

First Branch Unified District



Tunbridge Central School



Faculty/Staff Handbook

2019-2020

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Employment Practices

The White River Valley Supervisory Union/First Branch Unified District is an equal opportunity employer. This handbook was written in accordance with federal, state, local laws and applicable contract language in effect at the time of print. Subsequent revisions may cause conflicting statements. If such a situation should arise, the federal, state, local laws, policies of the district, as well as contracts will always be the official documents upon which a ruling will be based. This handbook shall be provided to each employee, upon hiring, and at anytime it is amended or republished.

Personnel Records

An official employee file is kept for each employee at the White River Valley Supervisory Union (WRVSU) Office. Each employee who arranges an appointment with the Superintendent's Administrative Assistant shall have a reasonable opportunity to inspect his or her file. An employee may also be provided a copy of all or part of his or her file.

Open Communication Procedure

The WRVSU/First Branch Unified District encourages employees to discuss any work-related issue you may have with that co-worker directly. If a resolution is not reached, or if an employee is uncomfortable in addressing the issue directly with the co-worker involved, please arrange a meeting with the school principal to discuss any concern, problem, or issue that arise during the course of employment. Any information discussed in this meeting is considered confidential with the school principal, except as may be necessary in order to address the problem. Retaliation against any employee for appropriate usage of open communication channels is unacceptable and should likewise be reported to the school principal or another member of WRVSU administration as soon as possible. Please remember it is counterproductive for employees to create or repeat rumors or gossip about colleagues or First Branch Unified District; whereas, it is constructive for an employee to consult his supervisor or school principal immediately with any questions or problems related to our workplace or employees.

Suggestions

The First Branch Unified District at Chelsea Public School and Tunbridge Central School encourages all

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employees to bring forward to the school principal their suggestions and good ideas about how our school can be made a better place to work, and our service to students and parents enhanced. When an employee sees an opportunity for improvement, please discuss with the school principal.

Supervision of Faculty and Staff

The school principal supervises all faculty and staff in the building. Staff assigned to a particular classroom or area may also be supervised by the classroom teacher or case manager.

- **Teachers:** Teacher supervision and evaluation will be conducted following the protocols as outlined in the Master Agreement of the WRVSU Boards and the Whiter River Valley Education Association. All new teachers will be evaluated twice in the first two years of their employment.
- **Kitchen Manager, Head of Maintenance, Administrative Assistant, Student Support Specialist/Athletic Director:** These school positions shall be evaluated annually by the school principal.
- **Special Education Paraeducators:** SPED Paraeducators shall be evaluated annually by Special Education Case Managers and reviewed by the WRVSU Director of Special Services/school principal. The WRVSU Special Education protocols and evaluation form shall be used.

Background Investigation, Criminal Records Check

As part of efforts to provide a safe learning environment, applicants for employment will be subject to background investigation per state statutes. All offers of employment are conditioned upon submitting to, and the satisfactory results of a criminal records check, a background investigation, and fingerprinting.

Employee Information - Forms

All new employees must furnish the White River Valley Supervisory Union/First Branch Unified District the following before they may start work: Completed application, transcripts verifying college degrees and courses taken, a minimum of three (3) letters of recommendation, a copy of state certificate, social security number (for W-4), completed I-9 form (which requires an employee to show evidence that they are eligible for employment in the United States) and date of birth. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the White River Valley Supervisory Union (763-8840) of any changes in this information during the course of employment.

Job Posting

The White River Valley Supervisory Union/First Branch Unified District may consider current employees for new or vacant positions pending certification and experience. To that end, openings for anticipated, new or vacant positions will be posted at the school, WRVSU schools, SchoolSpring.com, and may include local papers.

- Teachers: See the Master Agreement – WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association for additional information regarding vacancy provisions.

Internal vacancies and WRVSU vacancies shall be posted on the bulletin board in the mail room.

Safety and Accidents

Safety to our employees is of paramount importance to the White River Valley Supervisory Union/First Branch Unified District. All faculty and staff are encouraged to exercise good judgment and consider

safety when performing tasks for the First Branch Unified District. Each employee should report any condition or situation he or she reasonably believes to be unsafe to the school principal.

All work related accidents must be reported to the school nurse and WRVSU Business Office immediately. Minor injuries should be treated at once. Accidents requiring immediate medical attention may require transport to an area hospital.

It is imperative that all work related injuries and accidents be documented immediately and sent to the White River Valley Supervisory Union Office within 48 hours. Documentation is critical should a worker compensation claim be filed as a result of the accident/injury. An employee's failure to file a report in a timely manner may result in their disqualification for worker's compensation benefits.

Professional Standards

Standards of Conduct

Any group of employees who come together for a common purpose must have policies, rules and procedures to work by. No list of rules can be all inclusive. The following areas, however, are expressly

described to guide employees in recognition of certain behavior that is clearly prohibited by federal and state law as well as the policies of the First Branch Unified Board of School Directors.

All employees are expected to adhere to the Core Teaching and Leadership Standards for Vermont Educators and to carry out all applicable federal and state laws as well as the policies of the First Branch Unified Board of School Directors. All employees are expected to meet the performance and conduct requirements of his or her position. Employees who fail to satisfy these requirements may be subject to disciplinary action. The following behaviors are prohibited:

- Theft.
- Hazing.
- Failure to report child abuse and neglect.
- Falsifying time sheets or other district records.
- Filling out another employee's timesheet.
- Use of copyrighted material without authorization of the copyright owner.
- Engaging in an act of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, physical or mental disability or sexual harassment.
- Disclosure of confidential information.
- Use of intoxicants or illegal drugs during work hours or reporting to work under the influence of intoxicants or illegal drugs.
- Repeated and excessive unexcused absence or tardiness.
- Abuse or damage of district property, equipment, vehicles, tools or abuse of property of others.
- Unauthorized possession of firearms or other dangerous weapons on district property or while performing district business.
- Disregard for safety which includes, but is not limited to, any behavior that creates an unnecessary dangerous situation.

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These standards of conduct are not set in any particular order. Your cooperation in observing these standards is expected. Any questions or concerns regarding these standards of conduct or anything not covered herein should be directed to the school principal or the White River Valley Supervisory Union Superintendent.

Conduct and Appearance

Employees are prohibited in engaging in general misconduct, which includes, but is not limited to profane or abusive language, physical violence, threats thereof, or interference with the work of others. As an employee of First Branch Unified District you are expected at all times to use your best efforts to perform assigned tasks promptly and efficiently and to be courteous and impartial in dealing with those we serve.

Employees are asked to dress in a manner suitable for their work and consistent with good taste and personal hygiene. It is expected that all clothing will be clean and in good repair. Questions regarding work clothing may be addressed to your supervisor and school principal.

Personal Electronic/Communication Devices

First Branch Unified District expects that all employees to be fully engaged with students during instructional time and not using personal and/or school owned devices for non-school

business. Personal electronic/communication devices or school owned devices may be used during non-student contact time such as breaks, lunch or planning periods for such purposes when necessary.

Absences and Tardiness

While You Are Out Procedure: When You Need A Sub?

Planned absence:

1. Get an employee absence form from the administrative assistant and request the dates of leave from the school principal.
2. Once you have a signed form return it to the administrative assistant. The administrative assistant will arrange for a substitute teacher for you if one is needed.
3. Leave detailed sub plans for your substitute. These may include class list, daily schedule, emergency drill information, special events, duties, lunch procedures, etc).

Unplanned emergency Absence:

1. Call the Tunbridge Administrative Assistant at home to get a sub. 802-889-3265. Call the Chelsea Administrative Assistant at 685-4551, ext 100. You may call as early as 5:30 a.m. and as late as 9:00 p.m.
2. Either have emergency sub plans in your desk ready for above situation or
3. Email sub plans to the Tunbridge Administrative Assistant: tvesper@wrvsu.org; to the Chelsea Administrative Assistant: wmccullough@wrvsu.org; or drop off at the school and leave the plans.
4. Upon return fill out the employee absence sheet and give to the Tunbridge and/or Chelsea Administrative Assistant to process.

Classroom teachers are responsible for having instructional plans for the substitute teacher.

Resignation/Retirement of Employment

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As an educational professional courtesy, employees are asked to provide advanced written notice in the event they decide to resign or retire from the First Branch Unified District. Such notice shall be provided to the school principal, White River Valley Supervisory Union Superintendent and to the First Branch Unified Board of School Directors. The notice should include the effective date of the resignation and or retirement.

- Teachers: See contract regarding details to resignation/retirement of employment.
- Support Staff (i.e. Kitchen Manager, Head of Maintenance, Administrative Assistant, Registrar, SPED Paraeducators): It is recommended that this group provide up to a three (3) week written notice to the Principal in the event of a resignation or retirement from WRVSU/First Branch Unified District.
- Out of courtesy, please discuss with your school principal in advance of a pending resignation or retirement.

(WRVSU and SU District Policies B33 Resignations)

Classifications

All employees, regardless of their employment status (full-time, part-time or temporary) are subject to applicable federal/state laws, applicable master agreements, WRVSU and First Branch Unified Board of School Directors policies and procedures, which may be modified at the Board's discretion from time to time.

Instructional Employees

Certified personnel who are engaged in the instruction of students and who are subject to the terms and conditions of the Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association.

Educational Support Personnel

Personnel who are engaged in the educational support of students and who are subject to the terms and conditions of the Master Agreement between the White River Valley Education Association Educational Support Personnel and the WRVSU Boards of School Directors and The White River Valley Supervisory Union.

Support Staff (i.e. Kitchen Manager, Head of Maintenance, Administrative Assistant):

Employment with the WRVSU/Chelsea Public School is subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the written contract entered between the employee and employer WRVSU/Chelsea Public School.

Year Round Employees

Year round employees are those who are contracted to work for 260 days.

School Year Employees

School year employees are those who are contracted to work between 180 and 220 days.

Temporary Employees

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Temporary employees are those hired for a limited time period, usually to perform jobs arising out of special projects, abnormal workloads, and temporary absences of an employee, emergencies, and so forth.

Non-Exempt Employees

Non-exempt employees are those employees who are covered by the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and applicable state law. Employees in this category will receive overtime pay for work in excess of 40 hours in a work week.

Exempt Employees

Exempt employees are defined as those employees who are classified as exempt from the overtime provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and any applicable state law. Exempt employees do not receive overtime pay, as their salaries represent compensation for all work performed in a pay period.

Compensation/Hours

WRVSU/First Branch Unified District the same principles of fairness to all employees, regardless of race, ancestry, religion, gender, age, marital or civil union status, national origin, sexual orientation, place of birth, veteran status, or disability, as defined and required by state and federal laws.

Basis for Determining Pay

Instructional Employees

Basis for determining pay for certified personnel who are engaged in the instruction of students and who are subject to the terms and conditions of the Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association.

Educational Support Personnel

Basis for determining pay for educational support personnel who are engaged supporting students and who are subject to the terms and conditions of the Master Agreement between the White River Valley Education Association Educational Support Personnel, the WRVSU Boards of School Directors and The White River Valley Supervisory Union.

Support Staff (i.e. Kitchen Manager, Head of Maintenance, Administrative Assistant, Registrar, SPED Paraeducators)

Basis for determining pay for administrative/support staff is subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the written contract entered between the employee and employer WRVSU/First Branch Unified District. The First Branch Unified District Board of Directors annually reviews and determines pay considering nature and scope of job, what other employers pay their employees for comparable jobs and rate of inflation among other factors.

Pay Cycle

WRVSU/First Branch Unified District pays employees every other Friday.

Mandatory Deductions from Paycheck

WRVSU/First Branch Unified District is required by law to make certain deductions from an employee's paycheck each time one is prepared. Among these are federal, state and local income taxes and employee

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contribution to Social Security as required by law. These deductions will be itemized on the employee's check stub. The amount of the deductions will depend on an employee's earnings and on the information the employee furnishes on her or his W-4 form regarding the number of exemptions claimed. If an employee wishes to modify this number, please request a new W-4 form from WRVSU Payroll Officer immediately (763-7795). Only an employee may modify their W-4 form. Verbal or written instructions are not sufficient to modify withholding allowances. It is advised that the employee to check her or his pay stub to ensure that it reflects the proper number of withholdings.

The W-2 form an employee receives annually reflects how much of her or his earnings were deducted for these purposes.

Any other mandatory deductions to be made from an employee's paycheck, such as court-ordered garnishments, or child support, Vermont Teachers Retirement for Vermont Municipal Retirement will be set out on her or his pay stub as required to make such deductions.

Direct Payroll Deposit

Direct payroll deposit is the automatic deposit of an employee's pay into the financial institution accounts of her or his choice. If an employee is not currently enrolled in direct deposit and would like to do so, please contact the WRVSU Payroll Office (763-7795). Written authorization is required to deposit employee pay through electronic funds transfer or other direct deposit systems

Error in Pay

Every effort is made to avoid errors in an employee's paycheck. If an employee believes an error has been made, please contact the WRVSU Payroll Office (763-7795). The payroll office will take the necessary steps to research the problem and to assure that any necessary correction is made promptly.

Overtime Pay

When operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular hours, non-exempt employees may be scheduled to work overtime. When possible, advance notification of these assignments will be provided. When required, overtime work is a job requirement for all WRVSU/First Branch Unified District non-exempt employees. All overtime work requires the supervisor's and school principal prior authorization. Overtime assignments will be distributed as equitably as practical to all employees qualified to perform the required work.

Overtime compensation is paid to all non-exempt employees in accordance with the federal and state wage requirements and is based upon actual hours worked. Time off for paid personal, sick, any leave of absence, or holiday hours will not be considered hours worked for purposes of performing overtime calculations. For overtime purposes, the WRVSU workweek runs from Sunday 12:00 a.m. to Saturday 11:59pm.

Time Records

WRVSU/First Branch Unified District takes the issue of recording time worked seriously. Further, and by law WRVSU/First Branch Unified District are obligated to keep accurate records of the time worked by each employee. This is done by time sheets for non-exempt employees. Non-exempt employees are responsible for accurately tracking time. No one may track hours worked for another employee (except for administrators who can track in times of absences) and tampering with another employee's timesheet is cause for disciplinary action. In the event of an error in reporting time, please report the matter to your supervisor or school principal immediately.

Wage Garnishments

If court-ordered wage garnishments require deductions to be taken from an employee's paycheck, she or he will be notified, and it will appear on the employee's pay stub.

Benefits

Eligibility For and Information about Benefits – All Employees

An eligible full-time employee will enjoy all of the benefits described in this handbook. Benefits will be implemented as soon as the employee meets the eligibility requirements as defined within the benefit plans(s) or as required by law. Benefits take effect the first day of the month following the employee's first day of work.

All employees are notified annually in June by the Business Department for employees to make changes to health insurance coverage which must be completed prior to July 1st.

Summary Plan Descriptions are available prior to enrollment and may be obtained through WRVSVU/First Branch Unified District carrier or by contacting the WRVSVU Payroll and Benefits Department.

An eligible part-time employee will enjoy pro rated benefits specifically required by law, provided that the employee meets the minimum requirements set forth by law and in the benefit plan(s).

Group Insurance Programs – All Employees

The following benefits are available and are described in the literature provided by WRVSVU/First Branch Unified District insurance carrier(s):

- ◆ Medical Care Coverage (to include prescription coverage)
- ◆ Vision Care
- ◆ Dental Insurance
- ◆ Life Insurance
- ◆ Accidental Death and Dismemberment
- ◆ Short Term Disability
- ◆ Long Term Disability

For more information on rates, premiums and coverage please contact the WRVSVU Payroll & Benefits Coordinator (763-7795).

Insurance/Benefits – Instructional Employees

See the Master Agreement WRVSVU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association regarding additional details about insurance/benefits.

Changes to Personal Information

For purposes such as an emergency, compensation and benefits, the WRVSVU/First Branch Unified District keeps records of employee's addresses, telephone numbers, tax withholding information and similar information. All employees are requested to notify the WRVSVU (763-8840) of any changes in such information as soon as changes occur.

Workers' Compensation

All employees are entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits. This coverage is automatic and immediate and provides certain benefits to compensate an employee for an on-the-job injury or illness. An on-the-job injury is defined as an accidental injury suffered during work hours, or an illness that is directly related to performing your assigned job duties. WRVSU/First Branch Unified District pays for this on the job-injury/illness insurance. An employee who cannot work due to a job-related injury or illness, Workers' Compensation insurance pays the employee's medical bills and provides a portion of her or his income until the employee can return to work or for a limited period of time defined by law, whichever comes first.

All injuries or illnesses arising out of the scope of your employment must be reported to the school nurse and/or payroll department immediately. Prompt reporting is the key to prompt benefits. Employees can insure their right to benefits by reporting every injury, no matter how slight.

Employees returning to work after being absent due to a work-related injury must report to their school principal or supervisor prior to beginning work and must bring a doctor's "return to work notice" in order to return to work. This notice is required to list any job restrictions if applicable.

Unemployment Compensation

Depending upon the circumstances, employees may be eligible for unemployment compensation upon termination of employment or a reduction in hours of work with WRVSU/First Branch Unified District. The Vermont Agency of Employment and Training determines eligibility for unemployment compensation. WRVSU/First Branch Unified District pays the entire cost of this insurance program.

Social Security

Employees are required by law to contribute a set amount of weekly wages to the trust fund from which future Social Security benefits are paid. WRVSU/First Branch Unified District is required to deduct this amount from each paycheck an employee receives. In addition, WRVSU/First Branch Unified District matches employee contributions dollar for dollar, thereby paying one-half of the cost of an employee's Social Security benefits.

The employee's Social Security number is used to record your earnings. Employees are encouraged to protect their Social Security record by ensuring that your name and Social Security number on the pay stub and W-2 Form are correct. Employees may also want to make sure your earnings statement is accurate each year by requesting a Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statement from the U.S. Social Security Administration.

Both paid and unpaid time off may be granted to instructional employees/educational support personnel based on the master agreements. Other eligible employees may be eligible based on district leave policies. Please consult with the Payroll Department for more information. For purposes of determining allowable leave, in Vermont, the term "spouse" includes a civil union partner/domestic partner, the term "stepchild" includes the child of a civil union partner, and the term "parent-in-law" includes the parent of a civil union partner.

Authorized Leaves

Holidays

- Instructional Employees: Holidays are not defined in the Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association.
- Educational Support Personnel: Per Master Agreement, full-time year round employees shall be paid the equivalent of one (1) day's pay for each of the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after and Christmas/equivalent. In addition, full-time year round employees shall be paid the equivalent of one day's pay for three additional holidays as determined by the school calendar. Additional information regarding paid holidays may be found under Article XXI of the Master Agreement.

Vacation

- Instructional Employees: Vacation is not a defined authorized leave in the Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association.
- Educational Support Personnel: Per Master Agreement, full-time and part-time year-round employees shall be entitled vacation days. See Master Agreement White River Valley Education Association Educational Support Personnel and the WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Supervisory Union.

Personal Leave

- Instructional Employees: A teacher will be granted three (3) days per year, to conduct personal or private business which cannot be accomplished outside of the school day. See Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association for additional information.
- Educational Support Personnel: Per Master Agreement, full-time year-round employees shall receive three (3) paid personal leave days annually. Full-time school year and part-time year round employees shall receive two (2) paid personal leave days annually. See Master Agreement White River Education Association Educational Support Personnel and the WRVSU Boards of Directors and The White River Valley Supervisory Union.

Sick Leave

- Instructional Employees: A teacher will be granted twelve (12) days sick leave at the beginning of each school year. See Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association for additional information.
- Educational Support Personnel: Per Master Agreement, full-time year-round and full-time school year employees who works thirty or more hours per week shall receive twelve (12) sick days each year, at the beginning of the year. See Master Agreement White River Valley Education Association Educational Support Personnel and the WRVSU Boards and The White River Valley Supervisory Union for additional information.

Bereavement Leave

- Instructional Employees: Bereavement leave of up to five (5) paid days per school year will be granted to a teacher in the event of death of a relative (spouse, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sibling, and parent-in-law). See Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association for additional information.
- Educational Support Personnel: Per Master Agreement, each employee shall be granted up to three (3) paid days per death of a member of the immediate family. Up to two (2) additional days

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may be granted by the administration to allow for travel. See Master Agreement White River Valley Education Association Educational Support Personnel WRVSU Boards and The White River Valley Supervisory Union.

Professional Leave

- Instructional Employees: Professional leave of three (3) days, in excess of those required by the administration, may be granted with prior approval of the Principal. See Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association for additional information.
- Educational Support Personnel: Educational Support Personnel are eligible to use \$500 annually for the purpose of educational, academic, workshop and like training related to his/her job. See Master Agreement White River Valley Education Association Educational Support Personnel WRVSU Boards and The White River Valley Supervisory Union.

Parental Leave

- Instructional Employees: See Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association for additional information regarding parental leave provisions.
- Educational Support Personnel: Staff shall be entitled to an unpaid parental leave for a period not to exceed ninety (90) calendar days from the date of birth or the date of adoption. Said days will run concurrent with the benefits extended to a staff member under Vermont Law. See Master Agreement White River Valley Education Association Educational Support Personnel WRVSU Boards and The White River Valley Supervisory Union for additional information regarding parental leave provisions.

Family and Parental Leave Act

- Instructional Employees: See Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association for additional information regarding provisions of FMLA/VPFLA Leave.
- Educational Support Personnel: See Master Agreement White River Valley Education Association Educational Support Personnel WRVSU Boards and The White River Valley Supervisory Union for additional information regarding provisions of FMLA/VPFLA Leave.

For FMLA/Vermont Family Leave forms and additional information, contact the WRVSU Business Office at (763-7795).

Discretionary Leave

- Instructional Employees: Teachers may request additional leave consideration from the Board. See Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association for additional information.
- Educational Support Personnel: Upon approval of the Board, an employee may receive an unpaid leave of absence for up to one (1) year. See Master Agreement White River Valley Education Association Educational Support Personnel WRVSU Boards and The White River Valley Supervisory Union for additional information regarding provisions of Unpaid Leave of Absence.

Jury and Witness Duty

- Instructional Employees: Leave will be granted for teachers performing jury duty. Teachers will receive their regular pay, but shall reimburse the District any payments received from the court accept payments for travel, room and board. See Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association for additional information.
- Educational Support Personnel: An Educational Support Person who is required to serve on a jury

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will be excused from his or her regular employment duties to perform such service and will receive his or her regular rate of pay. See Master Agreement White River Valley Education Association Educational Support Personnel WRVSU Boards and The White River Valley Supervisory Union for additional information regarding provisions of Jury Duty.

Military Leave

- Instructional Employees: The District shall grant such unpaid leave and reemployment rights as required by federal and state law to any employee who enters the U.S. Reserves and/or National Guard, whether by recall, draft or voluntary enlistment. See Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association for additional information.
- Educational Support Personnel: Military leave of absence and reinstatement from such leave shall be granted by the Board in accordance with existing state and/or federal statutes. See Master Agreement White River Valley Education Association Educational Support Personnel WRVSU Boards and The White River Valley Supervisory Union for additional information regarding provisions of Military Leave.

Sabbatical

- Instructional Employees: After 5 years of employment as a teacher within the White River Supervisory Union (WRVSU), at the sole discretion of the Board, a teacher may be granted a sabbatical, without pay, for a period of up to one (1) academic year, for the purpose of professional development, including, but not limited to, engaging in study or educational travel.
- Educational Support Personnel: Not available as a defined leave per Master Agreement. However, upon approval of the Board, an employee may receive an unpaid leave of absence for up to one (1) year. See Master Agreement White River Valley Education Association Educational Support Personnel WRVSU Boards and The White River Valley Supervisory Union for additional information regarding provisions of Unpaid Leave of Absence.

First Branch Unified District Guidelines and Procedures

In addition to information contained in this Faculty/Staff Handbook, all First Branch Unified District employees are responsible in the enforcement of applicable federal and state law, the policies and procedures of the First Branch Unified District and student handbook.

Animals in School

The Vermont Department of Health has issued specific guidelines regarding the presence of animals on school grounds and at school functions. The school nurse must be notified before bringing any animal to school. The school principal reserves the right to prohibit certain animals from being in school based on Vermont Department of Health guidelines.

Attendance/Lunch Count: Chelsea

Faculty are required to submit electronically daily attendance as well as complete lunch count for the school administrative assistant by 8:30 AM. The cafeteria staff uses lunch count information to project how much food to prepare. Attendance at grades 6-8 will be taken daily by period. The office needs attendance information to call families of students who are absent.

Attendance/Lunch Count: Tunbridge

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Faculty are required to submit electronically daily attendance as well as complete lunch count for the school administrative assistant by 8:30 AM. The office needs attendance information to call families of students who are absent. The cafeteria staff uses lunch count information to project how much food to prepare.

Bus Passes/Pickup Notes: Chelsea

All bus passes will be written by the administrative assistant. Faculty should send all notes received from students changing after school plans that include bus instructions, to the office with lunch count. The office staff will write the bus passes and deliver them to the classrooms by **1:00 p.m.**

Bus Passes/Pickup Notes: Tunbridge

All bus passes will be written by the administrative assistant. Faculty should send all notes received from students changing after school plans to the office as early as possible.

Communication Procedure - Chelsea/Tunbridge

All classroom teachers will have a page on the website that will include a class or course description, syllabus, and a personal introduction. Website material should be updated quarterly. All material will be accurate, up to date, and user friendly.

Each Chelsea (K-5) Tunbridge (K-4) student will be provided a school folder. Chelsea classroom teachers (K-5) and Tunbridge (K-4) teachers are responsible for sending school information home in students' school folders. If a student does not have their folder, they may be provided another one because school information will always be sent home in the school folder. Families and students are responsible for returning folders to school daily. K-8 faculty will communicate with families by phone call, Email, or by appointment as necessary. In addition to communicating academic and behavioral areas of academic concern, the administration encourages communicating positive accomplishments and achievement of students.

All faculty and staff when communicating all school business should use assigned email.

Dismissal - Students

The school day ends at 2:50 p.m. in Tunbridge and at 3:00 p.m. in Chelsea. Kindergarten is dismissed five minutes early for dismissal to busses.

Duty Coverage

If faculty or support staff are absent on a day that she or he has duty, please let the administrative assistant know so the substitute teacher may be informed of the duty. It is the responsibility of the individual on duty coverage to have a walkie-talkie device for the playground. When supervising the playground, if a duty partner is not present, please call the office for assistance.

If a faculty or support staff member is supervising a field trip or for whatever reason cannot cover recess or lunch duty, please find coverage. Please notify the administrative assistant of the change.

Educational Support System

As part of the educational support team (EST), Act 157 requires that schools have an education support team. The role of the EST is to assist teachers in developing plans to support students.

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The goal of the education support team is to ensure that all students who require additional classroom assistance are provided with an appropriate educational experience in order to provide for their continuing growth and development and preparation for independence and productivity as community members.

Please note: Throughout the EST process, the classroom teacher is the student's case manager. **In Chelsea, the School Counselor serves as the School EST Coordinator and in Tunbridge, the Special Education Case Manager serves as the School EST Coordinator.**

The Process:

1. A teacher has concerns based on data about a student not currently on an IEP or a 504 plan.
2. Notify an EST Coordinator of a student for an EST meeting.
3. Obtain and complete the referral forms. Please complete the needed forms in pen so that they may be copied.
4. Invite any additional staff members to the meeting.
5. Notify the parents/caregivers about the meeting.
6. Come to the EST meeting with the completed referral form, work samples and assessments.
7. The EST writes a plan for your student with action steps, timeline and evaluation criteria.
8. The EST sets a date to review the plan and revise the plan if the plan isn't working.

Emergency Response/Drills – School Safety

During the school day it is possible for emergencies to arise. In order to ensure the safety and well being of our students, First Branch Unified District at Chelsea Public School and Tunbridge Central School continuously revises as needed its emergency response plans and procedures in cooperation with the state Agency of Education, Orange County Sheriff's Department, Chelsea and/or Tunbridge Fire Department and others. As required by the State of Vermont, First Branch Unified District at Chelsea Public School and Tunbridge Central School conducts eight (8) drills each school year. The drills enable faculty, staff and students to practice the procedures in the possible event of an emergency.

Please ensure that all classrooms have an Emergency Response Plan Binder. In addition, all photo ID badges feature classroom crisis commands and are required to be worn during school hours.

For any other emergency, please contact the office immediately.

For school security and safety, all exterior doors must be locked while school is in session.

Energy

Faculty and staff are required to turn off all lights when the room is not in use. All technology equipment and devices must be shut down nightly.

During cold weather when the school is heated, please keep all windows and any outside doors closed.

Field Trips and Class Trips

Faculty planning field trips for academic experiences are requested to following the following protocols:

- **Communication about any and all trips will be made from teacher to the principal prior to submission of the Field Trip Request Form is submitted to the administrative assistant. Principal**

must approve the field trip prior to any communication with families or students about a planned trip.

- Teachers will submit a Field Trip Request Form to the administrative assistant 15 school days prior to the trip.
- The administrative assistant will stamp each request with the date it was submitted.
- Teachers will prepare and submit a Purchase Order to the registrar for the cost of the bus (get an estimate from administrative assistant) and include date of trip.
- Teachers will prepare and submit a Purchase Order to the registrar for any fees or expenses on the trip and include date of trip.
- Teachers will send permission slips home in school folders and place one in the administrative assistant's mailbox two Thursdays prior to the trip (i.e. Thursday, October 4 for a trip on Tuesday, October 23).
- **Teachers will be responsible for collecting permission forms and providing copies to the office. Deadline for return of permission slips is one week prior to the event.**
- Teachers will communicate all trips with the entire school via email 48 hours prior to the scheduled departure. Teachers will provide the cafeteria manager with the number of bagged lunches that are needed 48 hours prior to the scheduled departure.
- All chaperones are required to have a criminal background check through WRVSU. Please check with the school administrative assistant for additional information and forms.
- Teachers will provide the school principal with a listing of all chaperones two weeks prior to the trip.
- **Teachers must have emergency contact information and medical information of each student attending the field trip.**

Field trips are considered part of the curriculum and all children **must** have access to a planned field trip. Field trips cannot be used as a reward or punishment. Faculty who have concerns about a student's safety on a field trip, please discuss with the school principal at least **15 business days prior the trip**.

All field trips require bus and/or van transportation through the school's contracted bus company or other approved transportation provider. Faculty is requested to complete a Transportation Request Form two weeks in advance. Please plan any year-end trips well in advance. Faculty who would like confirmation of transportation arrangements are requested to check with the administrative assistant to call the day before the trip so that if there is a problem, adjustment can be made. Faculty is requested not to call the bus company. All correspondence should be through the office administrative assistant to avoid miscommunication.

Grading Procedures

It is expected that all students in grades K-8 will receive a report card for every class that includes a combination of teacher comments (as necessary) and specific grade or evidence, as well as a report card that will include a final quarter grade and teacher comments (as necessary) that are specific to the students' academic and social growth for every class. **The timeline for completing and releasing reports is found on the official First Branch Unified District - Chelsea Public School/Tunbridge Central School Calendar at the front of this handbook.**

Students in grades 6-8 will have their grades updated on Web-2-School at a minimum of every two weeks. Students in grades 6-8 are responsible for obtaining any assignments, projects, tests, and quizzes when absent.

Faculty-Staff Handbook

Every effort will be made by faculty to communicate academic progress to parents and/or guardians. Students in grades 6-8 who receives a failing grade on their report card will get a phone call home from the teacher of the class in which they are failing prior to receiving their report card and will be referred for EST if not previously referred.

Health Office

The health office is available to address the needs of students when they are feeling ill or are injured. Faculty who need to send a child to the health office should call to see if the school nurse is available to receive the child. This is important for the child's safety. For minor scrapes, faculty should keep a supply of band-aids available in the classroom.

Every staff member encountering a sick (vomiting) or injured (bleeding) child or adult should protect themselves with gloves prior to making contact with body fluids. Disposable gloves are located in the health office, in the kitchen, at the east exit to the playground, and in each classroom. Gloves should be in large manila envelopes, marked clearly as such. Faculty who use a pair or notice gloves are not available at a stated location, contact the custodian at once.

Leave Request Forms

These forms are located in a bin mounted to the wall opposite the faculty/staff mailboxes in the Chelsea School Office. Faculty/staff who are absent for **any** reason, must complete a Leave Request Form and submit to the administrative assistant. For faculty, if a substitute is not needed, please indicate so on the form. Faculty who know they will be absent ahead of time are required to submit a Leave Request Form before the administrative assistant will arrange for a substitute.

Personal Leave – A completed Leave Request Form needs to be given to the administrative assistant *as soon as possible*.

Sick Leave – Please complete a Leave Request Form to document a sick day and submit to the administrative assistant upon return.

Professional Leave – Please complete a Leave Request Form prior to your professional event.

Leaving the Classroom

If a class is visiting another classroom or is out of the classroom at an unscheduled time, a teacher is required to notify the administrative assistant. Faculty who may be taking a class outside and on school grounds are requested to notify the administrative assistant and to have a walkie talkie.

Lesson Plans

Upon request of the Principal, K-8 Faculty may be required to submit classroom lesson plans. Lesson plans may be randomly checked at any time.

Lost and Found/Chelsea

If an item is found by an employee, drop it off at the "Lost and Found" shelves located outside the cafeteria. Items will be kept for up to a semester.

Lost and Found/Tunbridge

If an item is found by an employee, drop it off at the "Lost and Found" shelves located in the main hallway. Items will be kept for up to a semester.

Media

Faculty and staff are encouraged to submit newsworthy and promotional articles of interest about First Branch Unified District at Chelsea Public School of student events, accomplishments, and achievements.

Parking – Chelsea

Faculty and staff are requested to park in the parking lot at the south end of the school or on either the north or south side of the South Common at the front of the school. Faculty and staff are requested not to park personal vehicles at the top of the South Common as a courtesy to the Orange County Courthouse.

Parent-Guardian Meeting Protocols

1. Identify who is running the meeting: This person is responsible for keeping the meeting on track, keeping it from getting bogged down or sidetracked, and seeing that all participants are being treated in a safe and respectful manner.
2. Articulate the purpose of the meeting: Do this even if “everyone knows already” as this provides the opportunity to say that all present have the common interest of wanting what is best for the student. At this point all other legal requirements or protocols for IEP/504 or other meetings are taken care of such as Parents’ Rights.
3. Outline the Agenda: Example: “During this meeting we will cover the results of the testing; we will hear behavioral concerns from the parents and teachers and we can discuss what steps we will want and/or need to take next.”

This is the point at which guidelines for participants can be set. How these are presented can vary, depending on the level of education, sophistication, anger and hostility of the parent(s).

Example: For parents who will assuredly pose no difficulty, it may be as simple as saying, “We may or may not reach agreement on every issue, but the best way to figure out how to help [student name] get the most out of school will be to hear everyone’s ideas.”

In addition to the above, a parent who is more likely, based on reputation or history, to be hostile or aggressive may need to be told: “We will, of course all treat one another with respect and courtesy, even if we are in disagreement.”

There is no “one size fits all” template for every situation, but if a parent crosses the line, a reminder of the need to treat one another in a respectful manner may be sufficient. For egregiously bad behavior, it may be necessary to simply end the meeting. (“This language is unacceptable, so we will end the meeting for now and reconvene at a later date.” Or, “We are no longer being productive, so we will reconvene when tempers are cooler.”)

There is no definitive script for all situations and some parents may be very difficult to deal with. The more practice the facilitator has, and the more clearly parameters are defined, the easier it is to facilitate a meeting.

4. Set and define time parameters.
5. Brief summation at the end of the meeting, including who is going to do what: Next steps to be taken, and by whom. Are we convening again? Do we schedule that now or will it be “if and when needed?”
6. Thank everyone for having been there.

Purchase Orders

All purchases must be made through the purchase order process and must have prior approval. This includes all reimbursements. This is required for the protection of faculty and support supervisors and as well as for WRVSU/First Branch Unified District audits.

Purchase Order (PO) forms are available in the office (in wall bin) and should be filled out completely. Indicate the grade level, classroom, department and the area (i.e. supplies, books, equipment) of the budget that the request is being made on the "Budget Category" line.

It is important for faculty and support supervisors that spending is limited to the budgeted amount. Please check with the administrative assistant if there is any uncertainty of the balance prior to completing a purchase order.

Please return all PO's to the administrative assistant for the school principal's signature. After approval, orders will be faxed unless otherwise indicated.

Recess

Recess is an important part of the students' day. It gives students time to relax and refresh themselves for the rest of the day.

Per WRVSU/First Branch Unified District *Wellness Policy*, "recess shall not be withheld from a student as a consequence for missed work or poor behavior, except in cases where a student's presence at recess is deemed unsafe or detrimental to the child's well being or the well-being of others."

A fanny pack with first aid supplies should be taken out to the playground daily. Fanny packs will be issued by the school nurse.

Students will be expected to go outside unless it is raining or the temperature and wind chill factor is below 10°F.

Restraint

Physical restraint of students by trained school employees shall be used only when necessary to protect persons, to protect property, or to provide for self defense.

(WRVSU and SU District Board Policies C34 Use of Restraint and Seclusion)

Retention

If you are considering a student for retention, it must be discussed with the school principal prior to recommendation at an Educational Support Team or a Special Education Team Meeting. Deadline for recommending retention is the first Friday in March. If the decision is made to retain a student, the classroom teacher will write a letter documenting the retention for the student's permanent file.

Room Use Sign-Up

Faculty and staff members needing rooms for meetings, conferences, performance rehearsals, etc., need to reserve these rooms. Please email or see the administrative assistant regarding requests and availability. To avoid scheduling conflicts, faculty and staff are required to arrange all requests through the administrative assistant.

Faculty Meetings - Chelsea

Faculty meetings are scheduled for Tuesdays*. Every grade span will have a monthly full-faculty meeting (occasionally includes staff), committee meeting time, two PLC meetings, and a monthly EST meeting. Staff meetings will begin at 3:10 p.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. Every faculty member is expected to attend every meeting. Faculty members who coach sports are asked to start practice after 4 p.m. on Tuesdays and communicate game schedules with the principal.

FBUD at Chelsea Faculty Meeting Schedule for 2019-2020 SY:

Typical meeting days are on Tuesdays, with the following exceptions (*):

	Full Faculty Meeting	PLCs	EST	Mentors-Mentees/Committees
September	8/26 (Mon)*	9/3 (K-5) 9/10 (6-8)	9/3 (6-8) 9/10 (K-5)	9/17 (Mentors) 9/24 (Committees)

	Full Faculty Meeting	PLCs	EST	Mentors-Mentees/Committees
October	10/1	10/8 (K-5) 10/15 (6-8)	10/8 (6-8) 10/15 (K-5)	10/22 (Mentors) 10/29 (Committees)

	Full Faculty Meeting	PLCs	EST	Mentors-Mentees/Committees
November	11/5	11/12 (K-5) 11/19 (6-8)	11/12 (6-8) 11/19 (K-5)	11/27 (Mentors)

	Full Faculty Meeting	PLCs	EST	Mentors-Mentees/Committees
December	12/3	12/10 (K-5) 12/17 (6-8)	12/10 (6-8) 12/17 (K-5)	

	Full Faculty Meeting	PLCs	EST	Mentors-Mentees/Committees
January	1/7	1/14 (K-5) 1/21 (6-8)	1/14 (6-8) 1/21 (K-5)	1/28 (Committees)

February	Full Faculty Meeting	PLCs	EST	Mentors-Mentees/Committees
	2/4	2/11 (K-5) 2/18 (6-8)	2/11 (6-8) 2/18 (K-5)	

March	Full Faculty Meeting	PLCs	EST	Mentors-Mentees/Committees
	3/10	3/17 (K-5) 3/24 (6-8)	3/17 (6-8) 3/24 (K-5)	3/31 (Mentors)

April	Full Faculty Meeting	PLCs	EST	Mentors-Mentees/Committees
	4/7	4/14 (K-5) 4/21 (6-8)	4/14 (6-8) 4/21 (K-5)	4/28 (Committees)

May	Full Faculty Meeting	PLCs	EST	Mentors-Mentees/Committees
	5/5	5/12 (K-5) 5/19 (6-8)	5/12 (6-8) 5/19 (K-5)	5/26 (Mentors)

June	Full Faculty Meeting	PLCs	EST	Mentors-Mentees/Committees
	6/2	6/9		

Faculty Committees - Chelsea: Faculty are required to serve on at least one of the following committees: Diversity Day, Green-Up Day/Spring Fling, SU Technology, SU Professional Development/Curriculum Committees, Farm to School

Faculty Meetings – Tunbridge (Joanne to replace with calendar similar to Chelsea Public School above)

Faculty meetings are scheduled for Tuesdays*. Every grade span will have a monthly full-faculty meeting (occasionally includes staff), committee meeting time and a monthly EST meeting. Staff meetings will begin at 3:00 p.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. Every faculty member is expected to attend every meeting. Faculty members who coach sports are asked to start practice after 4 p.m. on Tuesdays and communicate game schedules with the principal.

Faculty Committees - Tunbridge: Faculty are required to serve on at least one committee.

Parent-Guardian Communication Log Chelsea/Tunbridge

Faculty is required to maintain the provided communication log binder on a quarterly basis. It is recommended that there be 10 contacts per quarter. The purpose of the communications binder is to ensure that parents are partners with faculty in the education of our students. Communications may be used to inform, to address performance issues, to correct behavioral issues, or to promote student achievement and accomplishments. The following procedures are to be used to journal communications:

- Record all phone, email, and appointments on a weekly basis and specify purpose of call, email, or appointment.
- Emails may be copied and printed into the binder as documentation.
- Binder submission: *Friday prior to the end of each quarter.*

Teachers are welcome to submit their own individualized record keeping system.

Professional Development - Procedure for Taking a Course/Workshop/Conference

Course must begin between **July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020** to use the **2019-2020 Professional Development Allowance (PDA)**. PDA does not roll over to the next year. Faculty and eligible staff are requested to complete the requirements below prior to registering for a course/workshop/conference.

This is a 5-pronged procedure:

1) My Learning Plan (MLP)

- a) Log in to your MLP account provided by WRVSU -see Administrative Assistant for help
- b) Enter Professional Development request (Fill-in Forms)
- c) Make sure to include cost of books, mileage, lodging if you plan to request reimbursement
- d) Submit request for approval
- e) Wait for approval status email from MLP
- f) Once approved, print out the complete MLP request form; give to Administrative Assistant

2) Purchase Order (PO)

- a) Fill out PO form for course tuition and credits (and books if purchasing all at the same time from same institution)
- b) Attach print out/brochure of course description
- c) Fill out separate POs for travel expenses and books (if from separate vendor)
- d) Wait for PO approval confirmation email from Administrative Assistant

3) Registration

- a) Once both MLP and POs have been approved, register yourself for the course
- b) It is up to you to do this - if you need a copy of PO or PO number, ask Registrar
- c) If the institution sends the invoice to you, forward it to Administrative Assistant to pay

4) Employee Absence Form

- a) If your course falls on a school day, fill out this form
- b) Give it to the Administrative Assistant to line up a sub if needed

5) After course completion

- a) Upload transcript or certificate onto MLP as proof of completion
- b) Submit mileage reimbursement form (see Administrative Assistant for form)
- c) Submit any detailed receipts for reimbursement
- d) Payment is contingent upon successful completion of the course (with a grade of B or better or a pass under a pass/fail system) or certificates of attendance from a conference or workshop.

Note that payment from the school funds can take a few weeks from the time an invoice has been received by the Administrative Assistant. If the institution will not accept a PO as promissory note, with prior approval you may pay out of pocket and submit for reimbursement. Give the detailed receipt to the Administrative Assistant.

The WRVSU Grants Coordinator manages individual PDA expenditure and faculty course credit. Please call 763-7775 for individual PDA balances.

Policies, Procedures of Student Handbooks, Core Teaching Standards, federal/state law

It is expected that all faculty and staff will adhere to and enforce all applicable policies set forth by the **White River Valley Supervisory Union**, First Branch Unified District, all procedures and rules found in the *First Branch Unified District Faculty/Staff Handbook*, *Student Handbook*, all standards as set forth in the *Core Teaching and Leadership Standards for Vermont Educators*, as well as all applicable state and federal laws. **Warned and adopted policies are found under the "School Boards" tab at <https://wrvsu.org>.**

Students of Employees - Chelsea

First Branch Unified District at Chelsea Public School supports the needs of our employees. For employees arriving prior to 7:55 AM, employees may have their child(ren) in grades K-2 under their direct supervision (i.e. classroom or workspace) or may choose morning gym. For employee child(ren) who are grade 3 and above, it is requested that they go to morning gym (K-8), quiet library (3-8) or may seek teacher support.

Tardiness - Students

School starts at 8:00 AM at Tunbridge Central School and 8:15 AM at Chelsea Public School. Any student arriving after that time is considered tardy. Students are not marked tardy for late bus arrivals.

Students arriving after the start of school should report to the office to get a tardy slip. If the classroom attendance has already been delivered to the office, the administrative assistant will mark the student tardy.

Teacher Hours and School Year

The work year for teachers is 183 with 177 teaching days, maximum of five (5) in-service days and one flex day. See the Master Agreement WRVSU Boards and the White River Valley Education Association for additional information.

The contracted work day for teachers will consist of a student week and preparation/meeting time that is no longer than forty (40) hours per week. A teacher shall be in the building at least 15 minutes before the scheduled student day.

Faculty-Staff Handbook

Chelsea Only - The teacher day begins at 7:55 am, 20 minutes prior to the 8:15 am start time and ends at 3:25 pm, 25 minutes after the end of the last class. Teachers are expected to be on school grounds at 7:55 am. Faculty who need to leave the building before 3:25 p.m. on any day, please notify the school principal. Faculty (and when staff are notified) are expected to stay until 4:00 pm on Tuesdays for meetings and are therefore excused at 3:00 pm on Friday. Faculty members who coach sports are asked to start practice after 3:25 p.m. and communicate game schedules with the principal. It is expected that faculty members who coach sports be in attendance until 4:00 PM at monthly full faculty meetings (unless there is a scheduled game).

Tunbridge Only-The teacher day begins at 7:45 am, 15 minutes prior to the 8:00 am start time and ends at 3:15 pm, 25 minutes after the end of the last class. Teachers are expected to be on school grounds at 7:45 am. Faculty who need to leave the building before 3:15 p.m. on any day, please notify the school principal. Faculty (and when staff are notified) are expected to stay until 4:00 pm on Tuesdays for meetings and are therefore excused at 3:00 pm on Friday. Faculty members who coach sports are asked to start practice after 3:25 p.m. and communicate game schedules with the principal. It is expected that faculty members who coach sports be in attendance until 4:00 PM at monthly full faculty meetings (unless there is a scheduled game).

Technology

Responsible Use Agreement for Staff White River Valley Supervisory Union

version 1.0 (March 30, 2018)

Purpose

The Technology Vision in the WRVSU is that technology shall be effectively employed to create student learners who possess the critical skills and proficiencies to compete and participate successfully in a global society. Helping administrators and staff be more productive and efficient is an important part in achieving this vision.

Success in education, employment, and civic involvement increasingly demands the ability to effectively use technology. The intent of this RUA is to provide a framework to allow us to use technology, as well as the resources to which it gives access, to effectively pursue this vision.

These guidelines for careful use of school-provided equipment and responsible access to online resources apply both within and outside of the school.

Rules for Use

Access to the school's information technology resources will be provided to staff who agree to abide by these guidelines and act in a considerate and responsible manner. Staff must indicate their agreement by

signing at the end of this document before being allowed to use school-owned devices or to access network resources other than guest networks.

Devices and Network Infrastructure

The school's computer and network resources, hardware, software, and infrastructure are the property of the school. Use of these can be denied or other disciplinary actions may result if rules are violated.

All employees are to be fully engaged with students during instructional time and should not be using either school-owned or personal devices for non-school purposes during those times. School-owned or personal devices may be used during non-student contact time, such as breaks, lunch, or planning periods.

School-owned devices should not be used for purposes of running a business, either profit or non-profit.

Staff should endeavor to keep their school and private accounts separate, e.g. do not use the same password for educational and personal accounts.

Staff should strive to keep all school-owned devices in excellent condition. Avoid eating and having liquids in open containers near devices. Transport devices in padded cases. Avoid crushing devices, including by placing the charger on top of the screen when putting the device in a case.

Devices are to be turned in, if requested by Technology Staff, for checks and/or servicing.

Online Resources

The schools provide access to the Internet primarily for educational purposes. Staff are allowed to use our networks to access online resources. The availability of these resources, however, does not imply endorsement of content nor the accuracy of information that may be accessed. The schools shall not be responsible for the content of information retrieved via the Internet.

Each of our schools employ web content filters that are effective at blocking most of the objectionable content on the Internet. However, it is possible that objectionable content can get through.

It is not acceptable for staff to access sites or download content that is inappropriate. Some examples include, but are not limited to, sites with content that is:

- Defamatory or disrespectful
- Lewd, vulgar, or profane
- Threatening
- Harassing or discriminatory
- Bullying
- Pornographic
- Terroristic
- Illegal
- Disruptive to the educational process, school operations, or any school activity

Privacy & Security

Staff shall have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, receive or display on or over the school's computers or network resources, including personal files. The school reserves the right to monitor and track network access or to deny access to prevent unauthorized, inappropriate or illegal activity. Staff email and files can be searched at any time. Consistent with the employment contracts and policies of the SU and its schools, appropriate disciplinary action may be administered for misuse of its electronic equipment and resources. The district will cooperate to the extent legally required with local, state and federal officials in any investigation concerning or related to the misuse of the school's Internet connection, devices, or network.

Staff should be sure to use secure passwords and should not share their passwords with others. Secure passwords are not names or dictionary words, are at least 8 characters long, contain uppercase and lowercase letters, as well as at least one number and a special character (as long as all of those are allowed by a site).

Passwords are intended to prevent anyone else from accessing your accounts. They shouldn't be visible or easily discovered.

Computer screens should be locked or accounts logged out when staff are away from the device, meaning that a password will be needed to resume use of the computer.

Respect

Staff are prohibited from making use of any school devices or services to bully or harass others. They also must avoid offensive or inflammatory communication, including hate content.

Should a staff member encounter a situation where another user has inadvertently left themselves signed in they should sign the user out.

Staff should not attempt to gain unauthorized access to devices, networks, or resources.

Staff are to cite the source of content taken from the Internet or other electronic sources according to the Fair Use provisions of the Copyright Act.

Staff should never intentionally damage any school equipment. If such intentional damage occurs, users will be held responsible for the cost of repair or replacement.

Food and drink should never be near computers or other electronic devices.

Accidental damage to school equipment should be reported promptly to technology staff.

Staff should never attempt to gain unauthorized access to school-owned or inappropriate resources.

Staff should not attempt to tamper with, disassemble, or physically service any school-owned device. Damage or problems must be reported to Technology Support Staff or designated school staff members.

School resources may not be used for commercial or political activities, other than those that are approved as part of a classroom or school activity.

Staff are not permitted to make, or attempt to make, changes to the operating system or other “low level” portions of devices. They may not perform actions such as, but not limited to, installing software that is intended to bypass security measures or web content filtering.

Consequences

Violations of the above guidelines are to be dealt with in accordance with government laws and regulations, the school’s Code of Conduct, Employment Contracts, Policies, or any other applicable rules or guidelines.

The school does not take responsibility for lost or damaged items. Staff who choose to bring their own device to school do so at their own risk. Staff are encouraged to safeguard their devices at all times.

The above guidelines are to be reviewed, and a form signed each year, as part of this handbook.

Transportation of Students by Faculty/Staff

The First Branch Unified District encourages the use of busses for transporting students. Given the nature of student enrollment at school, there are circumstances when faculty/staff need to transport a small number of students (i.e. 5 or less) for a specific purpose. The procedures for transporting students in personal vehicles are as follows:

- The driver must provide the office a photocopy of the driver’s license, vehicle registration and insurance each time students are transported for the first time. These forms will be kept on file for the school year.
- The vehicle must display a valid inspection sticker.
- Drivers will carry at least the state minimum for liability insurance. If an accident does occur when transporting students, the driver’s insurance is the primary carrier; the First Branch Unified District at Chelsea and Tunbridge policy covers liability beyond the driver’s insurance limits. The driver is not “covered” by the school’s insurance policy.
- The vehicle must have a seat belt for every passenger and seat belts must be used at all times. Per Vermont Law, a student under the age of eight (8) must have an approved child restraint system.
- Before any student is transported in a personal vehicle, the parent must be informed and permission secured in writing.
- Parents may transport their child(ren) and are discouraged from transporting another/other child (ren). Unless a note is provided.
- Driver information (i.e. driver’s license, vehicle registration and insurance) must accompany the field trip request form.

Travel Procedure – Faculty-Staff

When district employees need to travel to workshops, conferences or other business events, approval is required prior to traveling or incurring any travel or registration fee expenses. Anyone incurring expenses without proper authorization will be personally liable for all expenses.

Travel Expectations

- When traveling for district-related business, the traveler should
- Be cost-conscious and spend carefully and judiciously
- Report non-meal expenses, supported by required documentation, as they were actually spent.

Mileage:

Travel is to be by the most direct route and will be reimbursed at the IRS per-mile rate in effect at the time of travel, or other rate as per local policies, for all miles traveled on district business in excess of normal commuting miles. When an employee is dispatched directly from home, or travels from a travel destination to home, the employee's normal commute from home to his or her primary location must be deducted from total mileage submitted for reimbursement.

Workshops and Conferences:

Requests to attend a conference or workshop must be approved in advance by the appropriate Administrator.

Registration fees are limited to the actual cost of the conference.

Air or train transportation is limited to the most cost effective rate considering circuitous routing, unreasonable hours, and excessive prolonged travel.

Rental cars are limited to the most cost effective rate considering the needs of the individual(s).

Other necessary transportation fees such as shuttles, taxis, tolls, parking, etc. are reimbursable.

Lodging at the conference venue is reimbursable. In the event that such lodging is unavailable then lodging is limited to the most cost effective rate considering proximity and access to transportation.

Meals will be reimbursed at a maximum per day allowance as established by the travel procedure; at a maximum per meal allowance established in travel procedure; based on actual itemized receipts subject to a maximum established in travel procedure.

Only expenditures addressed in this procedure are considered reimbursable.

(WRVSU and SU District Board Policies F1 Travel Reimbursement)

Selected Board Policies, State and Federal Regulations

Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace

It is the policy of the First Branch Unified District to maintain a workplace free of alcohol and drugs. No employee, volunteer, student teacher or work study student will unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess or use alcohol or any drug on or in the workplace. Nor shall any employee, volunteer or work study student be in the workplace while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that an employee, volunteer or work study student is under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while on or in the workplace, the person will be immediately removed from the performance of his or her duties.

(White River Valley Supervisory Union SU and District Board Policy B3 Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace)

Bullying Policy

Faculty-Staff Handbook

Chelsea Public School recognizes that all students and employees should have a safe, orderly, civil, and positive learning environment (16 V.S.A. 570(a)). For the purposes of this policy, “bullying” is defined as any overt act or combination of acts, including an act conducted by electronic means, directed against a student or employee by another student or employee or group of students or employees and which:

1. is repeated over time.
2. is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student or employee; and
3. either:
 - a. occurs during the day on school property, on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity; or
 - b. does not occur during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school sponsored activity but can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student’s right to access educational programs.

Examples of bullying include:

- Name-calling and verbal taunts
- Physical threats or actual physical harm
- Off-campus text messages or social media posts that ridicule or intimidate to the extent that the target is not able to fully access the school’s programs.

In order to be bullying, incidents such as the ones described above must be repeated over time, directed at a particular student, and intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate.

Reporting Procedures

Any employee who believes that s/he has been subjected to bullying or who witnesses or has knowledge of conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute bullying, are strongly encouraged to report it to the school principal. If the principal is not available, report the incident to the school counselor, or student support specialist. School staff and volunteers are required to report possible incidents of bullying to the school counselor, student support specialist or principal as soon as practicable. Parents and other adults are also encouraged to report any concerns about possible bullying of students to the school counselor, student support specialist or principal.

Consequence for violation of Bullying Policy

The school principal has the discretion to determine appropriate consequences and/or interventions for violations of the policy based upon the relevant facts and circumstances in a particular case, including but not limited to a consideration of prior instances of similar behavior and the employee’s overall disciplinary history. Disciplinary consequences may include awareness, counseling, oral warning, written warning, suspension, and possible dismissal.

(White River Valley Supervisory Union SU and District Board Policy C10 Prevention of Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying of Students)

Confidentiality

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. This federal law protects a child and a child’s family. Information about a child should only be shared with other staff members that have a need to know in order to meet the child’s academic and emotional needs.

Copyright Materials-Resources

U.S. Copyright Law (17 U.S.C. 101-120) are federal laws that that protects copyrighted materials. Unless specifically stated herein, or specifically stated on the materials, no copyrighted material or content may be performed, distributed, downloaded, uploaded, modified, reused, reproduced, reposted, retransmitted, disseminated, sold, published, broadcast or circulated or otherwise used in any manner whatsoever without express written permission from the copyright owner. Any modification of the content, or any portion thereof, or use of the content for any other purpose constitutes an infringement of the copyrights and other proprietary rights except under the fair use doctrine articulated in Section 107 of the Act.

Employee violation of U.S. Copyright Law shall be considered to have committed misconduct while employed and such misconduct will result both in disciplinary action and notification to the Vermont Agency of Education. Disciplinary action may lead to discipline, up to and including termination.

Dangerous Weapons on School Property

In order to provide for a safe school environment, the First Branch Unified District bans all weapons from school property (16 V.S.A. 1166). A weapon is any firearm, knife or explosive device and any other weapon, instrument, or material, whether animate or inanimate, which is known to be capable of inflicting bodily harm or death. No person shall at any time bring a dangerous weapon onto school property or harbor such weapon on school property without specific written prior approval from the Principal. Law enforcement officers as defined by 13 V.S.A. 4016 are excluded when engaged in legitimate law enforcement duties on school property.

Employee violation of this policy will result in both disciplinary action and notification to law enforcement. Disciplinary action may lead to discipline, up to and including termination.

(White River Valley Supervisory Union SU and District Board Policy C5 Student Firearms)

EMERGENCY-SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION

The Superintendent may order the closing of any and all schools whose operation on a short term basis would pose a serious threat to students or staff. Such emergencies may be caused by weather conditions, equipment breakdown, security threats, or health problems. The Superintendent will have the authority to delay school opening or dismiss early due to inclement weather or other emergencies. Days lost due to emergency closing will be rescheduled as needed, so that school will be in session as required by state law.

(White River Valley Supervisory Union SU and District Board Policy F31 Emergency Closings)

Employee Harassment

Harassment is a form of unlawful discrimination that will not be tolerated in the First Branch Unified District. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written or physical conduct constituting harassment as defined herein and by state and federal law violate this policy. Retaliation against any person raising good faith allegations of unlawful harassment or against any witness cooperating in an investigation by the District pursuant to this policy is prohibited.

Harassment/Sexual Harassment

The First Branch Unified District does not tolerate the verbal or physical harassment by any employee based on an employee's race, religion, creed, color, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, political affiliation, ancestry, place of birth or disability which has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an employee's work or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Sexual Harassment: The First Branch Unified District does not tolerate harassment by any employee on the basis of sex. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical or non-physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment.
- Submission or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment includes a wide range of behaviors, from the actual coercion of sexual relations to unwelcome offensive comments, jokes and innuendo, other sexually oriented statements, and unwelcome advances emphasizing sexual identity. Sexual harassment may be indirect and even unintentional.

Retaliation: The First Branch Unified District prohibits retaliation by any employee for taking adverse action against a person for making a complaint of unlawful harassment or for participating or cooperating with an investigation.

The First Branch Unified District prohibits all such activities whether engaged in by a school principal, supervisor, agent of the First Branch Unified District, co-worker, student or other non-employee who is on First Branch Unified District premises or who comes into contact with WRVSU/First Branch Unified District employees or students.

Employees and those in positions of authority should be sensitive to the questions about mutuality of consent that may be raised, and to the conflicts of interest that are inherent in personal relationships where professional and/or educational relationships are involved.

Unlawful harassment of any sort is a violation of First Branch Unified District policy and is prohibited by both state and federal law. An individual who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual or other unlawful harassment should report the incident to his or her supervisor, school principal or to the WRVSU Superintendent.

Upon receipt of a recommendation that the complaint is valid, the school will take such action as is appropriate based on the results of the investigation.

The complainant may appeal the investigator's recommendation to the WRVSU Superintendent (presuming the Superintendent is not the source of the investigation).

Faculty-Staff Handbook

The result of the investigation of each complaint may choose to bypass this policy and proceed directly to: Vermont Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Unit, 109 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, tel: (802) 828-3171. Complaints should be filed within 300 days of any unlawful event. The complaint may also choose to proceed directly to: Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Government Center, J.F. Kennedy Federal Building – Room 1875, Boston, MA 02203, Voice Phone (617) 565-1340, FAX (617) 565-3809, TDD (617) 565-1343.

(White River Valley Supervisory Union SU and District Board Policy B5 Preventing and Responding to Unlawful Harassment of Employees, Students and Third Parties)

Hazing

It is the policy of the Chelsea Board of School Directors, and as set forth in *16 V.S.A. 140 (a) – 140(d)*, that no student or employee of the school shall participate in or be members of any organization that is affiliated with the school or to a school activity; which is intended to have the effect of, or reasonably be expected to have the effect of humiliating, intimidating or demeaning the student or endangering the mental or physical health of the student.. No student organization or any person associated with any organization sanctioned by the School Board shall engage or participate in hazing.

“Endanger the mental or physical health” shall include, but is not limited to, any brutality of a physical nature, such as:

- Whipping
- Beating
- Branding
- Forced calisthenics
- Exposure to the elements
- Forced consumption of any food, alcoholic beverage, drug or controlled dangerous substance
- Or any forced physical activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual.

Hazing Complaint Procedure

1. Employees who have reason to believe that an incident of hazing occurred shall report such belief to the school principal. The report may be made orally or in writing.
2. The principal and/or designee shall conduct a timely, impartial, thorough and comprehensive investigation of the alleged hazing.
4. The principal and/or designee shall prepare a written report summarizing the investigation and recommending disposition of the complaint. Copies of the confidential report shall be provided to the complainant, the accused and others directly involved, as appropriate. A confirmed report of hazing will be reported to law enforcement officials.
5. If the investigation results in a substantiated finding of hazing, the principal shall recommend appropriate disciplinary action up and including termination of employment.

(White River Valley Supervisory Union SU and District Board Policy C10 Prevention of Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying of Students)

Tobacco Prohibition

In accordance with state law, it is the policy of the White River Valley Supervisory Union and the First Branch Unified District to prohibit the use of tobacco, tobacco substitutes or e-cigarettes on supervisory union or school grounds or at school sponsored functions. This ban extends to any student, employee or

visitor to the school, and applies at all times, whether or not school is in session. Students are, furthermore, prohibited from possessing tobacco products, tobacco substitutes or tobacco paraphernalia at all times while under the supervision of school staff or at school-sponsored activities.

(White River Valley Supervisory Union SU and District Board Policy B7 Tobacco Prohibition)

Homeless Students

The White River Valley Supervisory Union is interested in locating homeless children and youth. There children and youth are entitled to receive an education and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools within the supervisory union. If you know any child considered homeless in the area who is not enrolled in school, please contact Charlie Watson, Parent Liaison, WRVSU, 461 Waterman Road, Royalton, VT 05068 or call (802)763-8840.

Report of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to protect children whose health and welfare may be jeopardized by abuse or neglect and to ensure that school district employees meet their legal reporting obligations under 33 VSA 4913. It is further the purpose of this policy to make clear to school district employees that it is not their role to be investigator, judge and jury in cases of suspected abuse or neglect. Rather it is the role of the school district employees to be faithful and timely reporters of suspected abuse or neglect so that allegations can be brought to the attention of objective, trained and experienced investigators.

General Policy

Any school district employee, regardless of whether he or she is a “mandated reporter,” shall report suspected child abuse or neglect to the building principal, school counselor, school nurse, school librarian or student support specialist. If the building principal or designee is the person suspected of child abuse, the report shall be made to the superintendent of schools. Any school district employee who is a “mandated reporter,” in addition to reporting such suspected abuse or neglect to the principal, principal’s designee, or superintendent, shall immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect to the VT Department for Children and Families (DCF). Upon receiving a report, the principal, principal’s designee, or the superintendent shall remind the reporter of his or her legal responsibility to further report immediately to DCF.

Definitions

“Mandated Reporter” means a school principal, school teacher, school counselor, school librarian, school nurse, and other health care provider.

“Immediately” means as soon as the abuse or neglect is suspected but in no case later than 24 hours after such abuse or neglect is suspected.

“Report” means an oral and/or written description of the suspected abuse or neglect. If the report is made orally, the reporter should make a written notation of when and to whom the report was made and when the report was made. A copy of this notation shall be submitted to the principal. A report to DCF shall contain the following:

1. The name and address of the reporter;
2. The name and address, if known, of the child and the child’s parents or other persons responsible for the child’s care;
3. The age of the child;

4. The nature and extent of the child's injuries together with any evidence of previous abuse or neglect of the child or the child's siblings.
5. Any other information the reporter believes might be helpful.

"Abused or neglected child" means a child under the age of eighteen whose physical or mental health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm by the acts or omissions of the child's parents or other individual who may be responsible for the child's welfare (e.g guardian, foster parent, stepparent, teacher, etc.) or in the case of sexual abuse, any individual. Harm can be caused by the actual infliction of harm, by allowing such harm to occur, by failing to provide the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter or health care, or by abandonment of the child.

"Sexual abuse" means any act by a person involving sexual molestation or exploitation of a child. Sexual abuse also includes the aiding, abetting, counseling, hiring, or procuring of a child to perform or participate in any photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show representation, or other presentation which, in whole or in part, depicts sexual conduct, sexual excitement or sadomasochistic abuse involving a child. Sexual abuse may also be sexual harassment. However, following the school district's policy on sexual harassment does not fulfill the mandatory reporter's legal responsibility under the SRS reporting law. Suspected sexual abuse must be reported to SRS.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The First Branch Unified District does not discriminate in policies and practices on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or marital status. Inquiries concerning application of these standards may be referred to the Chelsea Public School Principal at 6 School Street, Chelsea, VT 05038, (802)685-4551 or Tunbridge Central School Principal at 523 VT 110, Tunbridge, VT 05077, (802)889-3310.

Grievance Procedure for Title IX, Title VI, Section 504:

The following procedures covering Title IX, Title VI, and Section 504 is to be used:

1. The complainant will present his/her grievance in written form to the school principal. Within five (5) school days an investigation will be conducted and a written response to the grievance will be made.
2. If not satisfied with the resolution at Step 1, the complainant may appeal to the Superintendent within five (5) school days. The Superintendent will hear the complaint within the ten (10) school days of receipt of the grievance and render a decision within five (5) school days thereafter.
3. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision at step 2, an appeal may be made within ten (10) school days to the School Board. The Board will hear the complainant at the next regular meeting. A written decision will be rendered within fifteen (15) school days following the hearing.

(White River Valley Supervisory Union SU and District Board Policy A22 Notice of Non-Discrimination)

Acknowledgment

Please sign below and acknowledge that you have read this Staff Handbook. Return this form to the administrative assistant by **September 6, 2019**.

Name Printed

Signature

Date