



Voluntown Elementary School
Voluntown Public School System
Voluntown, Connecticut

Kindergarten – 8th Grade
Student/Parent Handbook
2018-2019

These are the rules, regulations, and policies of our Elementary (Kindergarten-4th grade) and Junior High (5th -8th grade) programs. 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.

Reminder: School Hours ~ 8:50AM-3:20PM

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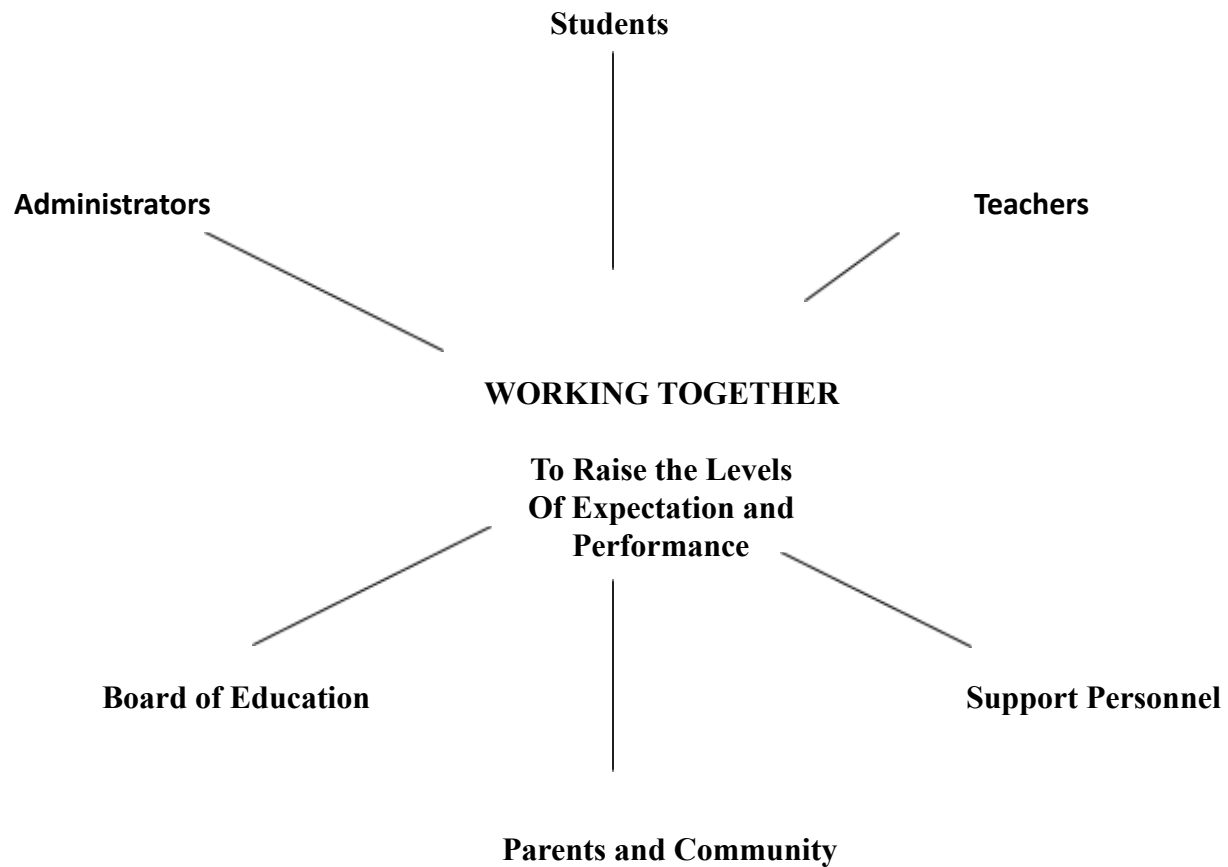
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(Updated by AMT and ALS on 8/26/18)

**Voluntown Public School System
Voluntown, Connecticut**



NAME

ADDRESS

TEACHER

*****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:

TEACHER → BUILDING ADMINISTRATION → SUPERINTENDENT

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

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Elementary School Handbook

Elementary School at VES
Voluntown Elementary Schools
Voluntown, Connecticut

Dear Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade Students and their Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to the comprehensive educational opportunities that we offer to our students in Kindergarten, first, second, third, and fourth grades. Our school provides students and the community with many exciting and meaningful learning opportunities and activities. This Student/Parent Handbook has been prepared to offer you an overview of programs and policies and the requirements of making an excellent transition from elementary to junior high school.

Our entire school staff works diligently to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere to optimize learning and be responsive to the academic, social, and emotional needs of our students. Contributing to this are a challenging and well-balanced curriculum, teacher teams, a variety of student activities, student support services, and a high standard of behavioral expectations. Our school affords students with learning experiences and classroom skills development that help to prepare them for the numerous challenges encountered in today's world.

The success of students is greatly enhanced when parents and the school cooperatively pool their resources to assist children through this most critical and crucial developmental period. Effective communication is instrumental in providing a positive school experience. Our school staff welcomes any suggestions, questions, or concerns that you might have, and is available to help work through any problems that might occur during the course of the school year.

It is our goal that these elementary school years will provide each student with a safe, successful, and productive school experience. We strive to ensure that each student reaches the maximum potential.

Most Sincerely from the Elementary School Staff,

Alycia M. Trakas	Principal/Assistant Superintendent
Amy L. Suffoletto	Assistant Principal
Penny Dermody	Resource
Valerie Lord	Kindergarten Homeroom
Hailie Davis	1 st Grade Homeroom
Kayla Berard	1 st Grade Homeroom
Mike Creaturo	2 nd Grade Homeroom
Jo Anne Weir	2 nd Grade Homeroom
Karen Britt	3 rd Grade Homeroom
Hillary Sirois	3 rd Grade Homeroom
Ed Duncan	4 th Grade Homeroom: Mathematics, Science, English
Ellen Maloney	4 th Grade Homeroom: Literature, Social Studies, English
Emilee Penman	Student Services: Kindergarten, 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th grades
Sue Dander	Student Services: Kindergarten and 4th grades
Andrea Kelly	Library/Reading Integration Teacher
Nancy MacBride	Art Teacher
Brian Racicot	Physical Education/Health Teacher
Jennifer Knickerbocker	Music Teacher
Margaret Volland	Computer Teacher
Emily MacEwen	School Counselor
Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D.	Director of Student Services

Junior High School Handbook

Junior High School at VES
Voluntown Elementary Schools
Voluntown, Connecticut

Dear 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade Students and their Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to the comprehensive educational opportunities that we offer to our students in fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Our school provides students and the community with many exciting and meaningful learning opportunities and activities. This Student/Parent Handbook has been prepared to offer you an overview of programs and policies and the requirements of making an excellent transition to high school.

Our entire school staff works diligently to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere to optimize learning and be responsive to the academic, social, and emotional needs of our students. Contributing to this are a challenging and well-balanced curriculum, teacher teams, a variety of student activities, student support services, and a high standard of behavioral expectations. Our school affords students with learning experiences and classroom skills development that help to prepare them for the numerous challenges encountered in today's world.

The success of students is greatly enhanced when parents and the school cooperatively pool their resources to assist children through this most critical and crucial developmental period. Effective communication is instrumental in providing a positive school experience. Our school staff welcomes any suggestions, questions, or concerns that you might have, and is available to help work through any problems that might occur during the course of the school year.

It is our goal that these junior high school years will provide each student with a safe, successful, and productive school experience. We strive to ensure that each student reaches the maximum potential.

Most Sincerely from the Junior High School Staff and Members of the JHS/HS Committee,

Alycia M. Trakas	Principal/Assistant Superintendent
Amy L. Suffoletto	Assistant Principal
Linda Larsen	5 th Grade Homeroom: 5th/6th Mathematics, 5th English
Kimberly Campeta	5 th Grade Homeroom: 5th/6th Literature, 5th English
Lauren Roderick	6 th Grade Homeroom: 5th/6th Science, 6th English
Jake St. John	6 th Grade Homeroom: 5th/6th Social Studies, 6th English
Megan Glidden	7 th Grade Homeroom: 7th/8th Literature, 7th English
Lynne Lawrence	7 th Grade Homeroom: 7th/8th Social Studies, 7th English
Alyson Paige	8 th Grade Homeroom: 7th/8th Science, 8th English
Jackie Vaillancourt	8 th Grade Homeroom: 7th/8th Mathematics, 8th English
Sue Dander	Student Services: 5th, 6th, 7th grades
Julia Stands	Student Services: 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th grades
Katelyn Stockford	Student Services: 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th grades
Andrea Kelly	Media Literacy Teacher
Nancy MacBride	Art Teacher
Brian Racicot	Physical Education/Health Teacher
Jennifer Knickerbocker	Music Teacher
Margaret Voland	Media Literacy Teacher
Emily MacEwen	School Counselor
Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D.	Director of Student Services

Voluntown Elementary School Philosophy

It is the philosophy of Voluntown Elementary School to promote a positive atmosphere to help students grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Our entire staff is dedicated to providing all students with a productive and enjoyable environment and encourages all students and parents to become allies in this endeavor as they complete graduation requirements and make the transition from elementary to junior high and junior high to high school.

Our school has its share of rules and regulations, designed not to limit freedoms, but rather to ensure the rights and opportunities of both students and staff alike. This handbook is intended to enable students and parents to better understand our course of studies, our expectations for student conduct, and, in general, our entire curricular and co-curricular programming.

Voluntown Elementary School Mission and Expectations Statement

Recognizing that our ultimate goal is to prepare students who will be responsible citizens of a democratic, culturally diverse society, our mission is to educate the whole student, encourage the pursuit of excellence, and foster an enduring love of learning. Our mission is based on the following beliefs:

- All students need to be valued and respected.
- All students are at a unique developmental stage and require a safe and nurturing learning environment appropriate to their particular emotional and cognitive needs.
- A comprehensive academic program must recognize the individual needs, interests, and learning styles of all students.
- An optimal curriculum addresses all facets of literacy and benchmark standards, teaching basic skills, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills in a variety of disciplines.
- A cooperative relationship with parents and community is vital in the education of children.

Expectations – students will leave school as:

- Tolerant and considerate individuals
- Clear communicators
- Logical thinkers
- Creative problem-solvers
- Collaborative contributors
- Enthusiastic learners

They are encouraged to further develop the core values of respect, responsibility, safety, and pride.

History of the Voluntown Schools

Between 1696 and 1732, there were no formal schools in Voluntown. Though town government was officially organized in 1721, it was several years before a circulating school was organized and a schoolmaster hired at the town's expense. In 1735, it was ordered that the school be kept in four places, three months in a place. The master, John Dunlap, was given thirty pounds (money) and enough meat, drink, washing and lodging for keeping the schools open for eleven months and eighteen days.

The first schoolhouse in town was built in 1737, four rods from the northwest corner of the Line Meeting House. In 1766, there were thirteen official school districts in Voluntown, each under the supervision of a "grand-school committee-man" appointed by the town. Wylie School was one of those small schools. Throughout the years, the small school districts slowly combined and eventually all students came to Center School, which was located on the present school site.

In 1953, the original Voluntown Elementary School was dedicated. Through the years, more rooms were added until the most current renovations were made that brought the school to its present size and Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth grade configuration.

Voluntown Board of Education Mission Statement

The Voluntown Board of Education commits to providing our students the basic skills essential to competent functioning in our society; including the ability to read, write, listen, speak, manipulate basic math concepts and acquire a general knowledge of science. It is therefore our mission to help our students mature into independent, reasoning, and responsible individuals, who can adapt constructively in an ever-changing multi-cultural and technological world.

The mission of the Voluntown Board of Education is to provide all of its students with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to learn, as well as to contribute and participate in a culturally diverse, rapidly changing society and to live a productive life. By working in concert with the family and community, an educational partnership will assist all children in achieving these skills and knowledge.

We will work to ensure all children will reach their individual potential with an appreciation of the lifelong learning process. We support the premise that learning is challenging, rewarding, and fun. We encourage teachers to provide opportunities for participation in the democratic process and the development of democratic values and ideas. We encourage family and community involvement to support our school.

Important Telephone Numbers

Voluntown Elementary School ...	860/376-2325 (8:00 AM--4:00 PM)
Superintendent's Office	860/376-9167
Student Services Department...	860/376-4720

Absences/Attendance:

Every year, at the beginning of the school year and upon any enrollment during the school year, we must inform parent/guardian(s), in writing, of his or her obligations under section 10-184 of the Connecticut General Statutes (see below).

Sec. 10-184. Duties of parents, School attendance age requirements.

All parents and those who have the care of children shall bring them up in some lawful and honest employment and instruct them or cause them to be instructed in reading, writing, spelling, English grammar, geography, arithmetic and United States history and in citizenship, including a study of the town, state and federal governments. Subject to the provisions of this section and section 10-15c, each parent or other person having control of a child five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age shall cause such child to attend a public school regularly during the hours and terms the public school in the district in which such child resides is in session, unless the parent or person having control of such child is able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools. The parent or person having control of a child five years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is six years of age and the parent or person having control of a child six years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is seven years of age. The parent or person shall exercise such option by personally appearing at the school district office and signing an option form. The school district shall provide the parent or person with information on the educational opportunities available in the school system.

Absences:

When a student is absent, a parent or guardian MUST inform the school regarding the absence by either calling the school or sending an email/written note. This documentation is required within 10 days of the absence or the absence will be marked unexcused. The school will make every effort to contact home whenever a student is absent.

When any student has been ill or expects to be absent due to illness for three days or more, he/she may obtain assignments by telephoning the school office before 8:50AM. These assignments can be picked up at the end of the school day after 3:20PM. Teachers are not required to provide special work for students who will be absent for reasons such as a family vacation. Students missing more than half the instructional day for the purpose of travel or vacation are considered as "absent".

Teachers may use WIN to review missed concepts to the student upon their return. However, teachers are not obligated to provide extra help or tutoring outside of the school day. If tutoring is necessary, the cost would be the responsibility of the parent. Effective July 1, 2017, any student serving an in-school suspension is to be counted as "in-attendance".

Makeup Work due to an Absence:

Students are responsible for making up any missed work from an absence. If a student is absent from school, work that is already due must be turned in upon his/her return. If a student is absent from school on a day of a test/quiz, it is expected that he/she will take it on the day of their return. Our teachers will provide him/her with a copy of all missing assignments on the day of their return. At that time, the teacher will create a makeup work plan for the student, based on the subject, instructional objectives, and type of assignment, not to exceed 5 days after returning to school.

Excused and Unexcused Absences:

Voluntown Elementary School follows the Connecticut State Board of Education's Guidelines for Excused and Unexcused Absences. Please use the chart below to help explain what are acceptable reasons for a student absence to be considered excuses, as well as the required documentation that must be reported to the school (within 10 days of a student absence).

Total # of Days Absent	Acceptable Reasons for a Student Absence to Be Considered Excused	Documentation Required within 10 days
One through nine	Any reason that the student's parent or guardian approves.	Parent or guardian note/email/phone call.
10 and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Illness (Note: to be deemed excused, an appropriately licensed medical professional must verify all student illness absences, regardless of the absences length. Student's observance of a religious holiday. Death in a student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family. Mandated court appearance (additional documentation required). The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (parental documentation is not required for this reason). Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators (opportunities must meet certain criteria). 	Parent or guardian note/email/phone call and in some cases additional documentation (see details of specific reason). Note/Email/Phone Call message must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of absence Reason for absence Name/signature of parent/guardian reporting the absence

Excused Absences for Children of Service Members:

An enrolled student, age five to eighteen, inclusive, whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has an immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone, or combat support posting, shall be granted ten days of excused absences in any school year and, at the discretion of the Board of Education, additional excused absences to visit such child's parent or legal guardian with respect to such leave or deployment of the parent or legal guardian.

Attendance Requirements:

In order to take full advantage of all that school has to offer, students need to make every effort to be in school each day. Good attendance is a major contributor to academic success. We work closely with the home to monitor student attendance. Classroom learning experiences are essential components of the overall educational process. Prompt and regular attendance to school and to individual classes is a valid and reasonable requirement to promote academic success.

In order to be promoted to the next grade level, the following requirements must be met:

- PreSchool/School Readiness: A student must meet all Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS).
- Elementary (Kindergarten – 4th grade): A student must meet all grade level expectations.
- JHS (5th – 8th grade): A student must receive a passing grade in each subject area (65% or better).

- A student may not be absent from school for more than eighteen (18) days in one school year. A student with extenuating circumstances may appeal to the Superintendent of Schools.
- Any student who is absent six (6) days, his/her parents or guardian will receive an informal notice.
- Any student who is absent nine (9) days will be notified of State attendance policies by the school administration. His/her parent or guardian will receive a formal written letter.
- Any student who is absent sixteen (16) days within a school year, a conference will be called with the student, parent/guardian(s), teacher(s), school counselor and an administrator to develop an individual attendance plan for the student to ensure daily attendance.
- Any student who has been deemed “truant” and/or “habitually truant” during the school year, a conference will be called (no later than 10 days after they have been deemed “truant” and/or “habitually truant”, with the student, parent/guardian(s), teacher(s), school counselor and an administrator to develop an individual attendance plan for the student to ensure daily attendance. A referral will be made to community agencies providing student and family services.

Chronically Absent Definition:

- **Chronically absent:** an enrolled student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal or greater than ten (10) percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during the school year.

Truancy Definitions:

- **Truant-** according to C.G.S.section 10-198a a “truant” is a student age five to eighteen who has four (4) unexcused absences in a month (period of time, not specific months named in a calendar) or ten (10) unexcused absences in one school year.
- **Habitual Truant-** according to C.G.S.section 10-198a a “habitual truant” is a student age five (5) to eighteen (18), inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private school and has twenty unexcused absences.
- **Defiant-** a student who has been continuously overtly defiant of school rules.

Attendance: TARDINESS (Reminder – School Starts at 8:50AM)

The School System provides daily bus transportation for students. Students who do not use this transportation are still expected to arrive at school on time, ready to participate and learn. They are expected to plan their time effectively to arrive at school and classes in a timely manner.

A student who is not present in homeroom for attendance at 8:50AM and prepared to start academic classes is considered tardy. Any time a student is tardy, they must sign in at the main office.

One of the most valuable life skills a student can learn is taking the responsibility of arriving at school everyday on time. This skill can easily be accomplished and will transfer as a valuable asset for the future. One of the most important times of the school day is in the morning. This is the time when important school news is announced, teachers define the plans for the day, and instructional goals are reviewed and set. The whole tone of a child’s school day is set in the first part of the day. Being punctual is ESSENTIAL, as it minimizes disruption to the learning environment and maximizes valuable instructional time. Please help support your children in learning habits that will help them be successful at school and throughout life.

Please note that excessive accumulated time from being tardy and/or dismissed early from school, may be calculated in determining the total number of instructional time lost.

An excused tardy includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Illness
- Doctor’s appointment
- Extreme family emergency
- Extreme inclement weather

An unexcused tardy includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Oversleeping (parent or child)
- Alarm did not go off
- Missed Bus
- Sleeping in

Consequences for being late to school:

In addition to the following consequences all missed work must be completed (work is due the next school day).

Elementary (Kindergarten - 4th grade)

6 th through 8 th tardy:	Informal Notice will be sent home.
9 th	Formal Written Letter will be sent home.
10 th or more tardy:	Meeting with student, parent/guardian(s), school counselor and administrator to discuss consequences and/or "action plan".

Junior High (5th-8th grade)

3 rd tardy:	Verbal warning.
4 th through 6 th tardy:	20 minute lunch detention.
7 th through 9 th tardy:	30 minute detention; detention slip will be sent home to be signed by a parent/guardian; 24-hour notice will be given for detentions.
10 th or more tardy:	Meeting with student, parent/guardian(s), school counselor and administrator to discuss consequences and/or "action plan".

Academic Information – Course Grouping for 7th and 8th grades

The philosophy of the school is to group students heterogeneously in most core subject areas and in all exploratory areas. Limited homogeneity exists in several areas such as algebra due to the skill level and aptitude required. Each year a letter is sent home in grades six and seven in the month of June to discuss class placement for the following school year. The final decision is a collaborative one based on teacher recommendation, classroom performance, performance on benchmark assessments and parent input. Those students who have a recognized learning problem may be placed in special groups.

Accidents and Illness

A student should report to the teacher if he/she becomes ill during the day, or if involved in an accident while in the building or on school grounds. The teacher will then refer the student to the nurse and school office. Students must see the nurse for assistance in health matters prior to contacting home.

After-School Spectator Events and Evening Programs

Many after-school events are held during the school year. Attendance at these events is strictly voluntary but requires parent permission. **Students in grades 6 – 8 are invited to attend any after school activity but must have a written note allowing attendance at each individual event. Students may NOT call home the day of an event for permission to stay after school.** The school does not provide supervision for students voluntarily attending an after school activity, such as soccer, basketball, track & field games, etc. **Parents are responsible for their child's behavior. All students attending any after school event must follow the approved rules and regulations for the school or risk removal from the activity. Children must be picked up promptly at the end of the event/evening program.**

After-School Title I Tutoring Program

Students in 5th-8th grade are eligible for the after school tutoring program if they are failing any subject with a grade below 65. The tutoring is held three days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) from 3:20-4:20PM. The school provides bus transportation home. This program begins after the first progress report for the school year is sent home, based on available state funding.

Animals in the Classroom

1. Classroom pets or visiting animals must appear to be in good health.
2. Pets or visiting animals must have documentation from the veterinarian or an animal shelter to say they are fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) the notice must also state that the animal is suitable for being in contact with children.

3. Teaching staff will supervise at all times and offer instruction to children on proper behavior when in close proximity to animals.
4. Program staff will ensure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal.
5. Reptiles are not allowed as classroom pets because of the risk of salmonella infection.
6. Hands will be washed after children or staff have handled an animal.

Arrival Procedures (Effective as of November 2014)

When dropping off your child(ren) in the morning at school, please enter the lower parking lot (first lot to the left) to the drop off point/crosswalk. Students will exit the vehicle and be safely monitored using the crosswalk to enter the building by our staff member(s) on morning bus duty.

When dropping off your PreSchool child(ren) in the morning at school, please walk him/her to the staff member at the Early Childhood door. We thank you for accompanying your child to the Early Childhood door for their safety. Please park in the Early Childhood parking lot (the right parking lot when you enter VES).

Buses are the only vehicles that are allowed to pull up to the front of the building between the hours of 8:15-9:00AM and 3:00-3:45PM.

Thank you for your adherence to our student arrival procedures. This will help alleviate the traffic backup on Route 138 and ensure that our students, staff, and visitors to VES are safe!

Asbestos

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. The District has on file with Mr. Paul Ricard, our Director of Maintenance, plans showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Request to review these plans may be made in the school office.

Assemblies

Each year a variety of assemblies are held. Students are to sit with their class and conduct themselves in a polite and courteous manner. Past assemblies have included such topics as birds of prey, substance abuse, cultural presentations, student resiliency, self-esteem and others.

Awards

There are a number of awards given out during graduation exercises. They include awards for excellence in all academic areas, the most improved in all academic areas, as well as awards in citizenship. The valedictorian (#1) and salutatorian (#2) will be the top two students academically in the class based on their cumulative yearly averages for grades 6 through 8. Students will be officially announced at the graduation banquet and requested to deliver an honor speech at the graduation ceremony. Students in grades 5-8 achieving Honor Roll will be published in the school newsletter/website/social media and published in the newspaper.

Birthday Treats

Due to the many food allergies, including those that are life-threatening, as well as the Connecticut State Department of Education's Nutritional Standards, we can no longer allow birthday treats to be brought to school for distribution to the whole class. An alternative to a birthday treat might be stickers, or pencils, or a book for the class or school library with a bookplate honoring your child's special day. If teachers do request parents to send snacks to school, they will be very specific about the ingredients. All food brought to the class must include a list of the ingredients and be approved by an administrative review. Please see the Voluntown Public Schools Wellness Policy #6142.101 posted on our web site at volutownct.org, as well as the Connecticut State Department of Education's website, <http://www.sde.ct.gov/>, to view the list of approved food and beverages.

Below are the guidelines regarding the distribution of party invitations to classmates and the mandated state law requirements for Peanut Free Classrooms.

Party Invitations for Classmates

We allow invitations to be distributed in the classroom only if ALL classmates are invited.

Peanut Free Classrooms

Some classrooms and cafeteria areas might be designated as “nut free” due to severe nut allergies of some students. If your child is in a “nut free” classroom, a notification will be sent home and students will not be allowed to bring any food containing nuts in the classroom at anytime. However, food-containing nuts may be eaten in the cafeteria. Thank you for your cooperation and attention to this matter.

Board of Education

The Voluntown Board of Education responsibilities and duties are defined in Section 10-220 of the Connecticut General Statutes. These responsibilities, in part, include care, maintenance, operation of school property, transportation, budgeting, employment of personnel, program and curriculum approval. The members of the Board of Education are:

Chairperson	Diana M. Ingraham
Vice-Chairperson	Kristen Trahan
Secretary	Barbara Gileau
Members	Kate Beauparlant
	Flo Harmon
	Skart Paul
	Christopher Wilson

Superintendent of Schools Adam S. Burrows

In order to perform its duties in an open and public manner in accordance with state law, the Voluntown Board of Education holds regular meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Superintendent’s Office. Parents, students and community members are encouraged to attend.

Board of Education meetings follow a planned and posted agenda. At a certain time in the agenda the Board chairperson will recognize individuals who want to make a statement, not more than 5 minutes in length, or to express a viewpoint. In addition, if they give advance notice to the Superintendent, individuals with relevant issues for discussion may have such issues placed on a future Board agenda for a more thorough discussion of the topic.

The Board’s main purpose is policy setting designed to improve student learning. Board members are interested in the public’s opinion on district issues, which can assist them in formulating policy that reflects community values and expectations. The Board gathers community input to maintain a strategic plan.

Breakfast and Lunch Program

Breakfast is available from 8:30 to 8:50AM in the cafeteria and a “Grab and Go” breakfast is available for students to pick up and take to the classroom. A minimum of 20 minutes is scheduled for lunch during the middle of the school day for all grade levels.

Students may pay for their lunches daily either 1) in the cafeteria before school, at breakfast, or at lunch or 2) give their lunch money to their homeroom teacher in a plastic bag/envelope with the student’s name.

Families may apply to the Free and Reduced Breakfast and Lunch program. Applications are available in the school office and can be submitted at any time during the school year to the School Principal for a confidential review to determine qualification. This federal program allows students to participate in our free or reduced breakfast and lunch each school day. This form is initially sent home to all families during the first week of school.

Milk, juice, ice cream, yogurt, and a variety of other snacks will be sold on a daily basis in the school cafeteria during all lunch periods.

Students are expected to:

- Proceed to and from the cafeteria in a quiet, orderly manner.
- Remain in the cafeteria during their lunch period.
- Use a pass to the lavatory - available from the cafeteria monitors.
- Not “cut” into lines in front of others.
- Talk in normal tones.
- Observe good table manners.
- Respect the rights of others.
- Keep the table and floor around their seating area clean.

- Deposit litter in the proper litter baskets.
- Return all trays and utensils to the dishwashing area.
- Return to the table seat after depositing litter.

Students are expected to follow these rules and to follow the directions of the cafeteria monitors and head teacher. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action. The school supports and requires recycling efforts by all.

State guidelines require that we cannot allow a student or adult to charge for a meal. We must receive payment prior to the purchase to remain in compliance. An alternate meal is available on an emergency basis when the payment cannot be made at the appropriate time.

Bullying Policy (Safe School Climate Plan)

Bullying of a student by another student is prohibited. Such behavior is defined as any overt acts by a student or groups of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds or at a school sponsored activity, which acts are repeated against the same student over time. Such behavior will result in disciplinary action. Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical violence and attacks.
2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethnic-based or gender-based put-downs.
3. Threats and intimidation.
4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions.
5. Exclusion from peer groups within schools.

Three Main Components of anti-bullying initiatives:

School Wide Level

1. Increased understanding about and awareness of the characteristics of bullies and victims. This step targets the entire school population, teachers, staff, and students.
2. Increased commitment of staff to maintaining a safe, and secure school climate.
3. Increased supervision of unstructured time (recess, lunch) is an important aspect of the plan.
4. An ongoing training program includes such components as:
 - Staff development
 - School wide survey or questionnaire for 3rd through 8th grades
 - PTA programs about bullying
 - Purchase of videos for discussion
 - General school assembly
 - Announcements about kindness, respect, cooperation, gentleness, and others

Classroom Level

There are specific classroom rules about bullying such as:

- We shall not bully other students.
- We shall help students who are bullied.
- We shall make a point to include students who become easily left out.

There are class meetings for discussing the rules, reviewing sanctions or consequences for undesirable behavior. And the use of praise in class meetings, cooperative learning groups, and other strategies that seek to develop an increase in positive classroom climate.

Individual Level

There are clear consequences in place that include:

- Serious talks with both bully and victim by classroom teacher.
- Parent contact.
- Peer mediation/conflict resolution program.
- Referral to office if behavior continues.

Bullying Notice (Annual State Requirement for Board of Education Policy #5131.911)

Bullying behavior by any student in the Voluntown Public Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to

another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property,
- B. Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. Creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. Infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or physical, mental, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Students who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

- A. Creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
- B. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
- C. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- D. Students are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.

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.

Generally, transportation discipline includes the following procedures:

Misconduct Infractions:	Prohibited Infractions:
<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

Consequence:	Consequence:
<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

Students who are eligible to be transported to school by bus may not ride any bus except the one normally used. All buses are filled, and permission cannot be given to ride other buses to visit friends or to go to any other activities. In emergency or special situations where a bus change is required, parents are to contact Terry Chenette, Transportation Coordinator. Notes to drivers are not acceptable for a number of reasons. If a student misses the bus ride home, he or she should report directly to the School Office to inform the parent 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 busses, the Voluntown Board of Education has agreed to support the electronic surveillance program through the use of the video camera. Busses 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 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.

Cafeteria Rules

1. No pushing, cutting in line, or other physical acts against anyone.
2. No swearing or screaming.
3. No throwing objects.
4. Pass needed to leave cafeteria.
5. Respond in a positive manner to staff that give directions to you.
6. Walk at all times.
7. Respect others' rights.
8. Clean up your stuff.

Students are discouraged from borrowing and sharing money. It only leads to personal problems between friends. The cafeteria sells milk and other snacks separately from the hot lunch. The cost for hot lunch is printed in the weekly school NEWSLETTER. Lunches are to be paid in advance.

Care of School Property

Students are responsible for all school property in their possession. When students are issued a book they will sign a receipt and put their name in the book. Textbooks shall be covered and protected at all times. Students are responsible for any damage or wear beyond the normal amount. Lost or stolen books must be paid for. Students who carelessly or maliciously destroy or damage school property will be held financially responsible and will face disciplinary action. Most textbooks, reference materials, library books, and other equipment at VES are of excellent quality. It is important to keep equipment in as good condition as possible. Any destruction or defacement will be dealt with severely. Each student is requested to inform the teacher of any problems or changes in the condition of school materials.

Cell Phone Policy/Personal Electronic Devices

Cell phones and other personal electronic devices must be off and in lockers at all times. Students are not allowed to send or receive calls, send text messages, or visit social media sites during school hours. Any student caught using a cell phone during the school day will be asked to turn their phone over to the adult in charge. Students are asked to respectfully comply with this request. Teachers or administrators may confiscate cell phones. All confiscated cell phones should be turned into the office with student's name attached.

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|-------------------|---|
| 1st offense ----- | Students may pick up their phone in the office at the end of the day. |
| 2nd offense ----- | Student's parent must come and pick up the phone. |
| 3rd or more ----- | Can result in more severe disciplinary action as per administrative discretion. |

Classroom Placement

A great deal of thought goes into placing children in classes each year. The process is also time consuming, as the teacher focuses on each child's needs. Every effort is made to place each child in a learning environment where they will be the most successful. This learning environment incorporates several factors. Therefore, we do not take classroom placement requests. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Code of Conduct

Students are responsible for conducting themselves properly in a responsible manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity. The district has authority over students during the regular school day and while going to and from school on district transportation. This jurisdiction includes any school-related activity, regardless of time or location, and any off campus school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location. Student responsibilities for achieving a positive environment in school or related activities include:

1. Attending all classes, regularly and on time.
2. Being prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments.
3. Being dressed appropriately.
4. Showing respect toward others and behaving in a responsible manner.
5. Paying required fees and fines.
6. Abiding by the code of conduct.
7. Obeying all school rules, including safety rules, and rules pertaining to Internet safety.

8. Cooperating with staff investigations of disciplinary cases.

9. Volunteering information relating to a serious offense.

Students who violate these rules will be subject to disciplinary action and shall be referred when appropriate to legal authorities for violation of the law.

Students at school or school-related activities are prohibited from:

1. Engaging in academic dishonesty, including cheating, intentionally plagiarizing, wrongfully giving or receiving help during an academic examination and wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores.
2. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or damage property.
3. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
4. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students or staff.
5. Disobeying directives from school personnel or school policies, rules, and regulations.
6. Being disrespectful or directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward teachers or other school employees.
7. Playing with matches, fire, or committing arson.
8. Committing robbery or theft.
9. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by the school, other students, or school employees.
10. Disobeying school rules on school buses.
11. Fighting, committing physical abuse, or threatening physical abuse.
12. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail; that is, forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.
13. Name-calling, making ethnic or racial slurs or derogatory statements that may substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
14. Engaging in an inappropriate physical or sexual contact disruptive to the school environment or disturbing to other students.
15. Assaulting a teacher, staff member or other individual.
16. Selling, giving, delivering, possessing, using or being under the influence of drugs such as: marijuana; a controlled substance or drug; or an alcoholic beverage.
17. Possessing a weapon or dangerous instrument.
18. Prescription drugs that are given to a person other than who the drug is prescribed.
19. Smoking or using tobacco products.
20. Hazing.
21. Behaving in any way that disrupts the school environment or educational process.
22. No student is allowed to possess an electronic pager, "beeper" device, cellular telephone, two-way radio or other telecommunication device on school property without prior approval of the principal.
23. Violating the district's Internet Safety policy.
24. Using or possessing a laser pointer unless under staff supervision and in the context of instruction.

Computer Use: Code of Ethics

Based on the Board of Education Policy 6141.321 and 6141.321(b) on Internet Usage, the following rules and code of ethics apply to Voluntown School computer users:

- I. **I recognize that all computer users have the same right to use the equipment; therefore,**
 - I will not play games or use the computer resources for non-academic activities when others require the system for academic purposes.
 - I will not waste nor take supplies such as paper, printer ribbons, and diskettes that are provided by the school system; and when I am in a computer lab, I will talk softly and work in ways that will not disturb other users.
 - For utilizing District-provided Internet access, I must first have this permission of and must be supervised by the professional staff. Students utilizing school-provided Internet access are responsible for good behavior online just as they are in a classroom or other area of the school. The same general rules for behavior and communications apply.
 -
- II. **I recognize that software is protected by copyright laws; therefore,**

- I will not make unauthorized copies of software found on school computers, either by copying them onto my own diskettes or onto other computers through electronic mail or bulletin boards; and
 - I will not give, lend, or sell copies of software to others unless I have written permission of the copyright owner or the original software clearly identified as shareware or in the public domain.
- III. I recognize also that the work of all users is valuable; therefore,**
- I will protect the privacy of others' areas by not trying to learn their passwords;
 - I will not copy, change, read, or use files in another user's area, without that user's prior permission;
 - I will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to system programs or computer equipment;
 - I will not use computer systems to disturb or harass other computer users by sending unwanted mail or by other means; and
 - I will not download information onto diskettes if planning to store the information for more than one week.
- IV. Violations of the rules and code of ethics described above will be dealt with seriously. Violators will lose computer privileges.**
- The purpose of district-provided Internet access is to facilitate communications in support of research and education.
 - To remain eligible as users, students' use must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of the Voluntown School District.
 - Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility.

A special sign-off sheet has been distributed with this handbook for a parent or guardian to sign to verify they have read and discussed with their child the above Rules and Code of Ethics for Computer Users.

Counseling

A full time certified school counselor and a part time School Psychologist are here to help all Pre-Kindergarten through eighth graders experiencing problems or concerns that are impacting education. A teacher, parent, or administrator may refer a student to counseling, or the student may contact the counselor directly. Counseling is confidential. Opportunities for parenting education and support activities are also provided.

The school counselor is available to help students better understand themselves, abilities, talents, and career options in order to make mature, responsible decisions affecting their lives and the lives of others. Students may see their counselor by making an appointment with teacher permission in an emergency. The counselor offers focus groups in response to student needs, for example: divorce groups, peer acceptance groups, and study skills programs. Parents are encouraged to contact the counselor with any concerns they might have. The counselor supports students who need academic intervention. Students who have failed several classes each trimester may be provided with small group instruction in their areas of need. These academic intervention meetings will be scheduled during their academic day.

Crisis Intervention Team (C.I.T.)

The Crisis Intervention Team was formed at Voluntown Elementary School in January of 1996 to actively respond to any crisis situation at school and develop a plan to deal with any crisis or emergency. Specific plans are in place for such emergencies as:

- Medical or other emergencies, natural disasters, sudden death or suicide, and other potential crisis situations.
- The C.I.T. promotes awareness and education of all school staff, support for high-risk students, coordination with community resources and managing crisis.

Current members of the Crisis Intervention Team are: Principal, Assistant Principal, Director of Student Services, School Counselor, Primary Grade Teacher, Director of Maintenance, School Nurse, Bus Coordinator, Athletic Director, Junior High School Teacher, Technology Coordinator, Superintendent, and other faculty or staff members as needed.

Curriculum: Common Core State Standards

The Board of Education has adopted the state and federal Common Core State Standards at www.sde.ct.gov located in the Teaching and Learning section as the core document from which our curriculum goals and practices flow. The following principles help guide planning and instruction.

Teachers use the Common Core State Standards to guide their planning and make individual adaptations based on student's developmental needs as determined by assessment procedures.

Dances and other After-School Activities

All after-school activities are held for the benefit of the students and parents connected with Voluntown Elementary School. The school sponsors sports activities, dances, plays, and concerts. Other activities are sponsored by organizations like the PTO, town recreation department, local church groups, etc. These organizations have their own rules for attendance and you must abide by their rules.

- After-school activity rules are the same as all of the regular school rules and consequences.
- A signed permission slip is necessary for admittance to any dance.
- Dances are for Voluntown Elementary School students only.
- **Children must be picked up promptly at the end of the dance/event/activity.**

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

Selecting a "Designated" High School

Eighth graders and parents will have access to information to gain a better understanding about high schools. A schedule and permission form for a series of field trips to various high schools will be sent home. After the visits, there will be time to review information, discuss the various options and organize to make the best possible decision. Eighth graders will be asked to prioritize their choice(s) of high school(s). Our School Counselor, is available to answer any question or to discuss the different high schools. Our goal is to support students choose a high school by late December that best fits their academic needs and future aspirations.

In the case of Norwich Tech or Ellis Tech, students will need to fill out an application in November/December. Acceptance, announced much later, is based on academic history, attendance, discipline record, and the results of 7th Grade standardized tests. Information regarding Killingly-Vo-AG is available on request from the School Counselor.

If selecting Norwich Free Academy or Griswold High School, school personnel will visit Voluntown in the springtime and assist the eighth graders in course selection.

Two magnet schools are now available: the Marine Science Magnet High School (MSMHS) in Groton and the Quinebaug Middle College (QMC) at Quinebaug Valley Community College in Danielson. Voluntown supplies transportation. Applications and deadlines are available online in order to be considered in a lottery system for enrollment. It is important for students to individually apply online and meet any due dates.

Any student who receives special education services will finalize course selections at a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting.

The designated high schools are:

- **Griswold High School, 267 Slater Avenue, Griswold, CT 06351 (860-376-7640 or Griswold.k12.ct.us)**
- **Norwich Free Academy, 305 Broadway, Norwich, CT 06360 (860-887-2505 or nfaschool.org)**
- **Norwich Regional Technical School, 7 Mahan Dr., Norwich, CT (860-889-8453 or cttech.org/norwich)**
- **H.H. Ellis Technical School, 613 Upper Maple St., Danielson, CT (860-774-8511 or cttech.org/ellis)**
- **Killingly Agricultural Education Program, 79 Westfield Ave., Danielson, CT (860-779-6675 or killinglyschool.org)**
- **Marine Science Magnet High School (MSMHS), 130 Shennecossett Road, Groton, CT 06340 (860-446-9380 or marinesciencemagnet.org)**
- **Quinebaug Middle College (QMC), 742 Upper Maple Street, Danielson, CT 06239 (860-932-4118 or marinesciencemagnet.org)**

Detentions

Morning detentions will be served from 8:15-8:45AM. After-school detentions will be served from 3:20-4:20pm. All students in detention must report to the designated area with their signed detention slip. If the detention is not served, the principal will receive a discipline referral form for the student from the teacher that assigned the detention. A 24-hour notice is given to parents for morning/after-school detentions..

It is the position of the administration that only under very difficult circumstances are students ever suspended from school. In-school suspensions will be served in an area away from all other school activities and the principal will determine that location.

Discipline and How to Behave in School

The school staff wants everyone to have a very successful year. No one has to feel uncomfortable in school because other students are treating them poorly. Everyone has the right to an education that is free of emotional, physical, or social threats. Therefore, the staff will enforce these regulations throughout the school, school grounds, and on all school-related trips, bus transportation, and after - school activities:

- Every person has the right to a safe school environment; therefore, no physical harm is to be inflicted by any other student, teacher or staff member.
- Every student has a right to learn; therefore, no student may disrupt any school social or academic activity.
- Every student and staff member has the right to an environment free from profane, obscene or generally unacceptable displays of clothing, books, language, etc. Therefore no clothes, printed materials, or language using and/or displaying such materials will be allowed.
- Every student must understand the school has ZERO TOLERANCE for drugs, alcoholic beverages, and cigarette smoking (by students) anywhere in or on the school property.
- Every student must maintain actions, which help keep general order (health and safety) in the building. Actions like running in the hallway, false fire alarms, theft, destruction of property, threats or intimidation, etc. are banned since these actions lessen the general health and safety level in the building.
- Any students involved in fighting will serve a consequence.

Each classroom in the building has specific rules and consequences. Please ask your teachers for their specific classroom rules. The principal supports the teachers and their regulations.

There are consequences for students when a student decides to act against the basic school regulations. All of the following consequences are applied equally to every student. The school administrators do have the right to modify the consequences based on the seriousness of the violation.

Discipline Guidelines

Discipline guidelines are based on the values represented by our core words: Responsibility, Organization, Cooperation, Kindness and Safety. The purpose of these guidelines is to establish a safe learning environment through the development of mutual respect for and between the students, staff, and school. School will provide a quality education in a structured program in which positive reinforcement is coupled with the consistency of consequences. Our underlying premise is that school needs to be orderly to maintain a safe, nurturing environment for students. Therefore, all students are expected to follow the fundamental rules listed below. These rules apply to any school activity.

SCHOOL RULES: "Learning and Caring Beyond Oneself"

- **Responsibility** -- Be responsible for your learning, actions and environment.
- **Organization** -- Be prepared, have appropriate materials, keep environment clean.
- **Cooperation** -- Be kind, respect authority, respect differences.
- **Kindness** -- Be positive and be a good role model.
- **Safety** -- Be safe in all you do.

Level I: Classroom Discipline

Teachers will manage classroom behavior and will initiate and implement appropriate disciplinary consequences for all classroom offenses except those that are listed under Level II. Any student who is disruptive within a classroom may be immediately sent/removed to a designated area for a time out period, and then be disciplined by the teacher at a later time.

Classroom actions teachers may take:

- Redirect, seat change, reflective writing
- Verbal warning
- Time out
- Teacher detention before school and/or lunch
- Community service
- Parent notification/conference
- Counselor referral
- Collaborative action plan

Student infractions that occur outside the classroom, i.e., halls, etc., will result in the appropriate consequence.

It shall be the teacher's discretion that determines which of the actions will be appropriate for disruptive student infractions outside of the classroom. A meeting with the teacher, counselor, and administrator, whereby the student's prior discipline problems and assigned consequences will be reviewed. When required, the administrator or teacher will initiate a parent conference to consider administrative disciplinary action of the student involved.

Level II: Office Offenses -Administrative Discretion

The administration reserves the right to make judgments that are in the best interest of all individuals involved. The discretion of the administration shall supersede penalties listed in the Discipline Guidelines. It is understood that discretion means that when, in the opinion of the administration, circumstances surrounding a violation are of such a nature as to be gross misconduct or extremely serious or dangerous actions, administration reserves the right to determine a consequence more serious than stated in the code. It is also understood that circumstances may not be considered serious enough to warrant a penalty stated in the code. In ANY circumstance not covered by the written rule, the detention and suspension policy is left to the discretion of the administration.

The policy below provides guidelines and consistency. In all cases, the administration reserves the right to employ good judgment in considering a specific situation.

- Counselor Referral
- School Resource Officer
- Administrative Discretion
- Alternative Classroom
- In School Suspension
- Out of School Suspension

VIOLATIONS that have consequences:

- 1st Offense Repeat Offense Chronic Abusive Language/Profanity
- Racial-Ethnic Slur
- Use/Possession of Alcohol ----- See No Tolerance Policy
- Arson ----- See No Tolerance Policy

- Bomb Threat/False Alarm ----- See No Tolerance Policy
- Use/Possession of Combustibles ----- See No Tolerance Policy
- Use/Possession of Drugs ----- See No Tolerance Policy
- Use/Possession of Weapons ----- See No Tolerance Policy
- Defiance/Disrespect/Non-Compliance
- Misbehavior for Substitute
- Missed Detentions
- Dress Code Violation
- Harassment/Bullying
- Threatening/Intimidating
- Sexual Harassment
- Obscene gesture
- Inappropriate display of affection
- Inappropriate Location/Out of bounds Lying/Cheating
- Physical Aggression/Fighting Property Damage/ Skip class/Truancy
- Leaving classroom w/o permission
- Technology Violation/Electronic
- Use/Possession of Tobacco
- Theft/Forgery/Plagiarism
- Laser Pointers are against the law in Connecticut Public Schools
- Failure to serve Detention results in an In School Suspension***

For any suspension out of school longer than two days, the parent must escort the student back to school upon his/her return to meet with an administrator. Out-of-School suspensions are mandated for weapons, drugs, or severe violence.

Level III: Zero Tolerance Policy

These acts are so serious that they always require administrative action, which result at a minimum in the immediate removal of the student from school (up to 10 days), and when appropriate, an expulsion hearing. These acts may also result in referral to law enforcement authorities.

- Possession of weapons: including but not limited to, firearms, knives, clubs, and explosives, including their facsimiles.
- Possession or sale of alcohol and/or drugs, including their facsimiles; consumption or being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs
- Vandalism (major)
- Theft (major)
- Arson, false fire alarm report, including 911 call, bomb threat, weapons threat
- Physical assault to a school employee or another student
- Major disruption of the school (including substantive violent threat to school or school personnel)

In ANY circumstance not covered by the written rule, the detention and suspension policy is left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee.

1. During periods of suspension, students are not eligible to participate in, or attend any school activity.
2. Students disciplined for weapon possession and/or consumption, influence, or sale of alcohol and/or drugs will be referred to the School Psychologist or Counselor.
3. During each trimester, a student who has received a suspension during that marking period will not be permitted to attend sponsored events and other events deemed by the administration.

Due Process

All students have the right to a hearing with their assigned administrator where reasons for suspensions will be presented and where the student may explain his/her actions. However, school administrators may immediately remove the student from school when, in their judgment, the student's behavior presents a real and present danger to the health and safety of the student, others, or the fundamental good order of the school. In the case of removal from school for more than ten days, there will be a hearing before the Board of Education. Parents are invited to attend.

Dismissal Procedures

Connecticut State Law mandates schools to instruct students a minimum number of hours each school year. Our procedures are in full compliance with state statutes. Students will begin dismissal at 3:20PM.

Our Crisis Intervention Team and School Security and Safety Committee have put into effect the following dismissal procedures. **Due to security and safety reasons, if you are picking up your child at the end of the school day, you will no longer be allowed to wait in the school.** Your child will be dismissed from the Early Childhood doors. While waiting, please utilize the Early Childhood parking lot (the right parking lot when you enter VES). Any student not riding the school bus must be picked up promptly at 3:20PM.

Unfortunately we do not have the available staff to monitor your child(ren) after dismissal times. We thank-you for your understanding and compliance to our dismissal procedures.

Walkers/ Bike Riders

By checking the appropriate line on the DISMISSAL PROCEDURES FORM, students in grades 5-8 may obtain permission to walk or ride their bicycle to/from school.

Students who walk or ride to school are not to report to school before 8:30AM. Students riding a bicycle will walk their bicycle to the designated parking area on the playground.

Students who walk or ride from school will be dismissed at 3:20PM through the Early Childhood doors; students are to leave the school grounds immediately.

Please be reminded that by CT State law students under the age of 15 are required to wear a helmet.

Dismissal at the end of the School Day (3:20PM)

At the beginning of year, you will receive a DISMISSAL PROCEDURES FORM. You will be given four choices of how your child(ren) will be dismissed throughout the school year. **You must check one choice, sign and return this form to the main office during the first week of school.** If you choose to have your child dismissed as a walker or pick-up every day, your child will be dismissed from the Early Childhood doors before all buses have been dismissed. **Parking is available in the Early Childhood parking lot (the right parking lot when you enter VES).** **Due to security and safety reasons, parents/guardians picking up children at the end of the school day will no longer be allowed to wait in the school.**

Dismissal during the school day (before 3:00PM)

Students that are picked up during the school day (before 3:00PM) must be dismissed from the main office. Please send a note in with your child to let us know you plan on having them dismissed early. **This note must be turned into your child's homeroom teacher at the start of the day. We will also take phone calls or emails (send communications to Rhonda Bursey, rbursey@voluntownct.org or (860- 376-2325).** **Please be advised that the main office must be notified of a pick-up by 3:00pm, otherwise, we will not be able to honor your request.**

Students picked up during the school day must be dismissed before 3:00PM in the Main Office. After 3:00PM, students must be picked up at dismissal time (3:20PM) through the Early Childhood doors. Please note, we do not dismiss students between 3:00-3:20PM.

Parent/Guardian must sign out of the school with the main office personnel. Anyone who is signing out a student must be included on his/her emergency card. Please be prepared to have ID. If an emergency arises, and it becomes necessary for someone who is not listed on this card to pick up a student, it must be authorized by the parent in writing or faxed to the main office. No exceptions will be made.

Dismissal: Weather Related

Occasionally the weather conditions become worse after school has started. When it appears that conditions will be worse by dismissal time, the school will close early. Emergency closing times may vary based on weather conditions and at the Superintendent's discretion. Announcements will be made on the radio when that happens so parents will be aware of the change. Parents are asked to supply us with an emergency plan in case we dismiss school early. (See Emergency School Closing)

Dominant Language Survey

Each year school systems are required by statute PA 77-588 to survey parents or guardians to identify the

dominant language spoken by students. This short survey is part of the information sign-off packet that was sent home with this handbook to be completed and returned to school.

Dress and Appearance

Students should dress in a comfortable, appropriate, and clean manner in order to maintain a safe and proper learning environment. Our dress and appearance expectations are designed to provide appropriate levels of decorum and decency to support a positive, welcoming, safe learning environment, while allowing students to express their individuality. Our Dress and Appearance Expectations are as follows:

- Clothing should be clean, neat, and worn as designed; excessively ripped or torn clothing is not acceptable; skin-tight/immodest apparel is not acceptable; underwear garments are not to be visible;
- Tops that reveal cleavage, torso, or undergarments (such as bra straps) are not acceptable; muscle tops, spaghetti-strap tops, backless/open-back tops, see through tops, mesh-style tops are not allowed; tops must have a minimum of “two-fingers width of coverage on the shoulders”;
- Pants/jeans must be worn at the waist; length of skirts, skorts or shorts must be at “fingertip length” (the length must extend below the student's fingertips when the student's arms are extended at his/her sides); rips, tears, or slits may not be open/revealed above fingertip length; leggings may be worn along with skirts, shorts, dresses, or tops of appropriate fingertip length;
- Shoes must be worn at all times; sneakers must be worn for participation in PE class; flip-flops, high-heels, and sandal style shoes that make walking, running or other activities less safe for students are discouraged; black-soled footwear, which marks the floor, are discouraged;
- Outerwear attire/items and backpacks/purses shall be stored in lockers/cubbies during the school day;
- Parents are encouraged to send students to school with appropriate outerwear according to the weather and activities students will engage in;
- Head coverings (hats, hoods, bandanas) and sunglasses may not be worn inside;
- Clothing with pictures or sayings of a profane or suggestive nature, is related to drugs, alcohol, or any illegal substance, is offensive to others, contains advertising any product or service not permitted by law to minors, promotes violence, or signifies gang or group affiliations is prohibited;
- Apparel and accessories should not present a threat to the health or safety of others, nor should it interfere with their learning environment; chains or metal studded items are not permitted.

Students are expected to comply when asked by a staff member to adjust any clothing or to remove inappropriate items. Students who refuse to comply will be referred to an administrator. Any decision made by building administration about whether or not a student is violating the dress code is final. Standard discipline referral procedures will be followed.

1st violation:	Verbal warning and possible change of clothing
2nd violation:	Change of clothing and parent notification
Additional violations:	Building administrators reserve the right to impose additional progressive disciplinary consequences.

Emergency School Closings and Delayed Opening Information

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 7:15AM.

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.

If an early dismissal is called, there will be no PM PreSchool/School Readiness classes, and classes will stay until dismissal time. Lunch is provided for students.

Emergency closing times may vary based on weather conditions and at the Superintendent's discretion. If a late opening is called there will be no AM PreSchool/School Readiness classes.

Extra-Curricular Activities

These are school programs that may extend beyond the school day and meet on a regular basis. We encourage all students to participate in these activities. They are fun and add another dimension to school. They also afford an opportunity to establish new friendships and skills. The following are some activities offered at the school:

- Fall: Soccer
- Winter: Basketball and Cheerleading
- Spring: Track
- Intramural Volleyball
- Band/Chorus
- Math Counts (one Saturday during the school year)
- 8th Grade Memory Book

A student must have a grade of 65 or better in any given subject to participate in extracurricular activities. The student's primary responsibility is to complete daily class work and assignments. All students are barred from all extracurricular activities while on suspension.

Students who are absent from school on the day of the chosen extracurricular activity cannot participate in that activity unless he/she has a valid excuse and the parent or guardian calls the school in advance to obtain administrative permission. **Students must be in school for a minimum of 3 hours in order to be eligible to participate in an extracurricular or after school activity.** In the event of a situation arising, which is not covered by these rules, the administration will provide a final decision.

Students in 5th-8th grade are eligible to participate in one of our interscholastic sports programs (soccer, basketball, cheerleading, and track) as determined by our Athletic Handbook. Students must have a physical in order to play on an interscholastic team. It is the hope of this administration that all students who want to play in the interscholastic sports program can play. Sometimes, with the numbers of students who try out, we have to "cut" some players. Most times the "cuts" are caused because of the lack of an extra coach for the number of students.

Field Trips/Reward Trips

Each year students take a variety of educational field trips. Students are expected to represent their school for the fine institution that it is. In the case of reward trips, students may be excluded from trips due to a poor academic or behavioral record. Behavioral expectations found in school are always expected on field trips.

Parents/guardians are often asked to serve as chaperones on field trips. Some class trips have chaperones chosen by a lottery system. No other children in the family are allowed to come along on the grade level field trip.

Field Trip Costs

At Voluntown Elementary School, field trips are a part of the student academic and social program. No pupil shall be denied the opportunity to participate in classroom field trips because of financial hardship. Reasonable expectations for financial support of admission fees and transportation may be made of trip participants with the principal's approval. Therefore, if the cost of a field trip creates a financial hardship for any family, the **parent, not the student**, is requested to contact the principal to discuss payment options or other reasonable expectations of financial support to be considered.

Fires Drills and Safety Drills

At the sound of the fire alarm, students leave the building with their teacher, following the directions posted in each of your classrooms. It would be wise to find out those directions and learn them. Once outside, students are to remain at the assigned area until told to re-enter the building.

When students and adults get outside, they get away from the building; Do Not stay in the driveway (fire trucks and emergency vehicles may be coming.) Safety drills are also practiced. Please follow the teacher's directions for these drills.

Food/Beverage in the Classroom

We recommend that **ALL** students bring water bottles to school that they can keep on their desks and travel to/from classrooms in order to keep hydrated. Water bottles should be plastic and have a screw-on cap. Fruit juices with insertable straws are only allowed during the designated snack time and during lunchtime. Colored beverages (i.e.: Gatorade, PowerAde) are only permitted during lunchtime. Caffeine and energy drinks (i.e.: Soda, Monster, Red Bull, Rockstar, Amp) are not recommended for students.

Students are encouraged to eat breakfast in the morning. Breakfast is served from 8:30-8:50AM in the Cafeteria. If students prefer, they can grab breakfast and eat in their classrooms.

There is also designated snack time during the school day. Research shows that healthy snacks contribute to making healthy choices and providing students with the nutrients to support growth and learning. Below is a list of foods and beverages that can be counted as “healthy snacks”:

Beverages	Foods
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water• 100% fruit or vegetable juice• Lowfat or nonfat milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any fresh fruit or vegetable• Canned and packaged fruit products• Dried fruit• Animal crackers, popcorn, pretzels• Lowfat or nonfat yogurt• Lowfat cheese• Whole grain crackers• Granola or cereal bars• Trail mix• Luncheon meats

“Fragrance Free” School

As part of an ongoing effort to implement our “IAQ/TfS” priorities, it is important to consider factors that might influence the quality of our indoor air as well as the impact on individuals who are in the building or visiting. It was therefore decided that we would implement a “Fragrance Free” initiative. This requires a careful review of the chemicals that are used for cleaning. It also requires avoiding perfumes or other fragrances that might flow throughout classrooms and offices and have a potential adverse affect on individuals who are highly sensitive and may have a reaction. Thank you for your support and help with these efforts.

Fundraisers

Food fundraisers are allowed if students are involved with taking the order and delivering the money to school for the food item. A parent or other adult will be required to pick up the food items. Fundraisers selling food to students on school premises during school hours are not allowed.

Green Cleaning: Standard Precautions

As part of maintaining a healthy environment for staff and children, the following precautions will be followed by the Readiness Program and Maintenance Staff. All cleaning and sanitizing products must conform to the Green Clean Program* and are to be labeled with Manufacturer’s Label. The Manufacturer’s Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) are to be readily available for reference.

- All surfaces that are exposed to infectious bodily fluids must be made of a disposable material or one that can be sanitized.
- Staff will use disposable gloves when handling situations that expose them to bodily fluids, openings in the skin, and mucous membranes.
- When spills occur, staff members clean them up immediately with detergent followed by rinsing with water.
- After cleaning, staff members sanitize nonporous surfaces as described in the cleaning procedure.
- Staff clean carpet by blotting and spot cleaning with sanitizing detergent and inform custodial staff of the need to shampoo carpet.

- Staff members dispose of contaminated materials in a plastic bag that is tied securely and place in a secured container.
- Staff will use proper hand hygiene following all above situations. (Refer to hand washing chart)

The Voluntown Board of Education adopted this Green Cleaning Program.

Hall Passes

Students must have a pass to be out of their classrooms during instructional time.

Health Services

Communicable/Infectious Diseases

Students with any medical condition, which within the school setting may expose others to disease, or contagious and infectious conditions may be excluded from school and referred for medical diagnosis and treatment. Additional information concerning this may be obtained from the school nurse.

Before a child may return to school after an absence due to such condition, parents and students may be required to submit medical evidence that their child has recovered sufficiently to prevent exposing others.

1. Any student diagnosed with strep throat, must be at home for 24-48 hours after starting the antibiotic prescribed by your physician
2. Any student with a temperature above 100 degrees F. will be sent home.
3. The Council on School Health has determined that “no healthy child should be excluded from or allowed to miss school time because of head lice. “No-nit” policies for return to school should be abandoned.” Our school nurse can check a child’s head if requested to do so by a parent. Our school nurse will also distribute available accurate information about the diagnosis, treatment, and preventions of head lice in an understandable form to the entire school community.

Health Screenings

The school nurse will administer and/or supervise screenings for vision, hearing and scoliosis as required by state law. Parents wishing to have these screenings done by private physicians shall provide a report of screening results to the school nurse.

Illness Policy

If, upon arrival at school, it is obvious to the school nurse that your child is ill, a parent/guardian will be contacted and are expected to pick up their child. Also, if during the course of your child’s day, your child is unable to participate in the curriculum activities due to suspected illness, you will be contacted and are expected to pick up your child. Please, use your best judgment in determining if your child is healthy enough to attend school. The goal is to keep the school environment as healthy as possible for all students and staff.

The school nurse will be monitoring for the following illnesses:

- o Severe cold and fever (100 degrees F or above), sneezing, nose drainage, and coughing.
- o Conjunctivitis (an eye infection commonly referred to as “pink eye”).
- o Bronchitis. This can begin with hoarseness, cough, and slight elevation in temperature.
- o Rashes that you cannot identify or that have not been diagnosed by a physician.
- o Impetigo. Begins as red pimples on the skin, which eventually become small vesicle surrounded by a reddened area. When the blister breaks, the surface is raw and weeping.
- o Diarrhea. Watery or greenish bowel movements.
- o Vomiting more that the usual “spitting up”.
- o With a contagious disease, a child must be kept home and the school nurse notified. The child may only return to school with a signed note from his/her physician. Illnesses include: measles, mumps, rubella, chickenpox, and strep throat.

If your child comes to school with the symptoms of flu, as described above, or if your child develops these symptoms when they are at school, your child will be sent home for at least 24 hours after they are fever-free or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.

If your child is prescribed an antibiotic, the child should not attend school until he/she has been on the medication for at least 24 hours. Please, contact the school nurse.

Immunizations

All students must be immunized against certain diseases and must present a certificate from a physician or local health agency. If the student should not be immunized due to medical or religious reasons, a statement from a physician or the parent as appropriate must be provided. The required immunizations are: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, Pertussis, Measles, Mumps, Hepatitis B, Chicken Pox, Rubella and Hemophilic Influenza Type B*. Parents or guardians of any children unable to have the mandated immunizations prior to initial school entry and the boosters as required in the later grades may have the immunizations, on the recommendation of the Board of Education, be paid by the town.

In addition to the required immunizations for initial entry into school for kindergarten, regular and special education preschool programs, additional immunizations are required for entry into seventh grade and for entry into eighth grade. The school must enroll any homeless student even if the student is unable to produce the required medical and immunization records.

Immunization Entry Requirements

Vaccine	Grade	Number of Doses
Pneumococcal	PK and K (born 1/1/2007 or later and less than 5 years old)	1 dose on or after 1st birthday
Hepatitis A	PK and K (born 1/1/2007 or later)	2 doses given six months apart-1st dose on or after 1st birthday
Influenza	PK (age 24-59 months) given annually between Aug. 1 and Dec. 31 each year	1 dose- (2 doses for those receiving flu vaccine for 1st time)
MMR	K-12	2 doses given at least 28 days apart -1st dose on or after 1st birthday
Varicella	PK	1st dose on or after 1st birthday
Varicella	K and Grade 7 entry	2 doses given 3 months apart- 1st dose on or after 1st birthday
Tdap	Grade 7 entry	1 dose
Meningococcal	Grade 7 entry	1 dose

Medication

A physician's written order and a written authorization of a parent or guardian must be presented for each medication ordered (including aspirin) and for each extension of a previous order.

Forms for physician's orders and authorization by a parent or guardian are available at the school office. No non-prescription medication, including vitamins, diet pills, cough drops and aspirin may be self-administered. The medication must be delivered directly to the school nurse or administrator by the parent or responsible adult. Medication must be delivered in and dispensed from the container properly labeled with original prescription date, name of doctor and patient, name, strength of medication, and directions for administering.

Parents may bring to school the exact amount of medication needed each week or month.

Long-term medication orders are to be renewed at least once each school year.

A parent or responsible adult must pick up unused medication after notification by the school. If medication should cause a potential for unusual side effects, it is suggested that parents get in touch with the school nurse, administrator, or school counselor.

Medication Regulation

Safeguards are used with all medications for children:

- Staff administer both prescription and over-the-counter medications to a child only if the child's record documents that the parent/legal guardian has given the program written permission.
- The child's record includes instructions from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended medication for that child; alternatively, the licensed health provider's office may give instructions by telephone to the program staff.
- Any administrator or teaching staff who administers medication has a) specific training and b) a written performance evaluation updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration: 1) verifying that the right child receives the 20 right medication 3) in the right dose

- 4) at the right time 5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. The person giving the medication signs documentation of items 1) through 5) above. Teaching staff who are required to administer special medical procedures have demonstrated to a health professional that they are competent in the procedures and are guided in writing about how to perform the procedure by the prescribing health care provider.
- d) Medications are labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health provider, the name of the licensed provider, the expiration date of the medication, or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it.
 - e) All medications are kept in a locked container.

Homebound Instruction

Home instruction is available to students who are unable to attend school for medical, and/or mental health reasons for a period of two weeks or longer as diagnosed by a physician, psychiatrist or the Planning and Placement Team. Home instruction may also be provided for those students who have been excluded from regular school attendance for disciplinary reasons.

Homeless Students

Homeless students, as defined by federal and state legislation, will have all programs, services, and transportation that other students enjoy and may continue to attend the school of origin. The local liaison for homeless children is the principal.

Home School Partnership

Our school community aspires to have each child investigate, master, and apply the knowledge, skills, values, and behaviors essential for productive lifelong learning and meaningful participation in society. While learning becomes the student's responsibility, it is the role of teachers and parents to support, nurture, and guide the process. Our youth flourish where learning is a collaborative home and school effort. Therefore, in the home and school relationship it is essential that:

- Parents and teachers direct constructive and ongoing communication that is prompt, courteous, and focused on the well being of the student. Teacher suggestions for scholastic improvement and follow-up, particularly in consistent daily monitoring of homework completion and overall academic achievement, should be adhered to. Communication and remediation of problems supported at the parent-teacher level are focused on obtaining appropriate and direct solutions.
- Parents and teachers recognize the academic, physical, social and emotional development of the child is a shared and overlapping responsibility of the school, the family, and the community at-large. At home and at school, a high priority is given to learning and the positive development of each child.
- Parents and teachers contribute to an atmosphere of respect among students, themselves, and between students and adults. High standards are established for each student's responsibilities in the learning process, for behavior, and for respect for other people and for property.
- The intention of the school is that the home and school relationship be positive, productive and, most importantly, established in the best interest of each student.
- School personnel may be reached via email/phone.
- Teachers use a program called PowerSchool for record keeping and grading purposes. In 5th-8th grade, a username and password is given to all parents/guardians to access information about their child's grades and performance. Parents may login through the parent portal on the school website. We strongly encourage all parents/guardians to access this information on a regular basis.

Homework, Study Habits, and Extra Help

Homework is considered a key component in the overall learning process. It is designed as an extension of classroom work to help students become more adept with material presently being studied. Homework also promotes a

greater degree of self-directed and independent learning. Appropriate amounts of homework are assigned according to grade level. If no formal assignments are given, time should be spent either reading or reviewing previously presented work in each of the student's academic areas.

Specific homework assignments may strengthen basic skills; extend classroom learning, stimulate and further interests; reinforce independent study skills; develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction; stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time; and acquaint parents with the student's work in school. Students will have experience working on long-term projects, preparing for tests, and reading assignments. These tasks should be considered as homework and may entail completing assignments over a weekend or holiday period. Students, therefore, must learn to budget their time and establish priorities. All students should keep a daily assignment log identifying their exact assignments. It should be noted to both parents and students alike that one of the greatest sources of academic failure at school is the non-completion of homework assignments.

Some good study habits include:

- Use your class time wisely.
- Schedule a study time each day. Study in a quiet area. Try to read and study without the TV or radio on.
- Do the subjects you feel are the most difficult first.
- Check over your work or have your parent check the work.
- Do all of your work. If you have a problem, call a friend for help.

If you need extra help at any time, do not hesitate to see your teacher and arrange for a before school appointment for extra help. A few minutes before school may save you many worries later. All teachers at the school make themselves available for extra-help. This time can be spent going over:

- Material not clear to student
- Material missed due to absences
- How to study more effectively
- Preparation for a test
- Planning and working on a major project or paper

Asking for extra-help is the responsibility of the student. Students experiencing any type of academic difficulty are strongly advised to seek extra-help.

Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher if they have any questions dealing with their child's general work habits as they relate to homework. Parents will be provided with their child's locker number and combination in order to access materials in the event of their child's absence.

Honor Roll

The Voluntown Elementary School philosophy of Honor Roll is three fold. The Honor Roll is one of the means to implement the philosophy of challenging the individual to develop to the fullest intellectual capacity, creative potential, and, above all, to seek wisdom. To provide an incentive, needed by some students, for striving to reach the limit of their potential both in the academic and exploratory areas of the curriculum. To publicly recognize above average achievement by students regardless of intellectual capacity. The Honor Roll is published three times per year, at the end of each marking period, in the local newspaper. The Honor Roll determination for students in JHS (Grades 5-8) is based on two components:

- **First**, in order to make the Honor Roll, **no grade** shall be lower than an 80% in **ALL** subjects (Language Arts, English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art, Music (Chorus and/or Band, if applicable), Physical Education/Health, and Media Literacy. If a student has met this qualification, he/she has made the Honor Roll for that trimester.
- **Second**, in order to distinguish if a student has earned Honors or High Honors, we average percentages for each class. Students earn Honors if their trimester average is between 80-89%. Students earn High Honors if their trimester average is 90% or greater. This trimester average is used in calculating a student's GPA as well.

Below is a more detailed explanation of our determination of Honor Roll, Honors or High Honors, and trimester averages.

- **High Honors:** 1) No grade lower than an 80% in ALL classes. 2) Trimester average is 90% or greater. Please note that Specials are averaged together for one Specials grade (Art, Music, Physical Education/Health, and Media Literacy), which is then averaged with core academic classes in order to determine if a student has achieved Honors or High Honors. Additionally, no student can have an Incomplete in any subject area or more

than 1 Pass to achieve High Honors.

- **Honors:** 1) No grade lower than an 80% in ALL classes. 2) Trimester average is 80-89%. Please note that Specials are averaged together for one Specials grade (Art, Music, Physical Education/Health, and Media Literacy), which is then averaged with core academic classes. Additionally, no student can have an Incomplete in any subject area or more than 2 Passes to achieve Honors.

IAQ/TfS (Indoor Air Quality/Tools for Schools) Policy

The Board of Education approved an IAQ/TfS (Indoor Air Quality/Tools for Schools) policy in 2006 to meet state guidelines. An IAQ/TfS Committee has met on a regular basis to develop recommendations and effectively implement this program.

All faculty and staff participate in reporting information to the committee to effectively assess the maintenance and facility needs of our school. Air quality priorities are determined by gathering data about such things as general cleanliness, excess moisture, thermal comfort, ventilation, educational supplies, local exhaust fans, and general comments. Mr. Paul Ricard, our Director of Maintenance and Facilities, has been highly successful in follow-through with repairs and maintenance.

The IAQ/TfS Committee receives regular reports of all facility and maintenance repairs to support the creation a list for the Board of Education to consider in the budget process for both short and long term facilities and maintenance priorities.

Insurance

School insurance is made available to families through a specific program. Brochures are distributed to all students at the beginning of each academic year. While the program is not mandatory, it is suggested that parents take advantage of the opportunity to provide adequate protection for their children while in school. Any such arrangement is contractual between the parent and insurance carriers and the Voluntown Public School assumes no liability from disputes arising from such contract.

Insurance: Connecticut HUSKY Health Insurance Plan

Healthy children do well in school. The State of Connecticut has a special HUSKY Health Insurance Plan that pays for doctor visits (including physical exams), prescriptions, emergency care, vision and dental care, mental health care, special health care needs and more. It is for children under age 19 in families of all incomes. Over 230,000 children now have their health care covered by the HUSKY Plan.

If your child is uninsured and you would like to participate in the Connecticut HUSKY Plan visit www.huskyhealthplan.com or call the information hotline at 1-877-284-8759.

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 unless under a staff member's supervision and in the context of instruction. Laser pointers will be confiscated and students will be disciplined.

Library/Media Center

The library/media center houses a collection of materials designed to meet a variety of needs and abilities. The center provides students and staff with a variety of books, magazines, newspapers and other materials. Students receive a library/media center orientation early in the school year that helps provide them with the resources to use the center most effectively. Students may sign out materials between 9:00AM and 3:00PM. Parents may also sign out materials.

The center can be used during class with a pass from the teacher. Most books may be borrowed for two weeks and may usually be renewed. Students are responsible for all materials that they sign out. It is the student's responsibility to return all borrowed books to the book drop located in the library. Students who damage or fail to return a book will be required to pay for it or lose the privilege of borrowing books.

Guidelines have been established for the use of the Internet. Student violations of the guidelines can result in the termination of access privileges and in disciplinary actions. It is the policy of the Board of Education that all students must sign an acceptable use policy which indicates that a student agrees to use the Internet exclusively for educational purposes. Each contract must also include a signature from the student's parent/guardian.

Lockers

Each student in 5th-8th grade will be provided one locker with a combination at the beginning of the year. Their teachers will inform students the appropriate time to go to their lockers. Students are not to share lockers nor are they to distribute combinations to other students. Any student who tampers with, or enters, or attempts to enter another person's locker will be subject to disciplinary action. The school follows Connecticut State Law and Board of Education policy regarding search and seizure of property or person. Lockers are school property and may be accessed by authorized school personnel.

Locker Room Procedures for 7th/8th Grade Students and Student Athletes (Grades 5-8)

Students are offered a locker to safeguard their personal property. The school is not responsible for items that are lost, damaged, or stolen in lockers. Students should never share their combination with another student. Students are to pay close and precise attention to make sure their locker is closed and locked after use. Large amounts of money and valuables should not be brought to school or stored in your locker.

All incoming 7th and 8th grade students will be given a combination padlock for their PE locker. Locks must be school-issued due to matters of school security. School lockers are considered school property and subject to search. Locks that are not school-issued will be removed at the expense of the student. Lost, damaged, or stolen locks must be replaced at the replacement cost.

- PE locks & lockers will be issued by the PE staff during the first week of school
- Students are required to lock all personal items in their PE locker upon leaving the locker room.
- Lost or damaged PE locks must be reported to PE staff and a replacement lock will be issued.
- Students may be required to pay for lost or damaged PE locks.
- Students are responsible for making sure their locker is closed & locked before leaving the PE locker room.
- Valuables should be locked in your P.E. locker.
- No food is permitted at any time in the P.E. locker room.
- Aerosol containers (including, but not limited to, Axe body spray, hairspray, deodorant/antiperspirant, etc) are not permitted at any time.
- Unsafe conduct will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.

Student Athletes:

- Grade 5-6 athletes will be issued a locker/lock at the discretion of their coaches.
- Grade 7-8 athletes will use the locker they were assigned at the beginning of the year.

Lost & Found and Personal Belongings

Any articles which are found in the school or on school grounds should be turned in at the Main Office. Unclaimed articles will be disposed of at the end of each trimester. Loss or suspected theft of personal or school property should be reported to the Main Office.

Personal belongings and valuables should not be brought to school. No home toys are allowed at recess.

Media Access to Students

The Board of Education recognizes the important role the media serves in reporting information about programs and activities. The district will make every reasonable effort to provide media access to students. School administrators are authorized to grant permission and set parameters for media access to students in their respective grade. The media may interview and photograph students involved in instructional programs and activities including athletic events provided their presence will not be unduly disruptive and shall comply with policies and goals. Parents who do not want their student interviewed, photographed, or videotaped by the media shall inform the school principal accordingly.

Migrant Students

A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs and elective classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation and evaluation of the migrant program.

Music Department Maintenance Fee

At the start of the school year, the VES Music Department will instill a yearly fee of \$20 to cover expenses incurred with minor repairs to the school owned instrument. Parents/Guardians are responsible for the total loss or theft of the instrument in the amount stated on the Use of School Equipment Form. In addition, students are responsible in advising the band director of any problems with and/or damage to the school instrument immediately.

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

Outdoor Recess

The Voluntown Board of Education requires the school to provide K-8 students with at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess to encourage physical activity and socialization, weather permitting. As a reminder, no home toys are allowed are recess. Students must adhere to the safety and security rules for recess and outdoor equipment. Recess supervisors will facilitate positive play amongst students. At times, students may be redirected to an alternate activity or area of the playground for their safety and well-being.

1. In cold weather students should wear dry and layered clothing to protect them from the cold.
2. In hot weather the students will be encouraged to play in the shade and drink lots of water.
1. In hot weather students should wear appropriate sun-protective clothing and/or SPF 15 or higher sunscreen.
2. Students will be protected from excessive cold, heat, other environmental, or air quality issues. The school will use the local news agencies for regular monitoring of weather conditions. For extreme situations the school will utilize the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association alert system. For environmental air quality alerts the local Department of Health or Fire Department will notify the school. The Program Administrator (school principal) will notify the teaching staff.

Outside Activities

In many academic areas of study during the school year, students will be going outside on the school grounds and into Pachaug State Forest for classes. In addition Voluntown Elementary School uses Constitution Field, along with the adjacent walking track and surrounding pond for recess, classes, athletic events, and other activities. Teachers try to take the students outside whenever possible to make learning more meaningful and enjoyable. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact building administration.

Parent Involvement Communications

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communications and interactions. Parents/guardians are urged to encourage their children to put a high priority on education and to make the most of educational opportunities. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and available academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in parent organizations, attendance at Board of Education meetings and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged.

In accordance with Board of Education Policy 1111 Parent Involvement and the Parent Involvement Compact: Parenting skills should be promoted and supported. Communication between home and school should be regular, two-way and meaningful. Parents should play an integral role in assisting student learning. Parent should be welcome in every school and their support and assistance sought. Parent input should be sought regarding decisions that affect children and families. Community resources should be made available to strengthen school programs, family practice and student learning.

Parent/Teacher Communications

Parents can call teachers during the school day at (860) 376-2325. They may leave a voicemail and the teachers will get back to the parents as quickly as possible. Email is another form of communication. Teacher email addresses are available through our school website at www.voluntownct.org. Staff members make every attempt to return communications within 24 hours, Monday through Friday.

Parents need to follow the communication process. That is, call/email the person most directly concerned. Calls should go directly to the teacher, then Building Administration, and then the Superintendent. Another method, after all of the other avenues have been tried, is to go directly to the Board of Education which meets every month in the Board of Education room at the Superintendent's Office.

All parents are encouraged to discuss any and all educational concerns with the professional staff. If there are concerns, which the parent wishes to address to the Building Administrator, any parent may request a meeting simply by calling school to make an appointment. The Administrators will see parents as quickly as possible if you must come to school for an emergency.

Without administrative understanding of parents' concerns, there is little ability to solve problems. No parent should feel that by voicing a concern that their children will suffer negatively.

All student records are available for review. Please call the office to request that review.

All legal issues, for example, restraining orders, divorce decrees, must be brought to the attention of the school office. Without current copies of any legal orders on file, the school cannot be held accountable to enforce those orders.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parents are important partners in their child's educational successes. Conferences with teachers may be held at any time during the school year. Parents and students, as well as teachers, counselors or administrators may initiate a conference.

A parent or student may arrange a conference with an individual member of the school staff or a group conference with school staff members. Conferences are held during school hours but every effort will be made to accommodate parent schedules.

Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO)

The PTO is a vital link between the school and the community and parents are invited to join and take an active part. The mission of the PTO is three-fold:

1. To support and speak on behalf of the youth in the schools, in the community, and before governmental agencies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children.
2. To assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children.
3. To encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of this nation.

The objectives of the PTO are to:

1. Promote the welfare of children in home, school and community
2. Raise the standards of home life
3. Secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth

4. Bring into closer relation the home and the school for parents and teachers to cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth
5. Develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

Parking for Bicycles/Scooters

Students riding bicycles/scooters to school must wear helmets. Bicycles/scooters must be parked at the bicycle rack in front of the school. All students riding their bikes to school must understand that they leave their bikes/scooters in the racks. The school cannot be held liable for any damage that may occur. You need to lock your bike/scooter and you do so at your own risk. In addition, parents must write a note to give permission for walkers and bus riders to use their bikes/scooters to come and go from school. Call the school office for more information.

Personal Hygiene:

Personal hygiene is considered a safety issue. Please follow rules of good personal hygiene.

Pesticide Application Notice

Connecticut General Statute 10-231 to 10-231d requires school systems to send a notification of the policy for applying with a description of the prior years applications. We are also required to implement and maintain a registry of parents or guardians who wish to be notified of pesticide applications during the school year. The method of application of pesticides at schools is strictly regulated and must be applied by an applicator with operational certification.

The intent of this policy is to ensure that students, employees and parents/guardians of the Voluntown Public Schools receive adequate notice, in conformity with applicable statutes, prior to pesticide application in school buildings or on school grounds and will only employ certified pesticide applicators for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds.

Physical Education Regulation

In order for your child to be excused from participation in physical activity, including Physical Education class, a note from a Doctor must be handed into the School Nurse. Our School Nurse will keep track of the length of time that your child is prohibited from physical activity (physical education class, recess, athletics, etc.) and when it is safe for your child to resume physical activity. The School nurse will communicate this information to the Physical Education Teacher, your child's Classroom Teacher(s), and the Recess Supervisors.

A parent/guardian note excusing your child from physical education will only be accepted one class per trimester. Any other notes will be unexcused.

As a reminder, students in 5th-8th grade must pass Physical Education/Health in order to successfully meet promotion requirements.

Plagiarism

The use of current technology offers students many sources for information. Plagiarism is defined in the Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary as:

- An act of stealing and passing off as your own, the ideas or words of another;
- To present as one's own, an idea or product derived from an existing source.

Plagiarism is against the law. Students violating this law should expect consequences. Students will be taught proper techniques for referencing material from different sources.

Positive Behavior Support

Positive behavior support meshes the values, attitudes, climate, culture and discipline of a school to help students want to be active, contributing members of a rich school environment. Students are taught behavioral expectations in the various settings they encounter throughout the school day. Our school uses a variety of positive reinforcement to help recognize and promote appropriate behaviors.

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 students' 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 20204605

Professional Development

Teachers and staff are provided appropriate professional development opportunities. The overall goal is to engage in an ongoing cycle of intentional teaching that supports a path of growth over time toward learning outcomes for students based on the state and federal Common Core standards. The process of planning, implementing, observing and assessing is braided through the context of the standards, student interests, and the expectations for each grade level. A key factor in outcomes that lead to the future success of students is the ability of teachers to plan, implement, observe and assess student progress. Our school system has created a calendar for the school year that matches a calendar for the region. This allows our teachers to participate in regional professional development opportunities scheduled on twice per year.

Progress Reports, Report Cards, and Grading Practices/PowerSchool

There are three marking periods. The report cards will consist of two sections. The first is the more traditional report card with grades for each subject. The second part of the report card will be a narrative format where the teachers will write about student behavior and work. The narratives are included with the report cards twice yearly. Some staff members will be collecting student work to develop a portfolio, which will be shared with parents during parent/teacher conferences. Progress Reports are sent mid-way between each Report Card. Students in Kindergarten - 4th Grade will be issued a Standards Based Report Card.

Teachers use a program called PowerSchool for record keeping and grading purposes. In 5th-8th grade, a username and password is given to all parents/guardians to access information about their child's grades and performance. Parents may login through the parent portal on the school website. We strongly encourage all parents/guardians to access this information on a regular basis. Teachers make every effort to post grades for assignments within 3 days of the due date; 5 days for long-term projects and essays.

Students are responsible for completing classwork, homework and projects assigned by his/her teacher in a timely fashion. If a student does not complete his/her work by the expected due date (not due to an absence), it is recommended that the parent/student speak with the teacher to discuss the possibility of turning in the work late. Based on the subject, instructional objectives, and type of assignment, teachers may allow students to turn in work late, not to exceed 5 days past the original due date.

Promotion and Retention

Our policy is to promote those students whom the schools feels have made satisfactory progress both academically and developmentally. Parents of any student receiving a failing grade/struggling in any subject at any time during the school year should contact the teacher of that subject to determine what can be done to resolve the academic deficiency.

Students in Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades, academic promotion to the next grade level is determined by successful completion of grade level requirements.

Students in 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th grades must pass all their core subjects (Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, and English) and PE/Health with an average of 65% or better in order to be considered for promotion to the next grade level.

Any student failing one or more subjects will not be considered for promotion. Students failing one of the required subjects listed above must attend summer school for a maximum of five weeks in the subject area that they failed during the academic school year. The program will be provided by the Voluntown Board of Education and is based on not successfully completing academic objectives. Failure to achieve a 65% or better average in the failed subject during the summer program will result in retention. Failure to attend at least 90% of the required summer school program will result in retention. Students failing more than one subject listed above at the end of the year, will not be promoted to the next grade. Promotion of Special Education students will be determined on an individual basis in conjunction with the IEP and PPT recommendations.

Administration will notify students in writing at the end of the first trimester if they are in danger of failing. This letter goes home with Trimester 1 Report Cards. Students and parents must sign and return the letter to the school within ten days.

Administration will notify students in writing at the end of the second trimester if they are in danger of failing. A certified copy of this letter, signed by a Voluntown administrator, will be mailed home to the parents at the end of the second trimester. Students and parents must sign and return the certified letter to the school within ten days. At that time a meeting will be scheduled with the parents, administrator, teacher(s), and student to plan a course of action stating the requirements that must be met to obtain success. The meeting will be followed-up by a copy of the plan signed by all parties.

Race and Ethnicity Questionnaire (Mandated)

All school systems are required by a federal mandate to send home at the beginning of each school year a special survey each year for parents or guardians to complete to more accurately identify racial and ethnic classifications.

Registration Regulations: Residency

It is extremely important that the school office be notified immediately of any change in address or residency. State guidelines require attendance at the appropriate school based on residency. A withdrawal form must be completed. Parents will then register their child at the school in their new town of residence.

Safety and Accident Prevention

Student safety at school related events is a high priority. Safety procedures require cooperation and students should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the school's code of discipline.
- Remain alert to and promptly report safety hazards, such as intruders on campus.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of the faculty/ staff overseeing the welfare of students.

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 is 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.

Sale of Food and Beverages

The Board of Education permits the sale of other beverages and food to students at “events” or “an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity”. Events include such things as a soccer game, debate, school play or musical, chess match, a dance, etc. Soccer practice, play rehearsals, or a chess club meeting are not events and these do not qualify.

The Board of Education, voted to permit the sale of beverages and food not meeting the Connecticut Nutrition Standards at events if three conditions are met: (1) the sale is in connection with an event (dance) occurring after the end of the regular school day or on a weekend; (2) the sale is at the location of the event; and, (3) the items are not sold from a vending machine or school store.

School Calendar:

Published annually and changes will be announced in the weekly school Newsletter.

School Ceremonies and Observances

The school district recognizes the value of certain ceremonies and observances in promoting patriotism and good citizenship among the students. Therefore, activities in schools commemorating national holidays such as Veterans’ Day, Thanksgiving, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents’ Day, and Memorial Day are encouraged. Students, faculty and administration seek to develop an awareness of the variety of religious beliefs, and all are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.

Activities related to a religious holiday or theme will be planned to ensure that the activity is not devotional, and that students of all faiths can join without feeling that they are betraying their own beliefs. Therefore,

1. School and class plays shall not be overly religious, and church-like scenery will be avoided;
2. Religious music shall not entirely dominate the selection of music; and,
3. Program notes and illustrations shall not be religious or sectarian.

An opportunity will be provided, at the beginning of each school day, for students to observe an appropriate period of silent meditation and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Participation in these activities is voluntary. Non-participants are expected to maintain order and decorum appropriate to the school environment.

School Grounds

Students are expected to behave with common sense on school grounds. The school is not open to students before 8:30AM or after 3:30PM (except for sports activities and when students are in rooms with teachers present). We do not want to have anyone hurt who uses school equipment. The head of maintenance inspects our playground equipment twice per year and monthly inspects the school grounds for hazards, broken glass, etc. Please be aware that the forest areas contain poison ivy, which can cause a severe skin rash. Stay out of the forest area and play only on school grounds.

School Records

All records are confidential. Student files and records do not contain any personal descriptions. Parents or guardians may examine school records. Parents must call the school secretary for an appointment. Preschool records are transferred to Kindergarten within the school system.

Section 504

Definition: Section 504 is a Civil rights Law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. This federal mandate requires that students who are disabled under the definition of Section 504 are evaluated, identified and provided with access to educational opportunities equivalent to their non-disabled peers. Section 504 provides accommodations and services to remove barriers to learning.

-Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

-ADA Amendments Act of 2008, Public Law 110-325

Student Eligibility: The Voluntown Board of Education is committed to providing students eligible under Section 504 with appropriate accommodations and services to afford them access to educational opportunities equivalent to their non-disabled peers. If a person has (1) a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

Security

We, at Voluntown Elementary School, want to assure you that we are taking every measure possible to keep all of our students, faculty and staff safe and secure. Faculty members and members of the VES Crisis Intervention Team met with town emergency officials to develop our crisis plans. We have had plans in place for some time now and periodically review and update them. We practice safety drills as well as fire drills.

In the event of an actual emergency, we ask that you do your best to remain calm and patient. We know that can be asking a lot during a crisis; however, until we have had an opportunity to assess the situation, we ask that you stay off the school's phone lines. We will be working closely with the State Police, the Voluntown Fire Department and town emergency officials should the need arise and cannot thank them enough for their support and guidance. We do have a plan in place for parents that choose to pick up their children at school. School authorities will direct traffic flow and a way for parents to sign out children at the office will be in place.

We do ask that you consider allowing students to stay in school, if it is decided that the school day will continue as a full session day. Experts have stated that keeping a normal routine is the most reassuring for students. Please review early dismissal plans with your children, in the event that we are told to close school and send students home, and make sure they are able to get into their house and have phone numbers available should they need to call you.

We also suggest that you limit TV viewing for your young children and watch with your children so that you can discuss what they saw with them and reassure them.

Harassment/Sexual Harassment Policy and 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 Programs

The district provides special programs for those with disabilities, which affect a student's success at school. Questions about programs should be addressed to Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D., the Director of Student Services, who is available to answer questions about eligibility requirements, programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations.

For students in need of Special Education programs, a PPT or Planning and Placement Team is designed to provide communication and decision-making at the school level concerning the effective use of available resources. The team is also responsible for follow-up and periodic review of all students presently in Special Education and special services programs.

Speech and Language Pathologist conduct entrance screenings for all new PreSchool/School Readiness students in September; and two Universal Screenings for all students for Articulation/Language & Hearing to Pre-K4 and Kindergarteners in May as well as new K registrations. They also conduct Articulation/Language screening to 2nd graders during October and November.

Any child identified as possibly needing special education and/or related services must be referred to this special Planning and Placement Team to review the need for an evaluation. A follow-up PPT after completion of the evaluation will determine whether Special Education services are required. Parents must give their consent before any evaluation can be done or any services can begin. An IEP or Individualized Education Plan, based upon the diagnostic findings of the evaluation study will be developed by the PPT, with parental involvement.

Specialists needing to serve a student and the homeroom teacher will have ongoing communication, updates and consultation with each other and the family. Students with disabilities already require an Annual Review PPT prior to the end of the school year with the current teacher present to ensure a smooth transition to the next grade level.

Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) are therapies (OT, PT, and Speech) provided to students, usually in PreSchool or Kindergarten with developmental delays in the area of speech, fine or gross motor activities. Teachers may request an OT, PT, or SLP to observe a class or student to determine if an assessment screening is appropriate. Parents must be informed and grant permission for an individual screening. If the results of the screening indicate that the student would benefit from therapy, a parent needs to grant permission for the service to begin.

Student Information Sheets and Emergency Transportation Information

Each year, student information sheets need to be updated. These information sheets have basic student information (address, name of parents, etc.). It is important to update your information throughout the school year as changes occur. Particularly important are changes in phone numbers, changes in emergency closing plans (where a student should go in the event of an early dismissal, school closing and no parent will be home), and medical information changes, especially allergies and changes in health conditions, and/or doctors.

It is the policy of this administration to ask for all unlisted phone numbers. At no time will these unlisted numbers be made public. Teachers will have access to these numbers.

Student Rights

The Board of Education believes that all students have a right to equal access to all educational programs even if you have a disability. That also goes for our sports program. There is equal access to all sports for both male and female students. Voluntown Elementary School does not discriminate on any basis against students, parents, or employees.

In our society, you have a right to understand and discuss why certain actions will be taken against you or why certain policies exist. You have the responsibility to ask for information in an appropriate manner. The following guidelines are in place under the due process laws:

- If you have a question about your grades, an action taken, and/or a policy of the school please discuss it with the teacher during an appropriate time (generally not in the middle of class).
- Your first line of communication is with your teacher.
- After your discussion, if you need additional advice or assistance, see the school counselor, principal, or special education director.

If you have been reported to the office for a student behavior matter, you must:

- Report directly to the office if told to by the teacher or staff member (paraprofessional).
- Remain respectful of the office staff and wait until you are seen by an administrator.

You certainly have the right to be informed as to why you were sent to the office. The administrator will read the teacher's referral about you. The administrator will discuss your report of the incident and then review both reports. The administrator will then make a discipline decision.

Student Success Plans

Public Act 10-111 mandates school systems in the State to implement Student Success Plans for all 6th through 12th grade students. The 6th through 8th grade faculty has been meeting on a regular basis to research, review, and implement Student Success Plans. As per state guidelines these plans will be shared with the high schools as the students graduate from eighth grade. We have selected "Naviance" software to document the year-to-year progress of students as they work to complete the requirements of the 6th through 8th grade curriculum and develop effective work habits and study skills.

Substance Abuse Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Education to prevent and prohibit the possession, use and distribution of any drug or drug paraphernalia, alcohol or tobacco products on school property, at school sponsored events, on school buses en route to and from school by any mode of travel provided by the school system. Violation of this policy will result in suspension from school and may result in an expulsion hearing before the Board of Education and legal action. Activities of a questionable nature that mimic or simulate drug use, possession, or distribution are similarly of serious concern and will be treated in the same manner as any substance abuse issue. Smoking is prohibited on school property.

Summer School

Summer school is provided for Special Education students as determined by PPT decision, and if space allows, for students in our SRBI program. In addition, summer school is provided for JHS students who have failed a core subject (Math, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, and English) or Physical Education/Health. Failure of more than one required subject results in automatic retention.

Suspension

A student may be removed from all classes when the student deliberately causes serious disruption of the teaching and learning process within the classroom.

The administration may suspend a student for infraction of school rules. Suspension is defined as an exclusion from school privileges for not more than ten (10) consecutive days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which suspension was imposed.

No student shall be suspended without an informal hearing before the building principal or his/her designee at which time the student shall be informed of the reasons for the disciplinary action and given an opportunity to explain

the situation, unless circumstances surrounding the incident require immediate removal. In such instance the informal hearing will be held during the suspension.

Suspension from school will result in loss of extracurricular and social privileges during the period of suspension.

Telephone

Students are reminded that they must have a classroom pass to use the telephone in the office and that telephone use is restricted to reasons of necessity and emergency. Parents may leave emergency messages for students and they will be delivered.

Testing/Assessments

All students in grades K through 8 will participate in the STAR Enterprise assessments in the areas of Reading and Mathematics. All students in grades 3 through 8 will participate in the SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) in the areas of English Language Arts and Math. All students in grades 5 and 8 will participate in the Connecticut Mastery Test in the area of Science. Special education students participate in the CMT program, except in the rare case when participation in an alternate assessment is detrimental to the student's PPT. The eighth grade graduating class must meet district standards for graduation, in addition to required course credits. Students attending a district school identified under the No Child Left Behind Act for improvement, corrective action or restructuring, may, as required by law, transfer to another district school and/or receive supplementary educational services at district expense in compliance with federal legislation.

Textbook Care and Obligation

Students are responsible for the care of books and supplies entrusted to their use. They will be assessed for damage to textbooks, equipment or materials. In accordance with state law, the school reserves the right to withhold grades, transcripts, or report cards until the student pays for or returns the textbooks, library book or other educational materials.

Transition to Junior High School

As students develop their skills and work to complete the requirements of the elementary grades, every effort is made to help prepare them for our Junior High School program. A unique quality of having a school with programs from preschool to eighth grade is the dynamic communication that occurs in curriculum development committees. This allows a committee to research, review, develop, and propose programs to a Curriculum Steering Committee and the Board Of Education to ensure a smooth transition.

Truancy Law – State of Connecticut

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF PARENTAL OBLIGATIONS UNDER C.G.S. 10184

Connecticut law requires that annually the school district provide you a written notice of your obligations under Connecticut General Statute 10184. This law requires each parent or guardian of a child five years of age and older and under seventeen years of age to ensure that the child attends school regularly when school is in session — unless such parent or other person shows that the child is receiving equivalent instruction elsewhere, or that the child has graduated from high school. The parent or person having control of a child sixteen or seventeen years of age must consent to such child's withdrawal from school by signing a withdrawal form at the school district office.

Regular student attendance is essential to the educational process. So we can inform you if your child is absent without a previous explanation, Connecticut laws also require that we obtain from you a telephone number or other means of contacting you during the school day. A form has been sent home at the beginning of the school year for you to complete and return to the school office.

Under Connecticut State law, there is a truancy procedure, which requires us to keep exact records of all tardiness and absences, which are unexcused. Any student (K-12) who is absent from school and is unexcused for more than 10 days any academic year will have a summons issued for the parents to appear in state court on truancy charges.

(This does not apply to students who are emancipated minors or have reached the age of 18 before the 10th unexcused absence occurred.)

Vandalism

Willful destruction of school property will not be tolerated. According to Board of Education Policy, destruction of school property by students becomes the parents' financial responsibility. Administrators may withhold transcripts, report cards, and grades until damages are paid to the school.

Visitors to School

We have a security system in place to keep our students and faculty safe at all times. When visitors arrive at VES, they will be buzzed in/given access into the building. Upon entering the school, visitors must report directly to the main office. At the front office you will be asked the purpose of your visit and will need to show your driver's license or picture identification.

Parents and other visitors are welcome to visit school if it has been arranged with the child's classroom teacher and approved by administration. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time (8:50AM to 3:20PM) are prohibited because it interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment.

Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds. The principal is authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering the building or from loitering on the grounds. Such persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

Volunteers

All parents/guardians interested in volunteering at VES must completed a DCF Authorization Form and have a brief orientation with the Administration to go through school policies and safety procedures. Once completed and after the classroom teacher agrees to the volunteer match, you may begin assisting at VES. Volunteers are to be accompanied by or work under the direct supervision of a qualified staff member at all times. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. We are trying to make VES as safe as possible!

Weapons/Threats of Violence

Students in possession of any weapon or issuing threats of any kind to anyone shall be reported to the principal immediately for referral to the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) for review. Police must be notified of weapons in accordance with Connecticut state law.

Website/Social Media Pages

Our school website, www.voluntownct.org, contains important information about our school system. Teacher web pages can be accessed through our school website. School web pages/social media pages must contain material that reflects an educational purposes. School web pages/social media pages are not to be used for personal, commercial or political purposes; and are considered a publication of the Board of Education. The Principal or designee will approve all material posted on the school's web page/social media pages. Students maintaining personal web pages/social media pages may be subject to disciplinary action for the content of such sites under certain conditions.

Important dates and events are listed on the school website at www.voluntownct.org or on our Facebook page. Teacher web pages contain homework, classwork and curricular information along and upcoming field trips, meetings, school calendar and more.

Teachers use a program called PowerSchool for record keeping and grading purposes. In 5th-8th grade, a username and password is given to all parents/guardians to access information about their child's grades and performance. Parents may login through the parent portal on the school website. We strongly encourage all parents/guardians to access this information on a regular basis.

The school plans to post student work, student newsletters, and other activities on our Internet web page – www.voluntownct.org or our Facebook account (social media pages). We suggest you visit both sites to receive information.

A special sign-off sheet has been distributed with this handbook for a parent or guardian to grant or not grant permission to publish work on the website which may also include a picture of the student. If we do not receive any communication from you, we will assume we do not have your permission to include your child's name and published work on our web page.

Wellness Committee

Our Board of Education established a Wellness Committee, which will be meeting to review issues related to nutrition and physical activity. Our district still allows food-oriented fundraisers, cupcakes for school celebrations, etc., but encourages the use of healthy foods. The Wellness Committee will take time to meet to research and review ways to encourage healthy foods and increased physical activity. Any new changes will be developed and recommended by the Wellness Committee and then submitted to the Board of Education for consideration.

Withdrawal from School

If a student is moving out of district, your parents must notify the office before school records can be forwarded to your new school.

A Special Message to 6th, 7th, and 8th Graders

It is important that you realize these last three years at Voluntown Elementary School play a critical role in preparing you for making a successful transition into high school.

Sixth Grade

Sixth grade requires an increased awareness of how to work with purposefulness and determination in completing your day-to-day schoolwork.

- Come to school prepared!
- Pay attention in class.
- Make sure you listen carefully to all directions as well as thoroughly reading all written directions.
- Write down due dates and seek to complete all work on time.
- Maintain orderliness with your school assignments, papers, and home/school learning areas in order to successfully follow through with completing assignments.
- Practice cleanliness and further develop your focus to take just a few moments with each change during your day. This allows you to have better control of your supplies, materials, and assignments to reduce the amount of time to find things.
- Take charge and develop your independent learning skills.
- Listen carefully to directions; focus on the objective of each lesson, and work to complete the assignment.
- Write down all assignments and due dates as soon as possible and check them off your list when they are completed and passed in to the teacher.
- Properly file a paper in your binder or other folder to make sure you know where it is located.
- Seek to work to the best of your ability in your day-to-day work.

Sixth grade is also a time to further develop your communication skills. You have the power to enhance your own self-esteem by developing your note-taking and summarizing skills. Your parents, teachers, and others will definitely recognize how well organized you are when you give accurate and detailed information about your school accomplishments and homework assignments. Words are powerful. It is important to accurately describe what happened at school to show responsibility for completing your work at school and at home. This documents your respect for developing and taking charge of your life.

The ability to work with purposefulness, determination, orderliness, and cleanliness will help you achieve excellence. These are work habits that you will use on a day-to-day basis in 7th and 8th grades, and also in high school. You have the power to make the decision to take just a few moments throughout the transitions that occur each day to strengthen your study skills and work habits.

Seventh Grade

Seventh grade at Voluntown Elementary School requires that you further strengthen your ability to work with determination, purposefulness, orderliness, and cleanliness in seeking excellence in your day-to-day work at home and at

school. Your ability to make successful transitions from class to class will depend on the decisions you make each day. Take time and develop the skill of properly writing down assignments and/or placing a paper in the correct place at the end of each class. There is a huge temptation to just shove a paper into a backpack or binder in order to visit or talk with a friend. Learn to use your time wisely in making transitions. In order to develop a habit of quickly organizing materials, learn to effectively take care of your assignments and papers. This orderliness actually results in better use of time as you transition to another class.

Eighth Grade

Eighth grade at Voluntown Elementary School requires that you again further strengthen your ability to work with determination, purposefulness, orderliness, and cleanliness in seeking excellence in your day-to-day work at home and at school. You will continue to switch for all subjects and have many teachers. Your ability to make successful transitions from class to class will depend on the leadership skills that you practice on a day-to-day basis to show that you are now ready to make the transition to high school. Eighth Graders take on a significant leadership role in our school. You are now in the position of showing all the other students in the building how to be respectful and responsible to others.

As Seventh and Eighth Graders, you are encouraged to do your best and continually improve. There are a number of opportunities to encourage you to improve and excel. There are Soaring Eagle Activities, Honor Rolls, National Junior Honor Society, and numerous end-of-the-year awards. We have criteria for the awards and this is posted in the homerooms. We encourage students and parents to review the criteria at the beginning of the school year.

There are significant events that occur in eighth grade and the most important are the decisions that you personally make to have a successful transition into high school. This becomes much easier if you have taken the time in the earlier grades to learn how to organize your ability to effectively work with others, follow the school rules, use your time wisely, and take responsibility for yourself rather than wait for someone else to tell you to complete a task.

Eighth Grade Graduation

The Board of Education votes each spring to approve the date of the eighth grade graduation. This significant event allows the students to be officially recognized for their efforts at Voluntown Elementary School. Entering high school allows the student to learn about new rules, regulations, responsibilities and requirements. As students make the transition they are required to carefully review school rules, regulations, and procedures.