

# 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR HANDBOOK

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

School Name \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

## IN CASE OF EMERGENCY NOTIFY:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

## Class Schedule

Class	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI

# 2021-2022 STUDENT PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

River Valley Middle/High School  
15480 Three Oaks Rd.  
Three Oaks, MI 49128  
269-756-9541; 269-426-4415  
Toll Free 800-605-8623

Welcome to the River Valley Middle/High School. All staff and administration are pleased to have you as a student and will do our best to help make your experience as productive and successful as you wish to make it.

## **River Valley Middle High School Mission Statement**

### MUSTANG PRIDE

Preparation

Respect

Integrity

Dependability

Effort

## **District Mission Statement**

*The mission of River Valley School District is quality education.*

Mr. Ryan Portenga, Principal (x-1032)  
Mr. Charles Richards, Assistant Principal/Athletic Director (x1016)  
Ms. Tammie Schmidt, Administrative Assistant (x-1015)  
Mrs. Kristin Lugbill, Counselor (x-1017)  
Ms. Stacey Vetter, Student Services Secretary (x-1019)  
Ms. Amy Vollman, Athletic Secretary (x-1139)

<http://www.rivervalleyschools.org/mhs/index.html>

To the Parents/Guardians and Students:

This student handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions that you and your parents may have during the school year and to provide specific information about certain Board policies and procedures. This handbook contains important information that you should know. Become familiar with the following information and keep the handbook available for frequent reference by you and your parents. If you have any questions that are not addressed in this handbook, you are encouraged to talk to your teachers or to my administrative team.

This handbook summarizes many of the official policies and administrative guidelines of the Board of Education and the District. To the extent that the handbook is ambiguous or conflicts with these policies and guidelines, the policies and guidelines shall control. This handbook is effective immediately and supersedes any prior handbook and other written material on the same subjects. These are to assist the student in maintaining the highest standards of academic achievement and social development, which are an integral part of the philosophy of the River Valley School District.

This handbook does not equate to an irrevocable contractual commitment to the student, but only reflects the current status of the Board's policies and the School's rules as of June 2021. The guidelines and procedures outlined in this handbook have been approved by the members of the River Valley School Board at its June 2021 meeting.

If any of the policies or administrative guidelines referenced herein are revised after June 2021, the language in the most current policy or administrative guideline prevails.

Our teachers, staff, counselors and administrators are available to provide clarification and guidance to students and parents concerning any phase of the school program. Please contact us if you need any assistance because it is essential that meaningful communication be established between the home and school if students are to realize their fullest potential.

We hope the best for you in the coming school year.

Yours in Education

Mr. Ryan Portenga  
Principal

# RIVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL FIGHT SONG

*GO, YOU RIVER VALLEY MUSTANGS  
FIGHT UNTIL YOU HAVE WON  
ONWARD NOW THAT VICTORY'S NEAR US  
FIGHT UNTIL THE FINAL GUN  
RAH-RAH-RAH*

*GO, YOU RIVER VALLEY MUSTANGS  
FIGHT FOR THE BLUE AND WHITE  
PUSH UP THE SCORE, LET'S GO FOR MORE  
AND FIGHT UNTIL WE WIN TONIGHT*

*MUSTANGS!  
FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT  
MUSTANGS!*

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# ACADEMIC INFORMATION

## HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES

It is the goal of River Valley School District to create a climate where expectations are high, individual differences are nurtured, global awareness is promoted, lifelong learning is valued, self-esteem is enhanced, and all River Valley community members have an opportunity to experience success. River Valley School District works closely with county and state industry leaders, community employers, and higher educational institutions to stay knowledgeable about current trends in employment, educational and training needs, and workforce demands. River Valley uses this information to guide our academic offerings, behavior expectations, and counseling program.

The high school program of the River Valley Schools offers a challenging course of study designed for students to recognize and achieve their academic and career potential. Through a coordinated sequence of academic and technical courses, all students will be better prepared to see their post high school experience as an opportunity for continuing their education. As lifelong learners, River Valley High School graduates may continue their education at four-year colleges, community colleges, technical institutions, the military, or in apprenticeship/training programs as they strive to reach their own individual academic and career goals.

### **CAREER PATHWAYS**

The River Valley Middle/High School Program of Studies is designed to offer students a pathway to success. Students create their Educational Development Plan (EDP) with the counselor beginning in 7th grade and update this plan yearly. Students have the opportunity each year to explore their interests, values, skills, and abilities through the CareerCruising program, and identify careers that best match these. As part of the EDP process, students develop a four-year high school course plan that will maximize their post-secondary potential and opportunities. Through this applied academic instructional program, all students will begin to see and value the relationship between their academic studies and real world application. This contextual learning experience enables students to make informed decisions as they consider career options.

### **CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)**

Students will have the opportunity to take a Career Technical Education (CTE) course beginning their Junior year. These courses include programs offered by River Valley and courses offered by other school districts in the county through our shared-time programs. Most of the shared-time programs require the

students to provide transportation for themselves to and from the program every day. If River Valley is able to provide transportation to a program, students attending that program will be required to take the school-provided transportation every day.

In order to assure success in these programs, strong attendance is required as well as a strong work-ethic. Students and parents must sign the CTE Agreement prior to being enrolled in the course. There is no guarantee to get into a requested program due to limitations in class size. Students that demonstrate strong attendance and dedication to his/her career pathway will be considered as priority students when selecting candidates to fill slots in a class.

If you wish to request a CTE course, please see Student Services for enrollment requirements and to be provided a copy of the CTE agreement.

### **DUAL ENROLLMENT**

In accordance with the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (PSEO), (Public Act 160 of 1996), and the Career and Technical Preparation Act (Public Act 258 of 2000), River Valley High School provides general information about the PSEO and college equivalent classes to all students. Please note that recent legislation has amended the PSEO to expand dual enrollment options for high school students in the State of Michigan. The language now allows students to begin taking dual enrollment (DE) classes in 9th grade and to take up to 10 dual enrollment classes in grades 9-12.

River Valley High School fully participates in dual enrollment with any accredited college or university. RVHS will pay the student's tuition, fees and textbooks up to 1/12 of a foundation grant (1/12 FG) per course. This comes out to approximately \$600.00 per course, depending on the education funding from the State for that year. Any costs exceeding the 1/12 FG is the responsibility of the student and/or parent. If any prior balance from previous DE courses remains; the student shall not participate in any DE classes.

- Eligible Course – 388.513(1)(d)
  - o Not offered by eligible student's high school (or is not available to the student due to an unavoidable scheduling conflict).
  - o Academic in nature: Normally applies toward satisfaction of [postsecondary] degree requirements. Not ordinarily taken as an activity course. Not a hobby, craft, or recreational course.
  - o In a subject area other than physical education, theology, divinity, or religious education.
  - o For subject areas assessed on a readiness assessment or the Michigan Merit Examination, eligible courses are limited to those subject areas for which the student has achieved a qualifying score. Not required for computer science or foreign language courses. A district may elect to support a student's enrollment in a subject area that the student has not yet achieved a qualifying

score if it has been determined to be in the best educational interest of the student.

- o Course limits: Up to 10 courses overall can be covered under the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act. For a student that first dual enrolls in:
  - 9th grade – not more than two courses per year in 9th, 10th, and 11th grade, and not more than four courses in grade 12
  - 10th grade – not more than two courses in 10th grade, and not more than four courses in 11th and 12th grade
  - 11th or 12th grade – not more than six courses per year
- Must be enrolled in exactly six courses per semester (combining RVHS courses with their DE courses).
- Students are responsible for their own transportation for all DE courses.
- All dual enrollment courses will appear on the student’s transcript with accompanying grades and will be included in the semester GPA, cumulative GPA, and class ranking. The final grade will be determined by the college. In the case of a grade of “W” assigned by the institution, RVHS will assign a grade of “NM” for no mark.
- Students who fail to successfully complete their DE course and/or withdraws from their DE course after the institution’s 100% refund date, will be required to reimburse the District for the monies spent, or the student will not be permitted to enroll in any additional dual enrollment courses.
- Students are responsible for following the course syllabus in all aspects. This includes, but is not limited to, attendance, work completion, maintenance of passing grades, and logging into online courses. Failure to do so could result in the student being dropped from the course by the institution without prior notice. The institution has independent authority in this decision. Students will receive an “NM” on their RVHS transcript should this occur.
- Students are responsible for knowing if credits will transfer to any other institution. It is ultimately the student’s responsibility to verify information with the institutions in question. Most 4-year institutions have transfer agreement information available directly on their website under the admissions and transfer student tabs. Students are encouraged to research this information as well.
- Any book / material is purchased by RVHS, it becomes the property of RVHS. If students would prefer to be the owner and keep their textbooks, the cost is the student’s responsibility.

**Students must have received a qualifying score on at least one of the following tests in order to take DE courses:**

**Minimum Dual Enrollment Qualifying Scores per MI Department of Education\* (2020-2021)**

Assessment	Test Section	Content Area	Minimum Dual Enrollment Qualifying Score
<b>ACT</b>	Mathematics	Mathematics	22
	Reading	Reading	22
	Science	Science	23
	English	English	18
<b>ACCUPLACER</b>	Quant/Alg/Stats	Mathematics	237
	Reading	Reading	263
	WritePlacer	English/Writing	6
<b>SAT*</b>	Critical Reading	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing	480
	Mathematics	Mathematics	530

**GRADES**

Grades are only finalized at the end of each semester. The semester grade is comprised of 80% classroom grade for the term (T1) and 20% semester exam. Progress reports will be communicated home after the first 9 weeks of each semester to report progress in the class. Report cards will be communicated home at the end of each semester.

**GRADING POLICIES**

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit will not be given toward improving the academic grade of a student. The academic grade must be a true reflection of a student’s proficiency on the reported standards thus “extra” credit would inflate and diminish the integrity of the grade itself.

**Cheating/Plagiarism:** Should a student be caught cheating and/or plagiarizing an assignment/assessment for class, the student will be required to redo/retake (see redo/retake policy) the assignment/assessment. Additionally, the student will receive discipline according to the student handbook.

**Late Work:** Late work will be accepted without academic penalty as long as the teacher deems the learning is still relevant. Late work will be marked as such in the grade book but will not affect the academic grade. However, the student’s

behavior grade will be affected by late work under one or more of the following categories: Participation, Preparedness, and/or Practice.

**Redos/Retakes:** Students will have the opportunity to redo/retake any assignment or assessment. A redo/retake can be requested by a student and/or assigned by a teacher. All retakes must require intervention, as determined by the teacher, prior to the retake and must not be the original assessment.

**Zeros/Incompletes:** Zeros will not be used to score missing work or incomplete work. Zeros will only be used to reflect student achievement on a given assignment or assessment. However, an incomplete, or an “i” will be entered when an item is missing which will calculate in the gradebook as a zero for the overall grade as to show the impact on the grade should that item not be completed. This is to prevent the illusion that a grade is higher than what is actually is when items are incomplete.

**Attendance:** Comp out procedures defined on page 15 of the student handbook will be used in any case where the attendance cap has been surpassed (high school). Truancy will be filed for middle school students with ten or more absences.

## **GRADING SYSTEMS**

**Standards-Based Grading:** Standards-based grading measures your student’s mastery of the reported standards for a class or how well your student understands the material in class. At the beginning of every unit, the teacher will break down the standards for the unit into smaller objectives and criteria using learning targets. During the unit, the student is assessed to see if they truly know the material using a variety of assessments, such as traditional pencil-and-paper tests, projects, discussions, or reports. The class grade will be based on all of the evidence the teacher collects demonstrating mastery of the reported standards. The goal of this approach is to provide the teacher, student, and parent as accurate a picture as possible of the student’s learning and to encourage a dialogue about how the student can master the material for the class. In particular, because learning is a process that takes place over time, each assessment will provide feedback for the student about what to focus on next, and the student will be allowed to retake assessments. If the new assessment shows a higher level of mastery, that new score replaces the old one. This can be done as long as the learning is still relevant.

**Classroom Grading Scale:** Student proficiency will be graded on a 4 point grading scale. This is a balanced scale communicating the level of proficiency a student has demonstrated on classroom assessments. The scores on the 4.0 scale each have a very specific meaning. They are:

- 4.0: The student demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the material by completing advanced applications of the material.
- 3.0: The student has mastered the complex, targeted knowledge and skills for the class

- 2.0: The student understands the foundational material that supports the targeted learning but is still working to master the complex material for the class.
- 1.0: The student is able to demonstrate an understanding of the foundational material for the class with help from the teacher but still struggles when working independently.
- 0.0: Even with assistance from the teacher, the student shows no understanding of the material.

**Letter Grades:** The 4.0 scale and percentage scores will be converted using the following conversion chart:

Percentage Score	Standards Score	Letter Grade
97-100	4.0	A
95-96	3.75	A
90-94	3.5	A-
87-89	3.25	B+
83-86	3.0	B
80-82	2.75	B-
77-79	2.5	C+
75-76	2.25	C
73-74	2.0	C-
70-72	1.75	D+
67-69	1.5	D
63-66	1.25	D-
60-62	1.0	F
51-59	.75	F
25-50	.5	F
1-24	.25	F
0	0	F

**Incompletes:** “I” Stands for “incomplete.” This score is used by a teacher when the student has not provided enough evidence for the teacher to assess the proficiency level on a given standard. This typically happens when the assignment/assessment the teacher used to measure proficiency was not completed by the student. Instead of entering a zero in the gradebook, which would communicate the student is not proficient on the standard, the teacher will enter an “incomplete” to communicate that not enough evidence has been provided to measure an accurate proficiency level for the standard. The incomplete score will still calculate as a zero in the gradebook until the item is completed and scored in order to prevent the inflation of grades with incomplete assignments/assessments not computing accurately into the final grade.

*NOTE: An incomplete will only be issued for an overall semester grade for a student for extreme circumstances out of the student's control such as an extended absence due to illness or a situation that prevented the student to complete the required work during the given time frame of the course. These situations can be granted an incomplete upon approval by the building principal and will be given a grace period determined by the principal to allow for the work to be completed for a grade or credit, whichever is deemed appropriate.*

**Weighted Courses:** A weighted GPA will be applied to all AP courses and Dual Credit courses taken at RVHS. Dual enrollment classes (classes taken on a college campus for credit), Math and Science Center courses, and other accelerated program courses must receive approval from the MHS Principal for a weighted GPA to apply. These courses must be in core academic areas and be considered college-level courses. A 1.25 multiplier will be applied to the standard GPA letter grade. The higher the grade a student earns, the higher the impact the multiplier has on the weighted GPA score.

Letter Grade	Score	Unweighted GPA Scale	Weighted GPA Scale with 1.25 multiplier
A	93-100	4.0	5.0
A-	90-92	3.67	4.58
B+	87-89	3.33	4.16
B	83-86	3.0	3.75
B-	80-82	2.67	3.33
C+	77-79	2.33	2.91
C	73-76	2.0	2.5
C-	70-72	1.67	2.08
D+	67-69	1.33	1.66
D	63-66	1.0	1.25
D-	60-62	.67	.84
F	0-59	0	0

**GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible to receive a high school diploma, a student must, at a minimum, satisfactorily complete the requirements as outlined below. Seniors must have all graduation requirements completed in order to participate in commencement. The graduation commencement ceremony is a privilege, and not a right. Seniors must conduct themselves properly throughout the entire senior year, remembering that any improper conduct, including senior pranks, could result in being excluded from the commencement ceremony. All students must be enrolled full time for each semester unless a otherwise

approved by the building principal. Students must participate in the Michigan Merit Exam or MI-Access in the spring of their junior year. In addition, students must earn 22 credits, to include the following:

- English Language Arts: 4 credits (at least one core English each year)
- Mathematics: 4 credits (Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, and one math-related class in senior year)
- Science: 3 credits (Physics/Chemistry Essentials, Biology, and a 3rd science or CTE program)
- Social Studies: 3 credits (World History, US History, Economics, and Government)
- Health and Physical Education: 1 credit
- Visual, Performing or Applied Arts: 1 credit
- World Languages: 2 credits
- Online Learning Experience: ½ credit (satisfied with successful completion of US History or World History)
- Elective Credits: 4 credits

See the River Valley Middle/High School Course Description Guide for information regarding potential modifications to graduation requirements.

#### **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS--TRANSFER STUDENTS:**

All students transferring to River Valley Middle/High School from accredited schools will have their records audited to determine which credits meet our graduation requirements. All credit from unaccredited high schools will be subject to review by the guidance staff and administration at River Valley Middle/High School. Total credits required will vary for transfer students based on total possible credits within the four years of high school. Students transferring from another state may be eligible for a personal curriculum modification and should see the counselor for details.

The following are possible results of the credit review: Credit awarded toward graduation here if the courses passed are aligned with the curricular offerings of this school. For example, no credit would be allowed for a Bible Study or Religion/Religion Studies. English courses passed would be accepted. In each case, a thorough study of transcripts will be made, sharing the findings with student and his/her parents within a reasonable time.

#### **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS--MICHIGAN MERIT CURRICULUM:**

The 18-credit MMC diploma will fulfill the MMC requirements as mandated by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). MDE states that, at a minimum, students will have demonstrated proficiency with the content outlined by the state academic standards or guidelines.

While elective courses certainly add to the enrichment of the educational experience and can guide students to career paths, as stated in our board policy, elective courses are not State-mandated curriculum requirements aside



from the 1 credit of Visual, Performing and Applied Arts requirement. These students are likely going to be entering the work force upon graduation, the military, a trade school or possibly a community college.

The MMC diploma will be serving a small (3-5 students a year) but very high-risk population of students who are at risk of dropping out. These students are typically looking at needing to return for a 5th year and it is likely they will choose to drop out versus returning for a 5th year.

An alternate diploma would not affect the integrity of the current high school diploma that most students will still be striving for. It will only enhance our ability to meet the needs of all students and positively affect our graduation rate. Students will receive a “Michigan Merit Curriculum” River Valley High School Diploma and will be eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies. A letter of understanding will be signed by the student and parent or guardian.

All other students who are with us at RVHS for 4 years, even our most at-risk students, can complete 22.5 credits if they are identified early and get extra support and intervention.

### **HONOR ROLL**

To be eligible for the Honor Roll (both 9-week and semester) a student must: (1) be enrolled full time receiving a passing grade for all six (6) courses; (2) have an average of 3.0 or better (4.0 = A; 3.0 = B; 2.0 = C; 1.0 = D).

### **TOP SENIORS**

Each year we will honor the top seniors in the graduating class. To qualify for this honor, a student must have a 3.5 GPA or higher, at the conclusion of the first semester of his/her senior year. Each year, all seniors with a 3.5 GPA or higher will be honored as a member of the Top Senior list and recognized as such.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL PROMOTION POLICY**

The Middle School retention will be based on the end of the year grades. A review of students will be made at the end of the first semester if two or more classes are failed. Individual students will be reviewed and a recommendation made at the end of the year if he/she fails two (2) or more classes. Summer School will be recommended for students earning below a C in one or more classes.

### **SENIOR MAKE-UP CREDIT GUIDELINES**

For students needing to make up credit during their senior year in order to meet graduation requirements as set forth by the RVBOE policy, the only correspondence programs that River Valley High School automatically accepts are from American School and Keystone National High School. Another alternative is for the student to enroll in courses through the Michigan Virtual High School and Edgenuity.

Classes must be selected with pre-approval of the guidance counselor and principal. Students and parents are cautioned not to pay for any classes until this pre-approval has been granted. Up to two full credit units will be accepted from these alternate sources.

### **SENIOR SECOND SEMESTER EXAM EXEMPTION**

Seniors receiving grades of B minuses (B-) and better during both the third and the fourth quarters (2nd semester) of the school year will be considered exempt from taking second semester exams.

### **TESTING OUT**

Michigan school code requires that high school students be provided with an opportunity to demonstrate mastery in a particular class through competency testing. The purpose of this provision is to ensure challenging class placement for all students and to provide for possible future college dual enrollment. Competency is for the whole course, whether semester or year-long; a student may not test-out of only one semester of a year-long course.

Students will be allowed only one attempt to demonstrate mastery (78%, C+) for any particular class during the designated testing window, which is 1 week prior to the beginning of the new school year, or 1 week prior to when the student would normally take the class he/she is attempting to test out of. Credit earned will allow a student to advance to the next course in the curriculum sequence and will not be included in GPA computation for any purpose. Mastery of the course may be assessed in ways that include items in addition to or in place of an exam (labs, portfolio...etc.). Students must request competency testing materials including a request form, course syllabus and description of assessment requirements. Materials are available through the student services office and your guidance counselor. Students are advised to speak with their counselor to gather more information.

### **Process for HS testing-out requests:**

1. Students may request to test-out of a course during 2 nd semester of the year prior to taking that course.
2. Students obtain testing-out request form from Student Services.
3. Student Services will provide the student with an FAQ from the Michigan Department of Education and the request form.
4. This request form is due back to Student Services three (3) weeks prior to the end of the school year.
5. Student Services will notify the Department Chair who will retrieve curricular and testing-out instructions and materials, including the grading rubric or answer key from the teacher responsible for teaching the course.
6. Student Services will provide curricular and testing-out materials to the student by the last day of school (study materials and project instructions; testing materials/ test will not be given to student until their appointment to take the exam.)

7. Student must take exam/submit project 1 week prior to the beginning of the new school year; all curricular/study materials must be returned at that time. The appointment for testing-out need to be scheduled through the Student Services office.
8. The teacher responsible for teaching the course will score exam/project upon return from summer; the teacher will communicate outcome to Student Services.
9. Student Services will communicate outcome to the student.
10. If applicable, Student Services will adjust the student's schedule and issue credit.

Middle school students are also afforded the opportunity for accelerated placement to ensure challenging class placement.

**Process for MS accelerated placement:**

1. Staff recommendations:
  - a. Fill out accelerated placement form and submit to Student Services.
  - b. Student Services will route form to parents for input and all required signatures.
  - c. If applicable, Student Services will adjust student schedule and place form in student's CA-60.
2. Parent requests:
  - a. Parents contact Student Services to initiate the above process.
  - b. Student Services routes accelerated placement form to appropriate staff, following steps 1-a, b, and c.
  - c. If data does not support accelerated placement, Student Services will communicate such to the parents and file form in the student's CA-60.

**TRANSFER STUDENT CREDIT EVALUATION**

Students transferring from other schools not on a six (6) hour day schedule will have their credits evaluated and put into formula in order to equate the transfer credits with the RV graduation requirements.

## **ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES**

The school district emphasizes the value of regular attendance in enabling students to benefit from the school's educational programs. Michigan law places responsibility on each student to attend school on a daily basis, and on each parent or guardian to send their child to school on a daily basis.

More important, however, is the effect of regular and punctual attendance on the student's scholastic achievement. Not only is each day's lesson important to the individual student, the student's participation in class contributes to the education of others. Frequent absence or tardiness, for any reason, is certain to adversely affect the student's schoolwork. Each student is expected to be

in school every day except when illness, injury, or some providential condition beyond the student's control prevents attendance.

Non-attendance is a violation of the law for both parents and students who are under sixteen (16) years of age. For all students under the age of eighteen (18), parents must notify a school official if a child is to be absent. For a student eighteen (18) or over, the school will expect a parent, doctor, or responsible adult to corroborate a student's absence. Absences may be excused up to **48 HOURS** after the student misses school. The principal of the school or his/her designee is responsible for enforcing the attendance laws of the state and is the person who may excuse a student for necessary absence.

### **ATTENDANCE CAP**

The responsibility for good attendance rests primarily with students and parents. Our staff will make every effort to encourage good attendance, make students and parents aware of poor or inconsistent attendance, and help students correct problems that might lead to excessive absences. It is our belief that learning takes place in the classroom, teacher-to-student and student-to-student, and that regular attendance reflects the values of the workplace.

- Each student is permitted ten (10) absences per semester. Students will be required to make up missed work for each absence. If the absence is considered unexcused, make-up work will be at the discretion of the teacher. See pg. 32 regarding BOE guidelines on long-term suspensions
- Parents have constant access to their student's attendance through Parent Internet Viewer. Correspondence will be sent to the parent after a student's 5th absence and again after the 8th absence.
- Middle school students who surpass the **tenth absence** will be referred for truancy.
- If a student surpasses the **tenth absence** credited toward the attendance cap in any one class taken for high school credit, the student will be required to "comp out" (defined below) of the course at the end of the semester per teacher discretion. Parents will receive notification from the teacher informing them of the situation. An appeal process is available for consideration of unusual circumstances by contacting a building administrator.

If a student surpasses the attendance cap, he/she **must continue to attend the class regularly** from that point forward through the remainder of the semester in an effort to best prepare for the "comp out" exam (See Comp Out information below).

**Comp Out Defined (for High School Credit Courses):** A student who surpasses the 10 allowable absences per semester (11+) will be required to "comp out" of the semester for credit. This will require the student to successfully complete an attendance portfolio of all assignments for that marking period,

plus any from that point forward through the end of the semester, including daily assignments, homework, labs, etc. (as defined by the teacher). Students are responsible for obtaining their missed work in a timely manner. If the attendance portfolio meets the teacher's standards, the student will then be allowed to take the semester exam. If the student passes the exam, he/she will receive the grade earned in the class. If a student does not earn credit for the course by successfully completing the above requirements, the student will receive an F for the course.

### **DEFINITION OF ABSENCES**

**An absence occurs when a student misses more than 10 minutes of any class.**

**Excused Absence:** (COUNT TOWARD ATTENDANCE CAP)

An excused absence from school or class is an absence in which the required parental contact with the school has taken place. An excused absence is one which falls into one of the following classifications and entitles the student to make up work for full credit:

- Personal illness
- Illness in the family
- Medical or dental appointment that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours
- Quarantine of the home
- Family activity
- Funeral
- Work at home due to absence of parents
- Written permission by the administration

**When a student is absent for any part or all of the day, building procedure requires that an explanation of the absence be furnished to the office. This should be done by the parent/guardian with 48 HOURS of the absence or the absence will be unexcused.**

**Excusing an Absence:**

- Contact the middle/high school office by phone within 48 hours of the absence. Call 269-756-9541 ext. 1015.
- Provide a written explanation on the day of the absence or prior to the absence. Verification may be requested for any call-in or note that appears to be questionable.
- Any absence that is not excused within 48 HOURS will be considered an unexcused absence.

**Exceptions:**

- If parents will be out of town for an extended period of time, it is important that the office be advised ahead of time of person(s) responsible for the student during the parents' absence.
- Students who are emancipated minors and do not reside with their parents are required to make arrangements with the office.

**Unexcused Absence: (COUNT TOWARD ATTENDANCE CAP)**

An absence that does not comply with the provisions for an excused absence is determined by a building administrator or his/her designee to be unexcused. When a student's absence is defined as unexcused, opportunity to make up missed work is left to the discretion of the teacher. The following is a listing of attendance behavior that results in an unexcused absence:

- Skipping class
- Failure to clear up absences within 48 hours of the day the student is absent
- Leaving class early without the permission of classroom teacher
- Leaving the building without first checking out at the office

**Exempt Absence: (DO NOT COUNT TOWARD ATTENDANCE CAP)**

- Long-term medical leave or chronic medical condition with documentation
- In-School suspension
- Pre-arranged absences of three or more days (contact a building administrator)
- Religious observance
- Death of a family member
- Direct Family Funeral Leave (contact a building administrator)
- Court appearances

**School Related Absence: (DO NOT COUNT TOWARD ATTENDANCE CAP)**

- Curriculum related absences
- Co-curricular absences
- Athletic dismissal
- Fine Arts dismissal
- College Visitations: One (1) per semester at a College
- College Visitations with representatives at RVHS
- Student government sessions
- OSS

Students who are excused from class for a school related absence are expected to stay current with all class work. It is the student's responsibility to contact his/her teacher(s) prior to the absence to get any class or homework assignments which are to be completed by the student before the next class session.

**Pre-Arranged Absence: (DO NOT COUNT TOWARD ATTENDANCE CAP)**

A pre-arranged absence is an absence from school for three (3) or more days for activities approved between the parents and administration. River Valley Middle/High School does not condone vacation absences that exceed school-scheduled vacation periods. In the case where extenuating circumstances exist, students and parents are asked to complete a pre-arranged absence form giving full particulars of the absences. Approval for such absences should be sought, when possible, at least one week prior to the date on which the absence is to occur. The student must present the form to each teacher for signature and the form should then be returned to the office ahead of time.

## **MAKING UP WORK AFTER AN ABSENCE**

When a student is absent (excused or unexcused - other than for OSS), it is the student's responsibility to arrange make-up work with the teacher. Make-up work may need to be schedule outside the student's regular class period. Each teacher will provide the students with make-up procedures at the beginning of each semester.

A student has two (2) days to make up work for each day of absence. A teacher may extend the make-up period depending upon the difficulty and extent of the assignment.

### **Requesting Assignments:**

- Homework may be requested after two (2) consecutive absences by contacting the office.
- If a student is absent less than two (2) days, he/she should contact a fellow classmate for the assignments, contact the teacher via email or phone, or see the teacher upon returning to school.

**For an excused, exempt, school-related or pre-arranged absence:** Students will be allowed to make up all work, tests, and assignments. The responsibility of initiating make-up work and turning in assignments rests with the student. Students who do not make up work will receive no credit.

**For an unexcused absence:** Make-up work may be assigned and credit will be at the discretion of the teacher.

**Previously assigned assignments:** Including projects and reports which are known to be due prior to an absence, are to be turned in on the due date or contact should be made with the teacher by this same date in an effort to establish an alternative plan. Exceptions may be granted at the discretion of the teacher due to the extent or nature of the absence and the specific class work involved. Students are encouraged to talk with their teachers regarding these important tasks.

**Timelines:** Students are required to make up all work that is a result of absences occurring within the first eight weeks of the marking period by the last day of the nine-week marking period. If a student misses a day during the last week of the marking period, make-up work or seat time may be extended with the permission of the teacher up to ten school days after the marking period ends. In this case, the student will receive an (I) incomplete grade on his/her report card which would be changed at the completion of the assigned work.

## **ATTENDANCE APPEAL PROCESS**

Students missing classes due to circumstances beyond their control may seek to

appeal classes beyond the attendance cap allowed per semester by presenting themselves along with parent or guardian before the administrator. Students seeking attendance waivers must be prepared to demonstrate, with appropriate documentation, that extraordinary conditions prevented them from attending school.

### **AGE OF MAJORITY**

On September 4, 1981, Attorney General Kelley gave an official opinion concerning the school board's right to enforce the eighteen-year-old attendance policy. The following is a quote from Mr. Kelley's opinion: "It is, therefore, my opinion that the board of education of a school district may not enforce a policy which requires a written excuse for absences and [passes] from a parent where the student has attained the age of 18 years, but may require written corroboration from a parent, if the student lives with the parent, or from a physician or other person if the student lives away from his or her parent." In keeping with the Attorney General's ruling, we have established the following rules for our eighteen-year-old students concerning non-attendance and passes:

**Absences:** The school will accept call-ins from an eighteen year old living at home. The absence will be placed on HOLD for up to 48 hours. The eighteen year old student must have the parent call the office within 48 hours to corroborate the call-in. **If a student does not call in or a phone call or note is not received from the parent within 48 hours, the absence will be recorded as unexcused.**

**Off-Campus Passes:** The school will allow an eighteen-year-old student living at home to request a pass. The eighteen-year-old student must have the parent call the office within 48 hours to corroborate the reason for the pass. **If corroboration is not received within 48 hours, the absence will be recorded as unexcused.**

Eighteen year olds may not check themselves out of school during lunch hour for lunch privileges. Parents may personally come to pick up students during the lunch hour; however, calls and passes releasing students for lunch will not be honored.

*NOTE: If an eighteen year old is not living at home, he/she must make special arrangements with the administrator regarding his/her absences and/or passes.*

### **SIGN-IN/SIGN-OUT PROCEDURES**

1. **Arriving late:** Students who arrive to school late must sign in with the Attendance Secretary and obtain a pass before going to class. The students must report immediately to class. Students found skipping class will receive additional consequences for not reporting to his/her assigned class.
2. **Leaving early:** If, for any reason, a student must leave the campus during class time, he/she must sign out with the Attendance Secretary. If a student has to leave the school for an appointment, a note or phone call from the parent or guardian must be received in the main office prior to the



appointment. If arrangements are not made and the student leaves school, disciplinary action will be taken.

### **SKIPPING**

A student who is on campus and has not reported to class or with the Attendance Secretary, is considered to be skipping. Additionally, a student that has reported to class but then leaves without permission is considered to be skipping that class period. Disciplinary action will be taken as follows:

1 class period	One (1) Day In-School Suspension (ISS)
½ Day	One (1) Day In-School Suspension (ISS)
Full Day	Two (2) Days In-School Suspension (ISS)

Once a student is on school property, whether by bus or car, leaving school property without permission will result in a minimum two (2) day In-School Suspension (ISS).

### **SUDDEN ILLNESS DURING SCHOOL**

Any student too ill to attend class must report immediately to the office. The student will be attended to and the parent/guardian will be notified. Should the student not handle this situation in this manner, it automatically results in skipping. Disciplinary action will be taken. A student who misses a majority of the class will be counted absent.

### **TARDINESS**

*THERE ARE NO EXCUSED TARDIES EXCEPT THOSE CONFIRMED BY A STAFF MEMBER.*

**Tardy defined:** Student arrives at class after the bell (or signal that class has started). The following guidelines apply to accumulated tardies in each class per semester:

- 3rd Tardy: Letter from MHS Office alerting parents/guardians to tardiness.
- 4th and 5th Tardy: Two hour Wednesday detention issued.
- 6th Tardy: Half-day of In-School Suspension issued for the 6th tardy and each tardy thereafter.
- Excessive tardies beyond the above plan will be addressed on an individual basis and may include a behavior plan.

**First Hour Tardies:** For any student who drives to school and is excessively tardy to first hour due to late arrival on campus, driving/parking privileges may be suspended or revoked.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The rights and responsibilities of students in the school district should be clearly stated. Administering the rules of the schools must include procedures which afford students due process of law. It is the objective of the River Valley Middle/

High School to provide a safe environment in which the major attention of the school is directed to the learning process. The rules of student conduct and discipline are intended to help nurture this environment.

1. The written rules of conduct and disciplinary procedures which govern students are established for the purpose of:
  - Recognizing the rights of students as citizens of the United States and the State of Michigan.
  - Providing a uniform code of conduct.
  - Providing due process procedures in the administration of discipline.
2. Teaching and learning proper conduct is a constructive process with emphasis on the development of self-discipline. Maintaining proper conduct in the schools involves establishing guidelines and limitations for student behavior. Students are expected to cooperate in this process and in general:
  - Develop self-discipline.
  - Demonstrate responsible social behaviors.
  - Show consideration for others.
  - Demonstrate honesty toward teachers and fellow students.
  - Respect school and personal property.
  - Follow the rules of conduct established by the school district, school, and co-curricular programs.
3. The Student Code of Conduct applies when a student:
  - Attends school or school sponsored curricular and co-curricular programs.
  - Is on school property or in school facilities.
  - Travels to and from school.
  - Travels with a school sponsored organization.
  - Is under the supervision of school staff.

### **CATEGORIES OF MISCONDUCT**

The following categories are not necessarily all-inclusive for middle and high school students. We at RVMHS yearly update and disseminate student handbooks that provide consistent behavioral guidelines within each of the educational levels. The following are fundamental areas of misconduct for which students may be disciplined.

### **CITIZENSHIP**

- Acts of civil disobedience, violating the civil rights of others, interfering with the educational process, or disrupting the order of the school.
- Verbal attacks against students, school officials, school personnel, and/or school guests.
- Persistent disobedience and/or breaking school rules and regulations.
- Using profane and/or obscene language and/or gestures.
- Defying the lawful instruction and/or supervision of school district personnel.
- Cheating in connection with scholastic and school activities.
- Refusal to furnish proper identification when requested to do so by school authorities.

- Dress, adornment, or grooming which disrupts the educational process, violates reasonable standards of safety, health, hygiene or decency. Dress which advocates illegal acts or gang affiliation.
- Adornment which can be used as a weapon.
- Visiting another school during the school day without permission from the home school and the receiving school.
- Causing disruption at another school.
- Improper displays of affection.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- Possession or storage on school property of weapons, explosives, or items which endanger health or safety. Public Act 211 (December 1987) prohibits the possession of dangerous weapons by the students in Michigan schools. The Act also provides procedures to be followed if a dangerous weapon is found in the possession of a student.
- Fighting or provoking a fight.
- Physical attacks or verbal threats to school personnel, school officials, other students, or visitors to the school.
- Extortion or issuing threats to another for the purpose of obtaining money, favors, or the possessions of another person.
- Continual or persistent annoyance, disrespect or harassment of a student or school employee.
- Causing a false fire alarm or bomb threat.
- Violating the bus conduct rules established by the transportation department.
- Unsafe or reckless driving on school property.

### **ILLICIT DRUGS AND CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES**

The use of illicit drugs and the misuse of chemical substances is wrong and harmful to the health of students. The district supports legislation intended to eliminate substance abuse in the schools (The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act—1986). Disciplinary sanctions up to and including suspension, a recommendation for expulsion, and referral for prosecution will be imposed on students who violate school drug policies and rules. The following are prohibited:

- Manufacturing, possessing, using, selling, or distributing illegal drugs, marijuana, drug paraphernalia, alcoholic beverages, or illicit chemical substances.
- Being under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, or chemical not intended by the manufacturer for ingestion.
- The possession, sale, distribution, misuse, and/or use of tobacco, lookalike drugs, steroid drugs, or performance enhancing drugs.
- Distributing, selling, or improperly using over the counter medicines, prescription drugs, or substances not intended for improper body absorption or ingestion.
- Behavior which jeopardizes personal safety, or the health and safety of others, including spraying cologne in hallways.

## **PROPERTY**

- Theft of property from students, school staff, or the school.
- Possession of stolen property.
- Misuse of books, materials, facilities, and/or equipment.
- Defacing, damaging, vandalizing, or destroying school or personal property.
- Trespassing or unauthorized entering or presence in a school building or facility.
- Misuse of driving and parking privileges.
- Gambling while under the jurisdiction of the school.
- Loitering on or around school property.

## **ATTENDANCE**

- Violating compulsory attendance laws and regulations.
- Persistent tardiness
- Skipping school, a class, or classes.
- Leaving school without prior arrangements with the school and parent/ legal guardian.
- Failure to report to a class or classes, required assemblies, and scheduled areas for study.
- Failure to attend school on a continuous and consecutive basis.
- Violating the attendance policy and the rules of the school district and attendance rules of the school.

## **OTHER**

- Disruptive behavior in the classrooms or school facilities.
- The use of electronic entertainment devices other than prescribed by the school.
- Insolent or defiant behavior toward faculty and/or support staff.
- The commission or participation in unlawful activities defined by the State of Michigan; or the violation of local laws and ordinances while in a school building, on school property, at or enroute to school-sponsored events.

# **DISCIPLINE—RULES AND REGULATIONS**

## **DEFINITION OF THE SUPPORT AND DISCIPLINE PROCESS**

Students have the responsibility to comply with all of the rules of the Code of Conduct and Discipline established by the school and the school district. No student has the right to disobey rules established for responsible conduct and a safe and effective learning environment.

School faculty members have the responsibility to understand and enforce student rules of conduct, school regulation and assist students in achieving responsible behaviors in the classroom and in the school. Parents have the responsibility and opportunity to work together with the school staff and administration during the support and discipline process. This parental involvement is essential to the educational and emotional development and success of the child.

## **DEFINITION OF THE SUPPORT AND DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES**

Discipline should be progressive in attempts to change the improper behavior of students. Progressive discipline means that constructive assistance and progressive consequences should be established for those students who continue to violate the same school rule, as well as those students who continue to demonstrate disruptive behaviors in the classroom and in the school. Progressive penalties stated for specific infractions in the high school code of conduct are for the purpose of changing improper behavior.

## **DEFINITION OF THE CLASSROOM SUPPORT AND DISCIPLINE**

It is the responsibility of each teacher to maintain a classroom environment for effective learning and responsible citizenship. Students who interfere with the educational process will receive support action such as notes, calls to parents, parent conferences, disciplinary referrals, or detentions.

## **DETENTION**

Students may be assigned, detentions. These may be during lunch in the ISS room or after school.

**Lunch Detention:** If a student's behavior warrants a discipline referral and the administrator assigns a lunch detention, the following will take place:

1. The student will be assigned a lunch detention on the next day. Parents will be notified of the date and details.
2. Students must arrive to the ISS room for lunch detention immediately and are expected to have schoolwork. Students who are not scheduled for a detention are not permitted to enter or otherwise disrupt the ISS room during detention.
3. If the student is in school and he/she does not attend or arrives late to a lunch detention, the student will be assigned an additional detention leaving two lunch detentions to be served. Students who skip a second or third assigned lunch detention will be assigned ISS.

**Missing Work:** Completing assignments not only develops responsibility in students, but most importantly provides practice and application as students work toward mastery of state and national learning standards. Therefore, River Valley will do all we can to help students develop a sense of PRIDE in their work.

1. Lunch detentions may be assigned for students who have non-absence-related missing work.
2. Students assigned lunch detention for missing work can have the detention canceled by turning in the missing assignment(s) before first hour on the next school day.
3. Students who are assigned lunch detention for missing work will not have anything placed in their discipline file.

**Detention After-School:** Classroom teachers may assign after school detention for up to two hours, for student discipline, missing work, and academic support purposes. In all cases, communication from school to home will take place via phone call, email, or a mailed letter and transportation responsibilities will be addressed.

### **DUE PROCESS**

When disciplinary action is taken against a student by a teacher or administrator, students have the following rights: to be informed of the reason for the action, to present any facts that will support their defense, to have a hearing to discuss both sides of the issue and/or the appropriateness of the action.

## **RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM STUDENTS:**

- Regular attendance.
- Arrive on time to school and to each class.
- Show respect for other students as well as any and all school personnel.
- Use of proper and appropriate language at all times.
- Taking responsibility of self-discipline and controlling one's own conduct.
- Behave in a manner that protects the health and safety of themselves and others.

### **WHAT IS NOT EXPECTED FROM STUDENTS**

**Assaults**—The Michigan School Code mandates that the Board of Education take the following disciplinary actions for students in grades 6 or above who engage in physical assault or verbal assault at school:

- Bullying
- Physical assault: Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to another through force or violence
  - school employee, volunteer, or contractor—permanent expulsion. (Subject to appeal for reinstatement after 180 days).
  - another student—suspension up to 180 school days.
- Verbal assault: any statement or act, oral or written, which can reasonably be expected to induce in another person(s) an apprehension of danger of bodily injury or harm. Bomb threats and similar threats directed at a school building, school property, or school related event are included as verbal assaults. Verbal assault of a school employee, volunteer, or contractor—suspension up to 180 school days.

### **BULLYING DEFINED:**

Per the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real

or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
- Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Consequences of bullying range from warning to expulsion, depending on the severity of the offense and the number of offenses. Students who feel that they may be victims of bullying should report their concerns to the counselor, social worker, or other office staff member immediately. See page 56 of this Student Handbook or refer to RVSD BOE policy #5517.01 for the entire RVSD Bullying Policy.

### **CARELESS, UNSAFE USE OF VEHICLES BROUGHT TO SCHOOL:**

Driving a vehicle to school is a privilege and requires both parent's and principal's permission. The procedure for gaining permission is:

1. Pick up the form at the office and complete, with proper signatures, a parent's permission form. The form requires agreement by the parent to assume full responsibility for the safe and proper driving of their child on school property.
2. Return form and receive principal's permission, purchase parking permit and parking space (for a nominal fee) identification tag as designated by the administration.
3. Leave vehicle in student parking lot until end of the school day.

Failure to follow the above procedure is grounds for suspension from school and the loss of privilege to drive to school.

### **CYBER-BULLYING DEFINED:**

The use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior by an individual or group, which is intended to harm others. A school may discipline students for engaging in cyber-bullying conduct off-campus when it is found that there is a direct impact on the school. Students who engage in cyber-bullying may be subject to prosecution under the Michigan Criminal Code and/or the Michigan Stalking Law. Upon knowledge of cyber-bullying River Valley will notify the parent of the students involved and possibly notify law enforcement.

**DISRESPECT/DEFIANCE/NON-COMPLIANCE:**

Student engages in brief or low-intensity failure to respond to adult requests. The authority of an adult supervisor must be recognized (i.e. failure to identify oneself when asked to do so by an adult employee). Students must accompany any adult supervising any school activity when asked to do so. Students are expected to follow and respect the reasonable directions of teachers, administrators and adult supervisors, etc. First time, failure to cooperate results in a minimum Wednesday Detention after school and notification to parents. After that, progressive suspension guidelines follow.

**DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT:**

Student engages in low-intensity but inappropriate disruption. Each student has a right to an education. Those who repeatedly disrupt a class will run the risk of being removed from that class. This includes behavior at school-sponsored events such as football and basketball games. Poor behavior, which includes repeated loitering in the halls, will result in disbarment from attending these activities.

**EXTORTION/BLACKMAIL/COERCION:**

Student engages in the use of force or intimidation to gain money or compliance.

**GANGS AND GANG RELATED ACTIVITIES:**

The presence of gangs and gang-related activity is contrary to the health, safety and welfare of the students and staff of the School District and the District as a whole. That presence materially disrupts the classroom and involves substantial disorder and/or invasion of the rights of others. Therefore, the presence of or student involvement in gangs or gang-related activities on school grounds or at school-related activities is strictly prohibited.

**HARASSMENT:**

It is the policy of this District to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment based upon a person's statutorily protected status, including but not necessarily limited to race, age, sex, religion, national origin, weight, height, or disability. No board member, staff member, visitor, contractor, employment applicant, or student of this District shall be subjected to any form of harassment or intimidation. (See page 46 of Student Handbook, or refer to RVSD BOE Policy #5517).

**INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE:**

Student engages in low-intensity instance of inappropriate language.

**INTERFERENCE WITH THE SCHOOL PROGRAM:**

Students will not be allowed to interfere in any way with the educational program. The right of each student to learn in a suitable environment will be preserved.

**LOITERING:**

Student is hanging around when he/she is to be somewhere else.



### **PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION:**

Student engages in inappropriate, consensual (as defined by school) verbal and/or physical gestures, contact of a sexual nature to another student/adult. Setting a good example in school is important. Use reasonable judgment in how you want other people to see you. Public displays of affection such as kissing are not appropriate behavior in school. Middle school students are to refrain from ALL aspects of PDA (public display of affection, including holding hands).

### **SMOKING**

Students are not permitted to POSSESS, smoke or chew tobacco on school property or at school-sponsored events or activities. State of Michigan Public Act 140 (1993) made River Valley Middle/High School and all public schools in Michigan a smoke-free environment.

**Vaping/Electronic Cigarettes:** Possessing or using electronic cigarettes at school is prohibited on school property or at any school sponsored event. Students found using or possessing these devices or any items or substances to be used in these devices, such as e-juice or liquid, on school property are subject to a minimum of 2 days OSS.

E-Cigarettes and vaporizers will be confiscated, and not returned. The district has the option to turn the device over to law enforcement. If the device is tested and an illegal substance is found, the student will also face additional discipline per RVSD BOE policy #5530.

### **UNSAFE PHYSICAL PLAY**

Student engages in non-serious, but inappropriate physical contact.

### **USE, POSSESSION, SALE, OR DISTRIBUTION OF DRUGS PROHIBITED**

The use, possession, sale or distribution of drugs, including alcohol, inhalants and look-alike drugs, (look-alike drugs means a substance that is not a controlled substance or is not a drug for which a prescription is required under law, which by dosage unit appearance including color, shape, size, or markings and/or by representative made, would lead a reasonable person to believe that the substance is a controlled one.), on school property or at school sponsored events away from school property is strictly prohibited and is serious misconduct which justifies the most severe disciplinary action in response to any violation. Any evidence of behavior or conduct on school property or school sponsored events consistent with previous consumption shall be considered a violation of this policy (as per RVSD BOE Policy #5530).

### **VANDALISM**

Defacing or destruction of school property or property of another. Violators will be asked to make full restitution including labor and up-to-date replacement costs for damages, minimum two (2) day suspension and possible police referral. Extensive vandalism and/or destruction of school property may result in

a recommendation for appropriate action to the Board of Education. Students involved in horseplay or inappropriate behavior and who unintentionally destroy school property must make full restitution for damages including labor and up-to-date replacement costs.

## **SUSPENSION**

Suspension constitutes a temporary denial of the rights to attend classes and is usually used as a heightened means of attempting to correct a student's behavior pattern. It is required that the district considers the following factors prior to suspending or expelling a student (except in the case of a zero tolerance expulsion):

1. The pupil's age.
2. The pupil's disciplinary history.
3. Whether the pupil is a student with a disability.
4. The seriousness of the violation or behavior committed by the pupil.
5. Whether the violation or behavior committed by the pupil threatened the safety of any pupil or staff member.
6. Whether restorative justice will be used to address the violation or behavior committed by the pupil. (NOTE: This language does NOT require a district to use restorative justice or even have such a system in place.)
7. Whether a lesser intervention would properly address the violation or behavior committed by the pupil.

There are currently two types of suspension, In-School (ISS), and Out-of School (OSS).

**In-School Suspension (ISS):** A student may be required to complete the consequences of misbehavior by remaining in a designated room and completing assigned classroom academic tasks. ISS, in lieu of out-of school suspension, will provide a student the opportunity to participate in school and to pursue academic study. Students who are assigned ISS but do not attend the day assigned will be reassigned ISS for the following scheduled day.

## **DETENTION/ISS ROOM RULES**

1. Students assigned to ISS for the day will report to the ISS room at the start of the school day. Students who arrive late to ISS will be assigned a lunch detention to be served the following day.
2. Students will be assigned a seat when they report to the ISS room. Students must remain in their seats while in ISS.
3. Students who are not scheduled for a detention are not permitted to enter or otherwise disrupt the ISS room.
4. A sack lunch will be brought to the room for those students wishing to buy a lunch. Hot lunches cannot be brought into the ISS room.
5. Bathroom breaks will be given at 9:10 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 1:30 p.m.

6. While a student is in the ISS room, there is to be no communication with anyone. Students must follow directions the first time they are given. If a student needs to talk to the supervisor, the student must raise his/her hand until the supervisor recognizes the student.
7. If a student is disruptive or sleeping in ISS, he/she will be warned one time. If a student is disruptive or sleeping a second time, he/she will be assigned an additional ISS. At this time, students will be required to call home to be picked up by their parents.
8. If a student needs to leave ISS to go to his/her locker or a classroom, he/she will be escorted by a staff member when one is available.
9. Food and beverages are only permitted during lunchtime. Students are only permitted to drink water at other times.
10. Students must surrender all electronic devices (phone, mp3 player, etc.) to the supervisor upon arrival. Devices will be returned at the end of the day.
11. Students who are sent to the ISS room will only be allowed to use the computer for schoolwork purposes. All students must have enough work to keep them busy while in the room.
12. Students will be allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities on days when they are in ISS. (Refer to athletics handbook for sports.)
13. Students who fail to comply with these rules will be subject to further discipline.
14. Students who are removed from a single class due to a teacher-imposed suspension will be sent to ISS for the remainder of the period. These students must first report directly to the office and present the ISS pass filled out by the teacher. These students will be expected to do schoolwork while in the ISS room.

### **ISS VIOLATIONS**

1. Cheating/Plagiarism - 1st offense, refer to Academic Honesty Guideline
2. Closed Campus Violation, refer to Attendance Guidelines
3. Dishonesty - Lying to a staff member
4. Excessive Tardiness, refer to Attendance Guidelines
5. Forgery/False Representation—Student has signed a person’s name without the person’s permission
6. Insubordination-Student engages in repeated refusal to follow directions, talks back and/or delivers socially rude interactions with a staff member
7. ISS Rules Violation
8. Intimidation - Any minor act of intimidation toward students and/or staff
9. Obscene/Lewd/Vulgar or Abusive Speech (1st Offense)-Verbal messages that include swearing, name calling or use of words in an inappropriate way
10. Parking Lot (2nd Offense)-Being in the student parking lot during school
11. Repeated Uncooperative Conduct
12. Skipping Class, refer to Attendance Guidelines
13. Skipping ISS
14. Teacher Imposed Suspension, refer to In-School Suspension Rules #14
15. Technology Violation (Internet), refer to Computer Technology and Networks

16. Technology Violation - Administrator's discretion
17. Unauthorized entry and assisting in unauthorized entry into the building
18. Water Toys-possession or use of squirting devices or water balloons
19. Vandalism (minor)
20. Other Behavior-any other undesirable behavior, which in the opinion of the principal is serious misconduct, warrants suspension.

### **OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (OSS)**

In a classroom, elsewhere on school premises, or a school bus or other school-related vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held on school premises River Valley School District administrators and assistant(s) continue to have delegated authority to suspend students for behaviors related to this policy for a period of ten (10) school days as enumerated in the policy book. The Board in a due process hearing shall hear recommendations for longer term suspensions and expulsions. The Superintendent shall ensure that all incidents of assault are reported as required by law.

All disciplinary consequences under this policy shall be applied in a manner consistent with applicable student discipline procedures, as well as all federal and state laws for students determined to be eligible for special education programs/services or reasonable accommodation of the disability.

Since suspensions are not unexcused absences, we give the students the opportunity to make up the work under the following guidelines. Students who are suspended for only a day or two may pick up the work before their departure and complete it as directed by the teacher. It is the student's responsibility to ask for and make up the work missed. Homework requests are submitted for students who are suspended for 3 or more days and may be picked up by the parent or guardian the day after the suspension. Under extenuating circumstances the teacher in conjunction with parents, counselor and school administration may recommend additional time for the student to make up the work. Suspensions (long term) administered through the Board of Education are exempt from the make-up work guidelines and will follow Board of Education Policy.

The building principal or his designated agent may suspend the student from school whenever that student is adjudged guilty of persistent disobedience, gross misdemeanor, or whenever the interests of the school demand such action, such as behavior that interferes with the orderly operation of the school.

Students whose actions on school property or at a school activity constitute a violation of local ordinances or the laws of the State of Michigan shall be immediately remanded to police custody and suspended from school.

Upon suspending a student, the principal or designee shall attempt to notify the parents by telephone and shall expeditiously transmit a letter including: 1) the reasons for disciplinary action; 2) provision for a parent conference; 3) the appellate procedure available to the Superintendent of Schools and through him to the Board of Education, which has final authority concerning all suspensions from school. In the event of appeal, a written notification of the final action will be transmitted to all parties.

### **SUSPENSION GUIDELINES—NON-COMPLIANCE**

Suspension is usually used as a final means of attempting to correct a student's behavior. Suspension from school includes suspension from ALL extra-curricular events as well, for the duration of the suspension. A student is not to be on school property while serving OSS. Ordinarily, a parental conference is held before the student is allowed to return to school. A student faces immediate suspension and possible expulsion for:

1. Assault/Fight—Involvement in a fight or assault. (minimum 2 days OSS)
2. Burglary/Theft—Student is in possession of, having passed on, or being responsible for removing someone's else's property.(minimum 2 days OSS)
3. Careless driving on school property. (1st offense: parent contact; 2nd offense: minimum 1 day OSS plus possible loss of driving privileges.
4. Explosive Materials—Possession/use of explosive materials (minimum 5 days OSS with possible recommendation for expulsion).
5. Fire Extinguisher—Touching/tampering with a fire extinguisher or fire alarm. (minimum of 5 days OSS and possible police referral)
6. Indecency/Obscene Behavior—Student engages in behavior that is immodest, socially unacceptable, or offensive to manners or morals. Committing an obscene or indecent act. (minimum 1 day OSS)
7. Intimidation—Intimidation of school personnel by verbal threats, threats of harm, trespassing and vandalism, either here, at their homes or anywhere else. This includes telephone pranks. (as per RVSD BOE policy # 3362.01)
8. ISS Rules Violation—Major violation
9. Laser pointer—possession or use of a laser pointer. (minimum 2 days OSS with possible recommendation for expulsion)
10. Lighters/Matches—Possession of matches, lighters, or flammable devices. (minimum 1 day OSS)
11. Obscene/Lewd/Vulgar or Abusive Speech—Verbal messages that include swearing, name calling or use of words in an inappropriate way, beyond first offense (minimum 1 day OSS)
12. Obscene materials—possession of obscene materials. (minimum 2 days OSS)
13. Possession—the possession, use or sale of intoxicants, drugs (as per RVSD BOE policy # 5530) and possible police referral.
14. Repeated uncooperative conduct. (minimum 3 days OSS)
15. Smoking—Smoking or possession of tobacco on school property (minimum 2 days OSS).
16. Vandalism—student participates in an activity that results in destruction

or disfigurement of property. Examples of defacing property include, writing on lockers, walls and doorways and interfering with ceiling tile, etc. (minimum 2 days OSS).

17. Weapons—possession of a knife, blade or other weapons (minimum 5 days OSS with recommendation for expulsion).
18. Any other undesirable behavior, which in the opinion of the principal is serious misconduct, warrants suspension (minimum 2 days OSS).

Appropriate demerits will be assigned based on the type of detention served or the amount of the suspension given. Parents will be informed in writing of their son/daughter's current demerit status following any discipline action resulting in detention or suspension.

### **TEACHER—IMPOSED SUSPENSIONS**

Teachers in the River Valley School District are authorized to immediately remove and suspend a student from that specific class, subject, or activity for up to one (1) school day when the student's behavior materially interferes with the teacher's ability to effectively teach or manage the class, subject or activity at school. The teacher shall immediately report the suspension and the reason for the suspension to the school principal and send the pupil to the school principal or the school's principal designee for appropriate action.

### **PROCEDURES – STUDENTS/TEACHERS**

1. A teacher may suspend a student from class, subject or activity for up to one (1) school day for certain conduct as specified in the Code of Conduct. The teacher shall immediately send the student to the principal or his designee and specify the reason for the suspension as specified in the Student Code of Conduct.
2. A student receiving a teacher-imposed suspension shall not return to the class (for that day), subject, or activity from which the student was suspended, without the consent of teacher and the principal or his designee, unless permitted by concurrence of both the teacher and the principal or designee.
3. At the discretion of the principal or designee, the student receiving a teacher-imposed suspension from a class, subject, or activity may be permitted to attend other classes, subjects, or activities if the student's conduct does not otherwise qualify for a multiple day suspension or expulsion in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.
4. As soon as possible after a suspension under this section, the teacher shall contact a parent regarding the suspension.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## ACADEMIC ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

*Please refer to the Athletic Handbook.*

## ACADEMIC HONESTY GUIDELINE

We at River Valley High School believe that an essential element of our intellectual goal of academic excellence is honesty. Academic honesty is based on respect for individual achievement that lies at the heart of any school. This requires that students produce work that is completely their own or that correctly acknowledges the contributions of other people and sources.

### **Examples of Academic Dishonesty:**

- Using notes, aids, or another student's assistance to complete a test, project or other assignment in a way other than what the teacher has allowed.
- Looking at another student's test, answer sheet, or other materials during a test period.
- Copying from or allowing another student to copy from a test, homework, or course work which is not intended to be group work.
- All types of plagiarism including:
- Omitting quotation marks for directly quoted material (whether from a book, magazine, internet source, or other writer).
- Omitting bibliographical references either in the text or on a source page at the end of the document.
- Using an author's ideas by paraphrasing (rewording and/or rearranging words and ideas) without proper citation.

### **Responsibilities:**

- The student is expected to complete his/her own work: tests, quizzes, projects, reports, homework assignments, essays, papers, and in-class assignments. Also, students will not participate in another student's academic dishonesty in any way.
- The parent is expected to understand this policy, encourage students' full compliance with it, and have appropriate academic expectations. Parents should support their students while not completing academic work for them.
- The teachers of River Valley High School are expected to review and enforce this policy with students. In an attempt to be proactive, teachers will provide correct citation methods for outside sources and stress the need for individual thought and productivity. Teachers will also serve on disciplinary action committees if needed.
- The administration is expected to support academic honesty with students, staff and parents. Administrators will serve on disciplinary action committees.

### **Consequences:**

Offenses against the Academic Honesty Guideline may result in removal or omission from membership in honor societies and/or other award programs in addition to the following:

- First Offense: Zero credit for the assignment and in-school suspension. The parent and student will be notified of possible consequences should more offenses occur.
- Second and subsequent offenses: Further record of the offense and possible loss of credit for the marking period or semester dependent upon a disciplinary action committee decision. The committee will be made up of the department members in which, the offense occurred (ex. English Department members comprise the committee if a student plagiarized an essay for an English class) along with an administrator.

### **ACTIVITIES**

Each student at River Valley Middle/High School is encouraged to take part in some activity. The following is a list of active organizations:

- Astronomy Club
- Athletics
- Business Professionals of America (BPA)
- Chess Club
- Culinary Club
- Drama Club
- Foreign Language Club
- National Honor Society
- Ski Club
- Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)
- Student Congress

Students are to be in school for the entire day if they wish to participate in any activities taking place after school. The principal or his designee must approve exceptions to this rule. Examples are medical and dental appointments for the time needed to be there.

### **ADMINISTRATION SUMMARY**

The school administration reserves the right to establish fair and reasonable rules and guidelines for items and occurrences requiring action that are not covered in the Student/Parent handbook, which may arise. In all cases, rules, regulations, and possible consequences shall be as consistent as possible in previously established rules, regulations and consequences for similar incidents. All steps will be covered under policy umbrella.

### **AGE OF MAJORITY**

*"See Attendance Policy"*

### **AMENDMENTS TO STUDENT EDUCATIONAL RECORDS** (BOE Policy 8330)

The Board will comply with a legitimate request for access to a student's records within a reasonable period of time but not more than forty-five (45) days after receiving the requestor within such shorter period as may be



applicable to students with disabilities. Upon the request of the viewer, a record shall be reproduced, unless said record is copyrighted, and the viewer may be charged a fee equivalent to the cost of handling and reproduction. Based upon reasonable requests, viewers of education records will receive explanation and interpretation of the records.

The Board shall maintain a record of those persons to whom information about a student has been disclosed. Such disclosure records will indicate the student, person viewing the record, information disclosed, date of disclosure, and date parental/eligible student consent was obtained (if required).

### **ASSEMBLIES**

There are two kinds of assemblies, one for the making of noise (pep sessions) and the other for listening and remaining quiet (all other assemblies). Neither a speaker nor an entertainer needs to be embarrassed about the behavior of our students attending an assembly. Therefore, shouting, whistling, and other such distractions will not be tolerated.

Our students are expected to display courteous and polite behavior at all assemblies. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action up to and including the denial of attendance from future assemblies.

### **BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS**

Blood-borne Pathogens: The District is subject to regulations from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to restrict the spread of hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immune deficiency virus (HIV) in the workplace. These regulations are designed to protect employees of the District who are, or could be, exposed to blood or other contaminated bodily fluids while performing their job duties. Because of the very serious consequences of contracting HBV or HIV, the District is committed to taking the necessary precautions to protect both students and staff from its spread in the school environment. Part of the Federally-mandated procedures includes a requirement that the District request the person who was bleeding to consent to be tested for HBV and HIV. This information would then be provided both to the exposed employee and the treating physician to determine proper medical treatment.

The law does not require parents or guardians to grant permission for the examination of their child's blood, but it does require the District to request that consent. Although we expect that incidents of exposure will be few, we wanted to notify parents of these requirements ahead of time. That way, if the situation does develop you will understand the reason for our request and will have had an opportunity to consider it in advance. These are serious diseases, and we sincerely hope that through proper precautions and cooperation we can prevent them from spreading. (Board policy 8453.01)

## **BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY LOCATION**

A copy of the River Valley Board of Education Policy Handbook is available for your review and perusal in our media center during school hours and also on our website. Those individuals who need to review such a document are asked to call the Middle/High School Office and make an appointment.

## **BUILDING USE**

Regular hours for teachers are from 7:30 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. Students and athletes who wish to be in the building before or after these times must make special arrangements to have a teacher or coach present (if no coach or teacher is present, students must be outside the building).

## **BUS SAFETY REGULATIONS**

### **TRANSPORTATION RULES AND CONSEQUENCES**

#### **Bus Rules:**

- Follow directions.
- No teasing or abusive language.
- Stay in assigned seats, keeping hands to self.
- Maintain acceptable noise level.
- Respect others and school property.

#### **Non-Compliance:**

- Verbal warning.
- First written warning—goes home to parent/guardian and returned with parent's/guardian's signature. Parental/guardian contact by transportation supervisor.
- Second written warning—possible student suspension from bus and a possible conference with the parent(s) and/or one (1) day of ISS. Conference involves transportation supervisor, driver and parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Third written warning—suspension from riding bus indefinitely, (1-10 days). Mandatory Conference with principal or his designee, transportation supervisor, driver and parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Fourth written warning—recommendation to Superintendent to suspend student from riding the bus for a period longer than 10 days, a semester, or the remainder of the school year.

All suspensions from the buses include routes, extra-curricular, field trips and athletic buses.

### **NOTE: IN THE EVENT OF A SERIOUS VIOLATION, A STUDENT MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE BUS AND SUSPENDED AT ANYTIME**

#### **Serious Offenses, But NOT Limited To:**

- Vulgar or profane language
- Use, possession or under the influence of tobacco or unauthorized substances
- Defiance, Disrespect of Driver
- Interfering with the safety of others

- Vandalism
- Fighting
- Bullying and Harassment

**Bus Passes:** It occasionally becomes necessary for a student to get off at a different stop or to ride a bus other than the one they normally ride. For your child’s safety, bus drivers will not allow students to get off at a different stop or ride a different bus without a bus pass. Students may obtain a bus pass from the office with a written note or called notification from the parent. Students who wish to ride a different take-home bus may do so if they have taken written permission from their parent or guardian to the principal (or designee), and can present a signed “bus pass” from the principal’s office to the bus driver. Bus students are expected to return home by bus unless the office is notified otherwise by parent.

**NOTE: INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL OF CHOICE STUDENTS**

Bus transportation may be provided for school-of-choice students on the days that the district of residence is closed or delayed due to adverse weather conditions. An alternate location will be designated for the pickup and drop off of school-of-choice students in your area if road conditions allow.

In order to transport school-of-choice students through a delayed or closed district into an open district, the main route (not alternate route) must be considered passable by the transportation department, with possible consultation with Berrien County Road Commission and Sheriff.

**CAFETERIA GUIDELINES**

The River Valley School District offers a hot lunch program and a breakfast program in all schools. A free and reduced meal program is available for families who qualify. Application forms are passed out to all students on the day they register and are also available in the school office. All applications are kept confidential.

A few simple rules to follow while in the cafeteria:

- Keep an orderly line—no cutting.
- Pick up after yourself.
- Do not sit on tables.
- This is no place for throwing food or debris of any kind. Failure to pick up materials from tables and the floor, and failure to return trays and silverware to their proper places will be disciplined, which could include disbarment from the cafeteria, detention, and suspension from school.
- Students are expected to help maintain a safe, clean and orderly environment.

## CELL PHONES /ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones/electronic devices are not permitted to be used during class time unless permission is granted by the teacher. Students are to silence and/or turn off the device and put their device in the designated area of the classroom upon entry at the beginning of the period. The device must remain in the designated area for the duration of the period. Students violating classroom technology rules will have their device confiscated by the teacher. Students found to be using any electronic communications device to in any way to send or receive personal messages, data, or information that would contribute to or constitute cheating on tests or examinations shall be subject to discipline and the device shall be confiscated and not returned until a parent conference with **the administration** has been held.

Cell phones that have picture-taking ability are discouraged; however, the following specific guidelines apply to these phones:

1. They are not allowed in locker rooms or dressing rooms at any time.
2. Students cannot take pictures of others without their prior permission.
3. Students are not allowed to connect their camera phone to any District-owned PC.
4. Any phone/camera device being used for any illegal purpose or being used in a manner that violates the Student Code of Conduct will be confiscated pending, where appropriate, parent(s)/guardian(s) conference. Where appropriate, police authorities may be contacted.

Devices operated in violation of this rule, or for any illegal purpose, shall be confiscated and not returned until, where appropriate, parent(s)/guardian(s) conference has been held. Repeated violations will result in permission being withheld to use or possess the device(s). **Cellular phones are to remain off during any lockdown and/or emergency situations.**

Walkie-talkies either long or short range, portable CB radios, portable "ham" radios, portable scanning devices, or portable games or toys that transmit a signal more than 20 feet or through walls, shall not be allowed in any circumstance unless specific permission for possession or use of the device has been granted by the building principal.

Use of cellular telephones during after school activities is at the discretion of the coach, advisor, or other adult in charge. However, the use of cellular telephones in areas where personal privacy is a reasonable expectation (i.e. locker rooms, showers, and restroom, etc.) or on school buses while being transported to and from school is prohibited.

Usage of cameras, radios, tape decks, pagers, or noisemakers are not permitted during the school day (from the time the first bell rings to start class to the end of the school day).

### **CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE OFFICER**

Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against or denied equal opportunity or access to the District's programs, activities or services may contact the District's Civil Rights Coordinator: Mr. Patrick Breen, MHS Principal, 15480 Three Oaks Road, Three Oaks Michigan 49128, 269-756-7872.

### **CLASSROOM GUIDELINES (GENERAL)**

It is the responsibility of each teacher to maintain a classroom environment for effective learning and responsible citizenship. The items that follow are to serve as general classroom guidelines. Each staff member will provide in written form and review their individual class rules in addition to these.

- Stop talking when the teacher asks.
- Pupils who have been absent should obtain the assignments, if possible, before the next class and be prepared for the day's work upon their return. Otherwise, one day's absence amounts to two days' loss of time.
- Always have the necessary books, materials and equipment ready to work.
- Backpacks are not allowed in any classroom during class time. This does not include the school-issued laptop bags.
- Please help to maintain a neat and clean classroom at all times.

### **CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

As part of our District's ongoing effort to improve instruction and student learning, District staff and other instructional coaches will conduct occasional classroom observations to collect data on instruction and learning. This observational data may be utilized to develop appropriate instructional plans to improve student learning. Information from these observations will be shared with parents/guardians during the intervention process. Any questions regarding classroom observations should be directed to the building administration.

### **COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND NETWORKS**

Before any students may enhance their school career through participation in the school's computer network, they and their parents must sign an agreement, which defines the conditions under which the students may participate. All students will be provided with a login and password. If you are in the system in unauthorized areas, the following will occur:

- Privilege of the Internet may be taken away for a length of time as determined by building administration.
- Non-compliance may result in suspension or expulsion, as determined by the building principal.
- Criminal charges may be filed.
- Payment for all damages to equipment.
- Students must have signed *Acceptable Use Rules* on file before using the River Valley School District Local Network/Internet.

## COURSE CHANGES

Only a counselor may make course changes, when requested prior to the beginning of a semester. If the class enrollment size can be maintained, the student, his/her parent, a counselor and teachers affected by the change, will meet to determine if a change is to take place.

Changes will NOT be made because of personal judgments or feelings about instructors or classes. After the second week of the semester, no changes may be made unless verified and agreed upon by all the teachers involved and have approval of the principal or his designee. To avoid errors, decisions on classes should be thoroughly investigated during the time of course selection process during second semester.

## DANCES

Dances are scheduled throughout the year to provide students an opportunity to interact with new people and to have fun with their friends in a supervised social setting. All school rules, regulations and eligibility (if students receive two (2) F's in any one marking period, they will be ineligible to participate for the next marking period), also when a student receives eight (8) demerits during a semester they will lose the privilege of participating in any dances for the remainder of that current semester. These eligibility rules are in affect for all dances including Homecoming, Winter Fest and Prom, just as with any other extra-curricular activities.

1. No open dances. Only currently enrolled River Valley High School students and their registered guests are eligible to attend dances.
2. Students are to have a valid River Valley Middle/High School I.D. **River Valley students and guests without a valid River Valley Middle/High School I.D. and will be subject to an additional cost to the dance.**
3. Students who wish to bring a guest must obtain and complete the necessary guest form from the main office and be responsible for the behavior of the guest. Dance guests shall be no older than 20 years of age. The guest form must be completed and turned into the office two-days before the dance. Guest must present I.D. at the dance when entering. Your guest will be required to follow school rules.
4. Students will only be admitted to dances one-half hour after an athletic event ends or one hour after a dance's starting time in all other cases.
5. All regularly scheduled High School dances must end by 11:30 with cleanup completed by 12:00 midnight.
6. All entertaining groups will be subject to all dance rules.
7. There must be at least four chaperones, two of which shall be teachers.
8. Once a student leaves a dance, she or he will not be allowed to reenter the dance.
9. High school students are not permitted to attend Middle School dances.
10. Prom is open to juniors and seniors only—individuals wishing to bring a guest must complete the guest form. It is recommended that in regards to bringing

guests, the students check with the principal or his designee with ample time prior to making major financial commitments and purchases for this event.

11. All regularly scheduled Middle School dances must end by 9:00 p.m. with clean-up completed by 9:30 p.m.
12. Middle School students may not leave the dance early unless a parent is there to pick them up.
13. Middle School students are not permitted to attend High School dances, including Homecoming, Winter Fest and Prom.
14. Middle School dances are for River Valley Middle School students only. No guests.
15. Attire for in-school dances must comply with school dress code.
16. No sexually explicit dancing. Students are to adhere to the dancing guideline, "Face to Face, leave some space". A failure to abide by this rule will result in the student being dismissed from the dance.

### **DEFICIENCY REPORTS**

Written notice of student academic deficiency will be posted on the grade viewer. For those parents not able to access the gradebook electronically our office will mail out reports midway between marking periods if contact/request is made by parent.

### **DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The River Valley BOE designates as student "directory information" a student's name; address; telephone number; date and place of birth; major field of study; participation in officially-recognized activities and sports; height and weight, if a member of an athletic team; dates of attendance; date of graduation; awards received; honor rolls; scholarships; telephone numbers only for inclusion in school or PTO directories. The Board will make the above information available upon a legitimate request unless a parent, guardian, or adult student notifies the School in writing with 10 days (refer to Policy 8330) from the date of this notification that he/she will not permit distribution of any or all such information. Information will not be provided to any organization for any profit-making purpose.

### **DRESS CODE AND GROOMING**

While fashion changes, the reason for being in school does not. Students are in school to learn and our dress code is intended to create unity, strengthen school spirit and pride, and focus attention upon learning and away from distraction. Any fashion (dress, accessory, hairstyle) that disrupts the educational process or presents a safety risk will not be permitted. Personal expression is permitted within these general guidelines.

If a student has selected a manner of appearance that is beyond mere freedom of expression and disrupts the educational process or presents risks to themselves or to others, they may be removed from the educational setting. Students are expected to wear appropriate clothing.

**Unacceptable attire includes:**

1. Clothing that is revealing. (i.e. front or rear cleavage, undergarments, midriff), sexually suggestive or transparent.
2. Clothing with tears or holes above finger-tip length when arms are extended to the floor.
3. Shorts, skirts, or “skorts” must be fingertip-length when arms are extended to the floor.
4. Spaghetti straps, halter tops or camisoles unless worn under another article of clothing.
5. Cutoff shirts exposing torso or sides without clothing underneath to cover skin.
6. Bandanas, sunglasses or sweatbands.
7. Winter coats and blankets are not to be worn between the starting time and the end of the school day.
8. Additional examples of unacceptable attire include clothing, jewelry or grooming advertising prohibited substances, gangs, criminal behavior, racism, disrespect of authority, promoting violence, or inappropriate language.
9. Hoods will not be allowed to be worn up. If a garment has a hood, the hood must remain down at all times in the building.

Students who are representing River Valley High School at an official function or public event may be required to follow specific dress requirements. Usually, this applies to athletic teams, cheerleaders, bands and other such groups. The administration reserves the right to determine appropriateness of dress and take appropriate action against students dressed improperly. Students who choose to violate the dress code shall be required to change/replace clothing item, modify appearance, and/or relinquish item when requested to do so, **the administration will make an attempt to make an immediate contact with parents.** In addition, the student will receive the following consequences:

- 1st time offenders—warning with letter home to parents.
- 2nd time offenders—will result in a Wednesday detention,
- Subsequent offenders—discipline will be progressive.

**EARLY DISMISSAL FOR STUDENTS**

No student shall be dismissed early from school without approval from the principal’s office. This policy shall apply to all situations, including those in which the parent or guardian picks up the student.

**EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY**

It is the policy of the River Valley School District to provide an equal education opportunity for all students. If a person believes that he/she has been discriminated against for denied equal opportunity or access to the District’s programs, activities or services, the person may utilize the complaint procedures as outlined in BOE Policy # 2260B. The following person(s) is designated as the District’s Civil Rights Coordinator: Mr. Patrick Breen, MHS Principal, 15480 Three Oaks Road, Three Oaks Michigan 49128, 269-756-7872.



## **FERPA**

Any parent or student who believes that the School District has failed to comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) or the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (“PPRA”), may file a complaint directly with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-8520. (Board policy 8330)

## **FIRE DRILLS**

Fire drills are held at various times during and throughout the school year. The first drill of the year is held at an announced time, but subsequent drills are held without any previous warning. The drills are of vital importance in helping to understand what to do in case of emergency.

When the fire horn sounds, students from each classroom will walk out of the school in single file. After leaving the building, students remain under supervision of the teacher. While waiting outside, students will station themselves at least 150 feet from the building. Students will return to the building when the passing bell sounds. Use exits as shown on the signs in your room.

## **FOOD CONSUMPTION**

No food or liquids are to be consumed in the halls. Liquids in bottles and cans must be unopened, closed with a lid or covered tightly with a cap when in locker and halls. The drinking of beverages and consumption of food is allowed in the classroom at teacher discretion.

## **GYM USE**

No gym use before, during, or after school without proper supervision.

## **HALL CONDUCT**

Hallways can be potentially dangerous areas in the building, particularly during passing time. Because of this, running and rowdy behavior cannot be tolerated nor is it expected of our students. Disruptive behavior in the halls will result in detentions and/or suspensions. Students must have a pass if they are in the halls during class time. Hall pass violation is when student is somewhere inside the building without permission.

## **INSPECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Parents may inspect any materials used in conjunction with any such survey, analysis, or evaluation. Parents also have the right to inspect, upon written request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum of the student. Form 9130f3, Request to Inspect Instructional Materials, may be obtained from the school office.

## **LEAVING A CLASSROOM**

All students must be in their assigned classes unless they have permission from the teacher to be excused.

## **LIBRARY GUIDELINES**

**General:** The library should be conducive to studying. A quiet, orderly atmosphere shall be maintained. This is not the “social club” of the school. No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated.

**For Students:** The library is available for student use at the beginning of the day (once the school doors open to students) and after school hours unless there is a prior engagement scheduled for the facility. The times will be set at the beginning of the school year by the administration. Audiovisual equipment may not be used in the library without the librarian’s approval of its use and purpose for a classroom assignment. Violations of the above rules will mean loss of library privileges.

**Use of materials:** Books may be checked out for a three (3) week period. They may be renewed unless someone else requests them. Reference books may be kept overnight and may be checked out anytime during the day.

- Books should be returned as soon as the student is finished with them. Other students may need the materials.
- If a book is lost, the student must pay the replacement cost before a new marking period begins.
- If the book is damaged, the student will pay a fee.
- Failure to be “all clear” with the library at the end of the year will result in report card/ transcript/diploma being withheld.

## **LOCKERS**

Lockers are issued to students at the beginning of the year. **Your locker should be kept locked at all times.** Students are cautioned against giving their combinations to each other or they cannot expect their property to be safe. Each student is responsible for keeping his/her assigned locker clean both inside and outside. Students are cautioned not to keep money or other valuables in their lockers. Students can purchase locks from the school. The purchase price for locks is \$5.00. Here are some worthwhile tips to follow:

- **DO NOT SHARE YOUR COMBINATION WITH ANYONE.** Too many times things are stolen. Unfortunately, everyone cannot be trusted. You, as the student, are responsible for what is found in your locker.
- **Keep your locker locked.** There should not be an excuse for leaving it unlocked or rigged!
- Clean and rearrange things in locker frequently.
- Treat lockers with care. The doors, although metal, have limits to their use. Periodic inspection of lockers by school officials will take place unannounced.
- Any expense in cleaning or repairing a locker will be the responsibility of the individual to whom it has been assigned. The unreasonable abuse of a locker will result in the denial of use of the locker.

Non-compliance results as follows:

- (Students may face up to 2-days minimum suspension)
- Students are to stay in the locker they are assigned at the beginning of the year. A change can be made with the principal's permission only. Disciplinary action will result with anyone who does not follow this rule.

Lockers may have pictures hung inside. However, no advertisements for alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or illegal substances, or pictures of inappropriately dressed people. Items displayed in lockers and materials should be in good taste.

### **Searches of Lockers and Students**

- Searches of lockers and students shall be conducted in accordance with the rules adopted by the Board, (See BOE Policy 5771). No law enforcement officer may search any locker without a search warrant unless he has the consent of the building principal and is accompanied by the principal or designated representative.
- The School District retains continuing ownership of, and jurisdiction over, school property assigned to a specific student. Searches of such property and a student's person may be conducted and seizures made when the school administrative personnel conducting the search have a reasonable suspicion that the property contains, or that the student is in possession of items; the possession of which constitutes a violation of state or federal law, local ordinance or a rule or policy of the school or which presents a threat to the security or safety of others or may be used to disrupt the educational process. All searches may be conducted with or without a student's consent.
- In order to protect the health, safety or welfare of students under school jurisdiction, building principals or designated representatives are authorized to search students. Strip-searches shall not be conducted by school authorities.
- All searches shall be carried out in the presence of an adult witness.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

When a student loses something at school, he/she should check with the office. Lost items have also been found on buses, in the student's locker and in classes. Those places should be searched also.

### **LUNCH**

We have a closed lunch period. This means that no students are allowed to leave school property by any means. Students in the building are restricted to the C-Wing.

### **NEW STUDENTS**

To assure appropriate placement and class schedule, the parents or guardian must accompany new students. A student will be denied admittance if not accompanied by parent or legal guardian. Please call the Student Services Office for an appointment.

## **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY** (BOE Policy 2260B)

The River Valley School District Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, (including sexual orientation or transgender identity), disability, age, religion, height, weight, marital or family status, military status, ancestry, genetic information, or any other legally protected category, (collectively, “Protected Classes”), in its programs and activities, including employment opportunities. Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against or denied equal opportunity or access to the District’s programs, activities or services may contact the District’s Civil Rights Coordinator: Mr. Ryan Portenga, MHS Principal, 15480 Three Oaks Road, Three Oaks Michigan 49128, 269-756-7872.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL/CLASSROOM PARTIES**

Parties in the classroom may be held occasionally with the following provisions:

- The classroom teacher must approve and notify the principal or his designee of the party at least three days in advance.
- Students are responsible for holding the noise to a reasonable level so that other classes are not disturbed.
- Students are responsible for cleaning the room after the party.

Classroom parties are not to be held the day before a vacation, the last week of school, or on Halloween.

## **PLAGIARISM**

*Please refer to the Academic Honesty Guideline section.*

## **QUESTIONS or PROBLEMS**

We believe that direct communication when issues arise is the best mode of communication. Should questions or problems arise in your child’s classroom and you would like to resolve the issue, please observe the following procedure:

- 1st: Contact and talk to the teacher (if not resolved then);
- 2nd: Contact the principal or his designee with the teacher: A conference with the parent/guardian, teacher, and principal or his designee will be scheduled (if not resolved then);
- 3rd: Contact the principal: A conference with the parent/guardian, and principal or his designee will be scheduled (if not resolved then);
- 4th: Parent may contact the superintendent or designee. The building administrator will facilitate this conference.

## **RADIOS/ELECTRONICS**

Please refer to Cell Phones/Electronic Devices—Page 43.

## **REPORT CARDS**

Grades A, B, C, D, and F are given for achievement. An incomplete is given only if a student has a long period of absence during the marking period. The incomplete is removed at the discretion of the teacher during the next marking

period, or the work is automatically declared failing and a grade of “F” may be recorded. See “Incompletes” Policy on page 10.

Report cards are available online through PowerSchool. Parents or guardians may request a hard copy to be mailed home by contacting the middle high school office at any point during the school year. Report cards are only generated at the completion of a semester. Progress reports can be generated at any point through the parent portal on PowerSchool. Grades will be updated for progress reports at the end of each marking period as well as throughout the semester.

### **SCHOOL CLOSING**

Closing of school due to weather—severe weather conditions sometimes makes it necessary for school officials to close school. Such decisions are made early in the morning, and the information is quickly given to all local radio stations. Students should not call the school or school officials to ask if school will or will not be in session on a particular day. These telephone lines need to be kept open, and students are asked to listen to their radios for a report of school closings. The following radio stations will be notified: WHFB-AM, FM Benton Harbor; WNIL Niles; WSBT South Bend; and WIMS Michigan City.

### **NOTE: INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL OF CHOICE STUDENTS**

Bus transportation may be provided for school-of-choice students on the days that the district of residence is closed or delayed due to adverse weather conditions. An alternate location will be designated for the pick up and drop off of school-of-choice students in your area **if road conditions allow.**

**In order to transport school-of-choice students through a delayed or closed district into an open district, the main route(not alternate route) must be considered passable by the transportation department, with possible consultation with Berrien County Road Commission and Sheriff.**

### **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

The School District retains continuing ownership of, and jurisdiction over, school property assigned to a specific student. Searches of such property and a student’s person may be conducted and seizures made when the school administrative personnel conducting the search have a reasonable suspicion that the property contains, or that the student is in possession of items; the possession of which constitutes a violation of state or federal law, local ordinance or a rule or policy of the school or which presents a threat to the security or safety of others or may be used to disrupt the educational process. All searches may be conducted with or without a student’s consent.

No strip searches will be conducted by any administrator or employee, but may

be conducted, if warranted, by law enforcement officials. Any items found in the course of a search that may be evidence of school rules, state or federal law may be taken, held, or turned over to the authorities. The school reserves the right not to return items, which have been confiscated.

Furthermore, as part of our Zero Tolerance Policy we at River Valley Middle/ High school conduct canine sniff searches. During these searches our hallways, lockers, and parking lots are accessed by the trained search law enforcement officials.

### **SELECTIVE SERVICE**

Male students age eighteen (18) or older are required to register for the selective service. See Board Policy, 8330.

### **SEX EDUCATION AND AIDS CLASSES** (BOE Policy 2413/2414)

The Board of Education has adopted a comprehensive Health Education Program which includes education on human sexuality and venereal and other non-casual contact communicable diseases such as AIDS. It is designed to provide an appropriate means for students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to maintain good health. The program also includes instruction in abstinence from sex as a responsible method for preventing unwanted pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases and as a positive lifestyle for unmarried young people. In compliance with State law and with its desire to maintain effective communication with parents and the community, the Board has made arrangements for the programs and instructional materials to be available for review by any parent or interested member of the community. If you wish to review any or all of the programs, please contact the principal of your child's school. After reviewing the programs, if you wish to discuss them, please contact the principal or the school office. Your child is required to participate in these courses, but the law allows you the right to have your child excused from participating in classes which include instruction in sex education, reproductive health, family planning, and AIDS education. The Board's policy is to honor parents' written requests that their child be excused from certain classes in any course. We encourage you to personally review the program lessons and materials and return the bottom portion of this letter to your child's school principal so appropriate alternative activities can be provided during the times of those classes.

### **STUDENT PRIVACY AND PARENTAL ACCESS**

Student Privacy and Parental Access to Information, Board Policy 2416: The collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose) is prohibited. For purposes of this section, "personal information" means individually identifiable information including: (1) a student or parent's first and last name; (2) a home or other physical address (including street name and the name of the city or

town); (3) a telephone number; or (4) a Social Security identification number.

### **STUDENT SERVICES**

River Valley Middle/High School provides an extensive program of counseling, advising, and other student personal services. Any student or parent who has questions regarding personal, social or emotional concerns, developing educational goals or career planning should contact the guidance counselor.

### **STUDENT WELLBEING**

Student safety is the responsibility of the staff. All staff members are familiar with emergency procedures such as fire and tornado drills and accident reporting procedures. Should a student be aware of any dangerous situation or accident, the student must notify any staff person immediately.

State law requires that all students must have an emergency medical card completed, signed by a parent or guardian, and filed in the principal's office. A student may be excluded from school until this requirement has been fulfilled.

### **TALENT OR VARIETY SHOWS**

Once or twice a year, talent or variety shows are held during the school day.

### **TELEPHONES**

Telephones in school offices are for school business and are not to be used by students except in case of emergency. Telephone calls for nonemergency situations will cost 25 cents.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

New books are marked "A" and conditions may range from the "A" grade to "D" grade. It is expected that through normal usage, a book will drop one grade per year. If the book is misused and the condition drops two grades, then the student is expected to pay  $\frac{1}{4}$  the price of the book as a fine. Should a new book, "A" grade, be lost or misused so badly that it cannot be used again; the student is expected to pay full replacement cost of the price of the book. Varying grade letters and degrees of misuse will be treated according to the above rule.

### **TORNADO/SEVERE WEATHER**

The River Valley Middle/High School will have on file, practiced and provide the needed severe weather information and routes. A tornado severe weather alert will be the 6-bell alert. When staff hears this signal they are to take students single file to their designated areas. Everyone is to remain at the location until the "all-clear" word is heard from the building principal or designee.

In the event of an announcement of tornado watch or warning by the U.S. Weather Bureau, students shall be retained in school until the regular time for dismissal or until such time, in the judgment of the Superintendent of schools, students can be safely dismissed.

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent and his/her staff to develop and implement a plan for care of students in the buildings during those times when a tornado watch or warning has been announced, such plan to pertain only to the regularly scheduled school day, and for the safe dismissal of students at the regularly scheduled dismissal time.

In the event of other severe weather warnings or conditions, the Superintendent's Office shall make a decision regarding the dismissal or retention of students.

If at the regular closing time a Tornado Warning is in effect for the immediate area, school will not be dismissed until the warning is lifted. Students may be picked up at the school by their parents if parents come to the school office to request their dismissal. No student will be released to a person other than the parent or guardian.

**Closings/PM Reopening:** The Superintendent, or designee, after having canceled school activities during the morning may reconvene school activities for the afternoon and evening activities commencing at 3:00 p.m.

Scheduled Michigan High School Athletic Association events or school concerts/ major student performances may be carried out at the direction of the Superintendent, or designee, in consultation with the Principal, Athletic Director, and the Supervisors of Transportation, Food Service, and Buildings and Grounds. Scheduled regular or special Board of Education meetings may be carried out at the direction of the Board President, or designee, in consultation with the Superintendent. Athletic practices, rehearsals, and other course content related to after school activities may be resumed, but students will attend on a volunteer basis only.

#### **USE OF SCHOOL EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES**

Students must receive the permission of the teacher before using any equipment or materials in the classroom and the permission of the principal to use any other school equipment or facility. Students will be held responsible for the proper use and safekeeping of any equipment or facility they are allowed to use.

#### **VIDEO SURVEILLANCE/ELECTRONIC MONITORING** (BOE Policy 7440.01)

The Board of Education authorizes the use of video surveillance and electronic monitoring equipment at various school sites throughout the District and on school buses. The video surveillance/electronic monitoring equipment shall be used to protect Board property and assets from theft and vandalism, through deterrence and video documentation. The system is not designed nor intended to protect individuals from being victims of violent or property crimes, nor to detect other potentially illegal and undesirable activities that may occur, although information may be used as evidence in such cases.



## **VISITORS GENERAL**

Doors are locked after 7:50 a.m. on school days. Students are not allowed to open them. All visitors must enter through the front doors and receive an identification tag from the high school office. The main entrance by the middle/high school office is designated as the only available entryway into the building.

## **VISITORS NON-RV STUDENTS**

In some cases the school will allow a student visitor, but the purpose must be for an educational intent. Arrangements must be made two days in advance with the principal or designee. There can be no visitors either the day before or after a vacation nor during any testing session.

## **RIVER VALLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT** **BOARD OF EDUCATION BULLYING POLICY 5517.01**

### **REPLACEMENT POLICY – SPECIAL UPDATE JANUARY 2012**

#### **BULLYING AND OTHER AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR TOWARD STUDENTS**

It is the policy of the District to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. This policy protects all students from bullying/aggressive behavior regardless of the subject matter or motivation for such impermissible behavior.

Bullying or other aggressive behavior toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties, including Board members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors, and volunteers, is strictly prohibited. This prohibition includes written, physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, including hazing, gestures, comments, threats, or actions to a student, which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm, reasonable fear for personal safety or personal degradation. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide positive examples for student behavior.

This policy applies to all “at school” activities in the District, including activities on school property, in a school vehicle, and those occurring off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the school’s control, or where an employee is engaged in school business. Misconduct occurring outside of school may also be disciplined if it interferes with the school environment.

**Notification:** Notice of this policy will be annually circulated to and posted in conspicuous locations in all school buildings and departments within the District and discussed with students, as well as incorporated into the teacher, student, and parent/guardian handbooks. State and Federal rights posters on discrimination and harassment shall also be posted at each building. All new hires will be required to review and sign off on this policy and the related

complaint procedure.

Parents or legal guardians of the alleged victim(s), as well as of the alleged aggressor(s), shall be promptly notified of any complaint or investigation as well as the results of the investigation to the extent consistent with student confidentiality requirements. A record of the time and form of notice or attempts at notice shall be kept in the investigation file.

To the extent appropriate and/or legally permitted, confidentiality will be maintained during the investigation process. However, a proper investigation will, in some circumstances, require the disclosure of names and allegations. Further, the appropriate authorities may be notified, depending on the nature of the complaint and/or the results of the investigation.

**Implementation:** The Superintendent is responsible to implement this policy, and may develop further guidelines, not inconsistent with this policy. This policy is not intended to and should not be interpreted to interfere with legitimate free speech rights of any individual. However, the District reserves the right and responsibility to maintain a safe environment for students, conducive to learning and other legitimate objectives of the school program.

**Procedure:** Any student who believes s/he has been or is the victim of bullying, hazing, or other aggressive behavior should immediately report the situation to the Principal or assistant principal. The student may also report concerns to a teacher or counselor who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator or Board official. Complaints against the building principal should be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent should be filed with the Board President.

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that they believe to be aggressive behavior directed toward a student. Reports shall be made to those identified above. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The Principal (or other administrator as designated) shall promptly investigate and document all complaints about bullying, aggressive or other behavior that may violate this policy. The investigation must be completed as promptly as the circumstances permit after a report or complaint is made.

If the investigation finds an instance of bullying or aggressive behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial action. This may include up to expulsion for students, up to discharge for employees, exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers and contractors, and removal from any official position and/or a request to resign for Board members. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement or other appropriate officials.

The individual responsible for conducting the investigation shall document all reported incidents and report all verified incidents of bullying, aggressive or other prohibited behavior, as well as any remedial action taken, including disciplinary actions and referrals, to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall submit a compiled report to the Board on an annual basis.

**Non-Retaliation/False Reports:** Retaliation or false allegations against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of bullying or aggressive behavior (as a witness or otherwise), or is the target of the bullying or aggressive behavior being investigated, is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy, independent of whether a complaint of bullying is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as bullying/aggressive behavior.

Making intentionally false reports about bullying/aggressive behavior for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

**Definitions:** The following definitions are provided for guidance only. If a student or other individual believes there has been bullying, hazing, harassment or other aggressive behavior, regardless of whether it fits a particular definition, s/he should report it immediately and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action.

“Aggressive behavior” is defined as inappropriate conduct that is repeated enough, or serious enough, to negatively impact a student’s educational, physical, or emotional well-being. Such behavior includes, for example, bullying, hazing, stalking, intimidation, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hitting/pushing/shoving.

“At School” is defined as in a classroom, elsewhere on school premises, on a school bus or other school related vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held on school premises. It also includes conduct using a telecommunications access device or telecommunications service provider that occurs off school premises if either owned by or under the control of the District.

“Bullying” is defined as any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e. internet, telephone or cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand held device) that, without regard to its subject matter or motivating animus, is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one (1) or more students either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

- substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one (1) or more students;
- adversely affecting the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the school district’s educational programs or activities by placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress;
- having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a student’s physical or mental health; and/or
- causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, psychological, or a combination of all three. Some examples of bullying are:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, pulling; taking and/or damaging personal belongings or extorting money, blocking or impeding student movement, unwelcome physical contact.
- Verbal – taunting, malicious teasing, insulting, name calling, making threats.
- Psychological – spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, coercion, or engaging in social exclusion/shunning, extortion, or intimidation. This may occur in a number of different ways, including but not limited to notes, emails, social media postings, and graffiti.

“Harassment” includes, but is not limited to, any act which subjects an individual or group to unwanted, abusive behavior of a nonverbal, verbal, written or physical nature, often on the basis of age, race, religion, color, national origin, marital status or disability, but may also include sexual orientation, physical characteristics (e.g., height, weight, complexion), cultural background, socio-economic status, or geographic location (e.g., from rival school, different state, rural area, city, etc.).

“Intimidation/Menacing” includes, but is not limited to, any threat or act intended to: place a person in fear of physical injury or offensive physical contact; to substantially damage or interfere with person’s property; or to intentionally interfere with or block a person’s movement without good reason.

“Staff” includes all school employees and Board members.

“Third parties” include, but are not limited to, coaches, school volunteers, parents, school visitors, service contractors, vendors, or others engaged in District business, and others not directly subject to school control at inter-district or intra-district athletic competitions or other school events.

For further definition and instances that could possibly be construed as: Harassment, see Policy 5517; Hazing, see Policy 5516.

MCL 380.1310B (Matt’s Safe School Law, PA 241 of 2011) Policies on Bullying, Michigan State Board of Education. Model Anti-Bullying Policy, Michigan State Board of Education. *Replaced 5/21/12.*



TITLE IX, 504, EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY  
**WRITTEN COMPLAINT FORM**

Building \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Grievance

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Signed – Signature Of Person Filing the Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Reported to \_\_\_\_\_ Principal or Supervisor

Disposition \_\_\_\_\_

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Complaint satisfactorily settled? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**ATHLETIC CODE CONTRACT FOR**  
**RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT TO BE COMPLETED**  
**BY STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN**

*This contract must be signed by the athlete and parent/guardian prior to participation in the interscholastic athletic program*

Student Form

I understand that participation in the River Valley Middle/High School Athletic Program is a privilege that is earned through continuous hard work in the classroom and in practice through adherence to the high standards of conduct outlined in the Athletic Code. I acknowledge the risk of injury when participating in interscholastic athletics, and release the River Valley School District and their employees against any claim by me on my behalf as a result of my participation. I have received and am aware of the middle/high school rules and procedures as stated in the River Valley Middle/High School Student-Athlete handbook and agree to abide by them.

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(Signature of Student-athlete)

(Grade)

(Date)

Parent/Guardian Form

As parents/guardians we commit to modeling good sportsmanship to our athletes, coaches, opponents and game officials. We agree to help enforce the expectations of the Athletic Code with our athlete and agree to report any violations should they occur of the Athletic Code by our athlete. We acknowledge the risk of injury when participating in interscholastic athletics and release the River Valley School District and their employees against any claim by/or on behalf of our student athlete. We have received and are aware of the school rules and procedures as stated in the River Valley Middle/High School Student-Athlete handbook, and give permission for our son/daughter to participate in River Valley interscholastic athletics.

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(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

(Phone)

(Date)

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(Address)

(Zip)



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## RVMHS ATHLETIC HOME PAGE

**The River Valley Athletic Handbook was approved by the River Valley Board of Education in June 2021.**

School Nickname: Mustangs  
School Colors: Navy/White  
League Affiliation: Berrien-Cass-St Joseph (BCS) Conference  
Athletic Director: Ryan Portenga

### *Conference Membership:*

#### **School**

Berrien Springs  
Brandywine  
Bridgman  
Buchanan  
Countryside Academy  
Covert  
Eau Claire  
Howardsville  
Lake Michigan Catholic  
Lawrence  
Michigan Lutheran  
New Buffalo  
River Valley  
South Haven  
Watervliet Grace Christian

#### **Nickname**

Shamrocks  
Bobcats  
Bees  
Bucks  
Cougars  
Bulldogs  
Fighting Beavers  
Eagles  
Lakers  
Tigers  
Titans  
Bison  
Mustangs  
Rams  
Patriots

### **High School Sports Offered**

BASEBALL  
BOYS' BASKETBALL  
GIRLS' BASKETBALL  
CHEERLEADING  
BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY  
GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY  
FOOTBALL  
GOLF  
SOFTBALL  
BOYS' TRACK  
GIRLS' TRACK  
VOLLEYBALL  
WRESTLING

### **Head Coaches**

Mr. Sokolowski  
Mr. Haske  
Mr. Alexander  
  
Mr. Dague  
Mr. Dague  
Mr. Johnson  
Mr. Gedert  
Mr. Schaser  
Mr. Dague  
Mr. Dague  
Mrs. Michaels  
Mr. Hein

### **Middle School Sports Offered**

BOYS' BASKETBALL  
CHEERLEADING  
FOOTBALL  
VOLLEYBALL

GIRLS' BASKETBALL  
CROSS COUNTRY  
TRACK  
WRESTLING

**RIVER VALLEY MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL**  
**ATHLETIC HANDBOOK FOR**  
*Student-athletes and Parents/Guardians*

**INTRODUCTION**

The River Valley High School Athletic Department believes that athletics are an indispensable part of the education process. Through our athletic programs we strive to engender the principles of courage, fair play, sportsmanship, tolerance and other traits of a good citizen. The student-athlete learns that certain rules are necessary and learns to abide by them. The student-athlete learns to respect the rights of others. The student-athlete learns to win with grace and humility and to accept defeat with poise and dignity.

Our interscholastic program benefits the entire student body and the community in the following ways:

- By developing an understanding and an appreciation of the place which interscholastic sports occupy in American culture and developing sound educational attitudes toward them.
- By educating the student body in the appreciation of sports and the best way to enjoy them from the point of view of good sportsmanship.
- By serving as the focal point for the morale, spirit, and loyalty of the student-athletes by providing a common meeting ground and enthusiasm that is shared by all.
- By providing a wholesome program of sports in which student-athletes, alumni, parents, patrons, and friends of the school may share, to the end that the loyalty of these groups to the school may constantly be renewed, strengthened, and united.

**Participation in River Valley athletics is a privilege, it is not a right granted with school membership. The acceptance of athletic participation involves a commitment by the participant to abide by the athletic handbook and become a role model for the school community. Based upon these expectations, the athletic handbook will remain in effect until a new handbook is issued.**

**ATHLETICS**

The Board of Education (see BOE Policy 2431) recognizes the value to the District and to the community of a program of interscholastic athletics for as many students as feasible. The program of interscholastic athletics should provide students the opportunity to exercise and test their athletic abilities in a context greater and more varied than that which can be offered by a school or the School District alone.

The program should foster the growth of school loyalty with the student body as a whole and stimulate community interest in athletics. Game activities and practice sessions should provide many opportunities to teach the values of competition and good sportsmanship.

The Board believes that it is the purpose of an interscholastic program to provide the benefits of an athletic experience to as large a number of students as feasible within the District. Since the primary purpose of the athletic program is to enhance the education of participating students as indicated in this policy, the Board places top priority on maximum student participation and the values of good sportsmanship, team play, and fair competition, rather than on winning, particularly at sub-varsity levels. The Superintendent is to develop guidelines for coaches to follow which will ensure that as many team members as possible get the chance to play, so they have the opportunity to benefit from the learning experience.

Use of a performance-enhancing substance by a student is a violation that will affect a student's athletic eligibility and extra-curricular participation, as determined by the Board. A list of performance-enhancing substances developed by the State Department of Community Health shall be included in AG 2431. This list will be distributed to parents and local physicians who might provide such test.

### **STUDENT—ATHLETE DEFINED**

A student-athlete is defined as any member of an athletic team or sport club, including team managers and student-trainers. When a student goes out for the first time and begins official practice, that student is regarded as a student-athlete. Student-athletes are subject to the provisions of the athletic handbook for the remainder of their high school career.

### **EXPECTATIONS OF THE STUDENT ATHLETE**

River Valley High School has the following expectations. The student-athlete will:

- Concentrate on being a good citizen, a good student and a good athlete.
- Remember that participation is a privilege
- Exhibit good sportsmanship and respect toward opponents, officials, teammates, coaches and fans.
- Be a role model in school and out of school
- Have pride in self, team, and school
- Be on time and prepared for all practices games and functions
- Play hard, play smart and play as a team
- Accept victory as well as defeat, with dignity and class
- Believe in themselves
- Follow the rules and guidelines of the student handbook, team handbook, and athletic handbook

**The following MHSAA message is a guide for student athletes regarding sportsmanship. The student-athlete will:**

- Accept and understand the seriousness of the responsibility, and the privilege of representing the school and the community.
- Live up to the standards of sportsmanship established by the school, administration and the coaching staff.
- Learn the rules of the game thoroughly and discuss them with parents, fans, classmates and younger students.
- Treat opponents the way you would like to be treated, as a guest or a friend.
- Refrain from making any kind of derogatory remarks to opponents during the game, especially comments of ethnic, racial or sexual nature.
- Wish opponents good luck before the game and congratulate them in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. The officials are doing their best to help promote the athlete and the sport.
- Win with humility; lose with grace; do both with dignity.

### **PHILOSOPHY OF WINNING**

Winning is the primary objective within the parameters of this philosophy. The winning of an athletic contest is not what teaches the values intrinsic in competition. The striving to win is what produces the sacrifice, dedication, teamwork, and courage that coaches wish to instill in our student- athletes. While losing is certainly not the purpose of competition, without it the ethics of our sportsmanship are never put to the supreme test. We want our athletes to try hard to win, to give their best effort, to be able to accept victory with poise and defeat with honor.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Playing time is guaranteed to all members of a team during each contest, but not equally. There will be no cutting at the Middle School level.

### **6th GRADE PARTICIPATION**

If the participation numbers are low for 7th and 8th grade students, 6th grade students may be permitted to participate in the following Middle School sports – volleyball, basketball, track, cross country and wrestling. **6th grade students are not permitted to participate in Middle School football.** A 6th grade student will not be permitted to displace a 7th or 8th grader from the team. 6th grade students must have a sports physical on file with the Athletic Director before the student is permitted to practice and participate in the sport.

The Athletic Director will make an announcement as soon as feasible regarding the number of openings that are available for 6th graders in a particular sport. 6th grade students will be asked to participate if there are fewer than 12 players per team, per sport. If there are more 6th grade students interested

in participating than there are openings, the coach may need to conduct try-outs to select the appropriate number of 6th grade students. 6th grade students must follow the same eligibility requirements as the 7th and 8th grade students. For additional information, please contact the Athletic Director at 269-756-7869.

### **JUNIOR VARSITY ATHLETICS--(includes all grade levels)**

Every effort will be made to provide quality playing time during a season to all student-athletes who demonstrate a strong work ethic and efforts to improve, but playing time does not have to be equal.

### **VARSITY ATHLETICS**

At this level, no one is guaranteed playing time as the best student-athletes should be on the field/court/mat/course when the skills and intensity of competition requires the best.

All student-athletes should be committed and focused at all practices and events, exhibit the highest skill level, demonstrate good sportsmanship on the field of competition as well as off, and be excellent role models of the Mustang tradition. Student-athletes who participate are expected to represent the highest ideals of character by exemplifying good conduct and good citizenship on and off the playing field/court/mat/course. The coach will decide all playing time matters taking all of this into consideration.

## **TEAM SELECTION AND TEAM PARTICIPATION**

The athletic department desires student- athlete participation. Coaches will be encouraged to keep as many athletes as can be handled reasonably within the facilities, budget, and to the relative ability of the group. Selecting the members of athletes for their teams is the responsibility of the coach. Coaches should explain the criteria for gaining and maintaining membership on the team before practice begins. Prior to final selections being made, the coaches of each program will meet with the Athletic Director to discuss their selections. Criteria for team selection and participation may differ from team to team.

In certain sports, maximum student-athlete participation levels or standards may be set. Choosing the members of an athletic squad is the responsibility of the coach. Prior to trying out, the coach shall provide the following information to all candidates for the team:

- a. Extent of the tryout period.
- b. Criteria used to select the team.
- c. The expected practice commitment if a student-athlete makes the team.
- d. Game commitment if the student-athlete makes the team.

The amount of playing time an athlete receives in certain team sports is

entirely the coaches' decision. Athletes are expected to earn their playing time by their performance in practice. Coaches will consider the athlete's practice attendance, attitude, physical ability and the athlete's ability to work together with his/her teammates and the coach.

### **GROUND RULES FOR ATHLETIC PRACTICE**

- Parent pick up times are 15 minutes following conclusion of practice.
- Student-athletes must be picked up within 30 minutes on game day. Student-athletes who are repeatedly not picked up in a timely fashion are subject to disciplinary action.
- Student-athletes must attend all practice sessions unless excused by coach.
- All practices are open with the following guidelines: All practices will be open to parental viewing, however, while viewing practice parents may not assist with instruction.
- The coach reserves the right to close a session if he/she: 1) Informs parents and student-athletes of this possibility prior to the start of the season, and the reasons for closure of such practice; 2) Gives adequate notice (and reason for closure) to parents and student-athletes; and 3) Informs the athletic administration of such decision.
- At no time are student-athletes to practice unsupervised.

### **BANNED DRUGS**

The Department of Community Health shall periodically distribute to the District the list of banned drugs based on bylaw 31.2.3 of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). This information shall be provided to parents, students and publications regarding athletics and extracurricular activities. The Athletic Director will address this list at annual department, coaches, and parent meetings.

### **ADDRESSING POLICY & PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS**

Coaches should never be addressed immediately following a contest and, if approached, they are not required to respond or discuss a contest immediately following it. When an athletic complaint exists, parents should contact the coach after 24 hours to set up a meeting to discuss the complaint. In doing so, the following communication / appeals order is to be followed:

1. Student-Athlete and Parent to Head Coach
2. Student-Athlete and Parent to Varsity Head Coach
3. Student-Athlete and Parent to Athletic Director
4. Student-Athlete and Parent to District Athletic Council
5. Student-Athlete and Parent to Principal
6. Student-Athlete and Parent to Superintendent



## **MHSAA RULES AND REGULATIONS**

All members of the athletic program, both coaches and student-athletes, will adhere to MHSAA rules and regulations. Special attention should be paid to the notion of "Open Gym" and/or other off-season programs for any sport.

Interpretations, which are questionable or perhaps not covered in these rules and regulations, may be clarified by contacting the MHSAA through the Athletic Director.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

School buses will be used for transportation of teams to events away from school, Monday through Friday, in all but rare situations. The Coach and Athletic Director may arrange for the use of alternate transportation if necessary. In such cases all drivers must be adults and approved by the administration.

For Saturday NON-CONFERENCE and NON-MHSAA sanctioned tournaments, transportation will not be provided and parents/student-athletes will be responsible for arranging their own transportation.

If outside transportation options are to be used for trips that are extensive in nature, the athletic director must be notified at least two weeks in advance of the trip. The athletic director will notify the Transportation Department at least one week in advance of the trip.

### **PARTICIPATION**

If both coaches agree that a change from one sport to another would benefit both teams as well as the student-athlete, only then will a change in season be permitted prior to the first contest.

No student-athlete will be allowed to participate in more than one sport per season unless both coaches consent to the double participation. If both coaches and student-athlete cannot agree on practice and participations guidelines, the student-athlete must choose which sport they will be involved in.

#### **ATHLETE DECLARATION FOR DUAL SPORT PARTICIPATION**

When a student athlete makes a decision to participate in dual sports in the same season, she/he must inform the athletic director in writing by no later than the first day of practice as assigned by the MHSAA.

Once the letter of intent has been received the athletic director will quickly set

up meetings with the coaches and parents as detailed in the procedures that follow. The following form will be followed.

### **DUAL PARTICIPATION PROCESS/FORM**

It is the intention of the athlete named below to participate in two sports during the same season. In order for this to occur the following stipulations must be met:

- The athlete must declare which sport is primary and secondary for participation purposes if between two teams or two individual sports. The “team” sport will be considered primary if between a team and individual sport. Exceptions would be cleared through the athletic director and any coaches involved.
- Letter award criteria will be established by the Head Coaches of the involved sports. These criteria will be presented to the athlete and the athletic director prior to the first game of the season. Any changes from the normal lettering criteria must be written on this form under additional stipulations.
- Approval may be denied because of academic ineligibility or concerns at any time during the sport season. Upon regaining eligibility, the athlete will be requested to choose one sport.
- An athlete who enters into a two sport participation situation is encouraged to continue for the entire season, but it will be possible to withdraw from one sport without penalty if the athlete determines the time demands and energy requirements hinder their ability to perform at an acceptable level. This decision is only to be made after careful consideration to the commitment made to each team.
- Practice and Game/Meet requirements must be established prior to the sport season. This should be in writing below. For athletes who do not submit this form prior to the sport season, the coaches involved and the athletic director will consider approval of dual-sport participation for the athlete and establish guidelines.

**DUAL PARTICIPATION PROCESS/FORM**

Name of Athlete: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sports: \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Sport: \_\_\_\_\_  
Practice and Game/Meet Requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Stipulations:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Athlete _____	Date
Signature of Parent/Guardian _____	Date
Signature of Head Coach-Primary _____	Date
Signature of Head Coach-Secondary _____	Date
Signature of Athletic Director _____	Date
Signature of Principal _____	Date

**SCHEDULING CONFLICTS**

Despite all scheduling efforts by the administration, conflicts will develop between co-curricular activities. The athletic department recognizes that each student-athlete should have the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in the area of co-curricular activities, and to this end, will attempt to schedule events in a manner to minimize conflicts.

Student-athletes have a responsibility to do everything they can to avoid continuous conflicts. This includes being cautious about belonging to too many activities prior to becoming involved in the activities.

If a conflict occurs, sub-varsity student-athletes are expected to attend the academic related function. Varsity student-athletes have the option to choose what event to attend, without any pressure from the coach or faculty member. Once a decision is made, neither the faculty member nor the coach will penalize the student-athlete in any way.

## **PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

As School Representatives, student-athletes are expected to dress in a socially acceptable manner. Head coaches are expected to use discretion in these matters at all times. Individual coaches will provide guidelines to student-athletes regarding appropriate attire and grooming, again at their own discretion.

## **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS**

No student-athlete may be allowed to participate in practice or in games without having had a physical examination. An attempt will be made each year to provide a common time for physicals; however, if a student-athlete decides to make other arrangements, they are responsible for turning in a completed form prior to any participation.

## **INSURANCE**

No student-athlete may be allowed to participate in practice or in games without having proof of insurance. If a student-athlete does not have a family insurance plan, they should contact the athletic office for information on purchasing insurance through the school. If at any time during the school year your family has a change of insurance, contact the athletic office to make sure you are still in compliance.

## **ATTENDANCE - ATHLETES**

While the MHSAA makes no reference to a student-athlete's attendance on the day of a contest, it is the policy of the River Valley School District that student-athletes are to be in school for the entire day in order to participate in any activities taking place after school. The Athletic Director must approve any exception.

If a student-athlete has an excused absence on Friday before a Saturday contest, he/she can still participate in the Saturday contest.

Students must be in attendance all periods of the day to be eligible to participate in both practice and competition. Students will be permitted one waiver of this rule per semester. Students who are absent from school for a doctor or dental appointment may attend or participate in an activity with a written doctor or dental statement releasing them to participate (or prior administrative approval). Under unusual circumstances, an administrator may grant approval for participation if arranged in advance. Appointments that can be scheduled during non-school hours should take place at those times.

In all cases, student-athletes are expected to be in school all day on the day following an athletic event. If they are not in school the entire day, the student-athlete is subject to the attendance rules listed above.

## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

The primary purpose of the River Valley School District is to provide a quality education for all its student-athletes. Realizing that the athlete is a student first, before a student-athlete may participate they must be passing five (5) of six (6) subjects in their classroom work. At the beginning of each school year, all incoming sixth and ninth grade student-athletes will be automatically eligible.

All student-athletes in grades 6-12 will have their grades checked each Tuesday. All student-athletes who have one (1) or more failing grades will be met with by the Athletic Director. Those who have more than one (1) failing grade have until Friday of that week to improve their grades. If, by Friday, the student-athlete is still failing more than one (1) class, they will be ineligible the following week – Monday through Sunday.

Per the MHSAA Handbook, student-athletes who have two (2) failing grades at the end of the semester, will be ineligible for the next 60 days. If after the 60-day period the athlete has one (1) or less failing grade, they will become eligible for sports participation. Athletes will still practice with the team and travel with the team while ineligible, but cannot wear team uniforms during this period.

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

River Valley Schools has high expectations for all students involved in public performances and events. Student behaviors will always be linked with the reputation of our school and community. As ambassadors of our school and community, participants carry a responsibility to represent River Valley in a positive manner. Consequently, the following code of conduct was developed to promote positive educational opportunities for students. Our “Student Code of Conduct for Extra/Co-Curricular Programs” applies to all students who participate in school performances - such as athletic contests, drama, band and choir performances, debate, etc. The “Code of Conduct” is applicable throughout the entire calendar year (365 days) – on or off school property.

If there is an alleged violation of the code of conduct, an investigation will be conducted. A meeting will be held to discuss the alleged infraction between the program supervisor, an assistant principal, and/or the athletic director. If it is determined that a violation of the code of conduct has occurred, then consequences will be implemented. Infractions and related consequences of the “Code of Conduct” shall be considered cumulative from the time students are placed under the code and remain until they exit the middle school or high school. Upon successful completion of middle school, any offenses incurred will not follow the student to the high school. All students will enter the high school with a “clean slate”. Middle school students currently participating in extra/co-

curricular activities will start their high school career on the last day of eighth grade.

### **Code Item #1**

It is the district's expectation that no member of a River Valley Middle or High School extra/co-curricular activity will knowingly use, have possession of, or assist other students in the use of the following:

- Tobacco and/or tobacco products in any form
- Alcoholic beverages
- Any form of illegal drugs and/or drug paraphernalia
- Prescribed drugs or over the counter drug/chemical

### **Consequences**

First Offense: Suspended from 33% of the events for the entire current activity(ies). If the suspension is not completed in one activity, it will be carried over to the next activity in which the student participates. The activity supervisor and administrator will decide whether or not the student will attend practices, games, rehearsals, and/or performances. In order to continue participation, parents must provide documentation that the student is involved in a certified/qualified substance use and abuse assessment program - including cooperation in post-assessment recommendations. Students who fail to comply with the terms of this intervention process will be prohibited from participation in all extra/co-curricular activities for one calendar year.

Second Offense: Suspended from all activities for one calendar year from the date of the offense. The student will be ineligible to receive any further awards within the immediate activity/season. In order to continue participation in any extra/co-curricular programs, parents must provide documentation that the student is involved in a certified/qualified substance use and abuse assessment program, including cooperation in post-assessment recommendations. Students who fail to comply with the terms of this intervention process will be prohibited from participation in all extra/co-curricular activities for the remainder of his/her high school or middle school career.

Third Offense: Termination of any further participation in school sponsored co/extra-curricular activities for the duration of the student's middle school or high school career.

### **Code Item #2**

It is the district's expectation that no member of a River Valley Middle or High School extra/co-curricular activity will exhibit behavior which is detrimental to their school or community. Misdemeanors or felonies falling under the criminal code (which occur in or out of school) will be included. The school may take disciplinary action regardless of whether or not legal action results in a conviction.

## **Consequences**

First Offense: Suspended from 25% of the events for the entire current activity(ies). When the suspension is not completed in one activity or season it will be carried over to the next. In order for consequences to be fulfilled, students must complete all related activities/seasons in good standing. The activity supervisor and administrator will decide whether or not the student will attend practices, games, rehearsals and/or performances.

Second Offense: Suspended from 50% of the events for the entire current activity(ies). If the suspension is not completed in one activity, it will be carried over to the next activity in which the student participates. The activity supervisor, athletic director and administrator will decide whether or not the student will attend practices, games, rehearsals, and/or performances.

Third Offense: Suspended from all extra/co-curricular activities for one calendar year from the date of the infraction. Additional violations may result in termination of any further participation in school sponsored extra/co-curricular activities for the duration of the student's middle school or high school career. A gross violation may result in termination of any further participation in school sponsored extra/co-curricular activities for the duration of the student's middle school or high school career.

## **Self-Disclosure**

Students who seek help regarding a chemical dependency problem shall not be subject to disciplinary action provided that a) there exists no violation at the time the student seeks help (for example, the student is not in possession or under the influence of alcohol or other unlawful drugs etc.), b) no subsequent violation occurs, and c) in the opinion of the administrator, the spirit of the policy has not been violated.

Note: Students who violate the Code of Conduct will serve their suspension only in an activity they have previously been involved or are currently involved. A student will not be permitted to serve the suspension in an activity newly joined for the purpose of avoiding the suspension to impact an activity for which he/she has previously been a member. Additionally, the Code of Conduct consequences will be invoked from the date the Administration has been made aware of the infraction.

## **NCAA AND NAIA GUIDELINES**

A student athlete wishing to participate at the collegiate level either at National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) or National Association Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) schools needs to read the following information. The NCAA and NAIA have eligibility regulations related to high school graduation, courses completed, grade point average and ACT/SAT scores.

If you are planning to enroll in a NCAA Division I or II college as a freshman, you must be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse ensures consistent application of the NCAA Initial-Eligibility requirements for all prospective student athletes at all member institutions. Check with your counselor to be sure you are taking a core curriculum that meets NCAA requirements; also, register to take the ACT or SAT as a junior. Submit your Student Release Form to the Clearinghouse early in your senior year or when you have definitely decided to participate in athletics during your freshman year of college. (See [www.ncaadearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaadearinghouse.net) for a free copy).

## **AWARDS**

All participants, Middle School through Varsity, receive certificates.

- First Varsity award = Varsity Letter (only can receive one)
- Subsequent Varsity awards = Corresponding Sport Pin
- Second Varsity Award for one sport = 2 year patch (only can receive one)
- Third Varsity Award for one sport = 3 year plaque
- Fourth Varsity Award for one sport = 4 year plaque
- First season sub-varsity = numerals
- Second season sub-varsity = small letter

**Patches will be given for conference, district and regional championships. If two or more of these championships are won in a given year, one patch will be given to indicate all championships won. These patches will be given to all members of the program who received a varsity letter.**

## **ATHLETIC COUNCIL**

The Athletic Council consists of a decision-making body. Its members consist of the Principal, Athletic Director, two faculty members at large, and all of the Head Coaches of school sponsored sports. The Athletic Director will chair this committee and will appoint one member to act as secretary.

The role of this council is to assist in evaluating the athletic program, recommend improvements, act as the appeals committee for RV Athletics and handle any special incidents such as student-athlete involvement with police, etc. Meetings will be held quarterly or by special request of the Principal or Athletic Director.

## **APPEALS COMMITTEE**

This coaches council (appeals committee) shall exist to provide due process for an individual student-athlete if a student-athlete feels that a penalty imposed by a coach or Athletic Director is unfair. When the athletic council meets to



discuss a student-athlete appeal, the coach who prescribed the penalty, the head coach of the sport the student-athlete is participating in, and the Athletic Director should be present. The Principal will not be present during these hearings because he is the next level of appeal. Any adult character witness for the student-athlete who could influence the final decision and parents of the student-athlete may attend if they wish.

The council members will hear the appeal and decide by vote if the penalty should stand. If the penalty does not stand, then the coach who formulated the original penalty must make a suitable penalty, and then the committee must approve the new penalty. The student-athlete must be informed of the remainder of their due process at the conclusion of the meeting. A majority of voting members must be present for action to be taken by the council. The Athletic Director and the head coach involved do not vote in these proceedings. A tie vote does not overturn a coach's decision.

## **PARENT SECTION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the parent's portion of the handbook is to help make the athletic experience positive for parents, as well as student athletes, coaches and administrators. Your student has indicated a desire to participate in the school interscholastic athletic program. Participation in interscholastic athletics is, however, a privilege. Parents of student athletes also commit themselves to certain responsibilities and obligations, which are outlined in this Athletic Handbook. Remember, everyone wants the same thing; we want the student athlete to enjoy being a part of a team, and to grow as a person through athletic competition that is educationally sound. The pride that comes from being a member of a successful team will be remembered forever.

### **WINNING**

The winning of an athletic contest is not what teaches the values intrinsic in competition. The striving to win is what produces the sacrifice, dedication, teamwork, and courage that coaches wish to instill in our student-athletes. While losing is certainly not the purpose of competition, without it the ethics of our sportsmanship are never put to the supreme test. We want our athletes to try hard to win, to give their best effort, to be able to accept victory with poise and defeat with honor.

### **EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN (S)**

The parent(s) will...

- Know, adhere to, and enforce the entire athletic handbook.
- Support all members of the team, the coaches, and athletic department.
- Maintain open lines of communication with coaches and athletic department.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship while attending athletic events.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**

The following MHSAA message is a guide for spectators regarding sportsmanship. The spectator will...

- Remember that you are at a contest to support and yell for your team and to enjoy the skill and competition; not to intimidate or ridicule the other team and its fans.
- Remember that school athletics are learning experiences for students and that mistakes are sometimes made.
- Praise student athletes in their attempt to improve themselves as students, as athletes and as people.
- Learn the rules of the game, to understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.
- Refrain from making any kind of derogatory remarks to your opponents during the game, especially comments of ethnic, racial or sexual nature
- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators and support groups.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Understand that they are doing their best to help promote the student athlete, and admire their willingness to participate in full view of the public.
- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team
- Refrain from use of any controlled substances (alcohol, drugs, etc.) before, during and after games.
- Be a positive behavior role model through your own actions and by censuring those around you at events whose behavior is unbecoming.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

### **ATHLETIC CODE**

Parents should understand, instruct, and model the athletic code. Your signature on the Athletic Contract, along with the signature of your student-athlete, indicates that you understand and accept those responsibilities and obligations and agree to cooperate with school personnel in enforcing the Athletic Code. The parent is also responsible for reading and signing the Athletic Contract Form.

### **CANCELLATION OF ACTIVITIES**

District policy states that all extracurricular activities, including practices and competitive events, will be canceled when severe weather exists in the area. If school is canceled because of inclement weather, practices and contests may still take place. However, no practices will be mandatory, nor will there be any punishment if an athlete cannot make it to the practice or contest.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

The parent is responsible to know and follow all eligibility requirements of the

Michigan High School Athletic Association and River Valley School District.

### **INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS**

One time per year, Parent(s) of athletes participating in fall, winter, or spring sports are required to attend the Parent Informational Meeting scheduled by the Athletic Director. There will be such a meeting at the beginning of each season. Parents of multi-sport athletes need not attend the Parent Informational Meeting more than once per school year, but are asked to attend all coach conducted team meetings. Immediately following the Parent Informational Meeting, each varsity coach for the season will hold a team meeting for the student-athletes and the parents.

At that time, coaches will distribute schedules and explain all team rules, expectations, and the team selection process.

### **UNDUE INFLUENCE**

The use of undue influence for athletic purposes by any person or persons directly associated with the school to encourage the attendance of a student in the school district shall cause the student to become ineligible for a minimum of one semester and a maximum of one year.

### **UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

The athlete is directly responsible for securing and maintaining all uniforms and equipment pertaining to their sport. The cost of replacing uniforms or equipment will be assumed by the athlete. The athlete cannot join another team unless all uniforms and equipment are turned in to the athletic office.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **FROM THE COACH**

As a parent, you should expect to receive the following information. The coach will:

- Define his/her coaching philosophy.
- Explain the expectations of the athletes.
- Provide practice and contest dates, times and locations.
- Explain any team requirements (i.e. fees, special equipment, etc.).
- Describe any discipline issues.

### **FROM THE PARENT**

The coach expects to receive the following information. The parent will...

- Notify the coach of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
- Notify the coach of an athlete's injury or illness.
- Discuss any specific concern in regard to a coach's expectations.
- Provide necessary information regarding athletic code violations.

### **PROBLEM SOLVING PROCEDURE**

When an issue arises that is appropriate for discussion, the coach will welcome

the chance to discuss it with you. However, the issue must first be brought to the coach's attention by the athlete. This ensures that the problem solving is initiated by the athlete. If, after discussion the issue is still not resolved, the parent may contact the coach to set up a meeting.

### **ISSUES WITH THE COACH**

Coaches are special people who play an extremely important role in the lives of athletes. Most coaches coach for two reasons: 1) They love the game, but more importantly 2) They love working with kids. Please keep the above items in mind when issues arise. The following section summarizes appropriate and inappropriate issues for discussion:

#### **APPROPRIATE ISSUES:**

If student-initiated problem solving has not brought a remedy, a meeting should be mutually agreed to by all parents and coaches involved. Parents should use the 24 hour rule. Clarity with an issue often comes by "sleeping on it". The following issues are considered appropriate issues to discuss with coaches:

- Expectations during practices and games.
- Strategies for the student athlete to improve.
- Availability of academic support.

#### **INAPPROPRIATE ISSUES**

The following issues are inappropriate items to discuss with coaches:

- Playing time.
- Team strategy.
- Play calling.
- Other student athletes.

### **PARENT PLEDGE**

As a parent of a student-athlete at River Valley, I promise:

- To work closely with all school personnel to assure an appropriate academic as well as athletic experience for my child while he or she is in middle/high school.
- To arrange timely transportation to and from practice and games for my child.
- To require my child to abide by the athletic department's training rules.
- To work cooperatively with other parent and school personnel to assure a wholesome and successful athletic program for our school.
- To acknowledge the authority of the coach to determine strategy and player selection.
- To promote mature behavior from student-athletes and parents during athletic contests.
- To work closely with coaches and other school personnel to identify a reasonable and realistic future for my child as a student-athlete, both in school and in college.

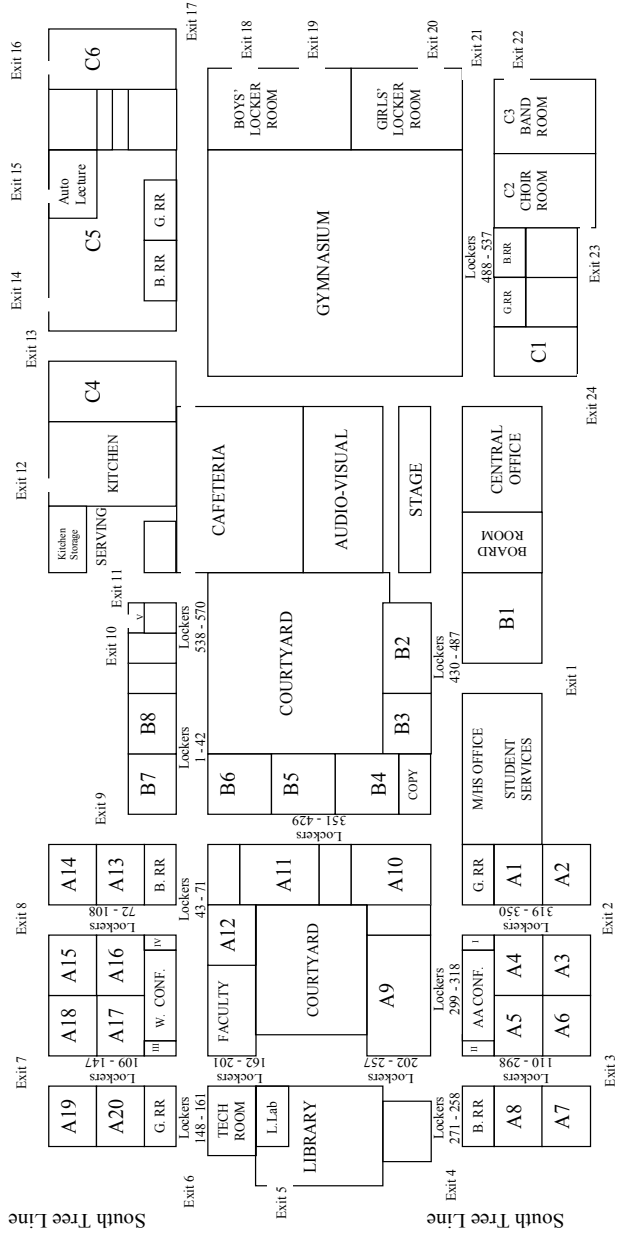
**RVMHS ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**  
**ELASTIC CLAUSE**

**In the event the Athletic Handbook or other school policies or procedures do not cover situations that arise, the administration and/or the Board of Education reserve the right to establish such rules and conditions to respond effectively to unanticipated or unique circumstances.**



- Key
- I Math Dept. Office
  - II Science Dept. Office
  - III Social Studies Dept. Office
  - IV ELA Dept. Office
  - V Custodial Office

Transportation Garage



# RIVER VALLEY MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL