student notifies the school unit, in writing, that such information should not be released without his/her written consent. Any such notice should be sent to:
MSAD#8-Supt of Schools
22 Arcola Lane
Vinalhaven, ME 04863
- Under Maine law, MSAD#8 shall not publish on the Internet without written parental consent any information whether directory or otherwise, that identifies a student, including but not limited to the student's full name, photograph, personal biography, e-mail address, home address, date of birth, social security number and parents' names.

Vinalhaven School Behavior Expectations

To ensure an excellent learning environment, all members of the school community are expected to be FAIR, HONEST, KIND, RESPECTFUL, and RESPONSIBLE.

In most cases, when a student is not meeting these expectations, the classroom teacher will handle the situation using classroom management strategies and discipline and/or conflict resolution. The steps and strategies that the classroom teachers and administrators take are based on the developmental needs of the student. Behavior issues **should be handled** by the Classroom Teacher before referral to the office, following the [Code of Conduct](#).

Pre-K-12 Student Contact: Vinalhaven School was designed on the premise that students at different development levels have different academic and social needs. This premise is reflected in the four wings of the school (Pre-K-1, 2-5, 6-8, 9-12). Vinalhaven School works to maximize the benefits of our Pre-K-12 school community by planning structured multi-age learning activities. Students are only permitted in wings other than their own with permission from a staff member.

The School Board has approved a very detailed [Code of Conduct](#) which outlines and clarifies standards of student responsibility for behavior, defines unacceptable behavior, establishes consequences for violations, and provides a protocol for handling discipline. Students should always strive to be role models for their peers and younger students.

Student Discipline

(Policy [JK](#))

It is essential for schools to maintain a safe and orderly environment that supports student learning and achievement. Good discipline allows the schools to discharge their primary responsibilities to educate students and promote good citizenship. All students are expected to conduct themselves with respect for others and in accordance with School Board policies, school rules, and applicable state and federal laws. Disciplinary action may be taken against students who violate policies, rules, or laws, and/or whose conduct directly interferes with the operations, discipline, or general welfare of the school.

The Board expects the following principles to guide the development and implementation of school rules and disciplinary procedures.

- Discipline should emphasize positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior, as well as appropriate consequences for misbehavior. The focus should be on providing a school environment where students are engaged in constructive learning and interactions with others.
- Expectations for student behavior should be clear and communicated to school staff, students, and parents.
- Consequences for misbehavior should be in proportion to the offense, fair, and consistently enforced.

- Parents should be actively involved in the process of preventing and resolving disciplinary problems at school.

Bullying

(Policy [JICK](#))

The Board believes that bullying, including cyberbullying, is detrimental to student well-being and to student learning and achievement. It interferes with the mission of the schools to educate their students and disrupts the operations of the schools. Bullying affects not only students who are targets but also those who participate in and witness such behavior.

Retaliation for the reporting of incidents of such behavior is also prohibited.

In adopting this policy, it is not the Board's intent to prohibit students from expressing their ideas, including religious, political and philosophical views that may offend the sensibilities of others, or from engaging in civil debate. However, the Board does not condone and will take action in response to conduct that directly interferes with students' rights at school under applicable laws or with the educational mission, operations, discipline or general welfare of the schools.

Definition of Bullying

"Bullying" and "cyberbullying" have the same meaning in this policy as in Maine law:

Bullying includes, but is not limited to a written, oral or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof directed at a student or students that:

- Has, or a reasonable person would expect it to have, the effect of:
 - Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property; or
 - Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to his/her property;
- Interferes with the rights of a student by:
 - Creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment for the student; or
 - Interfering with the student's academic performance or ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by the school; or
- Is based on:
 - A student's actual or perceived characteristics identified in 5 MRSA § 4602 or 4684-A (including race; color; ancestry; national origin; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; religion; physical or mental disability) or other distinguishing personal characteristics (such as socioeconomic status; age; physical appearance; weight; or family status); or

- A student's association with a person with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics or any other distinguishing characteristics;

Cyberbullying: "Cyberbullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including but not limited to, a transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted by the use of any electronic device including, but not limited to, a computer, telephone, cellular telephone, text messaging device or personal digital assistant.

Application of Policy: This policy ([JICK](#)) applies to bullying that:

- Takes place at school or on school grounds, at any school-sponsored or school-related activity or event or while students are being transported to or from school or school-sponsored activities or events; or
- Takes place elsewhere or through the use of technology, but only if the bullying also infringes on the rights of the student at school as set forth in the definition of "bullying."

Employee Awareness: The plan will be accessible to employees through annual training and copies of the plan are available either through the main office or on the school website.

Pre K-12 Dress Code

(Policy [JICH](#))

Students have the right to wear clothing that allows for free expression. But, there are legal exceptions to what individuals can wear. For example, students cannot wear items that advertise or promote activities that are illegal for minors. By law, students are not permitted to wear articles of clothing or anything worn on the body that:

- include vulgar, obscene or sexual material (this includes but not limited to Hooters, and Yankees S**K shirts),
- is disruptive to the instructional or educational opportunities of others. This includes overly revealing clothing such as clothes that by design, or because of holes or tears, reveal bust, cleavage, stomach, sides, backs, bottoms or underwear when either standing or sitting; extremely tight clothing or garments shorter than mid-thigh (otherwise known as the fingertip rule: hem lines are not above the fingertips when hands are held down at sides). Shirt straps must be at least two fingers wide.
- poses a safety threat or suggests violence.

Student Use of Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices Procedure

At the direction of the board, the school is going cell phone free from 8:00 AM to 2:40 PM.

The board wants our classrooms to be a place where students can learn without distractions. Our cell phone policy says that devices like cell phones, earbuds, and other electronics should

not interrupt teaching or learning during the school day. To this end, the school was tasked to develop a phone procedure to reduce distractions and increase student focus.

Starting with the 25-26 school year, **every student in grades 6–12 will be assigned their own personal YONDR pouch**. While the YONDR pouch is considered school property, students will be responsible for using it correctly each day. This will help everyone stay focused on learning.

Here is how it will work each day:

1. **Morning:** At 8:00 AM, students will go to their Period 1/Homeroom class. They will put their phone into their assigned YONDR pouch, lock it, and keep the pouch with them for the day.
2. **During the Day:** Students will carry their locked pouch all day. Phones will stay inside the pouch and may not be used during the school day.
3. **End of the Day:** Students will return to their Period 1/Homeroom class. The teacher will unlock the pouch, and students will take out their phone.
4. **Late Arrival / Early Dismissal:** Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch or unpouch their phone in the school secretary's office or the principal's office.

Violations – Pouch Damage / Lost Pouch / Using Phone During School

If a student damages their pouch, loses it, or is caught using their phone during the school day, the administration will collect the phone and pouch. We will then call home to schedule a meeting with a parent/guardian.

Students must follow all school rules for using electronic devices. Phones may not be used to bother or bully others, take photos or videos without permission, or be used in any way that breaks the law or school rules.

We know that some students may need a phone for a medical reason. If this is the case, please contact the school so we can make a plan.

Thank you for your help in keeping our school a safe and focused place for learning.

When a student violates this procedure, the school may take any or all of the actions listed in the [Code of Conduct](#).

Student Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Use

(Policy [JICH](#))

To promote the highest possible standards of learning, as well as the physical, social and emotional well-being of students, this policy is designed to aid students in abstaining from the unlawful use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs; provide for early intervention when use is detected; and, provide disciplinary action when necessary.

Any school staff member who has reason to suspect that a student has violated this policy is expected to report the incident to an appropriate administrator immediately.

Prevention: The Vinalhaven School will provide students with information and activities focused on abstaining from the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Such information and activities will address the legal, social, and health consequences of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and will provide information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure to use illicit drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. The Vinalhaven School will work in partnership with students, parents/guardians, and local law enforcement officials to eliminate these risks for all students.

Intervention: The Vinalhaven School has a Guidance Counselor and Social Worker to provide non-clinical chemical health assessments, assist students in addressing their harmful involvement with chemicals, and in continuing their educational program. Information will be provided, as appropriate, about drug, alcohol, or tobacco counseling and treatment, and programs that are available to students.

Rules and Sanctions: Students are prohibited from consuming, possessing, furnishing, selling, receiving, buying, manufacturing, or being under the influence of prohibited substances before, during, and after school hours, at school, in any school building, on any school premises, in any school-owned vehicle or in any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities, off school property at any school-sponsored or school-approved activity, event or function (such as a field trip or athletic event) where students are under the jurisdiction of the school unit, or at any time or place if the conduct directly interferes with the operation, discipline or welfare of the schools.

The term “prohibited substance” shall include, but not be limited to:

- Alcohol;
- Scheduled drugs (as defined in 17-A MRSA § 1101);
- Controlled substances (as defined in the federal Controlled Substances Act, 21 USC § 812);
- Tobacco products of any kind;
- Prescription drugs not prescribed for the student and/or not in compliance with the Board’s policy on administering medications to students (see Board policy JLCD);
- Any substance or behavior which can affect or change a student’s mental, physical or behavior pattern, including but not limited to volatile materials such as glue, paint or aerosols (when possessed for the purpose of inhalation) or steroids;
- Paraphernalia – implements used for distribution or consumption of a prohibited substance; or

- Any look-alike drug or substance that is described as or is purported to be a prohibited substance defined in this section.

Any violation of the terms of this policy shall constitute sufficient grounds for student discipline, including suspension or expulsion from school, at the appropriate discretion of the administration and the Board. Law enforcement authorities may also be notified of violations of this policy. Students who participate in extracurricular activities are subject to additional rules and sanctions.

Live Links

- [Planned Absence](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [JICJ](#) Student use of cell phones
- [JEA](#) Attendance Policy
- [JICH](#) Drugs/Alcohol Policy
- [JICK](#) Bullying
- [JICH](#) Dress Code
- [JK](#) Student Discipline
- [IKF](#) High School Grad Requirements
- [IIA-1](#) Grading and Credit Policy
- [ILA](#) Student Assessment
- [IHCDA](#) Post Secondary Options
- [IMDB](#) Instruction Exemptions
- [JL](#) Student Wellness
- [IHBAC](#) Child Find
- [IHBA](#) IEPs
- [JKG](#) Physical Restraint
- [JKAA-R](#) Seclusion
- [Sports Handbook](#)
- [College](#) Request Form