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PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2009–2010! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

The Van High School Student Handbook is designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. In an effort to make it easier to use, the handbook is divided into three sections:

Section I—REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS—with notices that the district must provide to all parents, as well as other information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook; and

Section II—INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS—organized alphabetically by topic for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware that the term “the student’s parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents must be familiar with the Van I.S.D. *Student Code of Conduct*, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found as an attachment to this handbook and posted in the office on each campus.

The student handbook is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect student handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters and other communications.

In case of conflict between board policy or the *Student Code of Conduct* and any provisions of student handbooks, the provisions of board policy or the *Student Code of Conduct* that were most recently adopted by the board are to be followed.

After reading through the entire handbook with your child, keep it as a reference during this school year. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact a teacher, the counselor, or the principal. Also, please complete and return the required forms included in this handbook or provided in the forms packet accompanying this handbook:

1. Parental Acknowledgment Form
2. Student Directory Information Form;
3. Release of Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Learning Forms; and
4. Consent/Opt-Out Forms.

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district's policy manual is available in the school office.

SECTION I REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

This section of the Van High School Student Handbook includes several notices that the district is required to provide to you, as well as other information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Van I.S.D. does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The following district staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex: campus administration – 903-963-8623
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: campus administration – 903-963-8623
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent, Joddie Witte– 903-963-8328

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Working Together

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school, a partnership that thrives on communication. Your involvement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects. Be sure your child comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child if your child is entering ninth grade.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed.
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal,

please call the school office at (903)963-8623 for an appointment. A teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school.

- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policy GKG and contact Keith Murphy (903)963-8623.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: Difference Makers, PTO, Athletic Booster Club, Band Boosters, Choir Boosters, and FFA Alumni.
- Serving as a parent representative on the District-level or campus-level planning committees assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact the High School office (903)963-8623.
- Offering to serve on the School Health Advisory Council, assisting the District in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies BE and BED for more information.] The Van I.S.D. will post the Board Agenda at the Administration Building on Thursday before regularly scheduled Board Meetings.

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student’s eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For further information, see policy EF.]

“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

As a parent, you have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for your child’s participation in:

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. See policies EF and FFAA.

Limiting the Display of a Student's Artwork and Projects

- As a parent, if you do not want your child's artwork, special projects, photographs and the like not be displayed on the district's Web site, in printed material, by video, or any other method of mass communication, you must notify the principal in writing.

Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff

- You may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teachers, including whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.

Reviewing Instructional Materials

- As a parent, you have the right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.

Inspecting Surveys

- As a parent, you may inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.

Accessing Student Records

- You may review your child's student records. These records include:
 - Attendance records,
 - Test scores,
 - Grades,
 - Disciplinary records,
 - Counseling records,
 - Psychological records,

- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,
- Other medical records,
- Teacher and counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns, and
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child.

Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student

- As a parent, you may grant or deny any written request from the District to make a videotape or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits the school to make a videotape or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:
 - When it is to be used for school safety;
 - When it relates to classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity; or
 - When it relates to media coverage of the school.

Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom

- You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom, if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.

Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags

- As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. A minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. [See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** policy EC(LEGAL).]

Excusing a Student from Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence

- You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3-12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the District determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK]

- Students who are exempted from reciting the pledge are expected to stand and remain quiet and respectful while others are reciting it.

Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct

- A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. See policies FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL), FO(LEGAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.

Requesting Transfers for Your Child

As a parent, you have a right:

- To request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by [campus administration] to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 25.0341. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the [superintendent or designee] for information. [See policy FDB]
- To request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDD(LOCAL)]
- To request the transfer of your child to another campus [or a neighboring district] if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether that assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. [See policies FDD(LEGAL) and(LOCAL).]

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Parents of Students with Disabilities

Parents of students with learning difficulties or who may need special education services may request an evaluation for special education at any time. For more information, see **Special Programs** and contact Sandy Bowker at (903)963-8328.

Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the District's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other support services that are available to all students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the District must decide if the evaluation is needed. If evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide consent for the evaluation. The District

must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the District receives the written consent. The District must give a copy of the report to the parent.

If the District determines that the evaluation is not needed, the District will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of his or her rights if the parent disagrees they disagree with the District. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*.

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is Sandy Bowker at (903)963-8328.

STUDENT RECORDS

Both federal and state law, safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and “eligible” students certain rights. For purposes of student records, an “eligible” student is one who is 18 or older OR who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records, is considered confidential educational records. Release is restricted to:

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights. Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18 or is emancipated by a court, control of the records goes to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes.
- District staff members who have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records. “Legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; or investigating or evaluating programs. Such persons would include school officials (such as board members, the superintendent, and principals), school staff members (such as teachers, counselors, and diagnosticians), or an agent of the district (such as a medical consultant).
- Various governmental agencies or in response to a subpoena or court order.
- Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she subsequently enrolls.

Release to any other person or agency—such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate.

The principal or superintendent is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The principal or superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. If circumstances prevent inspection during these hours, the district will either provide a copy of the

requested records, or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review the requested records. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

The address of the superintendent's office: P.O. Box 697; Van, Texas 75790.

The address of the principal's offices: 985 N. Maple; Van, Texas 75790.

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. If the district refuses the request to amend the records, the requestor has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requestor has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process defined by policy FNG(LOCAL).

Copies of student records are available at a cost of twenty-five cents per page, payable in advance. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge upon written request of the parent.

Directory Information:

The law permits the district to designate certain personal information about students as "directory information." This "directory information" will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, release of a student's directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year.

Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes:

The district often needs to use student information for the following school-sponsored purposes: student name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, and date and place of birth, as well as major field of study; degrees, honors, and awards received; dates of attendance; grade level; most recent educational institution attended; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and weight and height of members of athletic teams. [See FL(LOCAL).

For these specific school-sponsored purposes, the district would like to use your child's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, and date and place of birth, as well as major field of study; degrees, honors, and awards received; dates of attendance; grade level; most recent educational institution attended; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and weight and height of members of athletic teams. This information will not be released to the public without the consent of the parent or eligible student.

Unless you object to the use of your child's information for these limited purposes, the school will not need to ask your permission each time the district wishes to use this information for the school-sponsored purposes listed.

Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education:

The district is required by federal law to comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for students' names, addresses, and telephone listings, unless parents have advised the district not to release their child's information without prior written consent. A form has been attached for you to complete if you do not want the district to provide this information to military recruiters or institutions or higher education.

Please Note: Parents or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with federal law regarding student records. The district's policy regarding student records is available from the principal's or superintendent's office or [on the district's website at www.van.sprnet.org].

The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as teachers' personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

Bacterial Meningitis

State law specifically requires the District to provide the following information:

- What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

- What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when

people exchange saliva (such as by kissing; sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

- What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?

You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Texas Department of Health office to ask about meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Texas Department of Health, <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us>.

SECTION II

CURRICULUM-RELATED INFORMATION

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is conveniently organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child have a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact the high school office at 903-963-8623.

ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is essential for the student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws, one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit, are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed in the following sections:

Compulsory Attendance

State law requires that a student between the ages of six and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise legally exempt or excused.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18th birthday is required to attend each school day. If a student 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, however, the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespass.

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction (termed "accelerated instruction" by the state) assigned by a grade placement committee and basic skills for ninth graders; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the law and subject to disciplinary action.

A school-aged student's deliberately not attending school may also result in assessment of penalties by a court of law against both the student and his or her parents. A complaint against the parent may be filed in the appropriate court if the student:

- Is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

Attendance for Credit

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit, if appropriate.

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for religious holy days and documented health-care appointments will be considered days of attendance for this purpose. [See policies at FEB.]
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district. For a student transferring into the district after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.

- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

The student or parent may appeal the committee’s decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive credit, will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

When a student must be absent from school, the student—upon returning to school—must bring a note, signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A student absent for more than 5 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student’s extended absence from school [See FEC(LOCAL)]. A note signed by the student, even with the parent’s permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older.

Please Note: A student absent from school for any reason other than for a documented health care appointment will not be allowed to participate in school-related activities on that day or evening.

A student absent for any reason should promptly make up specific assignments missed and/or complete additional in-depth study assigned by the teacher. A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

Class time is important. Doctor’s appointments should be scheduled, if possible, so that the student will not miss instructional time.

A parent wishing to withdraw a student from school must present a signed request to the principal stating the reason for the withdrawal and the effective date.

ABSENT FROM SCHOOL

Parents of all students must telephone the school **Attendance Hotline at (903)963-3117** stating the reason whenever it is necessary for a student to be absent, arrive late or to be dismissed early during the school day. This phone line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, but it is preferable to make these calls as early in the morning as possible. The teachers take attendance each period, and the names of absentees are reported to the school office. **ANY ABSENCE NOT REPORTED OR VERIFIED BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN BY THE TIME THE STUDENT RETURNS TO SCHOOL WILL COUNT AS AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE.**

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

- Death in the student’s immediate family
- Illness of student
- Doctor and Dental Appointment
- Court Appearance

- Observation of religious holy days

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

Absences for all other reasons are unexcused and shall be treated as truancy. Oversleeping, car/transportation problems, work, job interviews, baby-sitting, running errands for self or parents, or as deemed as not excused absences or excused tardies by the principal. **Unexcused absences will be counted as a zero when calculating student grades.**

Continuous Attendance (Leaving the Classroom without Permission)

Once a class has started, students are not to leave the room without permission from the teacher in charge. Students who walk out of a room while a class is in session without the consent of the teacher in charge are subject to disciplinary action.

Driver License Attendance Verification

To obtain a driver license, a student between the ages of 16 and 18 must provide to the Texas Department of Public Safety a form obtained from the school verifying that the student has met the 90 percent attendance requirement and be in good standing academically for the semester preceding the date of application. The student can obtain this form at the school office.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The school counselor provides students and parents information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices. [For more information see policies at EIF.]

Advanced Placement Courses

Admission to Advanced Placement courses will be open. The following will be the Recommended criteria:

- The previous class average should be 85 for a regular class, 80 for honors
- The student must have passed TAKS
- Teacher recommendation

Criteria for removal from Advanced Placement course:

- If a student drops below an 80 average for two consecutive 6 weeks they will be removed to a regular class.
- If a student fails any six weeks they will be removed to a regular class

Criteria for denying honors credit for an Advanced Placement course:

- If a student drops below an 80 average for any two six weeks
- If a student fails the last six weeks.

The student will receive credit for the course; he/she will not receive honors credit.

CLASS RANK / TOP TEN PERCENT / HIGHEST-RANKING STUDENT

For two school years following their graduation, district graduates who rank in the top ten percent of their graduating class are eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas. Students must fulfill the requirements for the Distinguished Plan of graduation in order to be considered in the top ten percent of their class. Students and parents should contact the counselor or for further information about the application process and deadlines. [For further information, see policies at EIC.]

Van High School class rank will be determined by a weighted system including all four years of high school enrollment. Subjects will be assigned a weighted value with more challenging subjects earning higher grade point values. If a student fails a course and repeats that course, both grades will be included in determining the student's class rank. The following is excluded for the GPA ranking:

1. Credit by exam
2. Correspondence courses
3. Pace program
4. Summer course, except those taught at VHS for 1st time credit.
5. Band
6. Choir
7. P.E.
8. Athletics

Three-year graduates may be considered honor graduates if they complete the Distinguished Academic Record. The three-year graduates will be ranked with their class and **not** ranked with the class with which they are graduating.

The following is a list of weighted courses to be offered during the school year:

- A.P. English I, II, III and Concurrent English
- Pre-A.P. Algebra II
- Pre-A.P. Geometry
- Pre-A.P. Pre-Calculus and Concurrent Pre-Calculus
- Calculus
- Pre-A.P. Biology
- A.P. Chemistry
- A.P. United States History
- Concurrent Government/ Economics
- College Algebra

Calculating grade point average including weighted courses: Divide the total number of semester units taken into the total number of grade points earned. Add (10) points to each

semester grade that has been designated as a weighted course. The ten (10) points added to semester grades for weighted courses if for ranking purposes only. Additional points will NOT be added to report card grades. The semester grade on report cards is the actual grade earned by a student as indicated in the teacher's grade book. Ranking of students will be based on grade point averages of all courses, grade 9-12, except for band, choir, athletics, physical education, correspondence courses and credit by exam.

Valedictorian and Salutatorian

To receive the honor as the highest scholastic ranking senior students a Van High School, the following criteria is used:

1. Averages will be calculated on the four-year record following the first enrollment in the 9th grade with the requirement that three years attendance, including the senior year, must be in Van High School.
2. Students who qualify for this honor must successfully complete the Distinguished curriculum and have a satisfactory record in conduct.

CLASS SCHEDULES

Student schedules will be made in the spring prior to students entering the next grade level. Completed schedules are mailed to students or they are obtained from the high school office during the summer.

COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES

Van High School, at this time, offers concurrent courses through Tyler Junior College. The student may receive credit for both high school and college at the same time. Students must pay current Tyler Junior College tuition to receive the credit for the course and must make a C or higher to earn credit.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the District's policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office or [on the district's website at www.van.sprnet.org].

In general, the student or parent should first submit a written complaint and a request for a conference with the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the Board of Trustees.

Some complaints require different procedures. Any campus office or the Superintendent's office can provide information regarding specific processes for the following complaints. Additional information can also be found in the designated Board policy, available in the Principal's and Superintendent's offices.

Discrimination on the basis of gender: policy FB

Sexual abuse or sexual harassment of a student: policy FNCJ

Loss of credit on the basis of attendance: policy FDD

Removal of a student by a teacher for disciplinary reasons: policy FOAA

Removal of a student to a disciplinary alternative education program: policy FOAB

Expulsion of a student: policy FOD

Identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability: policy EHBA and FB. [See the section on **Special Programs**.]

Instructional materials: policy EFA

On-Campus distribution of non-school materials to students: policy FMA

COMPUTER RESOURCES

To prepare students for an increasingly computerized society, the District has made a substantial investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and their parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these resources; violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and their parents should be aware that —e-mail—using District computers is not private and may be monitored by District staff.

CONDUCT

Students are expected to:

- Behave responsibly, demonstrating courtesy and respect for the rights of other students and District staff. Student cooperation and respect for the property of others, including District property, is essential to maintaining safety, order, and discipline.

- Attend all classes regularly and on time; be prepared for each class; and take appropriate materials and assignments to class.

- Be well groomed and appropriately dress each day.

Applicability of School Rules

As required by law, the board has adopted a *Student Code of Conduct* that prohibits certain behaviors and establishes standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus—and consequences for violation of the standards. Students need to be familiar with the standards set out in the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as campus and classroom rules.

To achieve the best possible learning environment for all students, the *Student Code of Conduct* and other campus rules will apply whenever the interest of the District is involved, on or off school grounds, in conjunction classes and school-sponsored activities. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling the student—may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct* and policy

FO(LOCAL) in the District’s policy manual. Corporal Punishment will be governed by the following conditions: The student will be told the reason for the corporal punishment.

Only the principal, assistant principal, or teacher may administer the punishment.

The instrument to be used will be approved by the principal.

The punishment will be administered in the presence of one other District professional employee and out of view of other students.

A record will be maintained of each instance of corporal punishment.

Detention

Detention will be assigned to students for minor infractions. Detention will be held Tuesday and Thursday morning from 7:20-7:50, Wednesday afternoon from 3:25-3:55, during lunch (if approved by administration), other times specified by the teacher, and Saturday from 8:00-1:00.

FAILURE TO ATTEND DETENTION WILL RESULT IN ONE DAY OF SATURDAY DETENTION OR ONE DAY OF I.S.S.

FAILURE TO ATTEND SATURDAY SCHOOL DETENTION WILL RESULT IN 3 DAYS OF I.S.S.

Discipline Steps

Students should refer to and be aware of all behaviors and consequences addressed in the Student Code of Conduct. The following discipline schedule will be used for minor infractions, but is not limited to this action if the principal decides otherwise.

VIOLATION	CONSEQUENCES
#1	D-Hall
#2	D-Hall
#3	D-Hall
#4	1 Saturday D-Hall (8:00-1:00)
#5	2 Days I.S.S.
#6	3 Days I.S.S.
#7	5 Days I.S.S. (Possible Ticket from Van ISD Police Department)
#8	30 Days of A.E.P. (Minimum)

Other major violations of the Student Code of Conduct can result in immediate placement in Saturday D-Hall, In-School-Suspension, Out of School Suspension, or long-term Discipline Alternative Education Placement.

- Any student assigned to ISS will lose semester exemptions.
- Dress code violations may result in In-School-Suspension.
- Fighting on campus results in a minimum of five days of In-School-Suspension, and a referral to the Van Police Department.

- Tobacco on campus results in five days of In-School-Suspension, possible suspension, and referral to the Van Police Department.
- One missed D-Hall = 1 Day of In-School-Suspension or 1 Day of Saturday D-Hall
- One missed Saturday D-Hall = 3 Days of In-School-Suspension
- Two missed Saturday D-Hall = 5 Days of In-School-Suspension

Saturday School

Saturday school may be assigned to students who violate the *Student Code of Conduct* or who accumulate excessive absences. Saturday school is held at the Van Junior High School (8:00am-1:00pm).

A student who is assigned Saturday School for a violation to the *Student Code of Conduct* must report to the teacher at the Junior High School promptly at 8:00a.m. He/she must bring a Saturday School assignment sheet signed by the student and the parent. The student will not be admitted without this sheet. The student must bring paper, pen or pencil, and books to study or read during the Saturday School assignment. He/she may not sleep. All students must follow the Van ISD *Student Code of Conduct* during Saturday School. Failure to attend assigned Saturday School will result in further disciplinary action.

A student assigned Saturday School for excessive absences must make arrangements with the attendance officer and/or Assistant Principal to make up the excessive absences. The student must follow rules and procedures of Saturday School as stated above with the exception of needing the Saturday School assignment sheet.

Disruptions

As defined by law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people in an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to District property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving District property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on District property or on public property that is within 500 feet of District property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in district vehicles.

Social Events

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest

A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

Prom – All guests shall be pre-approved by designated administrator. All dress shall be formal (men- ties or tux; women- no mid-drift, no sheer clothing, and no slit skirts higher than five inches above the knee. If a student is currently serving in AEP or ISS the student will not be allowed to attend prom. Costs for tickets are non-refundable. All class dues and guest tickets must be paid no later than 3:30pm on the 5th school day before prom. Guest tickets will be one half the cost of total dues through the junior year (example: through junior year = \$60.00, guest ticket= \$30.00).

Academic Dishonesty / Cheating / Plagiarism

- Academic dishonesty - cheating or plagiarism - is not acceptable. Cheating includes the copying of another student's work – homework, class work, test answers, etc. – as one's own. Plagiarism is the use of another person's original ideas or writing without giving credit to the true author. A student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to loss of credit for the work in question, as well as disciplinary penalties, according to the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Fighting

- Fighting will result in five (5) days of In School Suspension and possible three (3) days of out of school suspension for the first offense, and possible ticket from local police. A second offense will result in either a ticket and/or 10 days of ISS or could result in recommendation for placement in DAEP. Self-defense is extremely rare; therefore, retaliation is also considered fighting and the above consequences will apply.

Knives

- Pocket knives or any items resembling a knife are prohibited.

Persistent Misbehavior

- The district defines persistent misbehavior to be two or more violations of the Student Code of Conduct in general or repeated occurrences of the same violation.

Cell Phones

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess cell phones; however, cell phones must remain turned off during the instructional day, and out of sight, including during all testing.

The use of cell phones in any area of the school such as the cafeteria, library, restrooms, etc at any time while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event is strictly prohibited

- If a student violates this policy the student will be subject to any disciplinary action by the school administration or designee according to the *Student Code of Conduct* and may

include confiscation of the device. Teachers will collect the cell phone and turn it into the principal's office. The principal will contact the parent to pick up the cell phone at the end of the semester. For Cell Phones in which a third party retains a legal right of ownership, an administrative fee may be charged. [See Policy FNCE]

Radios, CD Players, and Other Electronic Devices and Games

Students are not permitted to possess such items as, pagers, radios, CD players, tape recorders, camcorders, DVD players, cameras, or electronic devices or games at school, unless prior permission has been obtained from the teacher or principal. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact the parent to pick up the items.

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct* and may include confiscation of the device. For certain items, such as pagers, in which a third party retains a legal right of ownership, an administrative fee may be charged. [See policy FNCE.]

Laser Pointers

Students are not permitted to possess or use laser pointers while on school property, while using District transportation, or while attending school-sponsored or school-related activities, whether on or off school property. Laser pointers will be confiscated and students will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct.

Public Display of Affection

Appearance of intimate courtship has no place in the school and should not take place on the school campus or at any school related event. NO misunderstanding can result on this issue if all students interpret this to mean that students should not have physical contact with others.

CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

The District offers career and technology programs in auto mechanics, business, agriculture, industrial arts and home economics. Admission to these programs is based on appropriate grade level, and teacher recommendation.

Van I.S.D. will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Texas Department of Health regarding these diseases.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

The district permits high school students to take correspondence courses—courses by mail or via the Internet—for credit toward high school graduation [See policies at EEJC].

COUNSELING

Academic Counseling

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in grades 8 through 11 will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and vocational opportunities.

To plan for the future, each student should work closely with the counselor in order to enroll in the high school courses that best prepare him or her for attendance at a college, university, or training school, or for pursuit of some other type of advanced education. The counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

Please be aware that not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in the district. A student who desires to take a course not offered at his or her regular campus should contact the counselor about a transfer or other alternatives. If the parents of at least 22 students request a transfer in order for those students to take a course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or career and technology, then for the following year the district will either offer the course at the school form which the transfers were requested or offer it by teleconference.

Students who are interested in attending a college, university, or training school or pursuing some other type of advanced education should work closely with their counselor so that they take the proper high school courses. The counselor can also provide information about entrance examinations required by many colleges and universities, as well as information about financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

Personal Counseling

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with the counselor should make an appointment for necessary guidance.

Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment

The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent. Parental consent is not necessary when a psychological examination, test, or treatment is required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

[For more information, refer to FFE(LEGAL) and FFG (EXHIBIT).]

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Taken the Course

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit for it—may, in circumstances determined by the teacher, counselor, principal, or attendance committee be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, home school, correspondence courses, or independent study supervised by a teacher

The counselor or principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject.

The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an exam. A student may not use this exam, however, to regain eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

[For further information, see the counselor and policies EEJA.]

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Not Taken the Course

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has had no prior instruction. The dates on which exams are scheduled will be posted in the guidance counseling center on campus.

A student will earn credit with a passing score of at least 90 on the exam.

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the principal no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. The district will honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. If the district agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the district, the parent must purchase a test from a university approved by the State Board of Education. [For further information, see EEJB(LOCAL).]

DELIQUENT ACCOUNTS

Students are responsible for all monies owed for whatever purpose. These accounts are due before the close of each six weeks. Students appearing on the delinquent list for any six weeks per semester will not be eligible for exemptions status, and will be required to take their final exams during the regular scheduled times. In addition, any student failing to attend a scheduled exam without proper excuse will receive a zero on the exam for an unexcused absence. Also, any student appearing on the delinquent list per six weeks will not be eligible for the **PRIDE TRIP**.

DELIVERIES: FLOWERS/GIFTS

Flower and gift deliveries to Van High School will be delivered to the high school office. Students will be notified and will pick up deliveries at the end of the school day, except during homecoming and Valentine Day. Homecoming and Valentine Day deliveries will be made during the lunch hour at the cafeteria only.

DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS

School Materials

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc.

The Vandal Voice, football programs, and the yearbook, Vandalite, are available to students.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

Nonschool Materials From Students

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before posting, circulating, or distributing written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any nonschool material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made in two school days.

The principal has designated the High School office as the location for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by other students. [See policies at FNAA.]

A student may appeal a principal's decision in accordance with policy FNG. Any student who posts nonschool material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Materials displayed without the principal's approval will be removed.

Nonschool Materials from Others

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the District or by a District-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any District premises by any District employee or by persons or groups not associated with the District, except as permitted by policies at GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any nonschool material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the principal for prior review. The principal will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate District complaint policy. [See policies at DGBA, FNG, or GF.]

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD or a noncurriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All nonschool materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from District property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

DRESS AND GROOMING

The District's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

Dress Code Guidelines:

- According to district policy, the district prohibits pictures, emblems, or writings on clothing that are lewd, offensive, vulgar, obscene, sexually suggestive, or advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs or anything that can be associated with drug or substance abuse.
- Shorts must be of modest length not to exceed five (5) inches above the knee.
- Shirrtails will be tucked inside pants unless designed to be worn otherwise.
- Appropriate footwear is required.
- Caps, hats, and bandanas are prohibited inside the building or classroom.
- No shower shoes, bedtime slippers, or water socks are permitted.
- Pocket chains are not permitted.
- Pajama pants or tops are not permitted.
- Form-fitting clothing is prohibited.
- No rings, studs, strings, or other jewelry may be worn in body piercing other than the ears of female students.
- Hair color will be one that is considered "natural". Examples of unacceptable color would be an unnatural red, orange, blue, green, etc. Defining natural hair will be at the discretion of the principal or designee.
- Roller Blade Shoes are prohibited.
- Holes in the knees or other places in pants or blue jeans are not permitted.
- Writing, or the appearance of writing, on pants, shirts, shorts, or any part of the body is prohibited.
- Trench coats or dusters are prohibited.

Specific Guidelines:

Boys:

- Hair shall be clean, well groomed and not of excessive length. Hair shall not extend below the eyebrows, earlobes, or below the collar. The school administration has sole authority to determine what is excessive.
- Boys must be clean-shaven. Beards, mustaches, and goatees are prohibited.
- All sleeveless shirts are prohibited.

- “Sagging”- the wearing of shorts or pants below the belt line is prohibited.
- Lower garments must be worn waist high with belts fastened at all times.
- Earrings are prohibited.
- Ponytails are prohibited.

Girls:

- Apparel that is extremely low cut in front or back is prohibited.
- Form-fitting clothing is prohibited.
- Hemlines must be of modest length not to exceed five (5) inches above the knee.
- Garments, which expose the midriff when arms are raised, are prohibited.
- Exposure of any undergarment is prohibited.
- All sleeveless tank tops are prohibited.
- Full-cut split skirts with the top of the split no shorter than five (5) inches above the knee cap.
- Sleeveless shirts are permitted with an appropriate fit around the armhole. The shoulder strap must be at least 2 inches in width and the sleeves must NOT be cut-off. Tank tops and spaghetti straps are not permitted.

The dress code may not apply to every conceivable situation, and when questions arise regarding dress or grooming, the principals involved shall have the final responsibility of determining whether or not the conditions in question are in keeping with the intent of this dress code. The intent of the dress code is that all students shall be dressed so as to appear neat, clean, and in good taste.

Coaches and sponsors of elective activities may establish their own dress codes for students who participate in these activities with the understanding that the current dress code sets the minimum standard.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, Nominees, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Participation in school and school-related activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Eligibility for participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class, other than a class identified as honors or advanced by either the State Board of Education or by the local Board of Trustees, may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.

- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to ten absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of five absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of two absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the Board, are subject to these restrictions.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

Please note: Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the *Student Code of Conduct* or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization’s standards of behavior.

[For further information, see policies FM and FO.]

OFFICES AND ELECTIONS

CLASS ORGANIZATION:

Classes will elect the following class officers:

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. Representative

Students interested in running for class officer should sign-up with one of their class sponsors. Sponsors will go over the qualifications and responsibilities of class officers with each candidate before they sign-up to insure that they are aware of the qualifications necessary for running for that particular office.

Class elections will be held in the classrooms on a designated election day. Sponsors will meet and tally votes at a time and place to be designated later.

There will be no runoffs unless there is an exact tie. A plurality of votes will determine the winners. **BALLOTS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE OFFICE.**

FOR THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT:

Students will vote by secret ballot for one student to be class president. The student receiving the highest number of votes shall be class president and the student receiving the second highest number of votes will be vice-president.

FOR THE OFFICE OF SECRETARY AND TREASURER:

These will be two separate offices in the Junior and Senior classes and will be one combined office in the Freshman and Sophomore classes.

ELECTION OF CLASS FAVORITES:

Each member of the respective classes will be given two ballots. A student will write the name of a girl on one ballot and the name of a boy on the other ballot. The winner will be decided by a simple plurality.

ELECTION OF HOMECOMING QUEEN:

The senior class will select five senior ladies as nominees for the honor of becoming homecoming queen. Each senior student will write the name of five girls on the first ballot. The top five girls selected by the senior class will be the homecoming queen nominees. The winner will be determined by a simple plurality.

ELECTION OF HOMECOMING KING:

The senior class will select five senior men as nominees for the honor of becoming homecoming king. Each senior student will write the name of five men on the first ballot. The top five men selected by the senior class will be the homecoming king nominees. The winner will be determined by a simple plurality.

FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that requires use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.

- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a District-provided request form.

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the building principal. [For further information, see policies at FP.]

Class Dues

Class dues are \$20.00 per student per year. These dues are voluntary and are established as a means for a student to pay his share of the class expenses. Dues are collected and made apart of the Student Activity Fund, banked accordingly and audited. Dues may be paid by semester (\$10.00) per semester. Dues are non-refundable should a student withdraw. In order to attend the prom either their junior or senior year, students may pay freshman, sophomore, junior dues (or dues for each year they have attended Van High School) before the deadline set by the junior sponsors during the junior year. Each year senior sponsors will furnish a list of seniors who have paid dues to the junior sponsors. Only those seniors will be sent invitations to the prom. In order to attend the senior trip, students must pay dues for each year they have attended Van High School. Non-class members may attend the junior/senior prom as guests but a fee will be assessed to offset expenses. Class sponsors may request a fundraiser during the junior or senior year should additional funds be needed. Student dues shall not be retroactive. \$20.00 per year of any portion of year that student attended Van High School will be assessed. **EXAMPLE:** A student enrolls the latter part of junior year and \$20.00 for senior year. Early graduates must pay dues in full.

FUND-RAISING

Student groups or classes, and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the campus principal prior to any fundraiser. [For further information, see policies at FJ and GE.]

GRADE CLASSIFICATION

After the ninth grade, students are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation.

<u>Credits Earned</u>	<u>Classification</u>
6	Grade 10 (Sophomore)
13	Grade 11 (Junior)
19	Grade 12 (Senior)

GRADING GUIDELINES

In grades 9-12, achievement is reported to parents as: due to the diversity of the curriculum, teachers at the secondary level should operate under the following guidelines for a six weeks grading period:

Daily grades should total 50% to 75% of the six weeks average.

Major grades should total 25% to 50% of the six weeks average.

In a six week period students should be credited with a minimum of 6 daily grades and a minimum of 2 major grades.

Types of daily grades may include daily written assignments, homework assignments, quizzes, lab work, work on a project, or oral presentations.

Types of major grades may include quizzes, lab work, projects, major tests, or six weeks tests.

The semester grade is determined by the following formula:

1st Six Weeks, 2nd Six Weeks, 3rd Six Weeks, Semester Exam

Total Divided by 4 = Semester Grade

Exemption Policy

Students in grades 9-12 are eligible to earn examination exemptions in odd numbered classes the first semester and even numbered classes the second semester. Exemption eligibility requirements are:

- If the student has not more than two(2) excused absences with at least an 80 average.
- If the student has three(3) excused absences with at least a 90 average.
- Students with more than three(3) excused absences, one(1) or more unexcused absence, more than three(3) tardies in that class, or who have spent time in AEP or ISS, who have been disciplined through the office or have been placed on the delinquent list for any six(6) weeks during that semester will be **Ineligible** for exemptions.
- Students will not be eligible for exemptions that cheat on major tests/exams.
- TAKS Incentive Exemptions: Students who pass any or all parts of TAKS do not have to take their final exams in that core subject.

Students are not required to attend classes in which they are exempt on examination days. However, exempt students who are on campus must report to their classes. Students will be encouraged to attend each class on the examination day, take the examination, and have it scored. If the examination score will improve a student's grade average, it will be calculated as part of the semester average. Otherwise, the examination grade will not be counted.

GRADUATION

Requirements for a Diploma

To receive a high school diploma from the District, a student must successfully complete the required number of credits and pass a statewide exit-level exam.

The exit-level test required for students in grade 11 covers English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and requires knowledge of Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Integrated Chemistry and Physics, English III, and early American and United States History, World

History, and World Geography. A student who does not pass the exit-level assessment will have additional opportunities to take the test.

Graduation Programs

The District offers the graduation programs listed below. All students entering grade 9 are required to enroll in the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement (Advanced) Program. Permission to enroll in the Minimum Graduation Program will be granted only if an agreement is reached among the student, the student’s parent or person standing in parental relation, and the counselor or appropriate administrator. [See policy EIF(LEGAL).] Students who entered the ninth grade during the 2004-2005 school year must meet the following credit requirements for graduation:

	<u>Distinguished</u>	<u>Recommended</u>
Seniors	28	28
Juniors	28	28
Sophomores	28	28
Freshmen	28	28

Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, a student entering the ninth grade will be affected by new state graduation requirements for the Recommended Program and the Distinguished Achievement (Advanced) Program. To graduate under either of these programs, an incoming ninth grade student will have to earn an additional credit in math and an additional credit in science. The credit requirements for the various programs for students entering the ninth grade during this school year are listed above:

Any student successfully completing state and VISD requirements will be required to attend graduation practice, and attend the graduation ceremony in the required dress code. Students failing to comply with these standards shall not participate in the graduation ceremony. The Diploma may be received by the student after completing criteria established by the principal.

Early Graduation

A student may graduate from Van High School in three years provided he meets the academic requirements for graduation. A student who chooses to graduate early will be classified as a senior and participate as a senior in class activities such as pictures, etc. The student who graduates early will be able to order cap and gown, invitations, and participate in the spring graduation ceremonies with graduating seniors. A student graduating early must declare his or her intentions with the school counselor during the month of September before graduation in May. An early graduate may be an honor graduate but not Valedictorian or Salutatorian. An early graduate will be ranked with their class, not the class with which they are graduating.

Certificates of Coursework Completion

A certificate of coursework completion will be issued to a senior student who successfully completes state and local credit requirements for graduation, but fails to perform satisfactorily on the exit-level tests. Exceptions will be made by the Principal or Superintendent.

Students with Disabilities

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal committee, a student with disabilities may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her individualized education program (IEP).

State Scholarships and Grants

Under the Texas Early High School Graduation Scholarship Program, students who complete the Recommended or Advanced (Distinguished Achievement) High School Program may earn financial credits in varying amounts to apply toward college tuition. The amounts depend on the number of consecutive months in which the student completed graduation requirements and the number of early college credits earned and may be used at public or private Texas higher education institutions within the state. The counselor can provide additional information about meeting the program's eligibility requirements.

Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement Program may be eligible under the TEXAS Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions. [For further information, see the principal or counselor and policy EJ(LEGAL).]

HARASSMENT

The District believes that all students learn best in an environment free from harassment and that their welfare is best served when they can work free from discrimination. Students are expected to treat other students and District employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The Board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, or disability. [See policy FFH] Prohibited harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. A copy of the District's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office [or on the district website at www.van.sprnet.org]

Examples of prohibited discrimination may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; bullying, threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property. Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic

and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and District employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited harassment should immediately report the problem to a teacher, counselor, principal or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent.

Investigation of Reported Harassment

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited harassment by an adult associated with the district, or by another student, when the allegations, if proven, would constitute "sexual harassment" or "other prohibited harassment" as defined by district policy.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited harassment occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the harassment. The district may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint did not rise to the level of harassment prohibited by law or policy.

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of prohibited harassment is prohibited. However, a person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation may be subject to appropriate discipline.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, the district makes the following statements: Van I.S.D. does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The following District staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex:
Superintendent – Joddie Witte (903)963-8328
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability:
Special Programs Director – Sandy Bowker (903)963-8328

HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS

School Health Advisory Council

During the proceeding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from the Van I.S.D. administration office. [See also policies at BDF and EHAA.]

Vending Machines

The district has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines see the campus principal. [See policies CO and FFA]

Other Health-Related Matters

Tobacco Prohibited

The District and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of tobacco products by students and others on school property and at school-sponsored and school related activities. [See also the *Student Code of Conduct* and policies at FNCD and GKA.]

Asbestos Management Plan

The District's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, is available in the administration office. If you have any questions, please contact the central administration office.

Pest Management Plan

The District applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact central administration.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

Other designated staff members you may need to contact include:

- Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, who coordinates services for homeless students: Director of Special Programs – Sandy Bowker
- Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs: Van High School Principal – Keith Murphy (903)963-8623

HOMEWORK

Individual teachers will determine the extent to which homework will be given. Failure to complete homework may result in disciplinary action or grade reduction.

IMMUNIZATION

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the

student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services, Immunization Branch, can be honored by the District. The immunizations required are: diphtheria, rubella (measles), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and varicella (chicken pox). The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the Texas Department of Health. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student's religious beliefs conflict with the requirements that the student be immunized, the student must present a statement signed by the student (or parent, if the student is a minor) stating that immunization conflicts with the beliefs and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the student is an adherent or member. This statement must be renewed yearly.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition. [For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the Texas Department of Health Website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Questioning of Students

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the question or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

Students Taken Into Custody

State law requires the District to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.

- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the Superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

[For further information, see policy GRA(LEGAL).]

MAKEUP WORK

Routine and In-Depth Makeup Work Assignments

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. [For further information, see policy EIAB(LOCAL).]

A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. **The grade for make up work after an unexcused absence shall be a zero. (Local Policy EIAB)**

DAEP or In-School Suspension Makeup Work

A student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, coursework needed to fulfill the student's high school graduation requirements. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the coursework through an alternative method available,

including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. The District will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the District. [See policy FOCA(LEGAL).]

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The District may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. [See policy FEA(LEGAL).]

Students and their parents are encouraged to discuss options with the teacher or counselor to ensure the student completes all work required for the course or grade level.

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

- Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer:
- Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
- Medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified District employee from the original, properly labeled container.
- Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
- In certain emergency situations, the District will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:
 - In accordance with the guidelines developed with the District's medical advisor and
 - When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the District's form.
- Students may not, at any time, be in possession of any kind of medication or any substance that may be perceived as medication – prescription or over the counter.
- Students who must take medicine at school must leave their medicine with the campus nurse along with parental consent and directions for taking the medication. Failure to adhere to this policy, could mean that students are in violation of State of Texas policies concerning controlled substances at school.

A student with asthma may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse or principal if the student has been prescribed asthma medication for use during the school day. [See policy FFAF(LEGAL).]

Psychotropic Drugs

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

Teachers and other District employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend the use of psychotropic drugs. A District employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate.

[For further information, see policies at FFAC.]

MESSAGES TO STUDENTS

If messages are of an emergency nature, the office staff will make every effort to deliver them without delay. However, it is not possible to accept and hand deliver all of the telephone messages that come to the high school without interrupting classes and interfering with the learning environment the school faculty and staff work so hard to maintain. Students should ask friends and employers to leave messages at their home, not at school.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS

In accordance with UIL and VISD local policy, each student entering the 7th grade, 9th grade, or have been under a doctor's care and required the doctor's release to return to physical activity will submit from a licensed physician an exam indicating that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the athletic program. All examinations will be funded and coordinated through the VISD athletic program.

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge.

One minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during the minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. [See policy EC(LEGAL) for more information.]

PRAYER

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

PRIDE AND CITIZENSHIP INCENTIVE

The Pride Trip is an incentive trip to reward those students who are consistently attending school, exemplifying good character and responsibility, and maintaining good grades.

Pride Trip Criteria

Students must meet the following criteria to be eligible for a Pride Trip:

- No absences
- No tardies
- No office referrals/ or D-Halls
- No zeros
- A or B in Citizenship
- Cannot be failing any classes
- No fines – cafeteria or library

Excused absences and unexcused absences count against qualifying for PRIDE. Co-curricular and absences cleared by the office (P) do not count against qualifying for the PRIDE trip.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

In addition, at certain grade levels a student – with limited exceptions – will be required to pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), if the student is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and April 15 and is a Texas resident during the week that the TAKS is administered the first time.

- In order to be promoted to grade 4, students must perform satisfactorily on the Reading section of the grade 3 assessment test in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the Mathematics and Reading sections of the grade 5 assessment test in English or Spanish.
- Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, in order to be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 8 assessment in English.

Parents of a student in grade 3, 5, or 8 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. Such students will have two additional opportunities to take the test. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher, and the student's parent, will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third failed attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. In order for the student to be promoted, based on standards previously established by the District, the decision of the committee must be

unanimous. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. [See policies at EIE.]

A Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) will be prepared for any student in a middle school or beyond who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment test or is determined by the District as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year following enrollment in grade 9. The PGP will be designed and implemented by a guidance counselor, teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will, among other items, identify the student's educational goals, address the parent's educational expectations for the student, and outline an intensive instruction program for the student. [For additional information, see the [counselor] and policy EIF(LEGAL).]

Certain students—some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, counselor, or special education director.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

Because class time is important, doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time.

A student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day except with permission from the principal or designee and according to the campus sign-out procedures. Unless the Principal or Superintendent has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

To leave campus, a student must check out through the office and obtain a blue slip. A verbal request from the student's parent and/or guardian to the office is required. A parent may call the high school or leave a message on the Attendance Hot-Line at (903)963-3117. **A written request is not acceptable.** For illness or emergency, the student's parent or guardian will be telephoned and permission granted by the parent before the student will be allowed to leave.

When the student returns to campus, the student must sign in at the office before going to class. When a student is temporarily absent due to a documented appointment with a health care professional and misses any part of the school day, he/she must return a doctor's note to the high school office.

It is recommended that all doctor's appointments be made for times before school or after school.

REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every six weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written unsatisfactory progress report if their child's performance in any course is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject during a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject.

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal/ superintendent and are designed to reflect each student's academic achievement for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the Board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the District's grading policy. [See policy EIA(LOCAL).] The Board's decision is not subject to appeal.

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG(LOCAL).

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject.

SAFETY

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the district. Although the district has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other District employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

Parking Lot Rules and Regulations

- Students must have a valid Driver's License and Proof of Insurance. Students must register their vehicle in the high school office. Parking permits are available to be purchased by students for a fee of \$20.00. These permits must be appropriately displayed on the rear view mirror of each student's vehicle. Failure to purchase a permit, to display appropriately in the vehicle, or to park in assigned space will result in a loss of parking privileges and/or other disciplinary actions, and/or a fine payable to Van I.S.D. Parking permits are not transferable to other students. Students must park in the appropriate parking place making certain their vehicle is parked properly between white lines. All vehicles will be subject to routine permit checks without prior notice.
- Any student who will be driving different vehicles to school must register each vehicle with the office; a separate permit is not necessary for each vehicle. Students are not to drive or park on any of the grassy or dirt areas of the grounds or in areas designated for faculty or visitors, behind the building, or any unauthorized areas. Vocation students are not to drive or park their vehicles at classes located off the main parking lot unless prior

approval by the principal or assistant principal is given. Students are not to loiter in their vehicle or parking lot before, during, or after school.

- Any student driving a personal vehicle on school grounds is subject to random drug testing. (pending school board approval)

Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies

From time to time, students, teachers, and other District employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school would need to have written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

The District is not responsible for medical expenses associated with a student's injury. The District does make available, however, optional, low-cost student accident insurance program to assist parents in meeting medical expenses. A parent who desires coverage for his or her child will be responsible for paying insurance premiums and for submitting claims through the VISD Administration office.

Emergency School-Closing Information

During the school year, there may be times when school will be cut short or closed due to weather or emergency situations. An announcement will be made over the following stations: Channel 7 – Tyler, Channel 56 – Tyler, Channel 4 – Dallas, and radio station 1820 KTBB AM.

SAT, ACT, AND OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate exam to take; these exams are usually taken at the end of the junior year. (Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test, such as the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA).

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Student Use Before and After School

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place.

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

After dismissal of school in the afternoon, and unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher, students must leave campus immediately.

Conduct Before and After School

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on District premises and at school-sponsored events off District premises, such as play rehearsal, club meetings, athletic practice, and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the *Student Code of Conduct* or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

Use of Hallways During Class Time

Loitering or standing in the halls between classes is not permitted. During class time, a student must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

- Any student in the halls or other areas of the campus while classes are in session must have a teacher signed student agenda or signed pass from the staff member responsible for him/her at that time. Students may not be in the parking lots at any time during the school day without permission from a campus administrator. Failure to obtain proper passes will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Cafeteria Services

The District participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced lunches daily. Free and reduced-price lunches are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. See the school counselor or Treva Lewellen, Van ISD Food Service Director at (903)963-8386 for questions.

The District follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day. [For more information, see policy CO(LEGAL).]

All campuses of the Van ISD are closed. After arriving on campus during a school day, students must remain on campus for the duration of the school day unless they are checked out of school through the office by their parents. If a student leaves the campus before the normal end of school, that student will be subject to disciplinary action.

All students are to remain in the cafeteria throughout the lunch period. **Any student leaving the cafeteria to go to the parking lot, vocational building, agricultural building, or the main building without permission will be subject to disciplinary action.**

Library

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for independent student use during the school day with appropriate permission from teacher/campus administration.

Instructional Television

The district provides the opportunity for students in grades 9-12 to view a 12-minute educational program on current events and news items, two minutes of which contain commercial advertising. A parent who prefers that his or her child not view any commercial broadcast at school should notify High School Principal. An alternative supervised assignment will be made for the student.

Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups

Student organized, student-led noncurriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB.

A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

Homecoming Hall Decorations

Limit expenditures to \$200.00. Decorating will take place the weekend before homecoming. Judging will take place on Monday. Theme must be pre-approved by the designated administrator. No tape on ceiling tiles or floor. Lights shall not be covered.

SEARCHES

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, District officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

Students' Desks and Lockers

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students must be certain that their lockers are locked, and that the combinations are not available to others.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by board policy, whether or not a student is present.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the permission of the student. A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. [See also the Student Code of Conduct.]

Trained Dogs

The district will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around lockers and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas, or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. An item in a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle, to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

Drug Testing

All active students (male and female) involved in Van High School extracurricular programs will be subject to the drug-testing program. Participating students selected for random testing will be chosen from a pool of in-season and off-season activities. Qualified lab personnel and professional staff will administer testing. [For further information see policy FNF(LOCAL).]

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, dyslexic students, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the campus principal.

Special Services

Many children are born with or may acquire physical or emotional conditions, which limit their normal growth and development. Fortunately, many of these conditions can be helped or completely corrected if parents recognize the problem early and seek help. Early intervention is very important, so VISD provides services to children with disabilities beginning at age 3. This includes speech, physical, mental, and emotional disorders. Services for vision and hearing impairments may begin at birth.

VISD provides specialized instruction based on each child's need. In addition, services may include (if specified on the Individualized Education Plan IEP):

Speech Therapy

Occupational/ Physical Therapy

Special Transportation

Counseling

Other Related Services

Public schools provide these services at no cost to parents. If your child is having problems in school, or if your preschool child has problems in development, such as poor speech, clumsiness, or poor balance, extreme changes in mood, or problems with vision or hearing, contact Sandy Bowker, Director of Special Programs at (903)963-8328.

STEROIDS

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use.

Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

STUDENT AIDES

Senior students who apply for and are accepted to serve as either an office or library aide will do so with full knowledge that their behavior and actions are expected to be of the very highest quality. They will understand that all rules and regulations established for these positions will be strictly adhered to. Failure to comply with these expectations and policies will result in immediate removal from the student aide program.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Substitute Teachers have the same authority as regular teachers and should be treated with respect. Students are in a position to help the substitute in many ways. Students are expected to give their full cooperation.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Courses may be taken in summer school for make-up credit and/or enrichment with the approval of the counselor. Van I.S.D. works with Texas Tech University for correspondence courses. Students can sign up and pay the tuition to take high school courses if those courses are not offered by the school or if the student has had scheduling conflicts, or if the student desires to gain credit for failed classes. All of the class work, unit tests, and projects are assigned and graded by the university. The school counselors at VHS administer the final exam. These courses need to be completed by May 1 if the student is a senior.

TAKS remediation and the opportunity for credit recovery in core curriculum classes will be offered in the summer.

TAKS (TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS)

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state mandated tests (such as TAKS: the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–11
- Reading, annually in grades 3–9
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- English language arts in grades 10 and 11
- Social studies in grades 8,10, and 11
- Science in grades 5, 8, 10, and 11

- Any other subject and grade required by federal law.

[See policy EKB(LEGAL).]

TARDINESS

A student who is tardy to class will be assigned to detention hall. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action, in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

TEXTBOOKS

State-approved textbooks are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return a book issued by the school loses the right to free textbooks until the book is returned or paid for by the parent, however, the student will be provided textbooks for use at school during the school day.

TRANSPORTATION

School-Sponsored Trips

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. The principal or designee, however, may make an exception if the parent makes a written request that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent no later than the day before the scheduled trip.

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The District makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school. Further information may be obtained by contacting Bill Bogue at (903)963-8886.

See the *Student Code of Conduct* for provisions regarding transportation to the disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP).

Students are expected to assist District staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in District vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop nearest home.
- Keep feet, books, band instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses.

- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Wait for the driver’s signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.

When students ride in a District van or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened at all times.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*; bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

Bus Discipline Procedures

The following is to serve as a guide for dealing with bus discipline problems. Occasionally problems may arise that may require more immediate or severe consequences which will be at the discretion of the Principal and/or transportation director.

Misconduct will be punished according to the following Van ISD Bus Discipline Procedure:

- 1st Referral- Warning and parent notification
- 2nd Referral- Three days suspension from the bus
- 3rd Referral- Five days suspension from the bus
- 4th Referral- Ten days suspension from the bus
- 5th Referral- 30 days suspension from the bus
- 6th Referral- Suspension from the bus for the remainder of the school year

If a student earns a referral on the way to school and is to be suspended from the bus, the student will be allowed to ride the school bus home that afternoon and the suspension will start the following morning.

VANDALISM

The taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and for years to come—littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

VIDEO CAMERAS

For safety purposes, video/audio equipment may be used to monitor student behavior on buses (and in common areas on campus). Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video/audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

Parents and others are welcome to visit District schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the principal's office, sign in and obtain a visitor's badge.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the counselor's office.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

A student who is 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor, may withdraw without parental signature.

GLOSSARY

Accelerated instruction is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level.

ACT refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the American College Test. The test may be a requirement for admission to certain colleges or universities.

ARD is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student's parents are part of the committee.

Attendance Review Committee is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the Board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit lost because of absences.

DAEP stands for a disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the Student Code of Conduct. The DAEP will be separated from students not assigned to the program. It will focus on English language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self-discipline, and provide for students' educational and behavior needs, as well as supervision and counseling.

FERPA refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as directory information, unless the student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

IEP is the written record of the Individualized Education Program prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services, and program modifications or support for school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; modifications to state or districtwide tests, etc.

ISS refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the Student Code of Conduct. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

NCLBA is the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 that, along with other requirements for schools, provides for parent information and opportunities for "opting" their students out of certain activities or surveys.

Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) is a new state requirement for any student in middle school or higher who fails a section on a state-mandated assessment test or is determined by the District as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

SAT refers to the second of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

Section 504 is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined by an ARD committee to be eligible for special education services, appropriate regular educational services will be provided.

State assessment tests are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance is a condition of promotion and the grade 11 exit-level test is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests.

Alternate assessment tests, developed by the state, may be given to students in special education and students identified as limited English proficient.

Student Code of Conduct, developed with the advice of the District-level committee and adopted by the Board, identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from the classroom or campus. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a disciplinary alternative education program. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion, and states whether self-defense is a consideration in suspension, DAEP placement, or expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

TAKS is short for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills the state's current standardized achievement test given to students in certain grade levels and subjects in grades 3–11.

UIL refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary non-profit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

APPENDIX I
ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

My child and I have received a copy of the Van ISD Student Handbook (and the Student Code of Conduct) for 2009–2010. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the code.

Regarding student records, I understand that the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and state law require that “directory information” on my child be released by the District to anyone who requests it unless I object in writing to the release of any or all of this information. I also understand that to be in compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the District will release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, upon request, the name, address, and telephone listing of my child, unless I direct the District not to release this information without prior written consent, as indicated below. This objection must be filed with the principal within ten school days of my child’s first day of instruction for this school year.

Directory information includes my child’s:

1. Name,
2. Address,
3. Telephone listing,
4. Date and place of birth,
5. Photograph,
6. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports,
7. Weight and height of members of athletic teams,
8. Dates of attendance,
9. Grade level,
10. Enrollment status,
11. Honors and awards received in school,
12. Most recent previous school attended, and
13. E-mail address.

In exercising my right to limit release of this information, I have marked through the items of directory information listed that I direct the District not to release without my prior written consent.

Print name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX II
ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

My child and I have received a copy of the Van High School Student Handbook

Print name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

To the Parents of _____:

The District is required by federal law to notify you and obtain your consent or denial (opt-out) for your child to participate in certain school activities. The activities include a student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight areas, known as "protected information surveys."

14. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
15. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
16. Sex behavior or attitudes;
17. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
18. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
19. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
20. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
21. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

This requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure, or use of student information for marketing purposes ("marketing surveys"), and certain physical exams and screenings.