



# River Valley Technical Center

"Educating Today's Students for Tomorrow's Careers"



## *Employee Handbook*

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# ***INTRODUCTION***

The River Valley Technical Center School District proudly serves our students from member districts, partner schools, and communities:

- **Bellows Falls Union High School District**  
(Athens, Grafton, Rockingham, Westminster)
- **Green Mountain Union High School District**  
(Andover, Baltimore, Chester, Cavendish, Ludlow, Mt. Holly)
- **Expeditionary School at Black River**  
(Ludlow, Mt. Holly)
- **Springfield School District**  
(Springfield)
- **Fall Mountain Regional High School**
- **The Compass School**
- **Distance-education partners, including Woodsville H.S., Rivendell H.S., & Blue Mountain Union School**
- **Other towns within our service region**  
(Landgrove, Londonderry, Peru, Weston)

This handbook is designed to provide some basic information on a range of topics related to your employment with the River Valley Technical Center School District. It is not meant to replace any union master agreements.

## ***River Valley Technical Center Mission Statement***

*“Educating Today's Students for Tomorrow's Careers”*

The mission of the River Valley Technical Center is to educate today's students for tomorrow's careers and for all students to:

- Demonstrate the skills, knowledge and character necessary to become productive workers and life-long learners.
- Participate in a positive environment that integrates academic and technical education through applied learning.
- Benefit from teachers’ professional growth and continuous improvement of curricula that emphasizes the changing workplace and the pursuit of educational excellence.
- Have the opportunity to attain nationally recognized industry credentials or certifications through the completion of courses and programs.
- Demonstrate a sense of pride and ownership in their school and community.
- Have the opportunity to explore various career areas and to participate in workplace experiences.

# *River Valley Technical Center*

## *Statement of Philosophy*

At the River Valley Technical Center...

- We believe that we must dream as well as act to accomplish great things.
- We believe that learning is a lifelong adventure.
- We believe in facing each day with minds open to knowledge and hearts open to love.
- We believe in the freedom to wonder, to explore, to ask, to imagine, to create, and to collaborate.
- We believe that success means doing our best, being our best, and being proud of our efforts.
- We believe that every one of us has special talents and that collectively these talents benefit all of us.
- We believe in ourselves, in each other, and in the bright future.

In this school, we are preparing for the world of tomorrow!

(Adapted with permission of the Foreign Language School of Nanjing, China)

Approved by RVTC Faculty and Staff

August 29, 2007

Endorsed by 2008 RVTC National Technical Honor Society Inductees

June 12, 2008

Adopted by RVTC School District Board of Directors

July 2, 2008

## COMMITMENT TO NON-DISCRIMINATION

The following Notice of Non-Discrimination will be given to appropriate recipients as required by law:

River Valley Technical Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, marital/civil union status or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning the River Valley Technical Center's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, or other state or federal non-discrimination laws or regulations is directed to contact: Assistant Director, River Valley Technical Center, 307 South Street, Springfield, VT 05156  
Phone: 802-885-8302

**Discrimination Complaint Procedure:** The following procedures are established to provide avenues of redress for any student, parent, employee or citizen who feels there is evidence of the school district's failure to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Wherever possible, reasonable effort shall be made promptly to resolve any complaint of discrimination under any of these Acts on an informal basis with those closest to the source of the problem.

**Step 1:** If informal resolution is not possible, the complaining party shall file a written complaint within 10 business days of the alleged violation with the Assistant Director or their designee. The Assistant Director shall investigate the complaint and shall provide a written response to the complaining party within 10 business days of the receipt of the written complaint.

**Step 2:** If the complaining party is not satisfied with the outcome of Step 1, (s)he shall file a written request for review with the Superintendent/Director. The Superintendent/Director (or designee, which may be the Non-Discrimination Coordinator if not involved in Step 1) shall review the investigation/decision and shall make such further inquiry as appears necessary and shall issue a decision within 10 business days.

**Step 3:** If the complaining party is not satisfied with the outcome of Step 2, (s)he shall file with the Superintendent/Director a written request for a hearing with the River Valley Technical Center Board of School Directors at its next regular meeting (or other time agreeable to both parties). The Chair of the Board shall conduct the hearing at the Board meeting, and either or both parties may be represented by counsel at their own expense. Consenting witnesses may be heard and questioned by the Board. Hearing shall be in executive session, unless a public session is requested by the complaining party. (Where the hearing involves a student and the complaining party is not the student or the student's parent, federal and state confidentiality requirements shall be observed). The Board shall render a decision in writing within ten business days of the hearing. This decision shall be final and binding within the jurisdictional limits and authority of the board. The District Non-Discrimination Coordinator is the Assistant Director, 307 South Street, Springfield, VT 05156 (802) 885-8302.

## **SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS**

The River Valley Technical Center Board regularly meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 5:00 P.M. at the Howard Dean Education Center Conference Room. Staff members are welcome to attend Board meetings.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT EDUCATIONAL RECORDS**

Education records will be maintained and stored in a secure and confidential location, as defined in the River Valley Technical Center School District policy on Educational Records (FERPA), Code F27. Only employees and other school officials determined to have legitimate educational interest will be allowed to view or access student educational records. Each school principal will review requirements and obligations regarding access to student records with all staff.

Disclosure of information from educational records must adhere to the FERPA policy.

All educational records and information contained therein must be treated as confidential information and is treated as such. Violations of confidentiality will be treated as insubordination and dealt with as a disciplinary matter. For further information about student records and confidentiality, contact the Assistant Director or Registrar.

## **BUILDING SECURITY & USAGE**

All possible precautions must be exercised to make certain that proper security measures are taken in all buildings.

- Teachers should close and securely lock all windows and doors when they leave. Window shades must be drawn in each room during the heating season to conserve heat.
- Custodians are to make a complete check of the building doors, windows, etc., prior to closing the building for the day.
- Administration arranges appropriate building key control. No staff member may open the building for students without administrative authorization and notification of the custodial staff.
- School records and other valuables must be kept in the school safe, or a secure place designed for such items.

Staff members wanting to use school facilities beyond the normal school hours need to coordinate that use through the RVTC/HDEC Building Secretary, on the form provided for that purpose.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Leave of absence may be granted to employees of the District in accordance with state or federal law, collective bargaining agreements or pursuant to District policy and the individual circumstances. This provision is meant to be a general overview of the leave policies of the District and may be further explained or modified in the other policies and/or amended, eliminated, or changed by the District at any time in the future.



**Definition of Leave:** Any absence from work on a scheduled day of work for an excused or unexcused reason, whether it is paid or unpaid.

**Paid Leave:** A paid leave is any leave during which the employee continues to be paid under the regular payroll of the district, including pay based on sick or other paid leave time, and including leaves covered by Workers Compensation payments. Carrier-insured short- and long-term disability payments are not considered pay for the purpose of determining whether a leave is paid or unpaid.

**Requests:** Requests for leave must be made in writing using a Request for Leave Form or other form as designated by the District. The request must specify the time which the employee wishes to be on leave, the reason for such leave, and anticipated date on which the employee will return to work. All requests must be made as far in advance as possible and specific advance notification of five days is required for leaves of five days or more. The District may deny any discretionary, non-emergency request for leave if the granting of such leave would unduly interfere with our educational services or would create any undue hardship for the District, particularly as it relates to finding a temporary replacement if the employee has specialized or unique job duties and responsibilities.

**Leave Time Limitations:** Leaves may be granted for specific time periods up to a maximum of twelve months depending on the situation and reason for a leave of such duration. The District may extend this limitation to greater than twelve months in order to allow for the leave to coincide with any schedule or break in the academic school year.

**Continuation of Benefits While on Leave:** An employee who is on a leave of absence may have all insurance and other benefits continued for said period. Such a determination will be made based upon the appropriate contractual agreement, insurance carrier policy, and state and federal law. Any paid leave will automatically afford the employee the continuation of insurance benefits, seniority, experience credit for step raises, and accruals of sick, vacation and other time. Any insurance or other premiums which are required to be paid by the employee must be fulfilled in order for the employee to maintain coverage under any District plan or program. During an unpaid leave covered by state or federal FMLA the District will continue to pay its share of insurance premiums. Otherwise, during an unpaid leave, insurance premiums will become the responsibility of the employee under COBRA, and no accruals continue for seniority, experience credit for step increases, or accruals for vacation and/or sick leave.

**Employee Responsibilities While on Leave:** An employee who is on a leave of absence is required to abide by the purposes and any conditions imposed by the leave. In medical leaves, an employee may be required to report in periodically to the Office of Superintendent and provide any medical progress or other reports as necessary. It is expected that any employee with a medical condition for which leave is granted will comply with the prescribed regimen and medical treatment per the medical provider. It is also expected that an employee will not engage in any behavior which would exacerbate or worsen the medical condition, nor will the employee engage in any other form of employment or self-employment. Violations may result in disciplinary action in addition to termination of approved leave.

**Return from Leave:** An employee wishing to return to the position held prior to any leave may be required to provide medical certification of his/her ability to perform the essential functions of the position and a release to work. In addition, the District may require an independent medical evaluation. Absent such documentation, the District may prohibit the employee's return. An employee who has been on a leave will be returned to his/her previous position provided that the position is still available. The District will make every effort to return the employee to the previous position; however, there is no absolute guarantee that the identical position will be available at the expiration of the leave. In the event that the District cannot find a satisfactory temporary employee to fill a job, the District will hold the employee's previous job for thirty days and reserves the right to return the employee to an equivalent job thereafter. In such a situation, the District will place the employee in a similar or comparable position if one exists. If an employee is not able to return to work at the expiration of the leave, the District may fill such position on a permanent basis.

**Concurrent Application:** Leaves of absence often are available under either statutory, contract or District policy. Unless otherwise required by law or agreed in writing, leaves run concurrently under all applicable authorizing policy, contracts, or law.

### **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)**

The Family and Medical Leave Act provides for up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave in a twelve (12) month period for:

- birth of a child, or the placement of a child with you for adoption or foster care,
- a serious health condition that makes you unable to perform the essential functions of your job, or
- a serious health condition affecting your spouse, child, or parent for which you are needed to provide care.

You may be required to furnish medical certification of a serious health condition, periodic reports of your status and intent to return to work while you are on leave, and/or a fitness-for-duty certificate prior to being restored to employment.

Available accrued paid leave may be taken concurrently with the FMLA leave, subject to terms and conditions of the appropriate employee master agreement.

You must be reinstated to the same or an equivalent job with the same pay, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment on your return from FMLA leave.

Your health insurance benefits will be maintained during the period of any FMLA leave under the same conditions as if you continued to work. You will be responsible for paying your insurance co-pay in a timely manner during your leave. Failure to make those payments will result in the cancellation of your health insurance. If you do not return to work following FMLA leave for a reason other than:

- the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition which would entitle you to FMLA leave,
- or other circumstances beyond your control, you may be required to reimburse the district for its share of health insurance premiums paid on your behalf during your FMLA leave.

Your other insurances (dental, life, long-term disability) will continue during your FMLA leave.

**ABSENCES, VACATIONS AND PERSONAL LEAVES:**

These items are covered by negotiated agreement. Please refer to the appropriate Master Agreement for details. The Teachers Master Agreement contains specific information about using absence days to extend a school vacation or recess period.

**TUITION REIMBURSEMENT**

This item is covered by negotiated agreement. Please refer to appropriate Master Agreement for details. Prior approval for tuition reimbursement must be secured through the use of a Professional Study Request available online or in the main office. The budget year for tuition reimbursement allowances runs from July 1 to June 30. The particular year’s allowance against which tuition will be charged is based on the ending date of the course.

**COMPLETION OF DEGREES AND IN-SERVICE CREDITS**

Those teachers who have completed work for degrees must have the institution granting the degree file an official statement with Superintendent/Director. No salary adjustments will be authorized until such statements are received. Salary adjustments are effective the date the Superintendent/Director signs the Salary Adjustment form. Failure to secure prior approval by filling out a Professional Study Request may negate eligibility. Teachers are responsible for claiming eligibility for placement on a new salary column.

**ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES, PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL, ETC**

Staff members who wish to attend a conference must submit their request to the Superintendent/Director on a Conference Request Form. Prior approval is required. Tuition reimbursement funds may be available to cover conference expenses in certain circumstances and subject to certain restrictions. Please consult the appropriate Master Agreement for additional details.

**EXPENDITURE AUTHORIZATION**

All expenditures must be made by district purchase order. All purchase orders must include:

- Budget Code(s)
- Description of the items being ordered
- Any applicable shipping charges
- Superintendent/Director or Assistant Director signature

**Prior Approval:** All purchase orders must be sent to the Director's Office for approval before items are ordered.

Any staff member who undertakes any financial obligation without appropriate authorization is responsible for whatever costs may be incurred. For more detailed information regarding procedures, contact the Superintendent/Director's Office, at 885-8303.

## **PAYROLL**

Each employee shall be paid biweekly on every other Friday. Paychecks shall be available to employees usually on the preceding Thursday afternoon. Direct deposit is available and is transferred on Friday mornings of the pay week. Summer paychecks will be given directly to school year staff on the last day of school in June, unless other arrangements are made.

Salaried employees will have their salary equally divided among the pay periods which fall within the term of their contract. Per Diem and hourly employees will be paid based on the number of hours or days worked over the two-week period ending the Saturday prior to the pay day. Contact the Superintendent/Director's Office for further details, at 885-8303.

## **403(b) ANNUITIES**

The district agrees to make contributions to a tax-sheltered annuity as a result of an employee taking a voluntary reduction in salary. The employee must use the district's Salary Reduction Agreement form and may only use a service provider who has signed the district's Service Provider Agreement. The district does not make matching or employer contributions to tax-sheltered annuities.

An employee is eligible for salary reduction for tax-sheltered annuities provided that the employee:

- can defer at least \$200.00 annually
- normally works on average twenty (20) or more hours per week
- is not a student

## **EMPLOYEE INSURANCES**

The River Valley Technical Center offers a variety of insurance benefits to its employees such as health, dental, life insurance and disability insurance. Due to the variable qualifications for these benefits, please refer to the appropriate Master Agreement for details.

## **USE OF BUSES**

Requests for school buses for field trips, pupil activities, etc., are to be made on a Vehicle Request Form (available in the RVTC Forms folder on Google Drive) and processed through the Assistant Director's office. Please make requests at least two weeks in advance of the trip. The District has only a limited number of buses available and may not always be able to accommodate all field trip requests.

The River Valley Technical Center supports that students will be transported to and from school related activities by School District buses or chartered commercial vehicles. Prior authorization for transportation of individual and small groups of pupils in private vehicles must be given by the administration.

## **SCHOOL PUBLICITY AND NEWS RELEASES**

All employees are strongly encouraged to release news about class or individual school activities. Letters to parents and parent visiting days are great avenues for sharing the good news about our school. News releases that relate to School Board Policy, school personnel, general school programs or any item that might affect the total school system should be reviewed by those affected. If in doubt, consult with the Superintendent/Director at 885-8301.

## **ADVERTISING, SOLICITATION, FUNDRAISING AND GIFTS**

**Advertising:** No advertising or use of the school system to promote the merit of any product by brand name or trademark shall be permitted without approval by the School Board. This does not prevent advertising in student publications.

**Solicitation & Fundraising:** Participation in any fund or charity drive by either students or employees shall be entirely voluntary as far as each individual is concerned. There shall be no cause for embarrassment to those who do not or cannot participate or contribute.

Solicitation and/or distribution of materials to promote special interests in the schools are strictly prohibited except by prior approval of Administration.

Fund-raising campaigns to be conducted by students or school employees in the community or away from school premises to obtain funds for school, student body, and class or club treasuries may not be conducted without prior approval of the Administration.

**Gifts to School Employees:** To avoid possible embarrassment to pupils and possible criticism of the school, employees shall discourage the routine presentation of gifts for any occasion. Where a student feels a spontaneous desire to present a gift to a staff member, the gift should be of nominal value.

**Gifts to the School District:** The Board may agree to use a restricted gift, grant or bequest for a specific purpose, and shall disburse such funds accordingly within its legal authority.

## **TELEPHONES**

Telephones are provided for school business. Please limit the use of school telephones for non-school related purposes.

## **ACCIDENTS-STUDENTS**

Any accident on school grounds or at school functions which requires medical treatment must be reported by the Springfield High School Nurse's Office on an Incident Report Form provided for that purpose. A copy of the Incident Report Form must be immediately forwarded to Superintendent/Director's office.

## **ACCIDENTS-EMPLOYEES**

Any accident on school property must be reported to the Superintendent/Director's Office on an Employee Accident Report Form within 24 hours. This report needs to be completed regardless of whether the injured person sees a doctor at the time of injury or there is lost time.

## **SAFETY**

Report defects in unsafe equipment or other unsafe conditions to the Maintenance Department then complete the Maintenance Work Order Form. For needs that cannot be corrected immediately, safeguard the area in question.

## **FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

All employees will receive annual training in the use of Fire Extinguishers; employees may use Fire Extinguishers when appropriate to mitigate a hazard.

## **FIELD TRIPS, TRAVEL OR EXCHANGE PROGRAMS**

All trips are to follow established procedures as developed by the administration. All arrangements must have advance approval of the school director/assistant director, with the exception of overnight trips, which require the approval of the Superintendent and notification to the School Board.

**Field Trips:** The School Board considers field trips, planned for specific educational purposes, an integral part of the school program, and will provide a particular amount for such trips in the annual school budget.

When planning a school-sponsored field trip, every effort should be made to assure:

- The educational value of a trip.
- The safety of students and their adequate supervision.
- All students have signed parental/guardian permission. In the absence of a signed permission form, the Director/Assistant Director may, at his/her discretion, obtain verbal permission from the parent/guardian.

**Travel or Exchange Programs:** It is the policy of the School Board that:

- Any travel or exchange program activity must have prior approval of the Superintendent/Director and the School Board before any commitments are made with students or parents.
- Programs should be planned for school vacations and other times when classes are not in session, whenever possible.
- A strong effort must be made toward the inclusion of all eligible students.

Non-School Sponsored Educational Trips are viewed as non-school events and are not sanctioned by the School Board. Therefore, the School Board does not assume any responsibility for such events. School facilities and school time shall not be used by faculty members to promote or solicit for such activities without prior approval of the Director/Assistant Director.

Efforts should be made to inform students and parents when an activity is not sponsored by the school, especially if a School District faculty member is involved with the event.

## **DISCIPLINE, REPORTING, AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

As an employee of the River Valley Technical Center, you must be knowledgeable of and act on the following discipline, reporting, and emergency procedures. Full text of procedures and policy are available from the Superintendent/Director's office. If you ever have a question about whether or not you should follow up on an incident related to the following that is the time to bring the concern to the Director/Assistant Director. Investigation and corroboration of an incident must not rest with the employee.

**Student Harassment:** Harassment of students by anyone is not to be tolerated. There is policy that defines harassment and the procedures for dealing with it. Harassment is not limited to sexual harassment. Reporting sexual harassment is an obligation as well as ongoing general harassment.

**Employee Harassment:** There is policy which defines employee sexual harassment and procedures for reporting. That policy is included in this document.

**Reporting Suspected Abuse of a Student:** By law, suspected abuse must be reported. It is not the employee's responsibility to conduct an investigation to determine if abuse is taking place. In all cases, report directly to the Vermont Department of Children and Families Family service Division by calling 1-800-649-5285. Any report to SRS must be reported to the building administrator and guidance coordinator.

**Reporting Threats:** In all cases, threats of violence made against others must be reported to the building administrator. Investigation and determination of the actual likelihood of a violent act does not rest with the employee.

**Weapons Policy:** Any suspicion of a weapon being on school property must be immediately reported to the building administrator. Use of any object as a weapon must be immediately reported as well.

**Non-Violent Physical Intervention:** River Valley Technical Center personnel will use safe and effective techniques that ensure the care, safety, welfare and security of all students and staff. Verbal de-escalation techniques will be utilized to control and defuse potential aggressive or violent behavior.

**Corporal Punishment:** Corporal punishment is against the law in the State of Vermont. Physical restraint can be used to protect others and school property. Any use of physical restraint must be reported immediately to the building administrator.

**Emergency Evacuation Procedures:** Be aware of emergency/crisis plans for your building. Procedures and plans will be reviewed annually at faculty meetings.

**Student Searches:** Other than an emergency situation, searches of student lockers, possessions, and person, must be conducted with or by administrator. Report the need for a search to an administrator.

## **SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS**

The Board expects all students to be under assigned adult supervision at all times when they are in school, on school grounds, traveling under school auspices, or engaging in school-sponsored activities. School personnel assigned this supervision are expected to act as reasonably prudent adults in providing for the safety of the students in their charge.

When students are in school, engaging in school-sponsored activities, or traveling to and from school, on school buses, they are responsible to the school, and the school is responsible for them. School personnel assigned to their supervision serve in loco parentis.

In keeping with this expected prudence, no teacher or other staff member will leave his or her assigned group unsupervised except as an arrangement has been made to take care of an emergency.

Anyone who wishes to contact a student during the school day must receive permission from the school administration.

All extra-curricular activities and other school-sponsored events must have one or more faculty members to supervise, as determined by the administration. All school rules established in school policy and by the school administration apply during extracurricular and other school-sponsored events on or off school property.

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE**

**Policy:** It is the policy of the River Valley Technical Center School District to maintain a workplace free of alcohol and drugs. No employee will unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess or use alcohol or any drug on or in the workplace.

### **Definitions**

**Drug** means any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other controlled substance as defined by state or federal statute or regulation.

**Workplace** means the site for the performance of work for the School District, including any school building or any school premises and any school-owned vehicle or any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities. It also includes off school property during 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 District.



**Employee Responsibilities:** As a condition of employment, each employee will notify the Superintendent/Director in writing of his or her conviction of any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring on or in the workplace as defined above. The employee must notify the Superintendent/Director no later than five days after such conviction. Entry of a *nolo contendere* plea shall constitute a conviction for purposes of this policy, as will any judicial finding of guilt or imposition of sentence. Within 10 days of notification from an employee, or receipt of actual notice of an alcohol or drug conviction, the Superintendent/Director will notify any federal or state officers or agencies legally entitled to such notification.

As a condition of employment, each employee must abide by the terms of the School District policy respecting an alcohol and drug free workplace.

An employee who violates the terms of this policy may be asked to satisfactorily complete an alcohol or drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved by the Board. In addition, an employee who violates the terms of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to non-renewal, suspension or termination at the discretion of the Board.

**Administrative Responsibilities:** The Board will take action in accordance with the District's policies and procedures as well as applicable state and federal law.

The Superintendent/Director may establish an alcohol and drug-free awareness program in the District to include information on the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, the District's policy on an alcohol and drug-free workplace and any alcohol or drug counseling available to employees as well as any available rehabilitation and employee assistance programs.

A copy of this policy will be given to each District employee by the Superintendent/Director or his/her designee.

The Superintendent/Director or his/her designee will conduct a biennial review of the District's student and employee drug prevention programs as required by the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994. The review will determine the effectiveness of the prevention programs and the consistency of the enforcement of disciplinary sanctions. Following each review, required changes will be implemented.

## **SMOKING POLICY**

It is the policy of the River Valley Technical Center School District to prohibit the use of tobacco or tobacco substitute on school grounds in accordance with state law. This ban extends to any student, employee or visitor to the school, and applies at all times, whether or not school is in session. Students are, furthermore, prohibited from possessing tobacco products at all times while under the supervision of school staff or at school sponsored activities. Students who violate this policy will be disciplined under the school's disciplinary policy and procedures. Students who possess tobacco products shall be subject to having said tobacco products immediately confiscated by school personnel. Those students under the age of 18 shall be subject to referral to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

## **BLOOD BORNE PATHOGEN TRAINING**

In accordance with the OSHA blood borne pathogens standard, the River Valley Technical Center will follow a Safety Plan. This plan is on file in the Superintendent/Director's Office.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOLS AND LATE OPENINGS**

If school is to be closed or delayed for inclement weather or another emergency, the following plan will be in operation:

- Via automated telephonic notification system.
- Via the internet at [rvtc.org](http://rvtc.org), or on our Facebook page River Valley Tech Center.
- In Springfield, Fire whistle will blow at 6:30 A.M. to signal “NO SCHOOL”.
- Staff will be notified per procedures established at building level.

If the opening time for a school session is delayed, staff members are expected to be at school as close to the regular opening hours as reasonable for conditions.

On days of school closing, calendar year employees are expected to report to work, while school year employees do not report to work. Calendar year employees should consult their Master Agreement for further details.

## **HAZING**

**Policy:** It is the policy of the River Valley Technical Center School District that we will provide safe, orderly, civil and positive learning environments. Hazing in connection with any school sponsored activity or program is prohibited. The Superintendent/Director shall develop administrative rules and procedures as needed to enforce this policy and to comply with state law.

### **Definitions**

**Hazing:** Hazing means any act committed on or off school grounds by a person, whether individually or in concert with others, against a student in connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with the district; and which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, humiliating, intimidating or demeaning the student or endangering the mental or physical health of the student. Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts.

Hazing shall not include any activity or conduct that furthers the legitimate curricular, extracurricular, or military training program goals provided that the goals are approved by the administration and provided that the activity or conduct furthers those goals in a manner that is appropriate, contemplated by the school district, and normal and customary for similar public school programs.

**Organization:** Organization means a fraternity, sorority, athletic team, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or other similar group, whose members primarily are students of the District, and which is affiliated with the District.

**Pledging:** Pledging means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.

**Administration:** Administration means the Superintendent/Director or Assistant Director.

**Student:** Student means any person who:

- is enrolled in any school or program operated by the district,
- has been accepted for admission into any school or program operated by the district, or
- intends to enroll in any school or program operated by the district during any of its regular sessions after an official academic break.

**Reporting of Hazing:** Students who have reason to believe that an incident of hazing might or did occur may report such belief to any coach of an extracurricular team, teacher, school nurse, guidance counselor, or school administrator. Staff members who have received such a report from a student, or who otherwise have reason to believe that an incident of hazing might or did occur, shall report the incident to the administration, or, in the event of the unavailability of the administrators, to another person designated by the administration to receive reports of hazing. The report may be written or oral. If the report is made orally, the receiver shall make a written record of the report.

It is possible that an incident of hazing might also fall within the definition of abuse, neglect, or exploitation as those terms are defined in 33 V.S.A. §4912(2) and 33 V.S.A. §§6902(1), (7) and (9). Reporting a suspected incident of hazing to the administration does not relieve the reporter of any obligations additionally to report such suspicions to the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services as set forth in 33 V.S.A. §4914 or to the Commissioner of the Department of Aging and Disabilities as set forth in 33 V.S.A. §6904.

Incidents of hazing that the administration determines may constitute violations of criminal laws shall be reported by the principal to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

## **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

It is the policy of the River Valley Technical Center School District Board to allow for reasonable search and seizure of property used or owned by students following specific procedures. Other than for an emergency situation, consult with the administration prior to conducting any search or seizure.

## **WEAPONS**

**Policy:** It is the policy of the River Valley Technical Center School Board to comply with the federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, and 16 V.S.A. §1166 requiring school districts to provide for the possible expulsion of students who bring weapons to school. It is further the intent of the Board to maintain a student discipline system consistent with the requirements of the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Vermont State Board of Education rules.

**Definitions:** For the purposes of this policy, the terms “weapon” and “school”, and “expelled” shall have the following meanings:

**Weapon:** Weapon means a firearm as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code and 13 V.S.A. §4016, including:

- any weapon whether loaded or unloaded which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive
- the frame or receiver of any weapon described above
- any firearm muffler or firearm silencer
- any explosive, incendiary or poison gas
- bomb
- grenade
- rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces
- missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one quarter ounce
- mine, or similar device
- any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter
- Any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in the two immediately preceding examples and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.
- Any other weapon (including but not limited to a knife, as per Federal law), device, instrument, material or substance whether animate or inanimate, which in the manner it is used or is intended to be used, is known to be capable of producing death or serious bodily injury.

**School:** School means any setting which is under the control and supervision of the School District. It includes school grounds, facilities, and school-sponsored events whether held on or off of school grounds and vehicles used to transport students to and from school or school activities.

**Sanctions:** Any student accused of bringing a weapon to school may be brought to an Administrative Hearing by the Superintendent/Director or Designee.

A student found after having an Administrative Hearing to have brought a weapon to school shall be removed from a technical center program for at least one calendar year. However, Administration may modify removal from a technical center program on a case by case basis when it finds circumstances such as, but not limited to:

- The student was unaware that he or she had brought a weapon to school.
- The student did not intend to use the weapon to threaten or endanger others.
- The student is disabled and the misconduct is related to the disability.
- The student does not present an ongoing threat to others and a lengthy expulsion would not serve the best interests of the pupil.

An administrative hearing conducted under this policy shall afford due process as required by law. In addition, any student who brings a weapon to school shall be referred to a law enforcement agency.

## **BOMB THREAT**

The River Valley Technical Center works within the Springfield School District Policy on what to do in the event of bomb threat. Copies are available from the building administrator or the superintendent's

office. While we intend to respect the legitimate privacy interests of all persons, it is lawful for school authorities, within constitutional boundaries, to conduct reasonable examination of personal property on school grounds, including but not limited to lockers, desks, backpacks, and automobiles. In the event of a bomb threat, such items may need to be searched in order to assure the safety and protection of people and property.

We also want all members of the school community to know that any academic time lost as a result of a bomb threat will be rescheduled, either on a weekend, vacation day, or following what would otherwise be the end of the school year.

In addition, under State law, the making of a bomb threat is a very serious criminal offense, punishable for even a first offense by as much as 2 years in prison and a \$5000 fine. The making of such a threat may also lead to civil liability.

### **ENROLLMENT OF ADULTS**

Opportunities for adults to complete a High School Diploma, or post graduate work at the River Valley Technical Center are available. For further information, please contact the River Valley Technical Center Administration.

### **HEALTH POLICY**

#### **Dismissal in Case of Accident or Illness:**

A student who has an injury or illness during school hours must be assessed, and if necessary, dismissed through the Health Office. The parent/guardian or emergency designee will be notified prior to dismissal. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to submit at least two (2) emergency contact phone numbers for a student.

**Health Policy Medications:** Only medication that is considered absolutely necessary by the prescribing physician will be administered during school hours. Whenever possible, the medication schedule should be arranged so that it may be taken at home. All arrangements for dispensing medication at school shall be arranged with the school nurse or nurse's designee. The medication will be administered only by the school nurse or her designee.

### **PARENTAL RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

The School Board recognizes the value of providing information concerning a students' school participation and progress to both parents where the parents are separated, estranged or divorced. In such cases, the School Board and its employees will attempt to respect the legal rights of both parents with respect to involvement in their child's education, including access to records, educational decision-making, and notice and participation in school meetings and activities, as and to the extent provided by State and Federal law.

Upon written request to the River Valley Technical Center Registrar, the school shall subsequently and routinely mail to each joint-custodial and/or non-custodial parent copies of all school information which is sent home. This may include report cards, progress reports and newsletters. These mailings should continue for the remainder of the school year in which the request is made. This service may be requested annually.

## **VISITORS**

All visitors must report to the school office. A visitor (a person not employed by the school system) must report to the school office and receive permission to be on the school grounds. Visitors may be issued a “visitor’s permit”. Any person on school property who has not registered with the school office is illegally on school property and is to be asked to identify himself properly or to leave the school grounds. If the visitor refuses to leave the school grounds or creates any disturbance, the Administration has the authority to request aid from the law enforcement agency.

Other important rules and regulations will be found in Student/Parent Handbooks, School Faculty Handbooks, and the School District Policy Manual. Ask your administrator or supervisor how to access those resources.

## **HARASSMENT OF EMPLOYEES**

**Policy:** The River Valley Technical Center School District is committed to providing all employees a safe and supportive work environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect. Harassment is a form of unlawful discrimination as well as disrespectful behavior which will not be tolerated.

The River Valley Technical Center School District shall provide employees a work environment free of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct, or communications constituting harassment as defined and otherwise prohibited by state and federal law.

### **Definitions**

**Adverse Action:** Includes any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment such as diminishment of grades, suspension, expulsion, change in educational conditions, loss of privileges or benefits or other unwarranted disciplinary action in the case of students and includes any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment such as suspension, termination, change in working conditions, loss of privileges or benefits or other disciplinary action in the case of employees.

**Employee:** For purposes of this policy, an employee includes any person employed directly or through a contract with another company by the School District, agents of the school, School Board members and any student teacher, intern, school volunteer or work study student.

**Harassment:** Harassment means unlawful harassment and constitutes a form of discrimination. It is verbal or physical conduct based on an employee’s race, religion (creed), color, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, age, ancestry, place of birth or disability which has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an employee’s work or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

**School Community:** Includes but is not limited to all students, school employees, contractors, unpaid volunteers, work study students, interns, student teachers, and visitors.

**Sexual Harassment:** Is a form of sex discrimination and means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; or

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a component of the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

### **Examples of Harassment**

Harassment can include any unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct which offends, denigrates, or belittles an individual because of an employee's race, creed (religion), color, national origin, marital status, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ancestry or disability. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, unsolicited derogatory remarks, jokes, demeaning comments or behavior, slurs, mimicking, name calling, graffiti, innuendo, gestures, physical contact, stalking, threatening, bullying, extorting or the display or circulation of written materials or pictures.

**Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to, unwelcome touching, crude jokes or pictures, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing related to sexual characteristics, pressure for sexual activity whether written, verbal or through physical gestures, display or sending of pornographic pictures or objects, obscene graffiti, and spreading rumors related to a person's alleged sexual activities.

**Racial and Color Harassment:** Racial or color harassment can include unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's race or color such as nicknames emphasizing stereotypes, racial slurs, comments on manner of speaking, and negative references to racial customs.

**Religious or Creed Harassment:** Harassment on the basis of religion or creed includes unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's religion or creed such as derogatory comments regarding surnames, religious tradition, or religious clothing, or religious slurs or graffiti.

**National Origin Harassment:** Harassment on the basis of national origin includes unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's national origin such as negative comments regarding surnames, manner of speaking, customs, language or ethnic slurs.

**Marital Status Harassment:** Harassment on the basis of marital status includes unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's marital status, such as comments regarding pregnancy or being an unwed mother or father.

**Sexual Orientation Harassment:** Harassment on the basis of sexual orientation includes unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's sexual orientation such as negative name calling and imitating mannerisms.

**Disability Harassment:** Harassment on the basis of a person's disabling mental or physical condition includes any unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's disabling condition such as imitating manner of speech or movement, or interference with necessary equipment.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, examples cited in this policy.

### **Reporting**

**Mandatory:** It is the express policy of the River Valley Technical Center School District to require employee targets of harassment and employees who have first-hand knowledge of such harassment to report such claims. Employees who witness or are targets of harassment shall report the incident(s)

immediately to their immediate supervisor or another administrator who is not the subject of the complaint as may be appropriate under the circumstances. Targets of harassment should directly inform the person engaging in the harassing conduct or communication that such conduct or communication is offensive and must stop.

**Privacy:** Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need to investigate and act on investigative results.

**Retaliation:** There will be no adverse action taken against a person for making a complaint of harassment when the complainant honestly believes harassment has occurred or is occurring, or for participating in or cooperating with an investigation. Any individual who retaliates against any employee or student, who reports, testifies, assists or participates in an investigation or hearing relating to a harassment complaint will be subject to discipline by the School District.

### **Administrative Responsibility and Action**

**Reporting:** An employee who receives a complaint of harassment shall promptly inform the Superintendent/Director (or designee) or another administrator who is not the subject of the complaint.

**Investigation:** The School District is responsible for acting on any information regarding harassment of which it is aware. The Superintendent/Director shall provide for a thorough, prompt investigation of the incident; the investigation and written report shall be completed in a timely fashion in accordance with school procedures after a report or complaint, formal or informal, written or oral, has been received. No person who is the subject of a complaint shall conduct such an investigation.

**Final Action on Complaint:** The School District shall take disciplinary or remedial action as appropriate in order to ensure that further harassment does not occur. Such action may include, but is not limited to, education, training, counseling, transfer, suspension and/or expulsion of a student and education, training, counseling, transfer, suspension and/or termination of an employee.

**False Complaint:** Any person who knowingly makes a false accusation regarding harassment will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge of employees, or suspension and expulsion of students.

**Appeal:** A person judged to be in violation of this policy and subjected to action under it may appeal the determination and/or the action taken in accordance with procedures adopted under this policy. The procedures shall be consistent with the provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

**Dissemination:** The Superintendent/Director shall use all reasonable means to inform students, employees, and the community that the District will not tolerate harassment. A copy of this policy shall be provided to students, staff and parents each year and shall be included in the appropriate materials that are disseminated to the school and community.

**Training** The Superintendent/Director shall develop age-appropriate methods of discussing the meaning and substance of this policy with staff and students in order to help prevent harassment. Training may be implemented in the context of employee professional development and the school curriculum to develop broad awareness and understanding among all members of the school community.

### **BULLYING**

It is the policy of the River Valley Technical Center School District to prevent the occurrence of bullying in their schools. Bullying is a form of dangerous and disrespectful behavior that will not be permitted or tolerated.



**Bullying** means any overt act or combination of such acts directed against a student by another student or group of students and which:

- a. Is repeated over time;
- b. Is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; and
- c. (i) occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, or before or after the school day on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity; or (ii) does not occur during the school day on school property, on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity and can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's right to access educational programs.

Bullying may involve a range of misconduct that, based on the severity, will warrant a measured response of corrective action and/or discipline. Behaviors that do not rise to the level of bullying, as defined above, still may be subject to intervention and/or discipline under another section of a school's disciplinary code of conduct.

## **ACCEPTABLE USE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES**

### **Introduction**

The River Valley Technical Center School District offers students and staff access to electronic resources including but not limited to computers, networks and the internet, cameras, data files, e-mail and file servers which enables individual users in our school community to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and other resources while exchanging messages with people throughout the world. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials. Ultimately, school district staff, parents, and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that students shall follow when using the internet resources.

The school district expects that students will blend thoughtful use of the school district's electronic resources throughout the curriculum. The school district may provide guidance and instruction to students and will expect appropriate use of electronic resources.

This policy complies with the statutory requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and promotes the safe, ethical, responsible, and legal use of the district electronic resources, including the internet, to support the effective use of these resources for educational purposes. CIPA requires the installation and use of filtering software or services on all computers with access to the internet to prevent access to visual depictions of obscenity, child pornography or other materials harmful to minors.

**Use of System:** The use of electronic resources and access to use of the internet is a privilege, not a right. Access to electronic resources is given to those who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. General school rules for behavior and communications shall apply to network use, and River Valley Technical Center School District shall provide guidelines that follow the district policy for acceptable use of electronic resources.

### **Rules and Responsibilities**

**Responsible use of Electronic Resources:** The following rules should be abided by when using the River Valley Technical Center School District's electronic resources:

- Users will be polite.

- Users will not use vulgar or obscene language.
- Users will not transmit, receive, upload, download, store, print, post or distribute pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit, or educationally inappropriate material or messages.
- Users will use caution and discretion revealing an address, email, or phone number.
- Users will abide by generally accepted rules of network etiquette and will not recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization, harass another person, nor engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
- Other unacceptable use may be identified at the classroom / program level.

**Copyright:** Users of the River Valley Technical Center School District electronic resources will not engage in copyright infringement, such as:

- Users will make a standard practice of requesting permission from the holder of the copyright or the author of the work if the use of the material has the potential of being considered an infringement
- Users will not plagiarize work(s) found on the internet.
- Users will cite authors of work(s) found on the internet when using their ideas when creating reports or other communications.

### **Security**

- Users will notify a system administrator if a security problem (i.e. User that attempts to gain unauthorized access to the network) is identified.
- Users will not reveal any account password or allow other persons to use their account.
- Users may be occasionally required to update registration, password and account information in order to continue accessing electronic resources
- Any user identified as a security risk may be denied access to the district electronic resources

**Limited Expectation of Privacy:** The River Valley Technical Center School District owns and operates all hardware, software, and data on the network and equipment, including items issued for use at home. Network files and communication may be subject to review by network administrators to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are accessing and utilizing electronic resources responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on district servers and computers will be private. Electronic mail is not guaranteed to be private.

The school district will cooperate fully with local, state and federal authorities in any investigation concerning or related to any illegal activities and activities not in compliance with school district policies conducted through the school district network. Users should be aware that data and other materials in files maintained on the school district digital network may be subject to review, disclosure or discovery.

- Routine maintenance and monitoring of the school district system may lead to a discovery that a user has violated this policy, another school district policy, or the law.
- An individual investigation or search of digital files and the district's electronic resources will be conducted if school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or school district policy.
- Teachers have the right to review folders created specifically for their class.

**Limitation of Liability:** The District makes no guarantee that the functions or services provided by or through the District's electronic resources will be error-free or without defect.

- The District is not responsible for any damage the user may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service.
- The District is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through, or stored on any electronic resources.
- The District will not be responsible for financial obligations resulting from the use of the district's electronic resources.

**Vandalism/Harassment:** Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy electronic resources or data. This includes, but is not limited to, deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt equipment, software or system performance or to create or spread viruses.

Electronic harassment is defined as the persistent annoyance of another user or the interference in another user's work. This includes, but is not limited to, the sending of unwanted email.

**Consequences:** Individuals violating this policy shall be subject to the consequences and appropriate discipline that includes but is not limited to:

- Use of electronic resources only under direct supervision;
- Suspension of electronic resources privileges for a period of time to be determined;
- Revocation of electronic resources privileges;
- Suspension from school;
- Expulsion from school;
- Referral to legal authorities as required

Determination of unacceptable use and the application of disciplinary consequences will be made by the school and district administration.

The River Valley Technical Center School District has established guidelines for acceptable use and the discipline that could be imposed as a result of violations

Appropriate use of computers includes instruction and its associated academic activities, and research. Unacceptable uses include, but are not limited to the following:

- Use of Technical Center resources for illegal purposes.
- Knowingly performing an act that will interfere with the normal operation of the computer resources. This specifically includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized additions, deletions, or alterations of software installed on Technical Center computers. (This includes peer to peer file sharing programs.)
- Violation of software license agreements. This includes not only the illegal copying of Technical center software but also the illegal copying of any software to Technical Center computers.
- Use of Technical Center computers for unauthorized commercial use.
- Masking the identity of an account or computer. Anonymous communications are specifically prohibited.
- Viewing, posting, sending, or printing obscene or sexually explicit material or language using the computers.
- Use of Technical Center computer resources to intimidate or harass others.
- Use of a computer account without authorization from a system administrator. Obtaining a password for an account without authorization. Using a computer account other than the one assigned to you.
- Attempting to circumvent computer security measures or uncover existing security loopholes.

Student violations of any of the above restrictions will be forwarded to the Director reporting the name of the student, date, time, place and nature of the violation, and any other pertinent information.

Violations of these policies will result in the immediate loss of network access and may also involve other disciplinary or legal action, as appropriate.

Additionally, while students are accessing the Internet from a Technical Center computer, they represent the Technical Center. Students are expected to be polite in all interactions initiated from Technical Center computers.

The Technical Center reserves the right to view or scan any file or software stored on Technical Center systems or transmitted over Technical Center networks and will do so periodically to verify that software and hardware are working correctly, to look for particular kinds of data or software (such as computer viruses), or to audit the use of Technical Center resources.

### **CONNECTION OF “USER-OWNED” DEVICES TO THE RVTC/SHS NETWORK**

Connection of any “user-Owned devices such as laptops, computers, wireless access points and other related computer or network devices to the River Valley Technical Center network may be permitted on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Systems Administrator and Superintendent/Director. A Network Connection Permission Form must be on file with the Systems Administrator prior to any connection.

Please submit this form at the New Employee Orientation so that it  
can be filed in your personnel file.

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Employee Handbook August 2022 Edition and understand its contents. I recognize my responsibility to abide by the policies and procedures established herein.

Employee Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_