



Voluntown Public School System
Voluntown, Connecticut

High School & Transportation Handbook 2018-2019

These are the rules, regulations, and policies of our Transportation Department. The purpose of this handbook is to cooperatively work with students and their parents/families in their efforts to make a smooth transition through our school system.

Adam S. Burrows
Superintendent of Schools
860-376-9167
aburrows@voluntownct.org

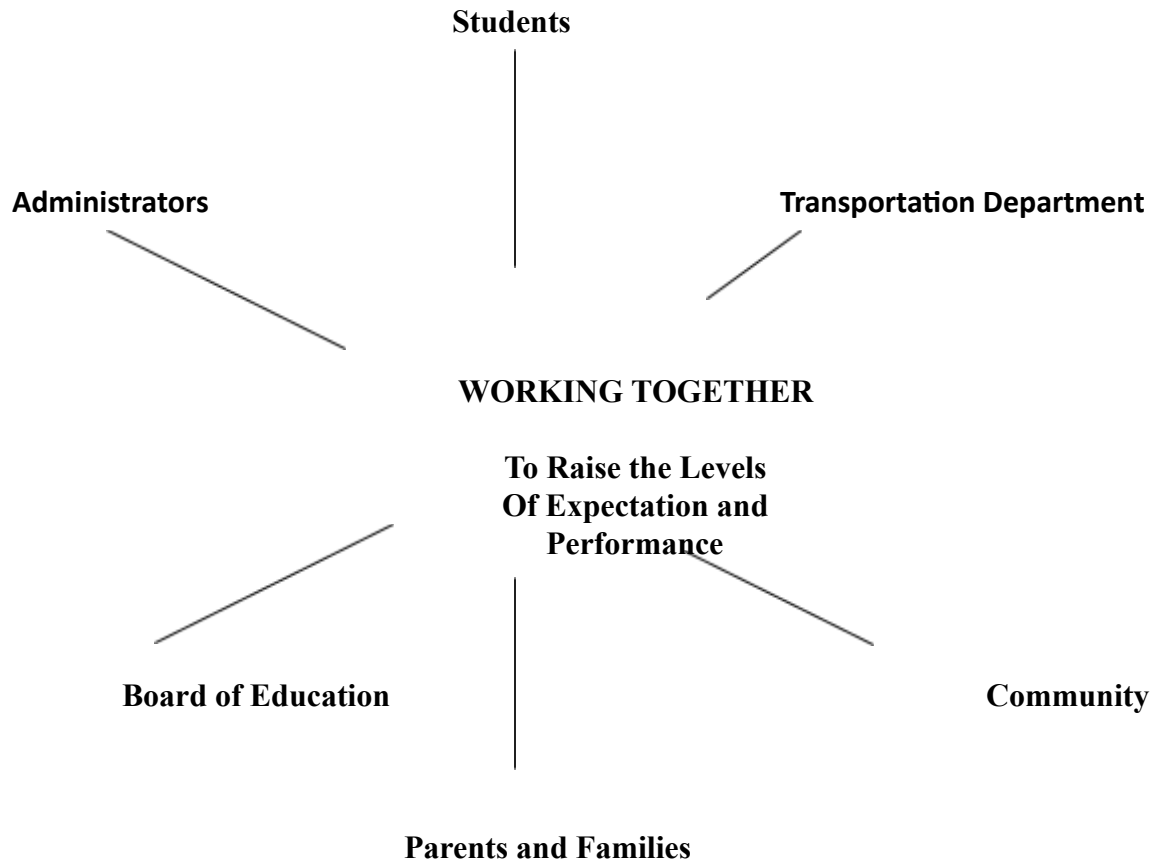
Alycia M. Trakas
Principal/Asst. Superintendent
860-376-2325
atrakas@voluntownct.org

Amy L. Suffoletto
Assistant Principal
860-376-2325
asuffoletto@voluntownct.org

Lloyd A Johnson, Ph.D.
Director of Student Services
860-376-4720
ljohnson@voluntownct.org

Terry Chenette
Transportation Coordinator
860-376-2325 ext. 122
tchenette@voluntownct.org

**Voluntown Public School System
Voluntown, Connecticut**



*****Steps in Communication*****

Channels of communication have been established by the Board of Education and, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, concerns of parents or residents should be made in the following sequence:

BUS DRIVER → TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR → SUPERINTENDENT

Members of the Board will refer individuals to the Superintendent of Schools, (860) 376-9167.

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Bus Safety, Discipline and School Transportation

The bus driver is in charge of the bus and its occupants from the time the students get on the bus until they are safely discharged. Students are expected to respect the rights of others at all times. Smoking, profane language, and misbehavior on the bus are prohibited. Repeated misbehavior or a single serious offense will result in losing bus privileges. If a student is on bus suspension, a parent is required to provide transportation to and from school. In an emergency situation only, students may take another bus with a written note from home and consent from the transportation supervisor.

Please note that infractions on the high school bus may warrant consequences by both Voluntown Public Schools and a student’s designated high school. At times, it may be necessary for Voluntown Public Schools to refer an incident to the student’s designated high school for further investigation and follow-up.

Generally, transportation discipline includes the following procedures:

<p>Misconduct Infractions:</p>	<p>Prohibited Infractions:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Removal of or attempt to get out of the safety belt · Improper boarding or departing · Bringing articles aboard of injurious or objectionable nature · Failure to remain seated · Rude, discourteous or annoying conduct · Hollering · Eating any type of food or candy · Failure to follow directions · Refusing to obey driver · Littering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fighting, pushing, tripping · Hanging out windows · Throwing objects in, out, or at bus · Open flames-matches, lighters, etc. · Improper behavior or threatening language (abusive, filthy, swearing) · Smoking/use of tobacco products · Drugs or related paraphernalia · Unauthorized departure from bus · Spitting · Tampering with bus equipment · Destruction of property · Weapons such as knives and firearms including toy pistols or cap guns · Riding bus to school and not attending school · Riding high school bus to VES then getting off bus and into personal vehicle · Riding in a personal vehicle from high school then getting on the bus at VES
<p>Consequence:</p>	<p>Consequence:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1st offense – Written Warning · 2nd offense – Three (3) day suspension of bus privileges · 3rd offense – Five (5) day suspension of bus privileges · 4th offense – Ten (10) day suspension of bus privileges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1st offense – Three (3) day suspension of bus privileges · 2nd offense – Five (5) day suspension of bus privileges · 3rd offense – Ten (10) day suspension of bus privileges

High School students who are eligible to be transported to school by bus may ride another bus (other than the one they normally use) in the afternoon from VES. Written requests by a parent/guardian must be given to the driver at morning pick-up or sent directly to Terry Chenette, Transportation Coordinator, in the morning in order to allow our Terry Chenette, Transportation Coordinator, time to review the request.

If a student misses the bus ride home from VES, he or she should report directly to the School Office to inform the parent/guardian by phone and determine an alternative transport home. Students must have written parental permission to walk home.

If a parent wishes to request that a child be picked up or dropped off at a location other than his/her home to accommodate daycare and/or babysitting needs, they must complete a Special Transportation Request form. Special Transportation Request forms can be found on the VES website and in the VES main office.

Requests for transportation to or from a Daycare location will be granted under the following:

- The location of the requested daycare provider is on an existing bus route;
- There is space available on the bus to which the student would be assigned if the daycare request is honored.

Terry Chenette, our Transportation Coordinator in consultation with the school administration will address daycare provisions that do not meet the above criteria on an individual basis. **A NEW FORM MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH ANY CHANGE.**

Bus riders - Remember that bus transportation is a privilege, not a right, and that you can be removed from the bus for up to 10 days because of your behavior. The following bus rules are in effect:

1. You are to be at your designated bus stop at least 5 minutes before the scheduled bus pick-up time.
2. You are to wait at the stop in an orderly manner. Only when the bus comes to a full stop and the driver signals are you to enter the bus. When crossing in front of the bus, always walk 10 feet from the front of the bus and never walk behind the bus.
3. When you are on the bus, you are to sit with legs facing front and all of your belongings under the seat.
4. You are to remain seated at all times.
5. No eating or drinking on the bus.
6. Do not put anything outside the bus windows.
7. The bus driver and/or administration may assign seats to students.
8. The bus drivers may report in writing any student who is in violation of these bus rules.

NOTE: According to Board of Education Policy students in grades Pre-K and Kindergarten will be brought back to school if an adult is not present to get them off the bus. Parents will then need to make arrangements to pick them up at the school. Students in grades 1-12 will be dropped at their designated stop - please be sure they are able to enter the house.

Bus Camera Regulations

In order to provide a safe environment and assist bus drivers with the monitoring of student behavior on school buses, the Voluntown Board of Education has agreed to support the electronic surveillance program through the use of the video camera. Buses are equipped with a live camera and will be videotaping during the school year. A posted warning will alert students to this possibility.

Videos will be confidentially reviewed on an as needed basis by the school administration in collaboration with the transportation coordinator to document misconduct. Students found in violation of bus conduct rules shall be notified and disciplinary action will be initiated under the district guidelines and procedures. Video recordings shall be treated as protected student records under FERPA or Family Educational Rights Act and Privacy Act and remain under the following regulations:

- Videos shall remain in the custody of the school system
- Based on privacy guidelines access to the tapes are available only to school authorities

A special sign-off sheet has been distributed with this handbook for a parent or guardian to sign and verify an understanding of the procedures concerning the use video recorders on the busses, that their child will be held accountable for following the rules, and that excellent behavior is expected on the bus.

Department of Children and Families of the State of Connecticut

Under the law of the State of Connecticut, all teachers and school systems must report all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to D.C.F. It is the procedure of this school that any employee who suspects child abuse and/or neglect will report by phone and then in writing these concerns to D.C.F. The school places all investigations in the hands of D.C.F. The school will not inform parents of the report. All reports will be maintained in the D.C.F. related student records until we are directed to remove the files by D.C.F. All such records are not open to the staff without written permission from the principal.

Designated High Schools

Board of Education Policy #5111.11

In accordance with the provisions of Section 10-33 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Voluntown Board of Education will designate a high school for Voluntown students who have completed the prescribed elementary course of study. The Voluntown Board of Education will pay all tuition costs and provide transportation to any child attending a designated high school provided that the designated high school can provide programs and services appropriate to the needs of the child or student who is qualified for, and requires, specialized instruction or services. As such, the Planning and Placement Team will make the high school placement of special education students, in accordance with state and federal statutes.

Attendance at high schools other than those designated by the Board of Education will be at the expense of the parents/guardians.

Current Designation of Secondary Schools: Griswold High School, Norwich Free Academy, Norwich Technical, Ellis Technical, Killingly Vo-Ag, Marine Science Magnet High School, Quinebaug Middle College, and special education placements.

Regulation Approved: September 8, 1992
Revised: April 10, 2014

VOLUNTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Voluntown, Connecticut

Emergency School Closings and Delayed Opening Information

Students who attend Voluntown Public Schools, but not Voluntown Elementary School follow Voluntown Elementary School's Closing and Delayed Opening transportation schedule.

If the weather is a problem, it may be necessary to delay the opening of school. When this occurs, announcements are made on the local radio stations between 6:00 and 7:15 a.m.

AM—WICH 1310	FM—WCTY 97.7	TV—Channel 3
AM—WILI 1400	FM—WILI 98.3	TV—Channel 8
AM—WSUB 980	FM—WNLC 98.7	TV—Channel 30
	FM—WKNL 101	

Additionally, School Messenger is used to inform VES families of closings/delays via phone, text, and social media (VES Facebook page). School Messenger notifications are scheduled to be sent at 6:00am. VES weather announcements can also be found online at www.ctweather.com and www.voluntownct.org.

Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Policy/Procedures

The Voluntown Public Schools/Voluntown Board of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, parenthood, veteran status, genetic information, or disability (including, but not limited to intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws (Policy # 4118.11/4218.11).

Ms. Emily MacEwen, School Counselor and Title IX Coordinator for the Voluntown Elementary School has the responsibility to monitor compliance with this policy. Ms. Alycia M. Trakas, Principal/Assistant Superintendent, is the Civil Rights Coordinator for the Voluntown Board of Education. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact them (see below):

Ms. Emily MacEwen
School Counselor / VES Title IX Coordinator
Voluntown Elementary School
195 Main Street / PO Box 129
Voluntown, CT 06384
(860) 376-2325 ext. 127
emacewen@voluntownct.org

Alycia M. Trakas
Principal/Asst. Superintendent / Civil Rights Coordinator
Voluntown Elementary School
195 Main Street / PO Box 129
Voluntown, CT 06384
(860) 376-2325 ext. 121
atrakas@voluntownct.org

Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the District receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask school districts to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request the district discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. (Note: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.) There is a right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue SW Washington DC 202024605
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Residency

It is extremely important that Voluntown Central Office, 860-376-9167, be notified immediately of any change in address or residency while attending high school. State guidelines require attendance at the appropriate school based on residency. When leaving the district, a withdrawal form must be completed at the high school. Parents will then register their child at the high school in their new town of residence. In the case where the Voluntown-designated high school does not change (for instance, if the family moves from Voluntown to Griswold or Norwich where the student is already a GHS or NFA student), it is extremely important to notify the central office as well as the high school's office of the address change, even if the student remains in that high school.

Safety Belts

To increase the safety of our students using school transportation, effective Monday, January 31, 2016, all students utilizing Voluntown Public Schools transportation will be required to wear safety belts, if the vehicle they are travelling in is equipped with them.

All students must wear the required safety belts. Any removal of the safety belt or attempt to get out of the safety belt in unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action.

Safety Seat ~ Booster Seat Harness

On rare occasions, an appropriate size booster seat harness may be necessary for the safety and security of our students. This seat will be used ONLY in an emergency situation and ONLY after a seat belt has been tried and found to be insufficient. At NO time should the booster seat harness be used on a continuous basis or as a consequence.

Harassment/Sexual Harassment Policy/Procedures

Sexual harassment (Policy # 5145.5) will not be tolerated among students. Any form of sexual harassment is forbidden whether by student, supervisory or nonsupervisory personnel, individuals under contract, or volunteers in the schools. Students shall exhibit conduct that is respectful and courteous to employees, to fellow students, and to the public.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal or physical, including, but not limited to:

1. Insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct;
2. Threats or suggestions that a student's submission to, or rejection of, unwelcome conduct will in any way influence a decision regarding that student;
3. Conduct of a sexual nature that substantially interferes with the student's learning or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment, such as the display in the educational setting of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

The Board of Education encourages victims of sexual harassment to report such claims promptly to the superintendent of schools or his/her designee. Complaints shall be investigated promptly and corrective action taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality shall be maintained and no reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith charges of sexual harassment.

If you feel that you are the victim of sexual harassment, you may also file a complaint with the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, 21 Grand Street, Hartford, CT 06106 at toll free 800-477-5737, TDD 860-541-3459. For Connecticut, as required, a formal written complaint may be filed with the Commission within 180 days of the date when the alleged harassment occurred. Furthermore, you may also file a complaint with the Boston Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Dept. of Education, 33 Arch Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02110-1491, Telephone: 617-289-0111, FAX: 617-289-0150, TDD: 877-521-2172, Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov. If you have questions or concerns, please contact any of the following staff members:

Alycia M. Trakas
Principal/Asst. Superintendent
Civil Rights/School Climate Coordinator
(860) 376-2325 ext. 121
atrakas@voluntownct.org

Amy L. Suffoletto
Assistant Principal
School Climate Specialist
(860) 376-2325 ext. 113
asuffoletto@voluntownct.org

Emily MacEwen
School Counselor
VES Title IX Coordinator
(860) 376-2325 ext. 127
emacewen@voluntownct.org

Special Education High School Tuition

Students who have been identified through a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) process as needing supportive special education services based on an Individual Education Program (IEP) receive coordinated services through the office of the Director of Special Education for the Voluntown Public Schools (860-376-4720). It is important to note that our Director of Student Services attends each PPT (Planning and Placement Team) meeting and is directly involved with the coordination and implementation of high school special education programs.

Transfers Between High School

The Voluntown Board of Education will be responsible for the payment of tuition for students enrolled in a designated public high school as of October 1st of a school year. Tuition payment shall not exceed that of a designated high school. The parents and/or guardians of any student wishing to transfer to another high school on and/or after that date shall be responsible for all tuition and transportation fees incurred. The provisions of this policy pertain to the high schools designated as such by the Voluntown Board of Education.

Board of Education Policy #5111.3

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statute Section 10 - 33
Policy Adopted: 12/10/91
Revised: 1/28/99, 11/13/01, and 4/10/14

VOLUNTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Voluntown, Connecticut

Transportation

Voluntown supplies transportation to and from the designated high schools. High school students must follow the rules and regulations of the Voluntown Public Schools. These rules are sent out to the students at the beginning of each school year by the transportation department. The bus drivers also keep students informed about safety and discipline on the bus. Questions regarding student transportation issues should be directed to the Transportation Coordinator at 860-376-2325, extension 122, or 860-376-9167. It is always important that students talk directly to their bus driver about any issues and/or concerns. The bus driver may be able to quickly resolve the problem.