

# **Otter Valley Union Middle & High School**

## **Student and Parent Handbook**

**2020-2021**



**Positive Attitude**

**Respect**

**Integrity**

**Determination**

**Empathy**

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## **RUTLAND NORTHEAST SUPERVISORY UNION**

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Jeanie Collins Superintendent of Schools  
Kristen Hubert Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment  
Marsha Bruce Director of Special Services  
Brenda Fleming Business Manager  
Alexis Blake Director of Information

## **OTTER VALLEY UNIFIED UNION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### School Board Members

- Laurie Bertrand (Sudbury) 2022 - Chair; RNESU Board
- Barbara (Bonnie) Bourne (Pittsford) 2021 - Vice Chair
- Barbara Ebling (At-Large) 2022 - Clerk; RNESU Board
- Greg Bernhardt (At-Large) 2021
- Rebecca Bertrand (Whiting) 2021 - RNESU Board
- Bonnie Chmielewski (Pittsford) 2022
- Derek Larsen (Brandon) 2022
- William Mathis (Goshen) 2021
- Mike Lufkin (At-Large) 2023
- Angela Ouellette (Leicester) 2023
- Kevin Thornton (Brandon) 2023
- Barry Varian (Brandon) 2021
- Nichole Bearor (At large appointment) 2021

## **PRINCIPALS' MESSAGE**

Welcome to the 2020 - 2021 school year - a year that has begun like no other year in Otter Valley history.

As we navigate these times together, please be familiar with the information in this handbook as well as the additional information in the online reference titled "Hybrid Learning at Otter Valley." The Otter Valley Handbook can be helpful to you as you plan your trip through the years at Otter Valley (guidelines / rules / course requirements) and the online reference is especially helpful as we experience the hybrid, educational world during the COVID pandemic.

We will strive to instill Otter PRIDE in all that we do, whether in the classroom with reduced, safer class sizes or in the off campus, home-based remote learning, as well as through whatever phase of the pandemic we are experiencing.

Stay healthy, keep safe, remain engaged in your education and show your Otter PRIDE.

James Avery  
Principal

Kristine Evarts  
Special Services Director

Geoff Lawrence  
Associate Principal

### **For information related to changes as a result of COVID 19:**

**Hybrid Learning at Otter Valley Union Middle and High School**

**Ovus.rnesu.org - Otter Valley's Reopening Plan**

[http://ovus.rnesu.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_174191/File/School%20Information/Otter%20Valley's%20Reopening%20Plan%20for%20October%2012th..pdf](http://ovus.rnesu.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_174191/File/School%20Information/Otter%20Valley's%20Reopening%20Plan%20for%20October%2012th..pdf)

## ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

2997 Franklin Street, Brandon, Vt 05733

Phone: 802-247-6833 | Fax: 802-247-4627

James Avery, Principal .....	x2611
Geoffrey Lawrence, Associate Principal .....	x2649
Kristine Evarts, RNESU Coordinator of Special Ed at OV .....	x2644
Lori Robear, Director of Guidance (Grades 9-12, L-Z) .....	x2603
Meredith McCartney Guidance Counselor (Grades 9-12, A-K) .....	x2610
Claudia Larrow Guidance Counselor (Grades 7- 8, A-Z) .....	x2609
Tracey Snow Librarian/Media Specialist .....	x2626
Whitney Christie Technology Coordinator .....	x2615
Tina Spotts School Nurse .....	x2612
Melissa Liberio HS Section 504/Educational Support Team Coordinator .....	x2675
James Kalb MS Section 504/Educational Support Team Coordinator .....	x2646
Kathryn Wallet Substance Abuse Prevention .....	x2605
Richard Vigue Transportation Coordinator .....	247-2769
Steven Keith Athletic/Activities Director .....	247-2768
Char Wessing Registrar/Student Information Systems Specialist .....	x2673
Cathy Louttit Principal's Office Administrative Assistant .....	x2602
Katie Davis Front Office Receptionist .....	x2601
Danielle Bishop Guidance Office Assistant .....	x2608

Carlo Romeo Dean of Students .....	x2614
Anne Cioffredi Student Support Professional .....	x2604
Karen Decker Intervention Specialist .....	x2604

### **Departments**

*Anthony Peduto High School Math.....	x2651
Greg Hughes High School Math.....	x2634
Nathan Wisdahl High School Math.....	x2640
Hunter Buxton 8th grade Math.....	x 2630
Hailey Watters 7th gradeMath.....	x2656
Patrick Fallon Math Intervention.....	x2674
Stephanie LaFountain Math Intervention.....	x2642
*Hollie Kretzer High School English.....	x2669
Kris Roberts High School English.....	x2633
Tom Ryan High School English & Social Studies.....	x2623
Dave Praamsma High School English.....	x2623
Cameron Perta 8th grade Language Art.....	x2628
Tiffany St. Michaud 7th grade Language Art.....	x2663
Jeffrey Meyers High School Science.....	x2652
Rachel Valcour High School Science.....	x2660
Melanie Loyd High School Science.....	x2624
Michael Metz High School Science & Health.....	x2648
Willa Abel High School Science.....	x2620
Kristin Shaeffer 8th grade Science.....	x2665
*Cliff Hunter 7th grade Science.....	x2671
*Jeff Jeskie High School Social Studies.....	x2632
Alyson Callahan High School Social Studies.....	x2631
Charles Hall High School Social Studies.....	x2666
Matt Clark 8th grade Social Studies.....	x2627
Val Dawson-Simpson 7th grade Social Studies.....	x2635
John Cioffredi Drivers Education.....	x2668
Devon Karpeck Technology Education.....	x2625
Mary Jane Hall Family & Consumer Science.....	x2639

*Michelle Gillette World Languages ( Spanish ).....	x2654
Molly Nitka World Languages ( Spanish ).....	x2619
Barbara Sicot World Languages ( French ).....	x2653
*Sarah Blow Technology.....	x2650
Lisa King Technology.....	x2621
*Jeff Hull Visual & Performing Arts.....	x2626
Pat Roberts Visual & Performing Arts.....	x2659
Frances Willard Visual & Performing Arts.....	x2667
Dasha Kalisz Visual & Performing Arts.....	x2622
Ken Cifone Visual & Performing Arts.....	x2657
Sandy Chicoine Physical Education.....	x2643
Ken Stanley Physical Education.....	x2641
Josh Hardt Moosalamoo Center.....	x2680
*Erica Eckrote Special Services.....	x2636
Colleen Davis Special Services.....	x2636
Megan Rose Special Services.....	x2638
Jean McMullen Special Services.....	x2646
Nicolette Lanphere Special Services.....	x2629
Travis Potter Special Services.....	x2637



# DAILY SCHEDULES AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\*Due to COVID19 all schedules and events are subject to change. Students and families will be updated. Please call the Main Office for assistance or reference the latest posted schedule on our website.

## GUIDANCE SERVICES

Otter Valley Counselors believe that learning is directly related to the students' understanding of themselves and their relations to others. The importance of the student's self-worth is a major goal of Guidance, along with that of each individual assuming responsibility for his/her actions, both in and out of school. Guidance services exist to provide information to students, parents, teachers and the community, and to help in using the information to understand themselves, each other and their roles in relation to the process of education.

The guidance program concentrates on assisting a student to develop:

- Academic and Career Plans
- Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills
- Academic Potential
- Positive Self Image
- Communication Skills
- Change and Transition Skills

Your counselor can:

- Assist in monitoring performance and assignments.
- Help students and parents understand grades and test scores.
- Meet with students to discuss issues.
- Assist in arranging special conferences between student and/or parents and faculty.
- Assist in arranging a team meeting to determine if individual attention is needed.
- Assist in course selection.
- Facilitate groups that address issues pertinent to the needs of students.
- Provide information to students, parents and staff about services available in the community.

- Provide information and support that will allow students to make appropriate decisions about post high school plans.

If you wish to see your guidance counselor, stop by the guidance office before school, during break, or during your lunch to make an appointment. Every effort will be made to schedule an appointment as early as possible without interfering with your regular class schedule. In an emergency, you may see any one of the three guidance counselors. In such cases, let the secretary know of your need and she will connect you with a guidance counselor as quickly as possible.

### **Course Opportunities**

The Otter Valley Course Catalog provides information that will assist you in deciding the courses you need to take, as well as which courses you may wish to take as electives. Please contact your guidance counselor for help with making course selections. Students can pursue a variety of online courses through VTVLC, internships throughout the school and community and Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs). Students also have opportunities to pursue dual enrollment classes in which they can get high school and college credits. Students continue to have varied opportunities at the Stafford Technical Center in Rutland and the Hannaford Technical Center in Middlebury.

### **Number Of Credits Required To Be In The:**

10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
7.0	14.0	21.0

### **Graduation Requirements**

The Otter Valley Union High School Board of Directors has approved the following graduation credits.

<u>Courses</u>	<u>Credits</u>
English	5.0
Soc Studies	4.0
Math	3.0
Science	3.0
Phys Ed	1.5
FACS	1.0
Fine Arts	2.0
Computer Ap	0.5
Electives	7.0
Total Required Credits	27.0

### **Grading System**

Otter Valley Union High School uses a numeric grading system when reporting marking period, semester, and final grades. At both the Middle School and High School levels, the following grading system is utilized:

- 90 -100 = Excellent = A
- 80 - 89 = Above Average = B
- 70 - 79 = Average = C
- 65 - 69 = Below Average = D
- 0 - 64 = Failing = F

In addition, the following notations are used when reporting marking period and semester grades:

- W = Withdrawn
- WP = Withdrawn, Passing
- WF = Withdrawn, Failing
- I = Incomplete, (*If you receive an incomplete grade ("I"), it means that you are being given an opportunity to complete the required work. Work with the teacher to create a time frame to achieve the necessary learning targets.*)

### **School Choice**

High school students have an opportunity to participate in the state-wide School Choice program. Many schools have created a system of application and lottery to determine the students who will be accepted. Students who participate in School Choice are responsible for their own transportation. Applications are available from guidance and must be completed in the early Spring.

### **Withdrawal From School**

If you plan to withdraw from school, you must complete withdrawal procedures through the guidance office.

### **MTSS (Multi Tiered Systems of Support)**

*A multi-tiered approach to instruction and intervention is a comprehensive and systematic process for assessing and maximizing the opportunities to learn for all students within any content area. It emphasizes the importance of effective, culturally responsive, and differentiated first teaching and effective early intervening supports for both academics and behavior for all students, prior to making a referral for a special education evaluation. The VT AoE has identified a multi-tiered system for RtII as a major component of school improvement and effectiveness. The components of Vermont's Multi-tiered System of Supports/RtII are: • A Systemic and Comprehensive Approach • Effective Collaboration • High-quality Instruction and Intervention that is Responsive and Differentiated • Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment System • Expertise (Well-designed Professional Learning)"*

Excerpt from MTSS-RtII-Field-Guide.pdf.

## **HONOR ROLL**

All students are encouraged to perform at their personal best in all of their classes. In an effort to recognize those who pursue excellence, Otter

Valley has four honor rolls. At the conclusion of each marking period, you may qualify for one of the following:

1. The Scholars' Honor Roll: For students whose marking period grades are all 90 or above, who are taking a minimum of 3.5 credits, and whose schedules include a minimum of two Advanced Placement or advanced courses (i.e., classes that have weighted grades).
2. The Principal's Honor Roll: For students whose marking period grades are all 90 or above.
3. The Honor Roll: For students whose marking period grades are all 80 or above.
4. The Merit Honor Roll: For students whose marking period grades are 80 and above with no more than one grade in the 70's, and no grades lower than 70.

## **CLASS AND ORGANIZATION FUNDS**

All class organization, and activity funds are to be approved by a faculty advisor who must verify that funds are available in the appropriate account and obtain approval by completing and submitting a school purchase requisition.

All fund raising projects must be approved by the Activities Director responsible for fundraising. Tickets or articles of any kind, other than those associated with approved school sponsored activities, are not to be sold on school property by students or outside organizations.

For a class to schedule an activity, it must be cleared through the advisor. The advisor will check the Activities Director and master calendar for school availability. Because the activity must be chaperoned by the class advisors, you must check with them before final plans are made. Police officers must be hired, and administrative coverage must be arranged by the sponsoring organization. Clean-up following a dance or other special activity is the responsibility of the sponsoring organization. In planning the event, plans for clean-up must be included.

## **HALL LOCKER REGULATIONS**

You are to report your locker number to your Advisor or to your Block 1 teacher. The school, administrators, faculty, and staff are not responsible for any items lost from lockers. Be sure that you keep your locker locked at all times. Be sure to keep your combination to your locker to yourself. All lockers are the property of Otter Valley Union High School. As such, all lockers are subject to inspection and search by the Administration if the need arises.

## **POSTERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

All posters need approval related to content, placement, and duration, number of posters and removal of posters. Defacement or removal without permission of an approved poster is a student conduct violation.

## **MEDIA OPT-OUT OPTION**

Throughout the school-year, Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union, its member schools and outside media groups often showcase our students, our students' work, school activities and events through media outlets, including but not limited to newspapers, television, websites, social media and school publications. As a parent or guardian, you have the option to request your student be excluded from media coverage. This request must be provided in writing. If you so choose, please contact your local school to request a Media Opt-out Form. The signed form will be kept on file for the current school year only.

## **SCHOOL VISITORS**

All visitors to the school must register in the main office as soon as they arrive in the building. They will receive a Visitor Pass.

By vote of the Otter Valley faculty, it has been decided that student visitors, not be permitted to attend school. Under unusual circumstances, the Principal may authorize a student visit. In such cases, requests must be submitted in writing to the Principal at least one school week in advance of the planned visit.

Parents wishing to confer with teachers are welcomed to the school and are requested to make appointments through the appropriate guidance counselor. If your parents would like to visit your classes, please have them call your guidance counselor to arrange a time and date for a visitation.

## **HEALTH ROOM PROCEDURES**

The school is staffed with a full-time nurse who will assist you with your health needs, including illnesses at school, accidents, and taking medicine prescribed by a doctor. The school nurse must approve all immunizations prior to students attending school. Parents should inform the school nurse of any medical conditions or concerns they have. Parents should alert the nurse to any allergies their child has.

**Procedures for Seeing the Nurse** If you become ill during the school day, ask your teacher for a pass to see the nurse. You must have a pass from a teacher, administrator, or guidance counselor in order to report to the health office. If the door to the health office is closed or locked, access the guidance office for assistance. If your illness requires that you leave school early to go home, the nurse will make the arrangements with your parents for you to leave, sign you out and alert the front office that you are leaving.

If you are involved in an accident during the school day and need medical assistance, alert the closest adult and report to the health office. You must immediately report every accident that occurs in the school building, on school grounds, at practice sessions, or during any school events, to the person in charge. As soon as possible, an accident report form must be filled out and submitted to the school nurse.

### **Tylenol & Other Over-the-Counter Medication**

1. Regular strength Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen are available in the health office.
2. Written permission is necessary from your parents for the nurse to be able to administer any over-the-counter medication.
3. Any over-the-counter medications brought into the school nurse must be in their original container.

### **Taking Prescription Medication at School**

1. Written orders from a physician must be given to the nurse. The required information includes:
  - a. Diagnosis
  - b. Reason for taking the medication
  - c. Name of the medication
  - d. Dosage and frequency
2. Written permission from your parent or guardian for the nurse or school personnel to administer the medication as prescribed by the physician.
3. All medication must be brought to school in a properly labeled container that includes directions for administering as provided by the pharmacy or physician.
4. All medication to be administered at school will be kept in a locked cabinet supervised by the school nurse.
5. All medications, (prescription and over the counter), must be taken under the supervision of the school nurse. You may NOT keep any medicines in your locker or in your possession.
6. Opportunities must be provided for communication with the student, parent, and physician regarding the effectiveness of the medication administered during school hours.

**When to remain home:** If you have a fever (over 99.5), you must not come to school. You must be fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours to return to school. If you are vomiting, you must not come to school. You must be 24 hours without vomiting to attend school. If you have a fever over 99.5 and/or vomiting at school, you will be sent home. (In times of extenuating circumstances (a pandemic for example), there may be health addendums that can be viewed in the back of this handbook.)

### **Insurance**

As an Otter Valley student, you are eligible to be covered by insurance for accidents and mishaps that occur during the school year. An insurance packet will be issued to you at the beginning of the school year. If your parents decide to enroll you, they must do so directly with the insurance company.

## **ATHLETICS AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **Participation in Co-curricular Activities and Athletic Events**

On the day of the event or activity, you are required to be in school no later than one (1) hour past the start of your school day. If you need to be absent for all or part of a day when an athletic event or co-curricular activity is scheduled, you need to obtain prior approval from a school administrator to do so. If an athletic or co-curricular activity is scheduled for a weekend or other non-school day, you must have attended school and all of your classes the last school day before the event in order to be eligible to participate. If you miss school or classes because of suspension, you will be considered absent, and the requirements above will be applicable.

### **Academic Eligibility Procedure**

To be eligible to participate in contests, games, theatrical, or musical performances, the student must be passing all courses.

Any course failures will result in the student being placed on academic probation. While on probation the student is expected to continue practicing, but may not travel with, may not suit-up with, may not warm up with, nor participate in any competitions, performances or productions.

If the student has one failure the student is placed on academic probation for five (5) school days. Five (5) days after the publication of the eligibility list the student must take the eligibility form to each of the teachers to verify that they are passing each class. They are to submit the completed verification form to the Activities Director. The student will continue with this process every five (5) school days until the new eligibility list is published.

If the student has two (2) or more failures the student is placed on academic probation for ten (10) school days. Ten (10) schools days after the publication of the eligibility list the student must take an eligibility form to each of their teachers to verify that they are passing in each class. They are to submit the completed verification form to the Activities Director. The student will continue with this process every five (5) school days until the new eligibility list is published.

When all grades are passing the student is able to compete or perform. At any one of the grade monitoring points the student may return to eligible or probationary status.

### **Sports Physicals**

All students wishing to participate in the sports program at Otter Valley must have a physical at least every two years. An official form must be on file with the school Nurse before a student may practice.

## **Athletic Procedures**

If you are interested in participating in one or more of the school's athletic teams, you need to be aware of the following guidelines and procedures:

1. You must comply with Vermont Principals' Association rules and regulations.
2. All athletes must be eligible under the guidelines set by the school concerning Scholastic Achievement and by the Vermont Principals' Association.
3. You are reminded that one condition of your participating in co-curricular and athletic events is your regular attendance at school and all of your classes. Consequently, to be eligible to participate in a school event, you need to comply with the procedures specified above.
4. If you are unable to participate in physical education class because of an injury or illness, you will not be permitted to participate in a school sport that day.
5. You may not participate in more than one sport per season without permission from the Activities Director.
6. There must be a seven (7) day period between the end of one athletic season and the beginning of the next when you are not involved in any school-sponsored teams.
7. You must have ten (10) days of practice before you become actively involved in interscholastic scrimmage or games.
8. All unexcused absences and cuts from a practice session will be handled by the coach.
9. Team rules such as dress code, practice procedure, lateness, language, and game conduct, not covered in these general rules will be the responsibility of each particular coach.
10. Students who are involved in the school athletics program are governed by RNESU Policy Code JFCIA, which can be found on the RNESU website: [www.rnesu.org](http://www.rnesu.org). This policy sets minimum penalties for students involved in the use and/or possession of drugs, alcohol, and/or tobacco by athletes. Note, however, that some coaches have adopted penalties that are stricter than the minimum penalties specified by the policy. In such cases, your coach will explain his/her policies to you at the beginning of the season, and the stricter penalties will govern your sport.
11. All team members will ride the bus to and from the game. Exceptions may be made, with approval from the coach, if you bring a permission note from your parent or legal guardian giving you permission to ride with an adult, including your parent/legal guardian. The note must be signed by an administrator, and be given to the coach prior to the game.
12. If you miss practice the day before a game, you will not be allowed to start that game. However, you may be substituted later if the coach deems it necessary. In a case such as skiing, the decision will be left up to the coach as to whether you will be allowed to compete.
13. You are responsible for the uniforms and equipment issued to you. If you fail to return the equipment, you will be obligated to pay the cost of replacing the equipment.
14. Letter requirements will be strictly up to each coach. The coach's policy will be on file with the Activities Director prior to the first regularly scheduled game.



## **Athletic Probation**

As a member of a school athletic team, you may be placed on athletic probation for 90 to 180 days if the Principal determines that you have,

1. Been removed from athletic contests by an official for unsportsmanlike-like conduct during one sport season.
2. Been removed from two athletic contests by an official for dangerous play during one sport season.
3. Performed off the field in a manner that is harmful, dangerous, destructive, or costly to another individual or to property.
4. The Principal will consult with the Activities Director and coach prior to your being placed on Athletic Probation.

## **Sportsmanship**

Whether you are involved in activities here at school or at another school's facilities, you represent the school and serve as ambassador of Otter Valley Union High School. On those occasions, it is critical that you behave yourself in such a manner so as to bring credit to you and to your school and community. Consequently, you are expected to conduct yourself according to the precepts of good sportsmanship whenever you are involved in school activities or athletic events.

## **Co-Curricular Activities and Athletic Programs Violations**

If you are involved in any of the school's extra-curricular activities, you are subject to the following conditions. Such activities include, but are not limited to, the student government, class officers, music or drama production groups, clubs, debate teams, athletics program, etc. If you belong to or participate in any of these activities, you need to be aware of and comply with RNESU Policy Code: JFCIA, which can be found on the RNESU website: [www.rnesu.org](http://www.rnesu.org).

**First Violation:** When a student has been involved in a violation of the school's drug and alcohol and/or anti-tobacco policies, he/she shall declare that the student is ineligible to participate for a period of ten (10) consecutive days in any school-sponsored co-curricular and/or athletics activities or programs, including rehearsals, presentations, practices, competitions, events, etc. The period of this school-imposed ineligibility will begin the day that the administrator declares the student to be ineligible. If the season or school year ends before the expiration of the ten days of ineligibility, the period of ineligibility will extend into the new season or school year, whichever is applicable.

Although the period of the school-imposed ineligibility shall begin on the date and time the violation has been confirmed by the school administrator, the actual date and time of the violation will be set at the time that the student violated the school's drug and alcohol and/or anti-tobacco policies. This means that the student will have been ineligible to participate from the moment the violation actually occurred. Consequently, if the student has participated in any games,

competitions, or matches during the period between actually committing the offense and the time he/she was found to be in violation by the Associate Principal, he/she and his/her team will be required to forfeit any and all such contests.

It is strongly recommended that a student who has been ruled ineligible as a result of violating the school's drug and alcohol and/or anti-tobacco policies become a participant in a recognized program of drug/alcohol counseling/rehabilitation or smoking cessation, whichever is appropriate in light of the violation, before he/she may be ruled eligible to resume participation in school-sponsored co-curricular and/or athletics activities or programs.

If the student on his/her own volition reports the violation to school officials before an investigation is initiated by the Associate Principal and who voluntarily and at his/her own expense becomes a participant in an appropriate program of drug/alcohol counseling or treatment or smoking cessation, whichever is appropriate in light of the violation, the period of ineligibility will be reduced to five (5) consecutive days. Satisfactory participation in such a program of counseling or rehabilitation must be certified by the doctor or counselor of the program.

**Second Violation:** A second violation provides the same restrictions and expectations as above for an initial violation as well as sixty (60) consecutive days of ineligibility in any school-sponsored co-curricular and/or athletics activities or programs, including rehearsals, presentations, practices, competitions, events, etc.

If a student reports their violation and becomes a participant in an appropriate program of drug/alcohol counseling or treatment or smoking cessation, whichever is appropriate in light of the violation, the period of ineligibility will be reduced to thirty (30) consecutive days. Satisfactory participation in such a program of counseling or rehabilitation must be certified by the doctor or counselor of the program.

**Subsequent Violations:** Continued violations provide 120 consecutive days of ineligibility in any school-sponsored co-curricular and/or athletics activities or programs, including rehearsals, presentations, practices, competitions, events, etc.

**Duration of Penalties:**

Penalties resulting from violations of the school's drug/alcohol and/or anti-smoking policies shall be cumulative over the student's years of enrollment at Otter Valley Union High School and will remain a part of the student's records until he/she graduates or otherwise permanently ceases enrollment at Otter Valley Union High School.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

If you are absent from school due to illness or another excused reason, a parent must call the school that morning, or as soon as possible, to report that you will not be attending that day. School staff may call the homes of students who are absent and whose parents have not notified the school. All absentee excuses must be given to the Main Office within three (3) school days of your return to school or your absence will be considered “unexcused”. If you collect five (5), or more, unexcused absences you will then meet with guidance and the school Truancy Officer to improve your school attendance. It is your parents/guardians legal responsibility to get you to school, by not attending there could be legal consequences.

While the state continues to struggle with containing COVID19, remote learning may continue for portions of the school year. Student expectations will be updated and shared when and if this occurs.

### **Unexcused Absence**

Any absence that has not been approved by or reported to the Main Office or Administration will be considered “unexcused”. Some examples of excused absences are: Student illness, illness of an immediate family member or other family emergency, death in the family, observance of a recognized religious holiday, court summons, in-school and out of school suspensions, other reasons approved by Administration.

### **Planned Absences**

Approximately one week before your planned absence you will need to get a “Leave of Absence” form from the Main Office. This form will be filled out by you, your parents and your teachers before being turned into the Main Office. School work will be provided to the best of the teacher’s ability. It is the student’s responsibility to check in with their teachers when they return to make sure they have completed the appropriate assignments.

### **Reasonable Time to Make up Work**

When you are absent, it is your responsibility to make up the work you have missed. If your absence was “excused” you will have the same amount of time to make up your work. For example, If you missed one day, you have one day following your return to school to turn in your assignment.

### **Late Arrival**

The school day begins at 8:00 am. We suggest students arrive by 7:55 to be on time. If you arrive late to school, you must report directly to the Main Office. You should present a note from your parents, or some other form of communication, to notify the school why you are late. If you do not have a note you will be marked as unexcused Tardy and will result in a Restorative Planning Time with the appropriate school personnel.

### **Early Dismissal**

Our school day ends at 2:30 pm. If you plan on leaving school early, your parents must notify the school before you leave. You will then need to sign out in the Main Office to record you are no longer in the building. This is a safety concern and must be followed. Failure to follow this process could result in disciplinary action.

### **STAYING AFTER SCHOOL**

If you stay after school, you must be involved in a school activity that is supervised by school personnel. If you are not involved in a supervised school activity, you should leave the school at the close of school at 2:30 p.m. The behavior of all students and guests is subject to school rules.

### **STUDENT DRESS EXPECTATIONS**

You are expected to dress for school in a manner that shows respect for yourself and others. Items of clothing that are unacceptable for school are those that disrupt the educational process, promote or glorify the use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs, or that encourages illegal actions, activities, items or substances. Prohibited are words or graphics messages that demean, harass, threaten, frighten, exploit, offend, or ridicule individuals or groups of people, that contain profanity or that refer to or depict in words or graphics obscene gestures, actions, or messages. Shoes must be worn at all times. Whether or not hats may be worn in class is determined by each teacher. If a teacher has the policy that hats are not to be worn in his or her classroom, you are expected to comply. Final determination of acceptable dress will be made by the school administration. During online sessions, the same dress expectations are to be followed.

### **DRIVING TO SCHOOL**

Permission to drive to school and park on school property is a privilege, not a right. The school reserves the right to regulate traffic and parking on school grounds. The school is not responsible for property lost or stolen from vehicles, nor is it responsible for any damage to vehicles that are parked on school grounds.

If you bring a motor vehicle onto school grounds, you accept the responsibility of complying with the rules and regulations established by the school regarding driving and parking. All motor vehicles brought onto school grounds must be operated in a safe manner. The speed limit on school grounds is 10 miles per hour. [RNE Policy: EEAE]

Pedestrians and school buses have the right of way on school grounds. You must yield to pedestrians and school buses. Driving or parking on walkways or grassy areas is not permitted. Parking is permitted in Designated Areas Only, and is restricted to the section of the parking lot that has been designated for student use. If you park in the Teachers' or Visitors' sections of the lot, you are in violation of the parking regulations. The parking lot at the back of the building is not open to students. You are not permitted to sit in your car, loiter on the parking lot, or leave school grounds. Motor vehicles, the parking lots, and school driveways are OFF-LIMITS to students during the school day. Cars are not to be used as lockers for books or other personal belongings,

nor are vehicles or the parking lot areas where students may loiter, meet friends, or spend lunch periods. During the school day, students may not go to the parking lot without a written pass from a school administrator. The school will not send students on school errands in their own or other students' vehicles. If you fail to comply with the above regulations, you will face disciplinary action by the school. Penalties for violation of the driving and parking regulations may include, but not be limited to, the towing of vehicles at the owner's expense and risk, ticketing of vehicles by the police, suspension from school, and/or revocation of student parking privileges. In addition to the rules above, the following regulations apply to snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles:

1. Snowmobiles and ATV's will be driven to and from school only. Use of these vehicles on school grounds is prohibited at all other times.
2. At no time may these vehicles be driven on athletic fields. Athletic fields will be circled in order to get to and from the parking area.
3. The speed limit for snowmobiles and ATV's on school grounds is 10 miles per hour.
4. Snowmobiles and ATV's registered with the school must comply with all Vermont State and local laws governing their operation.
5. The parking area for snowmobiles and ATV's will be located opposite the Large Cafeteria/Teachers' Room, inside the chain link fence.
6. Failure to comply with the above regulations will result in disciplinary action, including the suspension of parking privileges. [See also RNESU Policy Code: EEAE found on the RNESU website: [www.rnesu.org](http://www.rnesu.org)]

## **CAFETERIA EXPECTATIONS**

The cafeteria is a public place for all students to enjoy their lunch and socialize. We expect our students to behave appropriately and comply with the following expectations.

Students will use indoor voices and comply with staff requests.

Students will clean up after themselves and ask an Adult before leaving and to sign out.

There are a maximum number of students to a table. Chairs must be pushed in before leaving.

Middle School students are not allowed to use cell phones during lunch.

Due to health concerns, students at times may be required to eat in their advisory classroom this year.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Bus Expectations**

1. Follow the Bus Driver's and Bus Monitor's directions immediately.
2. Stay completely seated, facing forward, with your full body out of the aisle.
3. Use quiet, acceptable language only.

4. Respect other people, their space, possessions, and all equipment.
5. All food and drink stays in backpacks on school buses. Exceptions may be made by the Driver or other Adult on the bus during field trips and sporting events. (Gum allowed with special permission and with respectful use.)
6. All body parts and objects remain in the bus at all times.
7. Electronic devices may be used only with earbuds and headphones on the bus.
8. Taking photos and videos is not allowed on any RNESU bus.

School bus expectations are designed for the safety and comfort of all students. Failure to meet bus expectations will have consequences which may include loss of bus transportation privileges for up to one year, as decided upon by administration. Minor infractions of the bus expectations may receive a warning, parent contact, referral to the school principal and other consequences such as a school or bus suspension, seat assignments or participation in restorative work. Major infractions, such as safety issues, abusive language, vaping, physical assault, and bullying or repeated violations may result in a longer school or bus suspension, for up to one year. Bus behavior consequences will be decided by the school administrator in consultation with the transportation coordinator.

### **Bus Schedule**

Times are approximate and may vary significantly, especially during the first week of school as well as during poor weather events or as necessary for health precautions. The bus schedule is posted in the local papers the week before school begins and available on all district websites. If you do not have access to the internet, please call your school or the RNESU central office to obtain this information. If you have any questions, please contact Richard Vigue, RNESU Transportation Coordinator, at either (802) 247-2769 or his cell (207) 313-2532 or by email using the Let's Talk button on any school or district website. Please discuss the bus behavior expectations with your student. We wish for everyone to have a safe and pleasant ride to and from school each day.

Visit [rnesu.org](http://rnesu.org) for more information

## **ELECTRONIC USE AND CELL PHONE POLICY**

Students may access RNESU's electronic resources for appropriate educational purposes only. Teachers will remind students of appropriate and safe electronic use throughout the year. Notify school staff and your parent/guardian immediately if anyone contacts you for illicit or suspicious activities. Promptly disclose to the teacher or other school employee any message received that is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.

Know and follow the Acceptable Use policy. In accord with the Children’s Internet Protection Act, Section 1703, paragraph (1), the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union schools may employ technological measures to block access to World Wide Web resources of an inappropriate nature as judged by the local school board, principal and/or the properly designated school-level technology coordinator. It is recognized that these measures cannot be guaranteed to be 100% effective in blocking objectionable content.

**Personal hand-held devices** are not to be used by 7th and 8th graders during the school day, 8am-2:30pm unless used directly in an instructional activity supervised by a teacher. High School students may use their devices during the school day with permission from their teacher, or other school staff member. A student using a personal technology device, or a camera, to take pictures during the school day, without the express permission of anyone who might be photographed may result in confiscation of the device and deletion of the picture files. If a student needs to make contact with home or an employer, they are expected to do so during non-instructional times. Students may use the phone in the main office with permission to contact a parent.

## **SCHOOL SAFETY AND SUPPORTS**

Student emotional health and school safety are a shared responsibility. Otter Valley utilizes many ways to meet the needs of our students, including providing guidance counselors, Rutland Mental Health counselors, implementing a Social Emotional Learning curriculum and also a Positive Behavior Supports System. The Brandon Police Department and Otter Valley Union Middle and High School work together to promote an environment where all students can receive the help and support they require. Our School Resource Officer (SRO) is a valued member of our team and assists the school with restorative justice practices, school threats/assessments, as well as, building a trusting and compassionate relationship with our students. The SRO works closely with parents, students, and faculty to provide an overall safe learning environment for all of our students.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT VIOLATIONS**

**Threats:** All threats, direct or implied, are taken seriously and will result in immediate notification of Administration and/or Dean of students who will; Insure the safety of all students and staff members, notify RNESU Threat Assessment Team, who will perform an assessment, notify Police if appropriate and determine disciplinary actions, which may include suspension.

### **Restorative Practices**

A restorative approach works with conflict, focusing on repairing the harm that has been done. Otter Valley is dedicated to using restorative methods to build healthy relationships and help guide our students toward meaningful problem solving.

## Academic Dishonesty

Some first time offenses, such as copying homework or not citing sources in short projects, will be handled by the classroom teacher, resulting in the teacher notifying parents and administration and a grade of zero (0) for the assignment.

Other offenses, including not citing sources on major projects, copying verbatim from reference sources or another person's work, cheating on quizzes and tests, and second offenses will be documented by a referral to the Dean of Students and a grade of zero (0) for the work in question. This may also include, but not limited to, failure of the class, suspension and/or inclusion in your school record.

Otter Valley aims to promote a positive learning environment for everyone. At times this means holding students accountable for poor decisions they sometimes make. We believe this to be a learning opportunity, using restorative, educational and therapeutic supports to provide our students with the tools they will need to settle further disputes. Sometimes other consequences must be used, such as, detentions and suspensions. If a situation is serious enough a student may be asked to stay home from school, for a period of time, to think about their actions and how to repair the harm before rejoining their classmates.

Violations such as talking out of turn, not being prepared for class, throwing papers, leaving class without permission, inappropriate peer interactions, argumentativeness, persistent tardiness, etc. should be resolved at the classroom level between the student and teacher. The Planning Room staff will become involved when these behaviors are chronic to help the student and teacher improve the learning environment. Each case is considered individually, circumstances may result in consequences other than those listed below. Remote learning may continue for portions of the school year. Student expectations will be updated and shared when and if this occurs.

**Tier I** Offenses are normally handled by the classroom teacher or another staff member. A restorative meeting is first used to provide education and heal relationships. The Planning Room staff is available to help those involved work to find positive solutions and guide reparative conversations and agreements. Agreements may involve but are not limited to: parental notification, additional time with teacher, reparative work. Examples include:

*Non-compliance, Inappropriate Language/Clothing, Class Disruption, Late to Class, Unauthorized Location, Cell Phone/Electronic Use Violation, Inappropriate Physical Contact.*

**Tier II** Offenses are referred to the Planning Room and Administration. Possible consequences include all listed in Tier I, but also community service, In School Suspension or Out of School Suspension. Any combination of multiple Tier I offenses could result in a Tier II response. Examples include:



*Leaving School Grounds, Disrespect towards and/or Non-compliance with Staff, Class or Detention Skipped, Misuse of Technology.*

**Tier III** Offenses are referred to the Administration. Possible consequences include each listed in Tier I and II, but also a possible immediate confiscation of prohibited item, long term suspension and Police involvement. Any combination of multiple Tier I and/or Tier II offenses could result in a Tier III response. Additional consequences, such as an expulsion hearing by the School Board, may be imposed depending on the severity of the infraction. Examples of Tier III include:

*Fighting or Physical Aggression, Threats, Intimidation, Assault, Inciting Others, Hazing, Harassment, Bullying, Theft, Tobacco/ Vaping Policy Violation, Alcohol and Drug Policy Violation, Vandalism, Arson, Possession of a Weapon, Distribution of Pornography, False Reports of Fire and Other Situations That Disrupt the School Environment, Other Unlawful Acts.*

Some of the above mentioned infractions are dealt with specifically under RNESU Policies, Codes JFCIA, JFCI and JFCG which may be found on the RNESU Website: [www.rnesu.org](http://www.rnesu.org) under POLICIES in the main menu. You may receive a copy of these policies upon request.

#### **Prohibition of Weapons- special note**

All weapons are prohibited on school grounds, transportation, and any RNESU sponsored activity. All weapons will be confiscated and those students involved could be referred to Law Enforcement and may be suspended pending a hearing for expulsion by the Superintendent to the School Board of Directors. Therapeutic supports will also be made available if appropriate.

see RNESU policy at [rnesu.org](http://rnesu.org): code [JFCJ](#)

## **ITEMS THAT SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL**

Items that are dangerous or that distract you or others from active participation in the educational process should not be brought to school. Examples of what items you should not bring to school are matches and lighters, incendiary devices, fireworks, spray paint, skateboards, roller blades or skates, laser pointers, toys, games, electronic games, and items that can be perceived as weapons such as knives, nunchucks, etc.

If you bring distracting and/or disruptive items to school, they may be confiscated until your parents come to the school to pick them up.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS AND EVACUATIONS**

### **Fire Drills**

The safety of all students is a primary concern of the school. We are required to have organized practice evacuations of the building at least once each month. During emergency evacuations, you must remain quiet and stay with your classroom teacher at all times. The red arrow exit sign in each room will direct to which exit you should use. Go immediately to that exit with your

teacher. Once you are in the parking lot, at least 300' from the building, you must find your Advisory teacher who will take attendance. You are to remain outside with that teacher until he or she tells you to reenter the building.

### **Lockdowns / ALICE Response**

Lockdowns will be practiced regularly to insure familiarity with this emergency procedure. When the announcement is made that we are to "Clear the Halls," please follow the directions of your teacher who will direct you away from doors and windows.

### **ALICE**

In response to a threatening intruder in the building, an **Alert** will be given and students and school personnel will go into secure **Lockdown** during which time, based on the **Information** provided they will prepare to **Counter** or **Evacuate**.

### **Bomb Threats**

When warning of an impending bombing or other catastrophe is received, you will be given specific instructions to follow by the school's administrators. Students and staff will be required to go to a specified area and to remain there until further instructions are issued. You must remain with your teacher during any emergency evacuation. Under no circumstances will you be permitted to leave school grounds during the crisis unless you are directed to do so by a school administrator.

### **WARNING**

The Otter Valley UHS Board of Directors will employ all legal means available against anyone who causes a major disruption to the educational mission of the school by making a bomb threat or otherwise causing the evacuation of the school, including those under false pretexts. Such actions by the Board will include, but will not be limited to, suspension from school pending a review of an expulsion request, the filing of charges as specified by local, state, and/or federal laws, and the filing of civil suites to recover any damages or losses resulting from the false alarm or report.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

It is the policy of Otter Valley Union School that no student will possess, use, sell, give or otherwise transmit, or be under the influence of any illegal drug, regulated substance, or alcohol on school property, including all school sponsored activities and transportation. "Drug" means any tobacco, nicotine or vaping product, narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other controlled substance as defined by state or federal regulation or statute. Students shall comply with all training and co-curricular policies.

Consistent with state statutes, 16 VSA 140, no person, including adults, shall be permitted to use tobacco on school grounds. Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco RNESU policy at [rnesu.org](http://rnesu.org): code [JFCI](#)

### **Search and Seizure**

A School Official will search the person, belongings, lockers, and/or vehicle of any student allegedly involved in the Substance Abuse or Weapons violation. Where possible, the School Official searching the student will be of the same sex, and there will always be two adults present. Any contraband, products, paraphernalia, or money found during a search by a School Official under this policy will be confiscated, documented and then turned over to the Brandon Police Department for processing if appropriate.

### **Safety Check**

When a student may be experiencing a health issue and/or demonstrating unusual behavior, the nurse will perform a safety assessment. The process includes checking vital signs and an eye assessment. The outcome of the process helps the school nurse to determine whether or not the student is safe to remain in school, or needs to be further assessed by medical personnel.

### **Crisis Situation**

If there is a safety concern the student will be transported to a medical facility by a rescue vehicle and his/her parents/guardian will be notified as soon as possible.

Law enforcement officials will be called if necessary.

## **Students Suspected to be Under the Influence of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco**

### **First Offense**

1. The nurse will administer a safety assessment, the parents will be notified, the student is sent home for the remainder of the day.
2. The student will be suspended for up to 5 days and participate in restorative, educational and/or therapeutic work with school staff as appropriate. A re-entry meeting may be requested with the student, parents and appropriate School Officials.
3. Notification of law enforcement.
4. Consultation with student and school SAP counselor or other designated school officials.
5. Ineligible participation in all co-curricular activities and athletic programs for ten (10) consecutive days. Please refer to section ***PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS BY STUDENTS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL ATHLETIC PROGRAMS.***

## **Second Offense**

1. The nurse will administer a safety assessment, the parents will be notified, the student is sent home for the remainder of the day.
2. The student will be suspended for up to 10 days. A re-entry meeting may be requested with the student, parents and appropriate School Officials.
3. Notification of law enforcement.
4. Written verification of involvement in an approved program of drug/alcohol rehabilitation or counseling, either with SAP Counselor or Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor in the community, prior to re-entry.
5. Ineligible participation in all co-curricular activities and athletic programs for sixty (60) consecutive days. Please refer to section ***PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS BY STUDENTS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL ATHLETIC PROGRAMS.***
6. Community Restitution as defined by the designated School Official.

## **Third Offense**

Student will be suspended for 10 days and recommended for suspension for the remainder of the school year or possible expulsion.

## **Students in Possession of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco and/or Drug Paraphernalia**

### **First Offense**

1. When students are found in possession of drug paraphernalia, it will be confiscated.
2. The nurse may administer a safety assessment, the parents will be notified, the student is sent home for the remainder of the day.
3. The student will be suspended for up to 5 days and participate in restorative, educational and/or therapeutic work with school staff as appropriate. A re-entry meeting may be requested with the student, parents and appropriate School Officials.
4. Notification of law enforcement.
5. Consultation with student and school SAP counselor or other designated school official.
6. Ineligible participation in all co-curricular activities and athletic programs for ten (10) consecutive days. Please refer to section ***PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS BY STUDENTS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL ATHLETIC PROGRAMS.***

## **Second Offense**

1. The nurse may administer a safety assessment, the parents will be notified, the student is sent home for the remainder of the day.
2. The student will be suspended for up to 10 days. A re-entry meeting may be requested with the student, parents and appropriate School Officials.
3. Notification of law enforcement.
4. Written verification of involvement in an approved program of drug/alcohol rehabilitation or counseling, either with SAP Counselor or Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor in the community, prior to re-entry.
5. Ineligible participation in all co-curricular activities and athletic programs for sixty (60) consecutive days. Please refer to section ***PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS BY STUDENTS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL ATHLETIC PROGRAMS.***
6. Community Restitution as defined by the designated School Official.

## **Third Offense**

Student will be suspended for 10 days and recommended for suspension for the remainder of the school year or possible expulsion.

## **Students Selling or Furnishing Alcohol, Tobacco and/or Drugs**

1. Student will be suspended for 10 days and recommended for suspension for the remainder of the school year or possible expulsion.
2. Notification of law enforcement.

## **Responsibilities Of Students**

All students are responsible for understanding the Otter Valley Union Schools' Substance Abuse policy. Students who voluntarily request assistance or counseling where no offense has occurred as specified in this section of school policy, will not be punished. It is the intent of the School System to provide students experiencing alcohol and/or drug problems with all possible assistance and support.

## **STATE AND FEDERAL INFORMATION**

### **Harassment, Hazing and Bullying**

We believe that every student has the right to a safe and healthy school climate where they feel supported. On May 29, 2015, Secretary Holcombe issued a revised Harassment, Hazing and Bullying Prevention Model Policy that reminds school boards of their obligation to develop and

adopt harassment, hazing and bullying prevention policies. The Secretary emphasizes the school board's duty under 16 V.S.A. §§ 570a, 570b and 570c to annually designate two or more people to receive reports of harassment, hazing and bullying at each school. The names and contact information of employees designated to receive a Harassment, Hazing and Bullying (HHB) incident report, should be included in the school's handbook to parents and students.

16 V.S.A. §570 requires school boards to develop and adopt harassment, hazing and bullying prevention policies that shall be at least as stringent as the model policies developed by the Secretary.

16 V.S.A. §570(c) requires that school boards annually, prior to the commencement of curricular and co-curricular activities, provide students and their parents or guardians, notice of the harassment, hazing and bullying policies and procedures. The notice to students should be age appropriate and should include examples. The notice must "appear in any publication of the school district that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for the school." Secretary Holcombe's Memorandum on the Harassment, Hazing and Bullying Prevention Model Policy as well as a copy of the HHB Policy, are available on the AOE website.

If you believe Hazing, Harassment or Bullying has occurred immediately report it to one of Otter Valley Designated Employees:

Anne Cioffredi, Student Support Professional OVUHS 247-6833 ext. 2604  
Carlo Romeo, Dean of Students 247-6833 ext. 2614  
The RNESU Non-Discrimination Coordinator is Marsha Bruce, at 247-5757

*For more information See RNESU policy at [rnesu.org](http://rnesu.org): code [JBEAA](#)*

## **Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students**

All students need a safe and supportive school environment to progress academically and developmentally. Many questions arise for students and school staff when considering the best supports for transgender and gender nonconforming students. The Continuing Best Practices for Schools Regarding Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students are designed to provide direction for schools to address issues that may arise concerning the needs of transgender and gender nonconforming students.

## **Mandated Reporting**

As educators and mandated reporters, it is our duty to help protect students from abuse and neglect. Act 60 of 2015 provides that any mandated reporter who reasonably suspects abuse or neglect of a child shall report in accordance with the provisions of Section 4914 of this Title within 24 hours of the time information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect was first received or

observed. 33 V.S.A. § 4913(c). Review the joint memo from VDH and AOE regarding Mandated Reporting.

## **New Americans**

We have a responsibility to ensure that all of our students feel safe and supported. This occurs when we create school cultures that are responsive to the needs of the children in our care, and our families. Under Federal law, undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents (*Plyler vs. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982.)). And, under state law, all Vermont children, including undocumented children are required to attend school until the mandated age of 16. Meeting this obligation means going beyond telling families to enroll their student(s). It includes working proactively to ensure they feel safe, supported and welcomed. Public schools may not: 1. Deny or terminate a student's enrollment on the basis of actual or perceived immigration status. 2. Treat a student differently to verify legal residency in the United States. 3. Engage in any practices that have the effect of discouraging students from enrolling or attending school based on their immigration status. 4. Require students or their parents to disclose their immigration status or inquire of students or parents in ways that may expose their undocumented status. 5. Deny or terminate a student's enrollment due to the student's or parent's failure to provide a social security number.

## **FERPA Policies**

34 C.F.R. Part 99 (the federal regulations promulgated pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g et seq.) requires an annual notification to parents of their rights under the Act. Such notice must include that parents have the right to:

1. Inspect and review their children's records;
2. Seek amendment of the record if it is inaccurate or misleading;
3. Consent to disclosure of personally identifiable student information except as provided in 34 C.F.R. §99.31; and
4. If they believe the Act has been violated, file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the United States Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington D.C., 20202.

In addition, the annual notice must include:

1. The procedure for exercising the right to inspect and review education records,
2. The procedure for requesting amendment of the records, and
3. The criteria the school uses for disclosing student records to persons within the school who have legitimate educational interests in reviewing the records.

Finally, if the school does disclose "directory information" (e.g. names and addresses of students, date of birth, field of study, academic or other honors attained, participation on sports teams, etc.), and most schools do in some form or another, the school must notify parents of:

1. The types of directory information that will be released;
2. The right to refuse to let the school release particular or all directory information on their own children; and

3. The period of time within which the parent has to notify the school that he or she does not wish to have the school designate some or all of the information about the parent's child designated as directory information.

### **Protection of Pupil Rights Act**

The Protection of Pupil Rights Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232h (hereinafter "PPRA"), requires parental notification in a number of respects: a. 20 U.S.C. §1232h(c)(2)(A)(i) requires local education agencies to notify parents annually, at the beginning of the school year and within a reasonable time after any amendment thereof, of the adoption or continued use of PPRA policies. These local policies must include the following: i. The rights of parents to inspect surveys created by a "third party" (meaning not federally funded) before it is administered, ii. Procedures for such inspection of surveys, iii. Arrangements to protect student privacy with respect to surveys on sensitive matters, iv. The right to inspect any instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum, v. Procedures for inspecting the instructional materials, vi. The administration of any physical examinations or screenings, vii. The collection or disclosure of student information for marketing purposes, viii. The right of a parent to inspect any instrument used in the collection of personal information for marketing purposes before such information is collected or disclosed, and ix. Procedures for obtaining access to such instruments in a timely fashion. b. 20 U.S.C. §1232h(c)(2)(A)(ii) requires an annual notice to parents of the right to opt out of certain activities including collection of personal student information for marketing purposes, administration of certain surveys, and non-emergency invasive physical examinations or screenings. c. 20 U.S.C. §1232h(c)(2)(B) provides that schools notify parents, at least annually at the beginning of the school year, of the specific or approximate dates when any of the following will occur: collection of information for marketing purposes, administration of surveys containing sensitive questions, and any non-emergency, invasive physical examinations or screenings. d. 20 U.S.C. §1232h(d) provides that schools must "give parents and students effective notice of their rights under this section [PPRA]."

### **Military/Postsecondary Recruiters**

20 U.S.C. §7908(a)(2) requires schools to notify parents, presumably each year although the time period is not specified, that they may request that their child's name, address and telephone listing not be released to military or postsecondary recruiters without prior written parental consent.

### **Section 504 Grievance Procedures**

34 C.F.R. §§104.7 and 104.8 require schools to notify parents and others that the school does not discriminate on the basis of handicap; the school's notice shall identify the responsible employee designated to coordinate compliance with Section 504 and of the availability of a grievance procedure to address complaints regarding Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Civil Rights Act



Provisions 34 C.F.R. §100.6(d) requires “recipients” of federal funding to provide information to “beneficiaries” regarding the nondiscrimination requirements of the Civil Rights Act as applied to the recipient’s operations.

## **Notices to Parents Under Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

Local education agencies are required to communicate with parents in a variety of circumstances. Here are a few of the more significant ones:

1. 20 U.S.C. §6311(h)(2)(A)(i) requires local education agencies receiving Title I assistance to prepare and disseminate to all parents an annual “report card.” At minimum, it must contain information reported to the LEA by the state, disaggregated by student group, as well as how the student achieved on state assessments compared to students in the state as a whole, and to students in other schools in the same LEA. With the passage of ESSA and the retraction of regulations, LEAs should continue to provide parents with information about school performance. New accountability measures will go into effect under the new Vermont ESSA State Plan. A memo about parental notification regarding teacher qualifications is available online.
2. 20 U.S.C. §6311(h)(6) requires notice by a school district receiving Title I funds at the beginning of the school year to the parents of each student regarding the qualifications of the school’s teachers. The notice is to include the rights of parents, upon request, to Administrator Handbook (Revised: July 12, 2017) Page 9 of 18 obtain information as to whether the child’s teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria, whether the teacher is teaching under a waiver or provisional license, and what the major of the teacher was in his or her baccalaureate degree. If the child receives services from a paraprofessional, the paraprofessional’s qualifications must also be furnished. The notice must also contain a statement as to whether the student will be taught by a teacher for four or more consecutive weeks who is not licensed, as that term is defined under state and federal law. Finally, this notice must also alert parents to their right to obtain information as to the level of achievement of their child in each of the state’s academic assessments.
3. 20 U.S.C. §6312(g)(1) provides that parents of students who are of limited English proficiency are to be notified not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year that their child has been identified as in need of services. The statute contemplates very specific and detailed information to be provided in an understandable manner to the parents of the child.
4. 20 U.S.C. §6318(a)(2) requires each local education agency with Title I schools to “develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parental involvement policy.” The required content of the policy is spelled out in great detail in the statute.

## **Notices Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

The Federal Special Education Law, 20 U.S.C. §§1400, et seq., requires notice to parents in a variety of ways. However, the most prominent requirements are found in 34 C.F.R. §§300.111, 300.503 and 300.504.

1. 34 C.F.R. §300.111 relates to “child find” activities. As interpreted in Vermont regulations, child find includes, among other activities, notifying the public of the availability of special education services for children with disabilities aged 3-21. Similar provisions address child find for students aged birth-3. See Rule 2360.3 and Rule 2360.5.2 of the Vermont State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices.
2. The provisions of §300.503 require written notice to a parent of a student with a disability within a reasonable period of time before the school district proposes to initiate or change the identification (eligibility), evaluation or educational placement of the student or the provision of a free, appropriate, public education to the student, or whenever it refuses to do the same. The content of the required notice is very detailed. See Rule 2365.1.1 of the Vermont State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices.
3. §300.504 requires notice of “procedural safeguards” whenever a child is initially referred for a special education evaluation, whenever an Individual Education Plan meeting is called, whenever a reevaluation is sought, and whenever a due process complaint has been filed.

### **Civil Rights Act Provisions**

34 C.F.R. §100.6(d) requires “recipients” of federal funding to provide information to “beneficiaries” regarding the nondiscrimination requirements of the Civil Rights Act as applied to the recipient’s operations.

### **Title IX Grievance Procedures and Dissemination of Policy**

34 C.F.R. §§106.9(b) and 106.9(a)(1) provide that recipients of federal funding publish their grievance procedures with respect to discrimination on the basis of sex and that each recipient “implement specific and continuing steps to notify.... students and parents of elementary and secondary school students....that it does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational program or activity which it operates, and that it is required by Title IX....not to discriminate in such a manner.” The latter section requires publication of this notice in a variety of ways, including in bulletins, catalogs, or application forms.

### **Educator Quality**

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, parents may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child’s teacher. This information includes: whether the teacher has met the state requirements for the grade level(s) and subject area(s) they are teaching; whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency license; the college major and/or graduate certification or degrees held by the teacher; and whether their child is provided services by paraprofessionals and if so, their qualifications.

### **Notification Of Availability Of Asbestos Management Plan**

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act [40 CFR 763.93 (g) (4)] requires that written notice be given that Otter Valley Union High School has a Management Plan for the safe control and maintenance of

asbestos containing materials found in its buildings. The Management Plan is available and accessible to the public at the administrative office of the school. Please contact the Principal at 247-6833 if you wish to read the plan.

### **Concussions and Other Head Injuries**

Under 16 V.S.A. § 1431 the principal or headmaster of each public and approved independent school must ensure that statewide concussion and other head injury guidelines are provided annually to each youth athlete and the athlete's parents or guardians and that each youth athlete and a parent or guardian annually signs a form acknowledging receipt of the concussion and other head injury guidelines. There are training requirements for all coaches and referees of a contest on how to recognize the symptoms of a concussion or other head injury. Please familiarize yourself with these requirements under V.S.A. § 1431(c) and more details regarding the required notice described above.

### **Periodic Hearing and Vision Screening**

16 V.S.A. §1422 requires schools to test the hearing and vision of students pursuant to research-based guidelines. Review the joint memo from AOE and VDH on School Health Screenings.