

Voorheesville Elementary School Handbook

Voorheesville Elementary School Bill of Rights

We the students of the Voorheesville Elementary School, as responsible school citizens, are entitled to the following rights:

1. The right to a school system where learning occurs and every student is important
2. The right to respectfully express our opinions
3. The right to a clean environment
4. The right to be treated in a fair and impartial manner and have an opportunity to explain our actions
5. The right to be free from all types of abuse

Attendance

The school day begins at 8:45 a.m. and ends at 3:10 p.m. Arrival begins at 8:30 a.m. and students are considered late after 8:40 a.m. Dismissal starts at 3:10 p.m.

If your child misses the bus, and it is necessary to bring him/her to school, please make sure he/she does not arrive at the classroom before the starting time, 8:30 a.m. Your child is now a member of the Voorheesville Central School system. His/her attendance is recorded daily.

Attendance at school is one of the first learning habits or attitudes acquired by your children. You are the teacher in this matter. Your attitude will usually determine that of your child. School attendance is a responsibility which you and your child must accept. Your child's attitudes about this responsibility may influence their attitude toward other responsibilities throughout their lives.

Regular attendance is extremely important to the success of each child in school, and the parents' role in attendance is vital. Whenever possible, outside appointments for children should be made during hours when school is not in session. We particularly discourage taking children on vacation during regular school days. Parents teach responsibility by insisting that children attend school when classes are in session. Although work can be made up, the classroom time itself can never be substituted.

Absentee Call In Procedure

To report that a student will be absent for any reason, parents should notify the school before 8:40 a.m. by using one of the following communication methods:

Send an email to esattendance@voorheesville.org

Call the elementary school at 518-765-2382 and select 4 to reach the attendance line.

Please include the following information when reporting an absence:

Student name

Date(s) of absence

Reason for absence (be specific)

Parent or Guardian reporting the absence

In instances of communicable illness, parents may choose to report contagious symptoms such as vomiting, fever, pink eye, etc.

Your communication regarding absences will assure us that your child is safe at home. If we have not received notification from home, parent(s) of absent children will be contacted by the school for verification

If a student needs to be absent from school, a written excuse is also required. Please provide the following information on a note and send to school on the day the student returns:

- Student name
- Date(s) of absence
- Reason for absence (be specific)
- Parents' or guardian's signature

The absences noted below are considered legal and will be excused by school authorities:

1. Illness or injury
2. Medical or dental appointment
3. Death in the immediate family
4. Religious observance
5. Court appearance

If a student is absent for two or more days and is able to work at home, parents should make arrangements for work to be brought to them or picked up at school. Work can be provided for excused absences only. Unexcused absences or vacations do not warrant work to be provided by a teacher. Completing this work will enable the student to feel more successful and not as overwhelmed upon his/her return.

Late arrivals and early dismissals must be signed in or out at the office. No student will be dismissed directly from a classroom. Students arriving **after 10 a.m.** or leaving **before 2 p.m.** will be noted as a half day absent.

Assemblies

Assemblies are an integral part of each student's educational program. The Building Leadership Team presents a number of assemblies throughout the year. On occasion, individual classes also prepare and present performances that are viewed by appropriate grade levels and parents/guardians(if applicable). Due to space and trying to accommodate all of our families, school-age siblings of performers will not be permitted to attend family performances unless their particular class is attending. Our students will all be given an opportunity to see these performances at a different time.

Please park in the parking lot across the creek. Overflow parking is located at St. Matthew's Church.

Behavior

Philosophy

Most students attend school with the purpose of improving themselves academically and emotionally, while fulfilling their responsibility as students. The majority of students have a positive attitude toward their school, an understanding that they have a responsibility to behave in an orderly and respectful manner, and seldom have problems with school rules, as indicated by demonstrating appropriate behavior.

The principal, teachers, counseling personnel, parents, and students will work together in an effort to identify potential discipline problems as early as possible and seek solutions. It is our role to model appropriate behavior and use any student behavior difficulties as teachable moments. It is important that all students know and understand our school rules because this will give them a reason to support those rules.

Unfortunately, there are times when there must be consequences for actions. Consequences will be applied in a firm, fair, and consistent manner. The purpose of such actions is not necessarily to punish, but to redirect students so that their future behavior may improve.

These guidelines for behavior apply to all school programs before, during, and after the school day. Students should become familiar with these guidelines. Those who understand and follow these rules will help create a school that has an academically and socially safe atmosphere.

General Rules

Students are expected:

- to be responsible for each other's safety by not pushing, shoving, hitting, or throwing objects, making threats to harm others, or participating in any other
- to have respect for the personal property of others and for school property
- to avoid bad language and verbal abuse (profanity, insults, teasing, name, etc.)
- to keep our classrooms, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, and playground free of litter, markings, etc.
- to not chew gum while in school, unless it is utilized as a sensory tool and approved by school personnel.
- to behave in a polite manner
- to not bring anything to school that could result in an injury (to oneself or others), or anything that serves as a weapon of any kind (including but not limited to: knives, firearms, sharp objects, dangerous substances)
- to learn and practice positive communication skills and problem-solving skills to manage disagreements or personal conflicts with peers

In the Classroom

Students are expected:

- to obey teachers, aides, and other adult supervisors.
- to behave in a way that does not interfere with the learning of others.
- to follow individual classroom rules.
- Students are not allowed to wear hats or hoods unless for medical or religious reasons and/or specified spirit days.
- Personal items, including toys, purses, hair brushes, will be left in their cubby/locker.

In the Cafeteria

Students are expected:

- to eat with good table manners.
- to not throw food.
- to remain seated until given permission to leave their seat.

- to move through the lunch line in an orderly fashion.
- to clean up their table area when finished eating.
- to keep all lunch foods in the cafeteria.
- to talk quietly.
- to avoid bringing beverages in glass bottles as part of lunch.

In the Hallways and Stairwells

Students are expected:

- to respect the displays and hallway bulletin boards.
- to walk, not run, and to stay to the right while walking through the hallways.
- to move from place to place in an orderly, quiet manner
- remain quiet so others may stay focused
- Stay with your class or partner and go directly to your destination

At Assemblies

Students are expected:

- enter and exit the room in a quiet and orderly manner.
- to listen and watch attentively to the programs presented
- applaud and participate when you are asked to
- stay in your spot or class area with a calm body

At Recess

Students are expected:

- remain in assigned areas and follow recess procedures
- keep hands feet and objects to self and in control
- respond to adult directions right away
- play fair and to include others in their games.
- to share playground equipment and use it properly and safely.
- to not interfere in the games of others.
- respect the personal space of others (Refer to general school rules for examples)
- put away equipment after use

Disciplinary Action

Discipline is most effective when it addresses behavior promptly, in the environment where it occurs, and in a manner that students view as fair, consistent, and impartial. School personnel are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to focus on supporting students in developing self-discipline and pro-social behavior.

Before initiating a formal referral or involving administration, teachers are expected to implement a range of classroom-based strategies designed to address and correct behavior, while maintaining a positive and supportive learning environment. These proactive approaches help prevent minor issues from escalating into more serious disciplinary matters.

Examples of appropriate early interventions include, but are not limited to:

- Private conversations with the student
- Providing the student with a break or time to de-escalate
- Verbal redirection or correction
- Adjusting seating arrangements
- Offering alternative tasks or choices
- Loss of classroom privileges
- Contacting parents or guardians
- Assigning teacher detention
- Creating a classroom behavior plan
- Using restorative practices
- Referring the student to the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

These strategies are part of the teacher's professional responsibility and serve as the foundation for a consistent and constructive school-wide approach to behavior. Formal referrals should only occur after reasonable classroom interventions have been attempted and documented, unless the behavior is severe or poses an immediate safety concern.

Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair, and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary penalties will consider the following:

1. The student's age.
2. The nature of the offense and the circumstances that led to the offense.
3. The student's prior disciplinary record.
4. The effectiveness of other forms of discipline.
5. Information from parents/guardians, teachers, and/or others, as appropriate.
6. Other extenuating circumstances.

As a general rule, discipline will be progressive. This means that a student's first violation will usually merit a lighter penalty than subsequent violations. The range of penalties includes:

- verbal reprimand;
- Parent contact/conference
- Confiscation of electronic devices
- Removal, replacement or covering of an item that violates the dress code ;
- loss of privileges (i.e., recess, attendance /participation in special programs);
- detention;
- removal from the classroom by the teacher;
- In School Suspension

Parents will be notified of serious infractions and the consequences, and provided an opportunity for a conference. Teachers may remove students from their classrooms who are substantially disruptive to the educational process. A student identified as having a disability shall not be disciplined for behavior related to his or her disability. In all discipline matters, students are entitled to due process. Serious infractions that violate the law will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Please refer to the Voorheesville Central District's [Code of Conduct policy](#) for further details.

Bullying and Harassment Policy

[To view the Voorheesville Central District's policy on Student Harassment, Hazing, or Bullying Prevention and Intervention please click on this link.](#)

Dignity for All Students Act

Voorheesville Central School District complies with the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) passed into law effective July 1, 2012. Student harassment is prohibited on school property or at school functions. Harassment is defined as conduct, or verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that interferes with a student's educational performance, benefits or opportunities, emotional or physical well-being of which causes a student to fear for his or her safety. This extends to cyber bullying that occurs on or off school property. Also prohibited is student discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex. Any person having reasonable cause to suspect that a student is being subjected to discrimination or harassment should report the suspicions to the building principal. People who report such incidents in good faith are immune from civil liability and from retaliation. [Please refer to the Code of Conduct for more information.](#)

Closing School

Please sign up for our [ParentSquare](#) messaging system to receive instant updates to your phone or email.

School closings will be announced as early as possible once a decision has been made. The best form of notification of this information would be to sign up for ParentSquare. By signing up you will receive this information by an email or it can even be sent to your cell phone. Closings may also be found on some local news stations/websites, such as; WNYT, WRGB, WTEN, Spectrum News, and www.timesunion.com.

During the school day, if weather forecasts may cause an early dismissal, please check for updates regarding dismissal procedures. With well over 500 students we need your help and cooperation to run the buses on schedule. Please work with your child to make sure he/she knows what to do if no one is at home or a door is locked. Making alternate arrangements early in the school year will enable your child to be aware of a safe place to go. **If school is opening late or closing early, keep in mind that Kids Club will also be closed.**

Computer Policy

The computer is a tool that is used daily in instruction. Students in all grades are provided e-mail accounts as some instruction does utilize the internet and digital resources. The access to internet sites is strictly controlled in the primary grades.

Voorheesville Central School District provides students with access to District computers and the Internet. Students' use of computers and access to the Internet while at school are privileges and are intended to be for educational purposes only.

- All parents and students are required to review the District's Technology User Agreement and Parent Permission Form.
- Failure to comply with the regulations may result in disciplinary action.
- The District's Technology User Agreement and Parent Permission Form is for educational use, and the District's regulations are not necessarily all-inclusive due to this rapidly changing field. The Technology

User Agreement and Parent Permission Form references the following policies, which can be found on the VCSD website: Acceptable Use(4526), Internet Safety (4526.1), Code of Conduct (5300), and Harassment, Discrimination, Hazing, and Bullying (0115).

- Students and Personal Electronic Devices are prohibited per policy 5695. Devices restricted by this policy include “internet-enabled devices” and other personal electronic devices capable of receiving or sending calls or messages, collectively “Restricted Devices.”

Counseling

Counseling at the elementary level is a responsibility shared by our school counselor, social worker, the entire staff and parents. The elementary school counseling staff meets with teachers, students and parents in order to improve a student’s school performance, behavior and adjustment, self image, and social relationships. The counseling program also strives to make students more aware and knowledgeable of their strengths, talents and special aptitudes.

Disciplinary Action of Students with Disabilities

All students classified by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) are in general expected to follow the school’s rules and regulations.

For more specific information on Discipline of Students with Disabilities, please refer to the Voorheesville Central School District Code of Conduct.

Early Dismissal Requests

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are encouraged not to pick up their children prior to dismissal unless an emergency arises or appointments (dentist, doctor) could not be arranged for after school hours. In such instances, parents must come to the main office to sign their child out and meet their child.

Electronics:

In accordance with BOE policy 5695 Students and Personal Electronic Devices students are generally prohibited from using personal internet-enabled devices during the school day 8:30-3:00 anywhere on school grounds. If brought to school, these items should be left in backpacks and turned off.

Personal “internet-enabled devices” means and includes smartphones, tablets, smartwatch, or other devices capable of connecting to the internet. Other restricted personal electronic devices include voice and text only cell phones, beepers, or other devices capable of receiving or sending calls or messages.

If parents/guardians need to be able to contact their child during the school day please call the Main Office at 518-765-2382. There are phones available for student use for emergencies in the Main Office.

If a student is seen with a personal electronic device during the school day, it will be confiscated and then it will be stored in a locked safe in either the main office.

- 1st offense: Device may be picked up at the end of the school day.
- Further Offenses: Board of Education policy states that the device must be picked up by the parent/guardian.

Emergency Contacts

The school should have a record for each child with the following information:

1. The parents' or guardians' phone numbers, both at home and at the place of employment
2. The name and phone number of a person to be called in an emergency if the parent(s)/ guardian(s) cannot be reached. Should the child become injured or ill at school, the nurse will first call the parent. If no response can be obtained, the emergency contact designated will then be called.
3. Parent/Guardian phone contact information should be updated annually. Should parent or emergency contact information change, please notify the main office promptly so that the adjustments can be made in our student information system.

Emergency Drills

Students will practice a number of safety drills throughout the year. Our school is required by law to have twelve fire drills during each school year. Students are informed on the opening day of school of exit plans and proper behavior.

Other drills include bus drills, hold in place drills, evacuation drills, lock out drills, and lockdown drills. Every attempt is made to treat these drills as a learning experience, and is done in a non-threatening way.

Notification will go out to families prior to such drills.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act- FERPA (5500)

In order to provide students with appropriate instructional and educational services, it is necessary for the district to maintain extensive and sometimes personal information on them and their families. It is essential that pertinent information in these records be readily available to appropriate school personnel as well as being accessible to the student's parents or legal guardian and/or the student in accordance with the law, yet be guarded as confidential information. Student education records and personally identifiable information contained in a student's education records may not be released or disclosed without the prior written consent of the parent/guardian of a student under 18 years of age or a student over 18 years of age, except as otherwise authorized by law. When parents/legal guardians or students over the age of 18 inspect student records, appropriate school personnel must be present. Under no circumstances may student records be removed from school premises.

Field Trips

Field trips provide an alternative possible means of instruction for children. Whenever field trips are within a reasonable distance and are correlated with courses of study, arrangements are made to include them in instruction.

Prior to the trip, a permission slip will be sent home. This must be signed by the parent if the child is to be allowed to accompany the class on the trip. At times, parents are asked to accompany groups to ensure adequate supervision.

Grade Promotion and Placement Policy

Decisions about student promotion and placement are at the discretion of the building principal. These decisions are guided by recommendations of teachers and staff members, past academic performance, and

parent/guardian input. Past academic performance refers to a variety of indicators of student achievement and growth. The district's promotion and placement policy was adopted by the Board of Education following a review by the district administration.

- Promotion and placement decisions are not based solely, or primarily, on student performance on New York state assessments in grades 3-8 English language arts or mathematics. At VES, we use multiple data measures to support these decisions.

Health Services/Requirements

The elementary school nurse works with the school medical director, school administration, parents, teachers and students in the prevention of health problems, and in their correction when health problems already exist.

General Duties of School Nurse:

1. Triage, assessment, and care of students with an illness or injury.
2. Medication administration.
3. Case management for students with health care needs.
4. Development of an Individualized Health Plan and Emergency Care Plans for students with IEPs and other health care needs that will help to instruct school staff in actions to take when a health professional is not present.
5. Conduct vision, hearing, and scoliosis screenings in the required grade levels according to NYS Education law.
6. Send home, in a safe and proper manner, any student showing signs of any communicable or infectious disease reportable under Public Health law.
7. Provide emergency health care to any student or staff in need.
8. Communicating with students and families, along with school personnel as needed, regarding student's health and health care needs.
9. Connecting students and families with community providers and health insurance.

Provisions of New York State Education Law Regarding Administration of Medication during School Hours:

Precise procedures must be established to protect the individual concerned and all other pupils. Any medication left in the classroom or carried by an individual is a potential source of danger to the entire school population.

There are distinctly different circumstances when, under specified regulations, a medication prescribed by a private provider, may be administered to a pupil during school hours. Requirements for the administration of internal medication are as follows:

- a. The school nurse must have, on file, a written request from a medical provider in which he or she indicates the prescribed medication name, frequency, dosage, as well as the reason for giving it.
- b. The school nurse must have, on file, a written request from the parent to administer the medication as specified by the medical provider.

- c. The medication should be delivered directly to the school nurse by the parent. No medication should be sent to the school nurse by a student. The temptation to share a single dose or multiple doses is a real danger.
- d. Medication should be brought to school in a labeled container (if a prescribed medication, should be a pharmacy label). The medication will be kept in the school nurse's office in a locked cabinet.
- e. New York State Education Law applies to over-the-counter medications as well as prescription drugs. Cough drops, Tylenol, cold remedies cannot be given without the proper documentation.

When any member of the school staff observes a student carrying or taking a medication, that individual has a responsibility to refer the pupil to the school nurse. The school nurse will contact the parent and set up the proper procedure for administration of medicine.

Health Appraisal

Education Law requires that each furnish a health examination prior to entrance to K, 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th and 11th grades, and if the student is new to the district, upon registration. If your family physician cannot make this appraisal, the school medical provider will perform this service at your request.

If the student is required by his/her medical provider to take medicine during the school day, the parent should present a written request from the medical provider to the nurse as outlined above.. Students may not carry over-the-counter (OTC) medicine to or from school, or with them while they are in school. A note from the parent and medical provider must accompany any OTC medicine, and the parent must transport the medicine.

If a child is not allowed to go outside due to illness for more than one day, a medical provider's note is required.

New York State requires hearing, vision and scoliosis screening when not performed on the last medical provider exam, as well as verification of updated immunizations. Specific information will be sent home from the nurse's office.

Hygiene Education

Each year, the school nurse addresses proper hygiene with students. Topics include physical, dental, and mental health hygiene. There is also a maturation presentation given to all fifth-grade students at the end of the school year. If you have any questions about what may be covered, please contact the school nurse.

Home/School Communications

The home and school have a joint responsibility for a child's personal, social, and educational development. Individual parent/teacher conferences can be one of the most productive means of assuring home/school planning. Opportunities for conferences are offered during the year as a regular procedure. Both parents and teachers are encouraged to maintain contact with each other in order to assess student progress.

Homework

Homework is designed to give students an opportunity to practice the skills they have been learning in class, to develop the habit of organizing and using time efficiently, to apply knowledge learned in school, and to prepare for further learning. Homework should help develop the student's sense of responsibility by providing an opportunity for the exercise of independent work and judgment.

Homework important enough to be assigned should be evaluated or used to support classroom instruction. Grade level teachers are expected to have consistent expectations when it comes to homework assignments. Parents are encouraged to monitor homework assignments and, to the extent possible, provide conditions that are conducive to their successful completion.

Reading Students in grades K-2 are expected to read or be read to for a minimum of 15 minutes each night. Students in grades 3-5 are expected to read or be read to for a minimum of 20 minutes each night.

Mathematics Fact fluency is an essential skill for the academic success of students in mathematics. Students in grades K-5 will be expected to practice their math facts regularly.

Teachers may assign homework in other content areas as necessary.

The estimated time for homework, in addition to nightly reading homework, is as follows:

- 1st Grade – 20 minutes/week
- 2nd Grade – 30 minutes/week
- 3rd Grade – 40 minutes/week
- 4th/5th Grade – 50-60 minutes/week

Lunch Program

Voorheesville Elementary School students use four-digit pin numbers to make purchases from the cafeteria. The students will enter their numbers on a key pad at the cash register; which will bring up their photo, confirming that the right account is being charged. This process helps lessen the time students wait in line for their meals, snacks or beverages. This system is also used in the middle/high school building.

The students will be given their lunch cards -with pin number -to bring to the cafeteria until they have the number memorized. The teacher will collect the cards back for safe keeping each day. Once the pin number is memorized, the card will not have to be brought to lunch. The teacher will have the cards should the student need a reminder.

The 2025-2026 Executive Budget amended New York State Education Law by adding Section 915a ***Universal Free School Meals***.

Beginning in the school year 2025-2026, New York State School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the Federal school lunch and/or breakfast programs are required to provide reimbursable school meals at no cost to all students.

Families can find detailed monthly meal menus, free and reduced meal application forms on our website at: <https://www.voorheesville.org/departments/food-services/>

The accepted means of paying for food or beverage items are cash, check, or MySchoolBucks payment. Cash and checks are accepted and processed with no fee. MySchoolBucks includes convenience fees depending on the type of payment. These fees all go to Heartland Payment Systems (owner of MySchoolBucks). None of it is kept by the school. Paying by credit card through MySchoolBucks incurs a fixed \$3.25 per transaction with a credit card for school lunch and 4.95% for school store payments. Paying by e-check incurs a fixed fee of \$2.75 per transaction. To minimize this fixed fee, there is an annual option for e-check transactions that can be

accessed through MySchoolBucks. The annual fee is \$12.95 per child or \$26.95 per family (more than 2 children) and allows unlimited e-check transactions with no additional fee.

To access the annual option from a computer:

1. Go to the MySchoolBucks website and sign in
2. In the upper right hand corner, click on person icon
3. Scroll down to membership
4. Follow steps from there

The district uses **My School Bucks** as a means for parents to create and monitor food service accounts for their children. This web-based program can be used to put money on the account (using a debit or credit card), and track purchases of food and beverages. Please visit the myschoolbucks tab on the Voorheesville Central School webpage or visit <https://www.myschoolbucks.com/>

Please write the student's full name and homeroom number on all bag lunches. There is a free lunch and reduced lunch program available. Eligibility is dependent upon family income. Interested families may call the main office or our Food Services Director (Paul Franchini) at 518-765-3314, ext. 2195 for more information.

Lunch/Recess

Students have a 60 minute lunch and recess period, of which about 30 minutes is used for eating. On the vast majority of days students go outdoors for recess. Children should dress accordingly. When weather does not permit going outdoors, recreational play will be in the gyms or classrooms.

Parent Nights

Each fall, parents are invited to participate in a parents' night. Meetings are scheduled by class and grade level in order for parents to have the opportunity to meet with the children's teachers, more clearly understand the curriculum, and receive a general overview of the programs. Specific conferences are encouraged but should be scheduled for another time.

Parents Driving Students To and From School

- **Bringing to school:** Students should be dropped off by the bridge in the parking lot. An adult is on duty from 8:30-8:45 to supervise students' safe entrance into the building.

Except for specifically arranged circumstances, children cannot enter school before 8:30. Students arriving past 8:45 are considered tardy and must report to the office with their parents to be signed in.

- **Picking up from school**

Prior to dismissal: When picking up a student for an appointment or other necessary situation, parents should park in the parking lot across the creek and report to the main office. The secretary will contact the student who will meet the parent in the office. If a note has been sent with the student, we will make every effort to have the child in the office at the prearranged time. No students may be dismissed from the classroom.

Parent pickup for daily dismissal -Make the main office and classroom teacher aware if your child will be picked up regularly at dismissal. Once the buses have departed, parents can drive in and circle the lot until they reach the curb. Parents should stay in their cars, and students will be released to them as they are called.

Parking

All visitors, parents, and teachers should park in the parking lot across the creek. The blacktop area in front of the school is a fire lane and must be kept clear in case of emergency situations. For safety reasons, it is imperative that no cars be parked in this area. There is very limited parking on the side of the building and during the school day. This should be used for short-term visits.

On days when there are a lot of visitors in the building, overflow parking is on Mountainview Street at St. Matthew's Church. Park in the lot across the street from the church; do not use the lot next to the church entrance.

Please do not park along roadways, as you will be ticketed.

Personal Data

The accuracy of your child's personal data is very important. For example, it may be necessary to reach the parent during the school day in an emergency.

Parents and Guardians should follow instructions to create a [parent portal account](#) with current up to date phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contact information.

Please notify the Main Office promptly of any changes in your phone number, address, place of employment, physician and emergency contacts if you are not available.

Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment- PPRA(5550)

PPRA affords parents and students who are 18 or emancipated minors (eligible students) certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

Note: See district website for complete regulation.

Photo Policy

There are a number of instances throughout the school year where there are opportunities for photographs of school events. They may be taken by a student teacher who is working on a portfolio or a classroom teacher documenting projects or field trips. Photos may be children working through a process with a visiting artist or children participating in a school day activity.

At times, we may use these photos for educational purposes to highlight in district publications or social media the many wonderful things that go on in our school. We will not specifically identify students by full name in the photographs (e.g. Bugler) or on the district website. On occasion a photographer from a news organization may be here for an event. Where they would like to identify students for the newspaper, we will ask for permission specific to the instance.

If you have objections to having your child's picture in publications or on the website, please submit the No Picture Request form that can be found on our website.

Program Descriptions

The following is designed to give a brief description of the many programs offered at school. If you are interested in greater detail in any of the areas please contact the appropriate teacher or the principal. More in depth information is also available at Parents' Night.

- **After School**

On Tuesdays through Thursdays there are after school late buses that leave the building between 3:40 and 3:45. This additional afternoon time provides students with opportunities to stay for such things as Drama Club, intramurals, Art Club, Student Council, Game Club, Builders Club, tutoring, and homework assistance.

- **Art**

The elementary art program is a comprehensive sequential art curriculum, and is based on the New York State Visual Art Standards. The program encourages students to experience and explore a variety of art forms and media. Its objectives are:

- to design skills and concepts through various 2-D and 3-D mediums
- to advance creative and critical thinking through personal expression
- to promote esthetic awareness through the elements of art
- to further students' knowledge of individual artists, past and present, through their study of their works.

Students meet once every 6 day cycle for 45 minutes. Students are encouraged to wear a smock of some type to protect their clothing from being damaged.

- **Community Resources**

- New Scotland Kiwanis offers baseball and soccer
- CYO offers basketball
- There is an active scouts program for both boys and girls
- Food pantries: New Scotland Food Pantry & the Blackbird School Community Shop
- Any questions on outside health services can be directed to the school nurse, and questions on counseling services can be directed to the school counselor.

- **Computers/Technology**

Students in grades kindergarten through grade five are given opportunities to work with computers in the classrooms.

- **Extra-curricular**

- Art Club – grades 4 & 5
- Drama Club – grade 5
- Writers Club – grade 5
- Science Fair – grades K-5
- Blackbird Helpers- grade 4

- Student Council – grade 5
- Intramurals- grades 3-5
- Go Beyond Programs – grades K-5
- Hand Chime Choir - grades 4 & 5
- Builders Club- grades 3-5
- Game Club- grades 3-5
- Chess Club- grades K-5
- Odyssey of the Mind - grades K-5

- **Counseling**

The elementary school has full time counseling staff who work with the children in a variety of ways. Teaching is done within all classrooms and small group meetings (Anxiety Group, Social Skills Group and Friendship Club) and other counseling support may be available or provided to address a variety of social or emotional needs.

- **Instrumental Program/Band**

The band program is available to all fifth-grade students. Instrumental lessons begin in mid-September and continue through the middle of May. Fifth-grade band meets twice per six-day cycle an hour before school, beginning in mid-November. Performances consist of a winter concert and spring Fine Arts Night, which are both held at the Lydia A. Tobler Performing Arts Center at the middle/high school campus.

- **Kids Club**

Kids Club is a before/after school program that is housed in the building but is owned and operated independently from the district. For information, please call 518-765-2043 or email thekidsclubinc295@gmail.com.

- **Library Media Center**

The Voorheesville Elementary School Library Media Center program supports 21st Century learners through encouraging each and every student to use our electronic and print resources to:

- Investigate research projects that support classroom learning
- Cultivate curiosity and discover interesting things about our world
- Create new ideas and products and...
- Develop a lifetime love of literature!

Students, staff, faculty, and parents are all encouraged to come to the media center to use our resources, check out books, seek research and media, and assistance, or simply ... READ! Our library staff consists of Mrs. Rappoccio, the Library Media Specialist, and two Library Assistants.

Regularly scheduled classes are taught by the Library Media Specialist during the majority of each school day. However, students may come to the library individually during the school day for research or book selection if arrangements have been made between the Library Staff and classroom teacher in advance.

Please feel free to contact us by phone at 518-765-2382, ext. 4214, or by email at arappoccio@voorheesville.org. We will make sure to get back to you in a timely manner. We look forward to seeing your student in the library!

Library loan Policy

Students are allotted 10 minutes at the end of each library class to browse books and check-out.

Students in **Kindergarten** may check out one book each week.

Students in **First through Fourth Grade** may check out two books each week.

Students in **Fifth Grade** may check out up to three books each week.

- **Mathematics**

Our mathematics program follows the scope and sequence of the skills recommended by New York State and the Common Core. A variety of other materials are used to introduce, supplement, reinforce, and enrich concepts, using small group guided instruction.

- **Music**

At each level, the music program meets the four national music standards: creating music, performing music, responding to music, and connecting to music. During classes, we sing, listen to music from a variety of cultures and styles, play instruments, dance, and read and compose music. Each year we build on the following concepts: rhythm, melody, form, expression (dynamics), and harmony. There are performances in the following grades: kindergarten (winter and spring choral concert), third grade (musical), fourth grade (Spring Fine Arts Day), fifth grade (winter band and chorus concert, spring musical, and Spring Fine Arts Night). In fifth grade, all students sing in chorus, as part of the fifth grade music curriculum.

- **Health/Safety Program**

The goals of our health program are to develop an appreciation for mental, physical, social and emotional health, to develop an understanding of the human body and to promote an understanding of personality development and the influence this development has on behavior. We use the Second Step curriculum to address age appropriate topics with each grade level topics presented at K-5 include: development and maintenance of a healthy body, development of a healthy personality, bullying (and effective anti-bullying strategies), the human body and its systems, dental health, personal safety, nutrition, substance abuse, and first aid.

- **Physical Education**

The physical education department offers a diversified program. Each student develops wide and varied interests. Competitive, lifetime, and team-building activities are incorporated into the program. The focus is based not only on skills and fitness but attitude, preparation, cooperation, leadership, conflict resolution, and sportsmanship. Some of the activities included are: the mile run, beep test, fitness building games, variations of dodge ball and capture the flag activities, circus arts, obstacle course, Project Adventure, and rhythms and dance. Traditional competitive sports are also included. To be excused from physical education for medical reasons for any extended period, the student must supply a signed note from the physician to be given to the school nurse. This note should include the reason and length of time the child will be excused and when he/she can return to full activity. A parental request for an excuse from physical education class for up to one week will be honored.

- **OT/PT**

The occupational and physical therapists identify those children with fine and gross motor needs in order to provide therapy for them. The therapists will contact parents of those students. Periodic communications with parents are made to apprise them of their child's progress in the program.

- **Reading/Writing**

The Voorheesville Elementary School's literacy program is based upon *Wonders*, a McGraw-Hill reading and writing program. *Wonders* is an evidence-based program with explicit lessons in the five pillars of the science of reading: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Text Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. This resource provides alignment between each of these components, creating a robust learning experience. Students will be reading and writing analytically and practicing foundational skills. Instruction occurs in whole-class, small-group, and one-on-one settings. Instruction is based upon continual assessments throughout the year. Such assessments include but are not limited to: New York State Assessments, Reading Running Records, and DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills).

- **Speech and Language**

The speech and language pathologist identifies those children with speech and hearing needs in order to provide therapy. The speech pathologist will contact parents of those students. Periodic communications with parents are made to apprise them of their child's progress in the program.

- **Remediation**

Additional instruction in all subject areas is available for students who need help mastering the material. These needs may be determined through assessments or through teacher recommendations. If your child is selected for one of these programs, you will be given detailed information.

- **Resource Room**

The resource room provides services for students with specific learning disabilities. Students who attend the resource room have been identified by the CSE (Committee on Special Education). The resource room concept allows children to receive the major part of their education in the regular classroom, yet spend some instructional time in a setting where specialized individualized help can be provided. Curriculum modifications and alternative testing strategies are available to assist each student in reaching his/her potential. The resource room teacher is trained and certified in special education.

- **School Psychologist**

The school psychologist provides psychological and testing services to students. Services include:

- Assessment of individual children who are thought to be experiencing learning, behavioral, social, and/or emotional difficulties that interfere with school success.
- Counseling, behavioral consultation with teachers and parents, interviewing, etc.
- Consultation with school personnel and parents through conferences and committee involvement.

A child can be referred to the school psychologist by a parent, teacher, school counselor, social worker or administrator. Parental permission is obtained before formal services are begun. If parents wish to

refer their child, they can contact the school psychologist directly. Informal discussions are often helpful in determining the nature of the referral.

If significant concerns exist about the development of a preschool child, the school psychologist can serve as a resource in securing appropriate services.

- **Science**

The goals of our science program are to develop an awareness of science in our society, foster scientific literacy and curiosity, provide awareness of career opportunities in science-related areas, and foster an appreciation for the qualities of nature. Topics explored during the elementary school experience include: weather, solar system, rocks and minerals, electricity, our five senses, magnetism, and ecology. Our science curriculum is aligned with the Next Generation learning standards. This experience further reinforces concepts taught in class.

- **Social Studies**

The content of our social studies program at Voorheesville is based upon the scope and sequence of the K-12 social studies program in New York State, and Common Core recommendations. Ten key concept goals are stressed throughout the K-5 curriculum. The standards include: change, citizenship, culture, empathy, environment, identity, interdependence, nation, state, scarcity, and technology.

As each child progresses through the grade levels, the curriculum presented begins with the development of the child as an individual and spirals to encompass global understanding of all cultures.

****More information about state standards can be found at www.nysed.gov.****

Safety and Community Resources

Safe Gun Storage

Unsecured guns in the home pose a risk to students beyond gun violence in schools. These risks involve unintentionally shooting themselves or someone else and suicide through the use of a firearm. [New York State laws](#) require that guns remain safely secured and inaccessible to those not permitted to possess them. While parents and guardians may believe their child(ren) cannot access the gun(s) in their home, history has proven that, too often, this is not the case. While many factors are involved in the tragedy of gun violence involving students, securing firearms is one easy step for prevention. An additional resource is available to any family in crisis in Albany County. The Albany County Sheriff's Office will hold onto firearms for safekeeping during emergencies, such as domestic violence incidents or mental health struggles. Contact the sheriff's office for more information.

Student Progress Reporting

All students in grades K-5 will receive three (3) written report cards. Parents will have the opportunity for one scheduled parent conference in November. Other conference opportunities can be made available directly through your student's teacher.

PTA

The Voorheesville Parent Teacher Association is a local unit affiliated with the New York State and National PTA. It has focused on the areas of advocacy, service, and education. Along with numerous other special programs and activities, PTA regularly sponsors Parents as Reading Partners Program, homeroom parent

services, school photographs, book fairs, hospitality committees, and scholarship awards. Because public education is a joint effort of teachers, students, school board members, parents, and school administrators, there is great value in this organization which brings these people together regularly. Your participation is encouraged.

Registration

All new resident school-aged children and kindergarten children must be registered for school. A new pupil's immunization records must be submitted and students entering grades 1-5 should have their records from the previous school forwarded. Students coming from out of state, must have a physical from a New York State physician.

Roles

Voorheesville Elementary School aims to develop the curiosity, the desire, and the skills necessary for learning in an atmosphere which reflects and fosters a belief in the worth of each individual. We believe that all students, regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, handicapping condition or economic and social circumstances, have the right to a quality education. We strive to provide a setting that is positive and challenging and that takes into consideration each individual's interest, goals, present abilities, and future needs.

It is our hope that each individual student experiences a successful school career where he/she can develop to his/her fullest. However, the school cannot reach this goal alone. Students, parents, teachers and other school personnel have a joint responsibility for educating our students and have specific roles to play in this development.

The Role of the Students

- Accept responsibility for their actions.
- Respect the rights of others, including the right to an education in a place that is orderly and disciplined.
- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Take advantage of the academic opportunities offered at school.
- Support and participate in school activities.
- Maintain habits of personal cleanliness.
- Respect school property.
- Maintain respectful relationships with teachers and administrators.
- Contribute to keeping an atmosphere that creates mutual respect for all.
- Be informed about their rights and responsibilities, follow all rules and regulations of this policy, and report any infractions to the proper authorities.

The Role of the Parent or Guardian

- Send their child to school as required by New York State law.
- Insist on prompt and regular attendance.
- Make certain that all absences are properly excused.
- Provide for their child's health, personal cleanliness, acceptable grooming, and suitable dress.
- Guide their child from the earliest years to develop socially acceptable standards of behavior, to exercise self-control and to be responsible for his/her actions.
- Teach their child respect for law, for the authority of school, and for the rights and property of others.
- Know and understand the rules their child is expected to follow at school.

- Instill in their child a desire to learn. Provide a good place for study and ensure the completion of homework assignments.
- Convey an enthusiastic and supportive attitude toward school and education. Become familiar with their child's school, its staff, curriculum and activities, and attend parent/teacher conferences and school functions when possible.

The Role of Teachers, Administrators and other School Personnel

- Have and display a personal enthusiasm for teaching and learning and a genuine concern for the individual student.
- Provide varied learning activities so students learn to think and reason.
- Guide each student to assume responsibility for their actions and respect the rights of others.
- Be fair and consistent in enforcing rules in the classrooms, hallways, restrooms, school buses, on the school grounds and at all school sponsored activities.
- Create a meaningful teaching/learning situation, giving positive reinforcement for acceptable behavior.
- Demonstrate, by word and personal example, respect for law and order and self-discipline.
- Confer with a school counselor or administrator regarding any student whose behavior requires special attention.
- Seek to develop close co-operative relationships with parents for the educational benefit of the student by keeping open communication with parents and by sending communications home promptly.

Telephone

The office telephone is to be used by students **only in an emergency**.

Using this telephone for forgotten items, reminders to parents of an after school activity or change in plans to visit friends is discouraged. It is important that school and home work together to teach the children responsibility in this regard. Parental assistance in this matter will not only help the child but is greatly appreciated by the school.

Students are not to use classroom phones.

Testing

Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL-4) – This profile is given to all incoming Kindergarten students to better understand their learning skills and experiences. Areas screened include language skills, visual-perceptual motor skills, speaking and hearing skills, and general physical development. The tests enable us to work better with the children when they enter kindergarten. In some instances, suggestions will be made to parents for work in the summer.

Current State Testing includes:

- Grades 3 -5 English Language Arts
- Grades 3 -5 Mathematics
- Grade 4 Science

Questions regarding the tests or results can be directed to the classroom teacher or principal. More information on NYS testing can be found at www.nysed.gov.

Textbooks/Supplies

All textbooks, workbooks and supplies directly related to instruction are furnished by the school. Pupils are expected to supply their own paper, pencils and crayons. Families in need should contact the principal. Replacement costs will be charged for textbooks that are damaged, excessively worn, or lost.

Transfers

Parents moving from the Voorheesville area should notify both the school secretary and the teacher as soon as possible. The school needs to prepare information for the new school. This information will be mailed to the child's new school upon written request by the parents and request from the new school.

Transportation

Bus safety is the responsibility of the driver as well as the student. Proper behavior is expected from all students riding school buses. Students are to remain seated without rowdiness or boisterous talking while the bus is in motion and are expected to show respect to the bus driver as well as to their fellow students. In addition, please be sure that:

- No food or beverage be consumed on a bus.
- Children bring no items larger than they can place on their laps.
- Glass, breakable or valuable items as well as phones, tablets and other potential distractions should not be carried on the bus.

Bus routes are posted on the parent portal at the end of August. A school message notification will be emailed when routes are available.

Students riding the bus are expected:

- to be at their assigned bus stop and ready to board at least 5 minutes prior to their scheduled pick up time
- to remain seated while the bus is in motion
- to use kind and appropriate language, and refrain from using profanity, insults, teasing or harassment.
- To know his or her bus number for morning and afternoon routes
- to listen to and follow the driver's directions
- to keep the aisles clear and keep hands, feet and objects to themselves.
- to enter and exit the bus quickly and quietly when it is their turn to do so.

In addition, please be sure that:

- No food or beverages be consumed on a bus
- Children bring no items larger than those they can place on their laps
- No glass, sharp or breakable items are brought on the bus
- Valuable items are left home

Bus Permits

No child attending Voorheesville Elementary School is permitted to leave school on a bus other than his/her regular assigned bus. Only recurring schedules for daycare/ alternative family care are permitted. If you have any questions, contact us at transportation@voorheesville.org or 518-765-2382, ext. 5130

Late Buses

Late transportation from the elementary school each Tuesday through Thursday, typically for students in grades 3, 4 and 5. These buses leave the school at 3:50pm. These are provided for those students participating in extracurricular activities or clubs, or for students meeting with teachers for academic assistance. Parental permission must be given for students remaining for late buses. There are limited late buses, stops are at general locations along major roads. Generally, door-to-door stops are not available. Please contact the transportation office for stop locations at transportation@voorheesville.org or 518-765-2381, x 5130.

Transportation Safety

The safety of all students is our primary concern. All school buses are “school property” and are subject to all rules set forth in the District Code of Conduct. Each student has an individual responsibility to help ensure the safety of all students on the bus by following the rules. Coming to school, going home, and riding buses for extracurricular events or field trips, a student is expected to listen to and obey all instructions from transportation personnel. Examples of bus misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Bringing prohibited items onto a school bus. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to, skateboards, animals, flammable materials of any kind, medications that contain controlled substances except in compliance with District procedures and SED requirements for students who are authorized to carry and self-administer a lawfully prescribed medication, and weapons of any kind.
- Making threatening gestures and/or comments.
- Disregarding the instructions of the bus driver.
- Swearing or using inappropriate language.
- Vaping or smoking on a school bus.
- Damaging or vandalizing any part of a school bus.
- Fighting, pushing, or shoving.
- Standing while the bus is moving.
- Failing to keep head, hands, feet, and other objects inside the bus at all times.
- Use of flash photography

Transportation Consequences

- **First offense:** A warning from the driver.
- **Second offense:** A bus referral is sent to the Main Office, parents/caregivers will be contacted accordingly
- **Third offense:** A second referral is sent home, and the principal calls home to discuss the situation.
- **Fourth offense:** Bus privileges are suspended for three days, and a meeting is set up with the parents, the child, the principal, and the driver.
- **Fifth offense:** Bus privileges are suspended for five days and another meeting is held with all parties.

During a period of lost bus privileges, it will be the responsibility of the parent to transport the child.

While we strive for consistency and fairness, each driver must use their own discretion in dealing with offenses. In all cases the driver should investigate the matter with all students involved. If no resolution can be found, the matter will come to the principal's attention. Any case that involves physical action will be brought to the principal's attention and documented.

We will stress the above points at school, and ask that families discuss the same points at home.

Visitors

Parents coming to call for a child, delivering a child or bringing articles to their children during the school day must report to the office, not the classroom. Visitors must bring their license to the main office so it can be put on file and you will be given a visitors badge. If you do not have a visitor's badge or sticker, staff will ask you to return to the main office. The office staff will ensure any items or messages get to the children. Parents should only go to the room in which they were given prior authorization, not to other classrooms or areas of the building. A parent reporting to a room without prior notice is not only a "breach" in our security program, but a distraction and takes away from our work with all the children.