



# 2022-2023 Parent-Student Handbook



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## Acmetonia Elementary School

300 Pearl Avenue  
Cheswick, PA 15024  
724/274-6500  
[www.avsdweb.org](http://www.avsdweb.org)

Serving the communities of Cheswick Borough, Harmar Township, Springdale Borough, and Springdale Township

Superintendent	Patrick M. Graczyk, Ed.D
Springdale Jr-Sr High School Principal	Andrew Leviski
Springdale Jr-Sr High School Assistant Principal	Melissa Gibbon
Special Education Supervisor	Melissa Holler, Ph.D.
Elementary Principal	Gregory J. Heavner
Elementary Principal	Jennifer L. Vecchio
Director of Finance & Business Operations	Hamsini Rajgopal, Ed.D.
Public Relations Director	Janice Zastawniak
Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds	Cesareo Sanchez
Supervisor of Technology	Matthew Maine
Technology Systems Coordinator	Tina Kaczor
Athletic Director	Amanda Noel
Food Service Director	Alan Donnelly
School Police Officer	Thomas Downing
School Police Officer	Kevin Gourley

#### **Board of School Directors**

President	Larry Pollick
Vice President	Kathleen Haas
Treasurer	Paula Jean Moretti
Secretary	Hamsini Rajgopal, Ed.D.
Solicitor	Matthew Hoffman, Esq.

Members: Beth Bosco, David Buchman, Salvatore Conte, Jessica Griggle, Stephen P. Puskar, Glenna Renaldi

#### **ADDRESSES**

Superintendent and Central Business Offices  
300 Pearl Avenue, Cheswick, PA 15024  
Phone: 724/274-5300 Fax: 724/274-8040

Acmetonia Elementary School  
300 Pearl Avenue, Cheswick, PA 15024  
Phone: 724/274-6500 Fax: 724/274-2186

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Allegheny Valley School District, a group of small traditional communities, is to educate all students to achieve their maximum potential. A dedicated staff, in partnership with school, home, and community, will empower students to become responsible and contributing citizens able to meet challenges in an international society.

## **FORWARD**

The goal of the Allegheny Valley School District's elementary program is to provide optimum opportunities for a child to be academically successful. We believe that success is a partnership. We hope that through positive communications and interactions between youth, school, and community that these partnerships will grow. Research has shown that parental interest in a child's education is one of the most important factors for the child's success. The School District hopes that working together we will establish a positive network between the home and school. In the elementary schools, the building Administrator and the counselor are the people to contact with questions and problems. However, individual concerns can best be managed through personal contact with the classroom teacher. Opportunities are provided to meet with your child's teachers and other professional staff throughout the school year. We sincerely hope that all parents take advantage of these opportunities.

This guide provides useful information for parents and students about the elementary schools. Although not every question may be answered by this document, it does address those questions most frequently asked. If you still have a question after reading these pages, please call the school. We will be glad to offer any help necessary.

## **ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

Each year the School Board contracts with an insurance company to offer student accident insurance at minimal cost. Insurance coverage offers two plans. The first provides coverage for the school day or school activities; the second provides for 24-hour coverage. Students receive application forms for these plans in their first-day packets. Complete information about costs and coverage are included.

## **ADMISSION TO BUILDING**

The District welcomes parental visits and encourages familiarity with our schools. For the safety of our students, visitors must enter the building's main office and secure a visitor's pass upon entry to any District building. Visitors are required to submit a driver's license or other government issued I.D. to the designated receptionist to assure proper identification. The visitor's identification will be processed through the Raptor Identification System to create a visitor's badge which must be worn by a visitor during the time that he or she remains in an Allegheny Valley school. When dropping off items for students, please place all items on the cart in the school vestibule. Clearly mark your child's name and grade on the item. These items are distributed in a timely manner. However, all medicine and money should be directly handed to the school secretary.

Under no circumstances are visitors to enter any area of the school without first seeking permission. Unscheduled visits of this nature create an extreme disruption to the school environment. Conferences with teachers and administrators should be scheduled in advance.

## **ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL**

Parents are not to bring students to school prior to 8:10 a.m. Students who are dropped off at school earlier may potentially be in danger due to the lack of adult supervision. Staff may not be aware of the presence of students in the building due to other commitments at that time.

Students who walk to school should not arrive prior to 8:10 a.m. Students should not come early to school to play/loiter on school grounds. Students are expected to be in the classroom at 8:30 am.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

Currently, in the second semester of each school year the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is administered to students in grades 3 - 6. These grade levels are assessed in English language arts and mathematics. Students in grade 4 are also assessed in science. The PSSA is based on the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and is specifically intended for use in Pennsylvania. It is used to compare student performance relative to students statewide. A detailed student report is usually mailed to parents in mid to late summer or early fall.

Periodically, other assessments may be administered to students over the course of the school year. Parents will be notified as these assessments are introduced.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### Attendance Policy and Definitions

Frequent absences of students from regular classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the instructional process. The benefit of regular classroom instruction is lost and cannot be entirely regained even through after-school instruction. Ideas presented and interactions between class members or the instructor are made at this time and cannot be regained in any other setting. These experiences are a vital part of the student's total learning environment.

The compulsory attendance law and school code 13-1326-1339 adds credence to the process of education. This law reaffirms the regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, and other learning experiences that each student needs to attain to maximize educational benefits (*AVSD Board Policy #204*).

### Absence from School

"Absence" is defined as the non-attendance of a pupil on those days and half-days in which school is in session. Students who fail to submit a written excuse within three school days following an absence will be charged with an unexcused absence. Pupils who have received an excused absence will be permitted to make up any class work missed during their absence. Students receiving an unexcused absence or tardy will not be permitted to make up assigned work for the time missed.

### Excused Absence

"Excused Absence" refers to absence for any one of a number of legal reasons. All absences under this category may be classified into two groups: non-attendance due to unpreventable causes and non-attendance due to other legal reasons. Examples include: illness, quarantine, recovery from accident, required court attendance, death in the immediate family, approved family educational trips, educational tours and trips, or other exceptionally urgent reasons as determined by the Principal. For absences other than illness, the parent must contact the Principal for approval. Students who will be absent beyond three days due to illness are to call the school office to arrange for homework. Students must have pre-approval for family educational trips from the building Principal or the absence will be marked as unexcused. School related activities such as athletic events, testing, field trips or other school-related functions are considered excused absences from class.

### Unexcused and Unlawful Absences

Unexcused absences are coded as unlawful. Unexcused absence is the absence of a pupil due to parental/guardian neglect, illegal employment, or truancy. They include, but are not limited to, the following: car problems, absence through parent neglect, illegally employed, unapproved family vacation, missing the bus, sleeping in (no alarm), truancy, failure to obtain doctor's verification of an absence after three (3) consecutive school days missed. Students receiving an unexcused absence or tardy will not be permitted to make up assigned work for the time missed. Unlawful absences are considered unexcused absences for all pupils less than seventeen years of age. For any day

a student is illegally absent, the student will be denied the opportunity to make up work or tests. The school will impose the following penalties on students for unexcused or unlawful absences:

1. First Offense (three days of unexcused absence)
  - a. Official notice will be sent by mail to notify parents/guardians.
  - b. A parental/guardian conference may be required.
  - c. A truancy elimination plan (TEP) may be developed.
2. Subsequent Offense(s)
  - a. A criminal complaint may be submitted to the District Justice for any day beyond the three days referenced above.
  - b. A parental/guardian conference may be required.

### Tardiness

Tardiness is defined as the arrival to school of a pupil after the first period bell rings, provided the pupil is in attendance before 11:00 a.m. Tardiness may be excused for legitimate reasons, such as illness, required court attendance, or other exceptionally urgent reasons as determined by the principal. All other tardiness is unexcused. In addition, when a child is illegally absent for portions of a day, these portions will be added together and translated into equivalent days.

- Students who arrive at school after the warning bell must report directly to the main office for a tardy slip.
- Students arriving to school after 11:00 a.m. will be considered absent for one-half day.
- Students arriving to school after the end of the fifth period will be considered absent for the entire day.
- Continued tardiness will result in additional disciplinary action.

### Written Explanation for Absence

Parents shall furnish a written explanation for the absence of a child. All excuses must include the following information: student's full name, date of absence, reason for absence, and the signature of the parent/guardian. In case of chronic and irregular absence, school authorities may request a physician's excuse showing such absence to be justifiable. Statements must be signed by a licensed medical practitioner.

### Procedure for Reporting a Student's Absence

When it is necessary for a child to be absent from school, parents should call the school secretary by 8:15 a.m. Call each day the child is absent; this call helps to insure your child's safety. Parents should request homework prior to 10:00 a.m. for their child so as not to fall too far behind during their absence. Students will be allowed one-day make-up time for each day of absence when the student returns to school.

### Procedure for Returning to School After an Absence

The reporting and recording of an absence and tardiness is an important function. It is required by the Department of Education for reimbursement purposes and is necessary to maintain the integrity of educating children. It is necessary for a student to bring an excuse from his/her parent or guardian when returning to school after being absent. This excuse must be presented to the student's homeroom teacher or in the main office immediately upon returning to school. This excuse must state the reason for absence and the dates of absence. Students who fail to submit a written excuse within three (3) school days following an absence are charged with an unexcused absence. All excuses are kept on file in the main office.

### Missed Assignments

If a student has an excused absence, it is his/her responsibility to make-up missed schoolwork. Students will have time equal to the length of their excused absence to make-up the work.

### Excessive Absenteeism

It is the policy of the Allegheny Valley School District to require a physician's excuse for a child's absence when it is determined by the Principal that a child's school attendance pattern is chronic and irregular. When this situation exists, the parent or guardian will be informed by letter or phone that an excessive number of days have been missed and that a physician's certificate may be required. Three (3) consecutive days or more of absence will require an excuse from a physician. If the absences do not diminish, the parents shall be notified in writing that a physician's certificate shall be required for excuses of any or all absences and the child shall be referred to the Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP) Team. Excessive on-and-off absenteeism beyond ten (10) days will also require a doctor's excuse. Failure or refusal to supply a valid certificate will result in an unlawful absence. Note: It is to the student's advantage to submit a physician's excuse when medical attention is received.

- *First Offense*

A first offense consists of three or more days of absence without a lawful excuse. This applies only to compulsory school-age children. The School District's official written notice of absence to parents shall be served in person, by certified mail, or by the home and school visitor. This notice will come as soon as a pupil has three days or their equivalent, of unlawful absence. The first offense is closed at the end of three calendar days after the serving of the notice or upon the return of the pupil to school within the three days following the serving of the notice.

- *Second Offense*

After the first offense is closed, the next session during the school year that the child is unlawfully absent becomes a second offense and requires the serving of a warrant on the parent through the office of the magistrate. The serving of the warrant closes the second offense. Each succeeding session of unlawful absence by the same pupil becomes another second offense and the same procedure as outlined in this paragraph is repeated. The School District's official notice of absence to parents is not served in second offense cases. The notice served after the first three days of unlawful absence is adequate for the school year. This policy applies only to compulsory school aged children.

### Early Dismissals

Parents are encouraged to make doctor and dentist appointments for after-school hours or days when there is no school. If this scheduling is not possible, students must present a written request from a parent or legal guardian to the office in the morning. The request must state why the student needs to be excused early. Acceptable reasons for requesting an early dismissal from school would include emergency medical and dental appointments and religious events. All requests for early dismissals will be reviewed by the Principal prior to approval. The frequency of early dismissals may also be considered in the approval process.

Students may be released to either a parent or guardian provided there is no court custody order forbidding custody by a named parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian needs to send another person to pick up his/her child at school, the parent must include this information in the request. Identification of the third party will be required when he or she arrives to pick up the student. If a change occurs in regards to a pick-up time or person, parents/guardians must inform the main office in writing. Principals will only permit a pick-up change via the telephone in emergencies.

Parents are not to go to the student's room to pick the student up for dismissal. Parents should not call the schools after 2:00 p.m. to change a student's dismissal time or way home. Parents are reminded that they can only remove their own child(ren) from the buildings. Picking up and transporting another child is prohibited unless

permission is granted from both sets of parents involved and the school.

### Family Educational Trips and Educational Trips or Tours

Students who plan to be absent from school for any kind of trip or tour, even if only for one day, will be required to obtain prior permission from the Principal. Requests for any kind of trip or tour must include the educational reason for the absence. The request must be made in writing by a parent or guardian at least one week prior to the trip. Any days missed for trips or tours not approved by the Principal will be recorded as unexcused (unlawful) absences.

### Religious Holidays and Activities

A pupil may be excused from school for observance of bona fide religious holidays or activities by particular religious groups in accordance with Pennsylvania school laws. Submission of a written request must be made prior to the day(s) of absence.

## **BULLYING**

The District prohibits all forms of bullying of students and third parties by all District students and staff members, contracted individuals, vendors, volunteers, and third parties in the school. The District encourages students and third parties who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the designated employees. (*AVSD Board Policy #249*)

- Bullying, as defined by law, means an intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:
  - o Substantial interference with a student's education.
  - o Creation of a threatening environment.
  - o Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

## **CAFETERIA, FOOD SERVICE**

The Allegheny Valley School District Food Service Department provides breakfast and lunch for students at the elementary school.. The school cafeteria is maintained as a vital part of the health program of the School District. To encourage good nutrition, a well-balanced breakfast and lunch is offered at a reasonable price. All students are to either purchase their lunch or bring lunch from home. Balances are not to be carried on any purchases; notices will be mailed and upon the accumulation of \$15. Any student accumulating excessive balances will be subject to District guidelines for optional lunch choices.

The cafeteria management and fellow students appreciate cooperation in:

- Depositing all breakfast and lunch litter in wastebaskets.
- Returning trays and utensils to the dish washing area.
- Leaving the tables and floor in a clean condition for others.
- Not taking food from the cafeteria.
- Remaining in the cafeteria area for the duration of the lunch period.

Students may not leave the cafeteria without permission from monitors. Monitors may assign clean-up duties, detention, or recommend suspension to administration. Violations of the above regulations may result in disciplinary action. Our elementary schools are closed for breakfast and lunch periods.

### Free and Reduced Lunch

Applications for free and/or reduced lunch are available from the Food Service Department or online at <https://www.paschoolmeals.com/Register.aspx>. Those who qualify for this program will receive a free or reduced cost

for student lunch. Breakfast/lunches that qualify for this program are the regular menu items for the day – any ‘extras’ such as ice cream, second portions, etc. are NOT considered within the menu items and are subject to the regular pricing. Free and reduced price breakfasts and lunches are provided for low-income families who qualify.

### Debit System

Our school cafeterias have a computerized debit system. A debit account is set up for each student. We encourage parents to place money in their child’s account by mailing or sending a check or money order to school with their child. Sending cash to place in the cafeteria account is discouraged.

Purchases are deducted from this account, if money has been placed in the account. If there is no money in the account, students can purchase their meal with cash. This account can be used to purchase any food item in the cafeteria, full meals or a la carte items. Students are issued a customized Identification Bar Code or PIN (personal identification number) to access this account. For those students who participate in the free and reduced program, the computer acts as if the student has credit in his/her account and makes adjustments accordingly. Cashiers will advise students when their account balances are getting low. Money in this account can only be used for cafeteria purposes; cash cannot be taken out of the account.

Parents can send a check for the amount they would like to be put into their child’s account. Any amount can be deposited into the account on a weekly, monthly, or annual basis. Deposits must be made at the cafeteria office before school or in the cafeteria food lines. Any questions or concerns should be addressed to the Food Service Department at 724/274-8100.

### **Food Service Account Monitoring**

#### Meal Charge Guidelines

Students who forget their lunch money, or whose account has a \$.00 balance, will be provided a breakfast/lunch with the understanding that the parent will reimburse the cafeteria for these meals. The meal charge policy limits the meal charges for each student’s account to - \$15.00 per account. As the balance approaches \$.00 or dips into a negative balance, phone calls and/or letters are given to parents/guardians requesting the balance be made current. The designees will include an account update in any monthly or quarterly correspondence with the parents/guardians or one can be

mailed home at any time by parent request. In some cases, a meeting and/or phone calls by the Principal and/or Food Service Director will be made to bring an account current.

The District asks that parents do not overextend credit for students as it creates an uncomfortable situation for both the student and the school. In the event that the balances are outstanding by year-end, these balances will carry over from year to year. Parents should contact the Food Service Department at 724/274-8100 with any questions (*AVSD Board Policy #808*).

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER**

Parents are to notify the school office of any change of address, telephone number, or email address. It is imperative that the District has an up-to-date and correct listing for emergencies. Parents are asked to update this information at the beginning of each year and as needed throughout the school year. Any student residing with someone other than a parent or legal guardian must report this information to the main office.

### **CHILD CARE BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL**

The Allegheny Valley School District, in cooperation with the New Kensington Family Points Y.M.C.A., offers before and after-school childcare. This service is available for any school-age student. In addition, care is available in the summer.



The program is designed as a resource for daily activities to meet the developmental needs of school-age students. The fee structure for the program is set by the New Kensington Family Points Y.M.C.A. A sliding scale system is available for families with limited income. Please note that this program is not operated by the District. Registration, availability of space, and all concerns are handled through the YMCA. Contact the Y.M.C.A. at 724/335-9191 for further information.

### **CLASSROOM TREATS**

The Allegheny Valley School District is concerned with the overall health and wellness of students. To support this conviction, the District has a policy governing student wellness; schools must adhere to both State and Federal guidelines regarding this matter. The District suggests that no food treats are brought to school. Parents are asked to support the schools in this matter and become an important part of providing a solid foundation for students to learn good eating habits (*AVSD Board Policy #246*).

The District strongly encourages the selection of nonfood treats for birthday celebrations and classroom parties. The items below are offered as suggestions for nonfood items. The list is not exhaustive. Families should seek approval from classroom teachers for any items being sent to school as nonfood treats. ● Pencils ● Stickers ● Notebooks ● Bubbles ● Small boxes of crayons ● Very small toys or trinkets (i.e., party favors) ● Small crafts ● Favorite book read by school principal, family member, or other special adult and then donated to the school library in honor of the student ● 5-10 minutes of extra recess.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The staff at Acmetonia Elementary School manages a School–Wide Positive Behavioral Support Plan that involves school rules. These rules are to be taught and modeled by our school community and followed by our students and visitors throughout the school day. A leveled Misconduct/Response structure will be implemented according to the degree and/or frequency of the behavioral infraction. This structure can be found under Disciplinary Guidelines.

### **CONFERENCES**

Parents may make appointments for conferences with teachers, counselors, or the Principal by calling the school office. Appointments will be scheduled as soon as possible and as conveniently as possible for both parties. Parents are not permitted to walk into the classroom unannounced to have a conference with their child's teacher. All parents must report to the main office.

Since communication, at times, becomes distorted between school and home, parents are asked to refer all questions to the specific teacher involved. This direct method saves time and provides immediate feedback.

### **CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

Family situations that have resulted in divorce may have specific custody arrangements. Provisions are made to provide both parents with student data unless prohibited by a court order. It is critical that school officials are made aware of such prohibitions and official documentation (court order) be provided to substantiate the claim. Court orders must identify the custodial parent as well as any specific prohibition against the other parent. Verbal agreements cannot be honored. Consequently, requested information from either biological parent may be granted unless written legal prohibition or documents are on file in the school office.

Unless otherwise notified, the parent who registers the child in the Allegheny Valley School District is the custodial parent in the eyes of the school.

### **DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT AND BOOKS**

Unnecessary damage to school equipment must be paid for by those students responsible. Unnecessary wear and tear on textbooks, technology, or other equipment by students will result in a fee for replacement cost at the time the books, equipment, or technology is returned. Students will be charged for lost books and educational tools. If a lost book or educational tool is recovered, monies paid will be refunded. All school debts must be paid before a student can graduate.

## **DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES**

The guidelines for administering discipline to elementary students are authorized by the Allegheny Valley School District Board of School Directors. The list of procedures and applicable situations is subject to additions, deletions, and modifications. The rules and regulations contained in this handbook are a partial representation. The complete policy guides are on file in the central office or on the District's website. (*AVSD Board Policy #218*)

### **Please Note:**

Students and parents should realize that the laws of the commonwealth do not end at the property line of the school. If a student's behavior warrants the involvement of the local or state police departments, those authorities will be called upon and the student may be subject to their proceedings as well as the school's disciplinary actions. This procedure is extremely important in cases involving theft, fighting, assault, disorderly conduct, drug offenses, vandalism, and possession of dangerous illegal weapons. The guidelines in the handbook are not intended to be all-inclusive, as they do not cover every situation and condition. Therefore, if in the judgment of a school administrator a student's behavior is not defined in the code of student conduct, the administrator will take appropriate action in the best interest of the student and the school.

## **Elementary School Student Discipline System Misconduct/Response Structure**

### **Level I**

Definition: Minor misbehavior on the part of the student, which impedes orderly classroom procedure or interferes with the orderly operation of the school. The classroom teacher generally handles these misbehaviors using the following potential disciplinary responses:

1. Verbal reprimand
2. Seat change
3. Behavior contract
4. Restriction of privileges
5. Special written assignments
6. Time out
7. Referral to guidance counselor
8. Parental contact
9. Teacher detention
10. Walking Recess

However, such behaviors may be indicative of a problem that may be referred to the Principal or appropriate support staff. It is at the discretion of the administrator to assign detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or exclusion from activities for these infractions:

- A. Late to class
- B. Neglecting to return required forms

- C. Failure to be prepared with class materials, to complete assignments, and carry out teacher direction
- D. Disruptive behavior in class, hall, library, lavatory, bus, or cafeteria
- E. Eating/drinking in an unauthorized area; this includes gum chewing
- F. Cheating or lying
- G. Unacceptable language/unacceptable gestures
- H. Verbal harassment
- I. Defacing or unauthorized use of school property or facilities
- J. Unauthorized usage of electronic communication devices

## **Level II**

Definition: Misbehaviors whose frequency or seriousness tends to disrupt the learning climate of the school. These infractions, which often result from a continuation of Level I misbehaviors, normally require the intervention of the School Counselor and/or Principal or his/her designee. It is at the discretion of the administrator to assign detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or exclusion from activities for these infractions:

1. Recurring Level 1 misbehavior
2. Insubordination/defiance to an administrator, teacher, or school staff member
3. Tardy to school
4. Inappropriate dress
5. Falsifying information
6. Gambling
7. Possession and/or distribution of obscene or pornographic materials
8. School bus misconduct (Second Notice)
9. Safety violation
10. Verbal and/or physical harassment
11. Not attending teacher/office detention
12. Continued unauthorized use of cell phone/electronic devices during school hours
13. Possession of drawings of a threatening nature including, but not limited to, weapons or drugs

## **Procedures**

1. The supervising staff member, teacher, or bus driver refers the student to the Principal or his/her designee for appropriate disciplinary action.
2. The Principal or his/her designee conducts an investigation, if needed.
3. The Principal meets with the student and/or staff member, teacher, bus driver to determine the most appropriate disciplinary response.
4. The Principal informs the student and teacher of the discipline response and notifies a parent/guardian.
5. A grade-level meeting and/or parent conference is conducted, if needed.
6. The Principal, school counselor, teacher, or bus driver maintains a record of the offense and the disciplinary action.

## **Optional Disciplinary Responses**

- A. Continuation of the most stringent Level 1 options
- B. Referral to the school counselor
- C. Parental conferences
- D. Temporary withdrawal of certain privileges

- E. Office time out
- F. Office detention
- G. Referral to Student Assistance Program (SAP)

### **Level III**

Definition: Acts directed against persons or property and whose consequences may seriously endanger the health or safety of the student and others in the school. These acts normally require administrative discipline. Corrective measures, which the school should undertake, are dependent upon the extent of the school's resources for mediating the situation in the best interests of all students. It is at the discretion of the administrator to assign detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or exclusion from activities for these infractions; however, in some cases, law enforcement may have to be contacted or notified.

1. Continuation of Level II misbehavior
2. Possession of/use of tobacco, vapor products or look-alike substances in school, on school grounds, or the school bus (*AVSD Board Policy #222*)
3. Leaving school without permission
4. Absent from class without permission (1-3 offenses results in administrative reprimand)
5. Frequent truancy
6. Student harassment (electronic, written, drawing, verbal, physical, sexual)
7. Stealing/Vandalism
8. School Bus misconduct (3rd Notice)/School Bus Safety Violation
9. Failure to respond to a reasonable request of an administrator, teacher, or school staff member
10. Verbal or physical threat to an administrator, teacher, or school staff member
11. Unacceptable language/gestures to an administrator, teacher, or school staff member
12. Technology Usage Policy violation (*AVSD Policy #815, #815.2*)
13. Continued school safety violation

### **Procedures**

1. When the infraction is reported or detected, the Principal and/or his/her designee investigate further and confer with staff members on the immediate needs and circumstances.
2. The Principal and/or his/her designee meets with the student and/or any student witnesses.
3. The Principal and/or his/her designee meets with the student about the misbehavior, the extent of its consequences, and the subsequent disciplinary action.
4. The Principal and/or his/her designee meets with the student and confers with the parents/guardians about the misbehavior, the extent of its consequences, and the subsequent disciplinary action.
5. The Principal deems it necessary, the Principal will contact law enforcement officials if deemed necessary 6. The Principal or his/her designee makes an accurate record of the infraction and disciplinary response and a copy is sent to the superintendent.

### **Optional Disciplinary Responses**

- A. Continuation of appropriate Level II options
- B. Full withdrawal of participation in school activities
- C. Restitution
- D. Referral to appropriate agency and/or school
- E. Out-of-School Suspension

## **Level IV**

Definition: Acts that result in violence to another person or property or pose a direct threat to the safety of others in the school. These acts may be criminal in nature and are so serious that they require administrative action. The intervention of law enforcement authorities and/or action by the Board of School Directors may also be required.

1. Unmodified Level III misbehavior
2. Illicit use and/or possession of alcohol or drugs, look-alike substances, or paraphernalia including smoking and huffing
3. Selling of drugs
4. Possession, use, transfer of a weapon
5. Possession of dangerous chemicals, fireworks, bullets, or shell casings
6. Willful damage to school property (institutional vandalism)
7. Theft or receiving stolen property
8. Verbal or physical assault of an administrator, teacher, school staff, and/or their property
9. Bomb threats
10. Tampering with fire extinguishers/setting or creating false alarms
11. Terroristic threats
12. Indecent exposure
13. Sexting
14. Extortion of other students

## **Procedures**

1. Having verified the offense, the Principal and/or his/her designee, meets with all involved parties.
2. The Principal and/or designee initiates procedures according to established policy, excluding the student from school and notifies the parents immediately.
3. The Principal informs the superintendent.
4. School officials contact proper authorities and assist in prosecuting the offender.
5. The Principal or designee submits a complete and accurate report to the superintendent for possible School Board action.
6. At the Principal's discretion, an information follow-up may be given to appropriate staff members.

## **Potential Disciplinary Responses**

- A. Continuation of appropriate Level III options
- B. Full restitution of damages
- C. Full suspension
- D. Alternative placement
- E. Expulsion

## **DRESS CODE**

An individual student's dress, personal appearance, and cleanliness should reflect sensitivity for others. Clothing which disrupts the educational process is strictly forbidden. Parents are responsible for their child's appearance. The school Principal has the authority to bring to the attention of any parent dress habits of an individual student that are considered inappropriate or disruptive to the learning process of other students.

Examples of inappropriate dress include: hats/hoods; bandannas; sweatbands; sunglasses; clothing with profanity and/or reference to drugs, sex, or alcohol; extra large tank tops; spaghetti straps, halter, or mesh tops; and attire which bares the midriff. No jeans, pants, or shorts with holes above the knees. Shorts/skirts are not to have frayed edges, holes, or cutoff jeans. Shorts/skirts should reach the ends of students' fingers when holding their hands at their sides. Students are not permitted to wear chains or other devices hanging from their belts or pockets. Appropriate shoes should also be worn, that includes no flip-flops or skate shoes. Sandals must have straps attached to the student's ankle.

## **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

A student who, while under the school's jurisdiction, is found to possess, use, or abuse alcohol, narcotics, other drugs, health endangering compounds, or drug paraphernalia including smoking or huffing shall be subject to immediate disciplinary action. Paraphernalia includes: syringes, needles, roach clips, pipes, and look-a-like substances. Parents will be notified; the school will also notify the local police department. An informal hearing will determine what action will be taken.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Electronic devices are any devices capable of capturing, storing, and/or transmitting information including text, audio, and/or video data. Technology resources include, but are not limited to, such devices as: cellular devices (those that receive and send messages electronically), digital cameras, personal digital assistants (PDAs), laptop computers, MP3 players, iPads, iPods, and mobile devices. Personal technology are devices that are family-owned, AVSD technology are devices assigned by the District for student use.

Any use of personal technology resources by students while attending school, traveling on a school bus or vehicle, or while participating in an extra-curricular activity other than authorized by the District is prohibited, except whenever such use is related to a health or safety emergency or if required or authorized by a student's individualized education program (IEP).

Use of all electronic devices is prohibited during testing, except where specifically authorized by the teacher or staff member and where the use of such device is required for the test.

Students bringing personal technology resources onto school grounds, on a bus or vehicle or while participating in school-related events, do so at their own risk of loss of such devices. The District shall not be liable for the loss of or damage to any technology resource brought by a student to school, on a school bus or vehicle, or while participating in school-related events.

**Note:** A student's failure to comply with a staff member's request(s) to relinquish personal cell phone/electronic device will be considered insubordination and dealt with according to the Student Discipline policy (*AVSD Board Policy #237*).

## **ELECTRONIC TOYS & GAMES**

Electronic games, headphones, laser pointers, and any other game forms are not permitted to be used during the school day. Such items as electronic devices/games with headphones or without sound are permitted on the bus. While on the bus, these items may not cause disruption or unsafe conditions. Laser pointers are prohibited on school grounds, on buses and school vehicles, or at school-sponsored activities. Toys such as squirt guns will not be tolerated in school and will be dealt with accordingly. In addition, any collectible items such as trading cards, stuffed animals, or new "fads" are not to be brought to school. These items create disruptions and problems in school and on the bus.

Failure to adhere to the expectations of the handheld device usage agreement and the District's Electronic Devices, Acceptable Use of Internet, and Internet Safety policies (*AVSD Board Policy #237, 815, 815.2*) may result in

detention and/or suspension.

## **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

In the event of an emergency, parents will be contacted through the Black Board Connect system. This system delivers informational messages to each phone number/email that is registered with the school District. For this reason, it is important that all changes in phone numbers be reported to the school office immediately.

The Allegheny Valley School District in conjunction with local police, fire, and rescue units have developed plans to respond in a safe and orderly manner to emergencies that may occur in and around our schools. The safety of all students is the focus of all plans. Should an emergency occur, parents are asked to follow the instructions in the Black Board Connect message so as not to jeopardize the safety and security of all students. Depending on the type of emergency, attempting to pick children up from school before a planned response is complete may jeopardize a safe response to the situation. Information about an emergency and any alternate dismissal procedures will also be available on the District's web site at [www.avsdweb.org](http://www.avsdweb.org). The District encourages all parents to use the web site for official information.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Periodic evacuation emergency drills are conducted in all school buildings. All students will leave the building or follow emergency directions quickly and quietly when the alarm sounds. Once outside the building, students are to stay with their classes and move a safe distance from the building with their teacher. Directions for evacuating the building are posted in each room.

Parents should be aware that in addition to the fire and severe weather watch drills, students might be involved in other drills associated with the Emergency Plan over the course of the school year. As with the fire drills, students are to follow all directions.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

As part of the education program, children are taken on field trips supervised by a classroom teacher and parent volunteers. All trips must be related to the educational program and be approved by the building Principal. Students are permitted to participate in field trips only with the prior written permission of the parent. Permission slips are usually sent home with the students well in advance of the field trip. Students who have been a habitual discipline, absence, or truancy problem may be removed from these trips at the discretion of the building Principal. All school rules apply to all students on a school or PTA sponsored field trip. Field trip chaperones are considered independent volunteers and must abide by the criteria set forth by District policy (*AVSD Board Policy #916*).

## **FITNESS BREAKS**

Outdoor fitness time for students is held during the course of the school day, weather permitting, for students in grades PreK-6. Fitness breaks are supervised by the professional staff. Children are to be dressed appropriately. During inclement weather, students will have fitness breaks indoors.

Please contact your child's homeroom teacher with any special considerations for fitness (i.e. weather concerns, asthma or other health problems, etc.). Students may lose their fitness break for various reasons.

## **FLAG SALUTE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

It is the responsibility of every citizen to show proper respect for his or her country and its flag. Students may decline to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and may refrain from saluting the flag on the basis of personal beliefs or religious convictions. However, all students must stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Students who choose to refrain from such

participation shall respect the rights and interest of classmates who do wish to participate.

## **HARASSMENT**

The District prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment of students and third parties by all District students and staff members, contracted individuals, vendors, volunteers, and third parties in the schools. The Board encourages students and third parties who have been harassed to promptly report such incidents to the designated employees. (*AVSD Board Policy #248*)

Harassment shall consist of verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion when such conduct:

1. If sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity or creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.
2. Has the purpose of effect or substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance.
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's learning opportunities.

## **HAZING**

Hazing is defined as any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person or which willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition of continued membership in, any organization. The Board prohibits hazing in connection with any student activity or organization regardless of whether the conduct occurs on or off school property or outside of school hours. If the investigation results in a substantiated finding of hazing, the Principal shall recommend appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as circumstances warrant, in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. Additionally, the student may be subject to disciplinary action by the coach or sponsor, up to and including removal from the activity (*AVSD Board Policy #247*).

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

In compliance with the school code, the School Board requires that all students of this District submit to health and dental examinations. Each student shall receive a comprehensive health examination upon original entry to the District and while in sixth and eleventh grades. These examinations will be conducted by the school physician. A private examination conducted at the parent's request and at their expense will be accepted in lieu of the school examination.

In addition, each child shall receive a comprehensive dental examination upon original entry to the District and while in third and seventh grades. These examinations will be conducted by the school dentist. A private examination conducted at the parent's request and at their expense will be accepted in lieu of the school examination.

Parents and guardians of children who are to be checked shall be notified of these examinations. The notice shall include the date and location of the examination. Special forms are available at each school for those parents having their child examined by their own doctor or dentist. A student who presents a statement signed by his or her parent or guardian that a medical examination is contrary to his or her religious beliefs shall be examined only when the Secretary of Health determines that the student presents a substantial health menace to the health of other persons.

Please note that all students must comply with this policy or be removed from school until such time the parent and student fulfill this provision. Private physical or dental exams must follow the timelines established by the school for the respective year requested and should not carry over from year to year. These timelines are as follows:

- Vision tests are given every year, beginning with kindergarten, by a school nurse.



- Audio tests are given in kindergarten, first, second, third, seventh and eleventh grades and annually to special ungraded classes.
- Scoliosis (spinal curvature) screening takes place annually for sixth through seventh grade classes.
- Height and weight measurements are charted annually from kindergarten through twelfth grade.
- A cumulative record of medical examination is maintained for all students.

### Control of Communicable Diseases

There are many current communicable diseases or conditions for which children must be excluded from school. The school should be notified if children develop any of these diseases or conditions, including:

- Chicken Pox
- Pink Eye (Contagious Conjunctivitis)
- Impetigo Contagiosa
- Lice (Pediculosis) — Exclusion lasts until the last child is free from all nits
- Strep Throat (Streptococcal infections)
- Ringworm
- Scabies
- Scarlet Fever

Re-admission of any child to school following such an illness will be determined by the child being symptom-free as well as the possible observance of the exclusion period. The school nurse should be consulted if there are any questions or concerns regarding re-admission to school.

### Immunizations

Every student attending school in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must be immunized against the following diseases:

Compulsory:

- At least four doses of diphtheria/tetanus vaccine (one dose must be on or after the fourth birthday)
- Three doses of polio vaccine
- Three doses of hepatitis B vaccine
- Two doses of measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine, preferably as MMR vaccine
- Pertussis
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)

If your child has had the measles or rubella disease, and not the vaccine, the results of a blood test (serology providing immunity) must be presented to the school. If your child has had the mumps disease, and not the vaccine, a written statement from your physician verifying the diagnosis must be submitted. State law requires that proof of immunization, serology results, or doctor's verification must be provided before any child can be admitted to school.

There are updated guidelines that decrease the amount of time school Districts have allowed students to be 'provisionally' enrolled. In other words, the student does not have all of the immunizations required to attend school, but has proven to have at least one of the doses of the required immunizations. The window is now 5 days. For example, Kindergarten students will have 5 days, from the beginning of school year, to either get the immunizations required OR provide a note from a physician documenting the reason for not having the immunization OR documenting when the appropriate dose will be given. A student who is transferring into the District from another state or country will be given 30 days to provide documentation. Please contact the school nurse with any questions.

### Head Lice

In order to safeguard the community from the spread of head lice, the School District makes a commitment for managing individuals with this condition. The school nurse will make appropriate examinations of students identified as having this condition. Follow-up examinations will continue until no further infestation is evident. The school nurse will also examine all students having direct contact with the infested individual. Infested students will not be permitted to attend school until the condition is cleared and certified by an examination by the school nurse. If treated as prescribed by the school nurse, students should only miss one to two days of school.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to notify the school when there is an actual or suspected case of head lice in the home. A notice is sent home to the parents of students in the same room as the child having this condition. Proper medical attention should be obtained by the parent to prevent the transmission of this condition.

### Medications

It is the belief of the Allegheny Valley School District that the taking of medications in our schools should be kept to a minimum. However, when it is necessary to take medication at school, parents are required to contact the building Principal or nurse. Students are not permitted to self-medicate with the exception of students who use an inhaler or epinephrine (Policy #210.1). Students are required to report each use to the school nurse. Under no circumstances should a student share an inhaler or epinephrine with another student. The following procedure will be followed when it becomes necessary for school personnel to administer medication during the school day.

- All medication should be delivered to school by the parent or guardian.
- Only those medications prescribed by a doctor will be given.
- A statement signed by a physician with instructions must be presented by the student. The instructions must indicate:
  - A. The name of the medication to be taken
  - B. The dosage of the medication
  - C. The time for the medication to be given
  - D. Any possible side effects or special instructions
- Written parental consent must accompany the physician's statement.
- Only daily dosages in the original prescription container will be accepted. The school will not be responsible for more than a day's supply of medication, unless special circumstances exist.
- The medication will be locked in the nurse's or Principal's office.
- The student must take the medication in the presence of the school nurse, building Principal, or other designated school personnel.

### Sickness & Injuries

Students should not be sent to school if they are obviously sick. First aid is available to those students who become ill or injured while in school. These students should report immediately to the teacher in charge. When a student becomes ill at school, it is the parent's responsibility to provide transportation from school to home. Working parents are not excluded from this duty and should arrange for a neighbor or relative to be available in emergencies. These names and phone numbers should be listed on the student's parent portal Emergency Forms.

Emergency Forms are to be completed by parents annually. The forms enable the school nurse to see that children receive the best care possible. It is extremely important that these forms be updated in the school office. Phone numbers should be updated as soon as possible after a change has been made. Parents are asked to select individuals who would cooperate and be willing to care for their children when ill and who will come to school to pick up their children when ill.

When the Principal, nurse, or designee believes that a situation demands urgent emergency care, an ambulance will be called. Parents and guardians will be notified as soon as possible about the emergency.

Please be advised that:

- Parents who do not have telephone service to their home are asked to provide some method by which the school may contact them in the case of an emergency.
- Under no circumstances is a student to go home because of illness or injury unless he has been excused by the nurse or the Principal.
- Home-incurred accidents are not the responsibility of the school. Medical help in these situations cannot be administered.
- Schools cannot provide aspirin, cough drops, or other types of over-the-counter medications. Parents will have to follow the described process for medication if they want these drugs administered. ● With any significant illness or medication issues, parents should notify the school nurse before informing the classroom teacher. The school nurse will provide the teacher(s) with the necessary information about a child's health concern.

### **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

Students who have a prolonged illness and have missed one week of school, may be provided with homebound instruction. Students receive four hours per week of instruction in the major subject areas. Homebound instruction applications are requested through the Principal's office and must be approved by the Superintendent. Physicians will be required to certify the following:

1. The nature of the illness or disability
2. The date the disability began
3. The probable duration of the confinement
4. The prognosis
5. A request for tutoring

### **INTERNET GUIDELINES**

The computer facilities in the Allegheny Valley School District are provided for use by District students, staff, and community members in support of the District's programs. All users of the facilities and equipment are responsible for seeing that these facilities are used in an effective, efficient, ethical, and lawful manner. Disciplinary actions that may be taken include, but are not limited to: loss of computer usage privileges, dismissal from computer-related class, discipline under the discipline policies of the District, and/or appropriate legal action. All students using the computers in the school will be required to sign an Access & Usage Agreement. This form must also be signed by a parent/guardian. The form supports Acceptable Use of Internet, Networks, Computer Resources Policy. A complete copy of the policy is available upon request in the building's main office or the District website (*AVSD Board Policy #815*).

### **INTERNET SAFETY**

It is the policy of the District to (a) prevent its computer network from being used to access or to transmit inappropriate material via internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct communication; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of minors' personal identification information; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

In additional, the District will educate all students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking web sites and in chat rooms; and cyber bullying awareness, prevention,

and response (*AVSD Board Policy #815.2*).

### **LOCKERS**

Lockers are the property of the school and are assigned to students by the administration. Students should keep all jackets, books, and supplies in their lockers. Money, jewelry, electronics, and other valuables should not be kept in lockers. Students who find it necessary to bring money, expensive jewelry or coats, and other valuables to school should rent a lock from the office or secure with homeroom teacher. During physical education class or activities, students are advised to give valuables to the teacher in charge for security. The school is not responsible for losses that may occur. All losses should be reported to school authorities promptly. For security purposes, combination locks are available from the school office and are to be returned at the end of the school year.

Lockers are provided for student convenience. They should be visited as infrequently as possible. In order to avoid congestion in the halls between classes, students should gather all books and materials needed for morning classes when they go to their lockers before school. Materials and books needed for afternoon classes can be retrieved from lockers after lunch.

The schools strongly discourage students from using luggage-type book bags with wheels for school materials. These types of bags constitute a safety concern because they are too large to fit inside lockers.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Each school has a system for handling lost and found articles. The schools recommend that parents place names on students' boots, gym shoes, lunch boxes, sweaters, gloves, mittens, hats, coats, purses, eyeglasses, and envelopes containing letters or money. At the end of each semester, items that remain in Lost & Found will be given to charity.

### **NAME CHANGES**

Pennsylvania has a name change statute. A name can be changed only by petitioning the Common Pleas Court and obtaining court approval. If parents obtain a court-ordered name change for themselves, children who are minors also take on the new name. If there is no court-ordered name change, the legal name on the child's birth certificate shall be used.

### **NON-ACADEMIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

All students are given the opportunity and support services necessary to allow them to participate in both academic and extracurricular activities regardless of educational placement. Many extra-curricular and after-school activities are available for students in both school buildings. Students are advised of these activities at the beginning and throughout the school year. Students who do not report to school on the day of any after-school, non-academic, and/or extra-curricular activity will not be permitted to participate without a valid and reasonable written excuse to the building Principal.

### **PARENT ORGANIZATIONS**

The education of a child is a cooperative effort between the home and the school. Acmetonia Elementary School has an active PTA. This organization welcomes as members all parents and guardians of children enrolled in the elementary school, as well as all faculty and community members.

### **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

The elementary school supports a growing parent volunteer program. Any parent who is interested in serving as a volunteer should contact the building Principal's office. Volunteers will be assigned on an "as needed" basis to teachers and grade levels needing specific volunteer help.

For our students' safety, all independent volunteers and volunteer coaches/sponsors in the schools will be required to submit original Pennsylvania State Police Act 34 background check, Act 151 child abuse check, and fingerprint clearance, all at a cost to the volunteer (*AVSD Board Policy #916*). Volunteers whose reports and clearances are more than five (5) years old, must obtain and provide new reports and clearances in order to continue as volunteers thereafter.

## **PERSONAL INVITATIONS**

Personal invitations for functions outside of school are not permitted to be distributed in school unless ALL students in the classroom are invited.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDENTS**

### School Photographs

School pictures are taken once a year. Students will be notified about the date these photos will be taken. Information regarding purchase price will be given prior to the date when pictures are to be taken. A make-up day is available for students who are not in school on picture day. Provisions are made for poor pictures or refunds through the photo company.

### Public Relations Photographs

Individual and/or group interviews, photographs, or videotapes of Allegheny Valley students may be taken during the school year for use by the District in publications, its web site, social media, or local newspapers. Only photos of students or names of students will be published on the District's website.

In addition, Allegheny Valley provides opportunities for positive media publicity by arranging for reporters or photographers to interview and/or photograph students. A staff member is always present at these times. If a parent/guardian would prefer that his/her child not be photographed or interviewed for publicity purposes, please send written notification yearly by September 20<sup>th</sup> to Allegheny Valley School District, c/o Public Relations Department, 300 Pearl Avenue, Cheswick, PA 15024.

Keep in mind that student photos are taken at random and therefore chosen to appear in publications at random. There is no guarantee that students who have had photographs taken will appear in any publication. Also, please understand that although the District chooses pictures for its publications, it has NO control over which child's picture will appear in local newspapers. Should printed photographs of your child create a problem for your child or the family, please be sure to note this in the letter to the District. Feel free to contact the District's Public Relations Office at 724/274-5300 with any questions pertaining to these types of photographs.

## **POLICIES**

Information on specific policies adopted by the Allegheny Valley School Board of Directors can be obtained by visiting the AVSD web site, [www.avsdweb.org](http://www.avsdweb.org) or by request from the District's business office located in the lower level of Acmetonia Elementary School or at any building office.

## **PRIVACY RIGHTS OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS (CONFIDENTIALITY)**

Allegheny Valley School District and its employees are required by federal law, and state and federal rules and regulations, to protect the privacy rights of students. The foundation of these rights comes from federal legislation entitled Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, also known as the Buckley Amendments. State rules and regulations also exist which deal with the privacy and rights of regular and special education students. In addition, all students are covered by the state regulations contained in Chapter 12, known as Students' Rights and Responsibilities.

The laws, rules, and regulations mentioned above contain information about types of information and consent. There are different categories of information:

1. Educational Records consist of information directly related to a student that is maintained by an educational agency.
2. Personally Identifiable Information includes the student's name, the name of the parent or other family members, a personal identifier or a list of personal characteristics that would make the student's identity easily traceable.
3. Directory Information is information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

The District designates what information is labeled as directory information. It includes the following: the student's name, address, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of athletic team members, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received and the most recent educational agency or institution attended by the student.

Education Records and Personally Identifiable Information cannot be disclosed or released without written consent of a parent if the child is under 18. If the student is over 18 years of age, the student can give his or her consent to release this information. Directory information can be disclosed without consent from any party.

Disclosure of information means to permit access to, or the release, transfer, or other communication of, education records or personally identifiable information contained in these records to any party by any means. The means shall include oral, written, or electronic methods. This statement indicates that information about a student cannot even be shared in conversation without permission. This statement also applies to other Allegheny Valley School District personnel who do not have an educationally relevant reason to possess knowledge of a student. When parental consent is necessary for disclosure of information, this consent must: specify the records that may be disclosed, state the purpose of the disclosure, and identify the party or class of parties with whom the disclosure may be made. Furthermore, the Allegheny Valley School District must maintain a written record of disclosure for parents to inspect in the case that information has been released.

## **REPORT CARDS**

A formal evaluation of a student's performance will be provided four times during the school term. Parents are urged to contact their child's teacher at other times throughout the year when additional information is desired, or when the school should be informed of some unusual circumstance. The District emphasizes that parent conferences are essential for communicating about student progress. Interim Progress Reports are issued midway through each report period for students. Progress reports are issued for areas of improvement as well as for deficiencies in work. In addition, teachers contact parents throughout the year regarding student progress.

The general grading system for the elementary students is as follows:

90%= A 80% = B 70% = C 60% = D 59% and lower = Failing

Please note that in some courses the grading system may be adjusted to meet the nature and challenges of the course.

Grades 4 through 6 use an electronic format for grade reporting. Parents/guardians are to access the Parent Portal system to monitor their child's progress and contact the teacher through the parent portal, which is linked on the District's website, [www.avsdweb.org](http://www.avsdweb.org).

## **SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

All student activities carried on after regular dismissal time must be supervised by a faculty sponsor. The sponsor will have arranged with the Principal for permission to have students remain in the building after the regular dismissal time. **ALL** other students must leave the building at regular dismissal time or at the conclusion of any other activity that has a sponsor. Parents are expected to be punctual when picking up students from after-school activities.

### **School Bus Safety**

#### **Role and Responsibilities of the School**

The school shares the responsibility with parents to educate children in school bus safety. The school Principal is responsible for the discipline of his/her students who ride the school buses. Students who cannot comply with the school bus regulations may be denied the privilege of riding school buses. When this happens, school attendance is still required and parents must make other arrangements for their children to get to school. Students may be suspended and/or recommended for expulsion by the Principal due to violations of bus policies. The School Board authorized the use of video and audio recording on school buses and school vehicles for disciplinary and security purposes (*AVSD Board Policy #810.2*).

#### **Role and Responsibilities of the School Bus Driver**

School bus drivers accept responsibility for transporting children to and from school. Therefore, school bus drivers are given the authority to:

1. Assign seats.
2. Decide if their route is unsafe for school bus travel because of weather or road conditions (decisions must be reported to the transportation office).
3. Adjust their route due to emergency conditions.
4. Refuse to pick up or discharge any student at any stop other than the student's designated stop without a written request or authorization from the Allegheny Valley School District.

*All school bus drivers are trained and certified by W.L. Roenigk with the regulations of the Pennsylvania State Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Administration.*

#### **Role and Responsibilities of the Parent/Guardian**

1. Parents are responsible for reviewing the "School Bus Rules and Regulations" with their children.
2. Parents share the responsibility with the school for instructing their child(ren) to cross in front of the bus after being discharged, if the locations of their residences require them to cross the road at bus stops.
3. Parents should coordinate with other parents to ensure that an adult is present at the bus stop every day, especially with children under the age of nine.
4. Parents are liable for damage caused by their children to the property of others, including the school bus. When children walk to and from the bus stop or school, while they wait at the school bus stop, and when they walk home from the school bus stop at the end of the school day, students must show consideration and respect for the property of citizens whose homes and places of business are located along their routes.
5. Parents should have their children ready to board the bus ten (10) minutes before the scheduled arrival time of the bus.
6. Parents of children who walk to bus stops should develop specific routes that minimize the exposure of their children to vehicular traffic when walking to and from the bus stops.
7. Parents who request to have their child ride a different bus or become a walker for a specific day must submit

a letter to the Principal indicating the change, the day, and the reason. Upon Principal approval, the letter will be copied and given to the school secretary, classroom teacher, and bus driver. If the request is denied, the Principal will contact the parent before school dismissal.

*Riding the school bus is a privilege. This privilege may be temporarily denied or permanently revoked if the misconduct of the child jeopardizes the safe operation of the school bus or the safety of the children riding the bus.*

## **School Bus Rules and Regulations**

### **Before Loading:**

1. Always walk on the sidewalk to the bus stop; never run. If there is no sidewalk, walk on the left facing traffic.
2. Go to the bus stop five (5) minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
3. While at the bus stop, wait quietly in a safe place well away from the road.
4. Do not run and play while waiting.
5. Do not approach the bus until it comes to a complete stop.
6. Never go under the bus for an object.
7. Enter the bus in a line, with younger students in front. Hold the handrails while going up and down the steps.
8. When entering the bus, go directly to your seat.
9. Remain seated and face forward during the entire ride.

### **While on the School Bus**

1. The driver is in complete charge of the bus and students must respect his/her authority.
2. While the bus is in motion, students are to sit facing forward in the seats.
3. Students always speak quietly on the bus so the bus driver will not be distracted.
4. Students never throw things on the bus or out the windows.
5. Students keep the aisles clear at all times.
6. Coats, school equipment, and band instruments may be transported on the bus provided they can be secured in the seat and not placed in the bus aisles. For other objects, the driver may request written approval from the Allegheny Valley School District.
7. Feet should be directly in front of you on the floor and book bags should be kept on your lap or on the floor between your legs.
8. Students must not extend any part of their bodies through the school bus windows.
9. Students should never play with emergency exits.
10. Students may not eat, drink, smoke, and play audio, etc. while on board school buses.
11. Students must cooperate in keeping the bus clean and must not damage it. Any malicious or willful damage to a school bus will result in immediate withdrawal of transportation services for the student or students involved. In addition, the cost of repairing the damage must be satisfactorily settled.
12. Hands, feet and objects should be kept to yourself at all times while riding the bus. Physical, verbal, written and texted harassment or fighting is prohibited.
13. In case of an emergency, listen to the driver and follow instructions.



## **Unloading and Leaving the School Bus**

1. Students should remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
2. If you leave something on the bus, never return to the bus to get it. Notify the school.
3. Make sure drawstrings or other loose objects are secure before getting off the bus.
4. Respect the Danger Zone, which surrounds all sides of the bus. The Danger Zone is ten feet wide on all sides of the bus. Always remain 10 steps away from the bus to be out of the Danger Zone and where the bus driver can see you.
5. If you drop something near the bus, never attempt to pick it up, until the bus departs. Ask an adult for assistance. Never go under the bus for an object.
6. Those students, who must cross the street in front of the bus due to the location of their respective residences, should look in both directions to be sure that no traffic is approaching.
7. Never speak to strangers at the bus stop and never get into a car with a stranger. Always go straight home and tell your parents if a stranger or someone you know tries to pick you up.

## **School Closings and Delays**

For school closings, students will utilize virtual instruction or Flexible Instruction Days. Information for closings and delays will be available through KDKA radio and television beginning at 6:00 a.m. Information may also be released to WTAE and WPXI television stations. In addition, the Black Board Connect Voice Messaging will be activated under these circumstances. Moreover, this information will be posted on the District's web site [www.avsdweb.org](http://www.avsdweb.org) as soon as it becomes available. The District encourages all parents to use the web site for official information. The District is not responsible for misinformation provided by the media.

**PARENTS ARE ASKED NOT TO CALL THE SCHOOL.** All listings are under the Allegheny Valley School District and not the name of the school building. In the event of an early dismissal, parents who work and are not at home are urged to plan with their children where to go should such a situation arise. The schedule for school delays is as follows:

### **Elementary School Office Hours:**

**7:45 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.**

School office voicemail may be activated at 3:45 p.m.

If you are connected to the school voicemail after school hours, but you would like to speak to a District representative, please call the Allegheny Valley School District Business office at (724) 274-5300 until 4:00 p.m.

### **Two-Hour Delay**

Day Begins: 10:30 a.m. Day Ends: 2:45 p.m. (Cold breakfast will be provided, if needed).

## **SCHOOL POLICE OFFICER**

The primary purpose of a School Police Officer at the Allegheny Valley School District is to promote the safety of students, staff and visitors. This includes the safety of any student who needs to be controlled by the officer. Accordingly, a School Police Officer shall use only that force that is reasonably necessary to protect persons from

immediate risk of injury (AVSD Board Policy #829).

### **SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT**

Allegheny Valley School District works with teachers and students to practice school wide positive behavior. This program is a framework for enhancing adoption and implementation of a continuum of evidence-based interventions to achieve academically and behaviorally important outcomes for all students. Developing a positive school climate maximizes academic engagement and achievement while minimizing rates of rule-violating behaviors. Positive school climate engages acts of respectful and responsible behaviors while organizing school functions to be more efficient, effective, and relevant.

### **SEARCHES & SURVEILLANCE**

The Board authorizes the administration to conduct searches of students or their belongings, including lockers, automobiles, electronic devices, purses, backpacks, clothing, and other possessions in accordance with the standards set forth in AVSD Policy #226 - Searches. Generalized and random canine searches may be made of lockers, vehicles, and bags, including, but not limited to backpacks, gym bags and drawstring bags, (but not physically on a student's person), without notice and require no individualized suspicion. An indication by the canine that contraband is present shall constitute reasonable suspicion to warrant further searches by school officials. Drug sniffing dogs will not be used to search a student's individual person. No bag search shall occur while the bag is physically on a student's individual person (AVSD Policy #226.1). A complete copy of the policy is available upon request in the building's main office or on the District's website.

In addition, for increased school management, the District also reserves the right to subject students to recorded surveillance, by video or audio means, throughout the school day (AVSD Policy #810.2) and on the school bus. The recordings may be used as evidence of inappropriate student actions or behavior (AVSD Policy #816.1). The District prohibits the use of audio recording on any school bus or school vehicle that is not being used for a school-related purpose.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

There are established rules and guidance for the use of social media by students and employees. The District reserves the right to monitor any user's utilization of District technology resources. Users have no expectation of privacy while using District technology resources whether on or off District property (AVSD Board Policy #836).

- Users are responsible for their own behavior when communicating by use of social media.
- Users will be held accountable for the content of the communications stated/posted on social media locations where such communications materially disrupt school operations and are not otherwise-protected.
- Users are responsible for complying with the School District's employee and student conduct requirements and Responsible Use Policies.
- Users may not disrupt the learning atmosphere, educational programs, school activities, and the rights of others.

### **STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Allegheny Valley School District's Student Assistance Program (SAP) functions through the school year. These teams are available to assist at-risk students K-6 who are experiencing difficulties in the areas of academics, attendance, health, or behavior. These teams consisting of administrators, teachers, nurses, and support personnel are intended to work closely with families and draw on the expertise of their members to design and implement intervention strategies for student success.

Most often reading deficiencies make up the majority of elementary students identified for SAP and/or learning

disability services. Therefore, the current method of identification for learning disabilities may be utilized in place of the traditional IQ-achievement discrepancy model. This approach is called Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) and is most commonly employed in the area of reading instruction.

Using MTSS in the identification process has most frequently been embedded in a multi-tiered model of assessment, intervention, and progress monitoring. This model can be conceptualized as consisting of three phases:

- Determining whether effective instruction is in place for groups of students.
- Providing effective instruction to the target student and measuring its effect on performance.
- Referring students whose MTSS warrants additional or intensive continuing interventions. More information regarding the SAP procedures and interventions will be provided to parents of students referred into the process by a professional staff member. The Student Assistance Program is a confidential place to turn for help and support. For more information, contact the elementary school counselor.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work, and conformance to school rules and regulations. The most important concept is that all students share with the administration and the faculty a responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to learning. No student has the right to interfere with the education of his/her fellow students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of all who are involved in the educational process. Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner so as not to offend or slander others.

### **SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS**

The definition of suspension and expulsion in the Allegheny Valley School District is as follows:

- “Temporary Suspension” is the exclusion from school for an offense for a period of up to three school days by the Principal. This action can take place without a hearing in accordance with policies of the Board of School Directors.
- “Full Suspension” is the exclusion from school for an offense for a period of up to ten school days. This action will come after an informal hearing with the Principal is offered to the student and his or her parents in accordance with the policies of the Board of School Directors.
- “Expulsion” is the exclusion from school for an offense for a period exceeding ten school days. It may be permanent expulsion from the school. Please note that during this time, the student is excluded from ALL school activities.

The types of violations that could lead to exclusion from school are too numerous to mention. However, some examples of offenses follow:

1. Smoking/Huffing within the building, buses or on the grounds.
2. Acting or speaking in a flagrant or disrespectful way to a staff member.
3. Possessing obscene literature.
4. Leaving school grounds without authorized permission.
5. Violating safety rules.
6. Using vulgar, obscene or profane language or issuing threats.
7. Causing classroom or hall disruptions.
8. Forging an absence excuse, early dismissal or other parental permission slip.
9. Throwing snowballs on school grounds.
10. Fighting on or near school property.

11. Destroying or defacing school property.
12. Tampering with fire apparatus.
13. Possessing or using anything that might be considered a weapon.
14. Sexting.

## **SUSPENSIONS**

### Authority

The Principal or person in charge of the school may suspend any student for disobedience or misconduct for a period of one (1) to ten (10) consecutive school days and shall immediately notify the parent/guardian and the Superintendent in writing when the student is suspended.

There are two types of suspensions: out-of-school and in-school. The out-of-school suspension requires the student to be at home during school hours on the days when the suspension is in effect. The student may make up work missed during an out-of-school suspension within the same number of calendar days as the suspension. If the out-of-school suspension exceeds three school days, the student and parent or guardian shall be given the opportunity for an informal hearing consistent with the requirements set forth in the laws of Pennsylvania. The in-school suspension requires the student to spend a designated number of full school days (not counting absences) under supervision, during which the suspended student will continue with regular schoolwork. On the days when the in-school suspension is in effect, the student will travel to and from school in the normal manner. Upon arrival at school, the student is required to report promptly to the office with all the necessary school related materials, and remain there until the end of the school day. Students who are suspended in-school or out-of-school are **ineligible** for all student activities during the days of suspension.

## **TEACHER SELECTION**

Parents are asked not to request specific teachers for their children. Although there may be an occasional situation when this may be necessary, the practice does create many problems. Children are grouped by staff to provide the best learning environment for all students. Selecting teachers based on other students' experiences may not be the best choice for your child.

## **TELEPHONE USAGE**

Students should not use the office or classroom telephones except in emergencies. Student schedules for band, gym, and other encore classes are consistent each week. Students should not call home for gym clothes, band instruments, or other materials for these classes. Please establish a routine for your child so he or she will not have to call home for supplies.

## **TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLIES**

Textbooks, paper, pencils, and required notebooks for normal class needs are provided by the Allegheny Valley School District free of charge. Non-expendable items such as textbooks are loaned to the students. They must be returned to the school in good condition when no longer needed. Students losing or destroying any classroom or library books through carelessness will be required to pay for them.

The Allegheny Valley School District elementary school facilities and equipment are of the best available. Unnecessary damage to school equipment must be paid for by those students responsible. Unnecessary wear and tear on textbooks by students will result in a fee at the time the books are returned. Students will be charged for lost books. If a lost book is recovered, monies paid will be refunded. This applies also to those books that may be stolen from students.

## THREAT ASSESSMENT

In accordance with Act 18 of 2019, the Allegheny Valley School District has established a Threat Assessment Team for the 2021-2022 school year. The team is responsible for the assessment of and intervention with students whose behavior may indicate a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community, or others. The Threat Assessment Team is also responsible for providing training, education, and information to members of their school communities (*AVSD Board Policy #231.6*)

## TOBACCO/VAPING POSSESSION REGULATIONS

Act 145 of 1996 amends the Pennsylvania Crime Code (Title 18) to include language that prohibits students from possessing or using tobacco, vapor products or huffing in a school building, on a school bus, or on any school property, including home schools. Upon conviction, the student will be found guilty of a summary offense and subject to a fine of up to \$50 plus court costs. Students violating tobacco regulations will be sent to the Principal, the tobacco will be taken, and the parent notified of the violation. The student will be cited for tobacco use. A conference with the student and the student's parent/guardian may be necessary for the student to remain in school. All violations for tobacco will result in disciplinary action (*AVSD Board Policy #222*).

## TRANSFERS AND WITHDRAWALS

Parents and guardians of a student moving out of the District must inform the District registration/withdrawal which may be reached at 724-274-6500. Parents or guardians must provide the date of the student's last day in attendance and the name and location of his/her new school of attendance, if known. To register a child, the parent or guardian will need to complete the online registration form. Once the form is completed and submitted online, an appointment will need to be made with the registration office. Registration information cannot be submitted from a mobile device. Information must be submitted from a computer or laptop. The registrar will prepare a transfer form that is given to the student along with a copy of his/her report card. Parent signature is required to release student scholastic and health records to his/her new school. Additional information from the child's Principal or teacher regarding the student is released only upon parental request. All books and school materials given to students must be returned and processed before the student withdraws from school. Fines, cafeteria balances, and materials that have been lost must also be paid in full.

## TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

For the safety of students, a traffic pattern has been established for arrival and dismissal times at Allegheny Valley School District. Parents/guardians are asked to support and follow all established procedures. Specific procedures are distributed by school administration to families. Parents are reminded to abide by all signs in the parking areas. For student safety, the District asks that parents/guardians drive slowly while on school property and park only in designated areas.

## TRANSPORTATION

Buses are provided by the School District to transport students to and from school. All children assigned to buses are expected to ride them to and from school. Students are expected to report to their designated area upon arrival to school. **Non-bus students are not permitted to ride the bus. Students are assigned to specific buses. They are not to ride buses to which they are not assigned. In addition, parental requests for daily bus changes will not be honored.**

On designated days of the week, an activity bus is provided for upper elementary students who stay to participate in after-school activities. Only assigned bus students are permitted to ride the activity bus. An activity bus pass is obtained by the student from the activity sponsor.

### Safety Regulations

Students must observe all safety regulations while boarding, riding, and disembarking from the school buses. Students who ride the buses must cooperate in every way with the bus drivers who are in charge of the bus. Rowdiness and behavior inconsistent with safe transportation procedures will result in the loss of bus privileges. A bus misconduct report is sent to the office for review by the Principal. A bus safety unit is conducted annually in October and again in the spring to review safety measures.

Parents have a responsibility to impress upon their child or children the importance of following all bus rules, including respect for the drivers and bus-related personnel. Please note that all of the buses have cameras for documenting student behavior. Please see School Bus Safety for more information

Disciplinary action will be taken for any conduct that distracts the attention of the driver, in any way interferes with the safe operation of the bus, or threatens the safety of any of the passengers on the bus. Students who do not observe the bus rules of safety will lose their privilege of riding the buses and will have to provide their own transportation. *Parents are responsible for any student damages to school buses.* The following will serve as a guide to deal with discipline problems on the buses:

#### **First Offense:**

Parent notification, phone call, disciplinary report, and letter

#### **Second Offense:**

Detention

#### **Third Offense:**

Minimum of three days suspension from the bus

#### **Fourth Offense:**

Consistent suspension leading to withdrawal of bus privileges

*Each offense will be reviewed by the building Principal or designee*

### **TRANSPORTATION VIDEO AND AUDIO MONITORING**

In the interest of student safety, video and audio taping devices will be placed in District-contracted buses. Students and parents should be advised that students are subject to being recorded on the school buses at any time for disciplinary and security purposes. These video and/or audio recordings may be used in disciplinary proceedings.

Disciplinary action for misbehavior on a school bus will be consistent with District policies. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, District officials may, among other things, review the video and audio tape (AVSD Board Policy #810.2), confer with the bus driver, and meet with the student. A complete copy of this policy (#810.2, *Transportation Video and Audio Monitoring*) is available upon request in the building's main office or on the District's website.

### **VISITORS**

Students are not permitted to bring visitors to school to attend classes. All adult visitors or non-school personnel are to first register in the main office prior to moving through the building. Visitors are to enter the building via the main office entrance, register in the main office with a valid state license/ID, and receive a visitor pass. The visitor pass must be visible at all times while in the building; unauthorized visitors in the building will be reported to the administration and subject to District guidelines. The building Principal may delay permission for any visit to school.

### Raptor System

Personal Identification (ID) must be brought to the main office and scanned prior to any visitor being allowed to enter the building. This ID will be kept in the main office until the visitor exits the building. A badge will be provided for the visitor and must be worn at all times while he/she is in the school facility. (Reference AVSD

Board Policy #845).

### Parking

Parking may be difficult at times due to the large number of visitors attending special programs. For drop-off and pick-up of students, parents are not permitted to stop in the driveway in front of the main entrance. At Acmetonia Elementary School parking is available in the lot in front of the building. Visitors are asked NOT TO PARK IN THE DRIVEWAY OF THE TRUCKING BUSINESS ACROSS FROM THE ACMETONIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DRIVEWAY. THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY AND VIOLATORS WILL BE TOWED AT THE OWNERS EXPENSE. Parking on Pearl Avenue is also dangerous, creating an unsafe situation for drivers and pedestrians. During special programs, accommodations are made for parking at the Syria Mosque with a shuttle bus bringing people to the school as needed.

### **WEAPONS**

Weapons and replicas of weapons are forbidden on school property. Act 26 of 1995 requires an expulsion of a student for at least one year for possession of a weapon on school property.

“**Weapon**” shall include, but not be limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nun-chuck stick, brass or metal knuckles, firearm, shotgun, rifle, look-a-like gun, chemical agent such as mace, explosive device, and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

“**Possession**” a student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student: in the student’s locker, under the student’s control while he/she is on school property, on property being used by the school at a school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school or while the student is on his/her way to or from school. Any weapon possessed on school property is subject to immediate seizure and forfeiture. Incidents of students possessing weapons will be reported to the student’s parents and to the police. Appropriate disciplinary and legal action will be taken against students who possess weapons and with students who assist possession in any way. Weapons under the control of law enforcement personnel are permitted. The Principal may authorize other persons to possess weapons in school buildings. The Principal may prescribe special conditions or procedures to be followed before giving such authorization (*AVSD Board Policy #218.1*).

## **CURRICULUM**

### Chapter 15 & Other Protected Handicapped Students

A protected handicapped student is a school-age student with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to any aspect of the school program. In compliance with state and federal law, the Allegheny Valley School District will provide each protected handicapped student with related aids, services or accommodations needed to provide equal opportunity. These services will be given without discrimination or cost to the student or family. They will enable the student to participate in and obtain the benefits of school programs and extra-curricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled or seeking enrollment in special education programs. For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students, contact the Special Education Liaison at 724-274-5300.

### Full Day Kindergarten

School entry at the Kindergarten level is a child's opportunity to make a successful transition from home to school. It is a year of preparation, during which readiness skills are developed which enable the child to learn and perform productively. It is a year of new independence during which the school strives to help the child feel able and

competent away from home. Kindergarten is the beginning of a formal educational process where a child will interact with his/her peers and teachers to discover a new learning environment. The Allegheny Valley School District offers a full-day Kindergarten program that follows the regular elementary day schedule. It will consist of instruction in the core subject areas and a full range of special subjects. Essential Kindergarten skills will be taught, allowing for more in-depth skill development for students. Parents are reminded that attendance in Kindergarten lays the foundation for attendance patterns in subsequent years. Therefore, Kindergarten students should attend classes daily.

### Requirements for Kindergarten

Children turning age 5 before September 1st of the school year are eligible for admission to Kindergarten classes. Kindergarten registration is usually held during the month of March. At this time, parents are asked to come to the Acmetonia Elementary School office to complete all necessary paperwork and schedule an appointment for the screening of their child. These appointments are held in the month of June to evaluate readiness skills of the student. Parents must present an original birth certificate, proof of residency, and a complete record of immunization for their child at the March registration.

### Registration

Children who move into the District and enroll in an elementary building are subject to grade placement screening. These results may determine a recommendation for grade placement. All new students are required to complete a registration packet and meet with the Principal. A start date is determined once all required documents and evidence of complete immunizations are received. Additional registration information is available on the District web site.

### Libraries (Media Centers)

The elementary building contains a separate, well-equipped library. This program offers opportunities for independent reading, research, and study. Library resources are integrated into the language arts curriculum with the classroom teacher. Free time before and after school, as well as during the school day, may be used by students to select books for independent reading. These books may be signed out for a week at a time. If a book is lost or ruined, the student who signed it out must pay the full replacement value of the book. Students who ruin or destroy the computerized bar codes on the book covers will also be responsible for their replacement.

### Music

The objective of the music program is to make students competent in many areas of music. These areas include: singing, movement, music appreciation, music reading, composition, and improvisation.

Vocal music is scheduled for all pupils in Kindergarten through grade six. The program provides a variety of experiences, guided by a certified music specialist. In addition, students may also choose to begin studying wind, brass, and percussion instruments in the fourth grade. These classes are given under the direction of instrumental specialists. The students in the classes combine to form an elementary band.

The classroom music groups, Chamber Singers, Elementary Choruses, and the Elementary Bands perform publicly throughout the school year. Notice is given to parents by the group sponsor or class teacher prior to these performances.

### Physical Education

All students are required to take physical education classes. Student participation is based upon individual abilities. Adaptive physical education is available for those students who medically or physically warrant this program. All students are required to wear appropriate gym clothing while taking physical education. This clothing includes



soft-soled tennis shoes and plain gym shorts without studs or other ornaments. Although a uniform is not required, parents are asked to provide a simple inexpensive outfit for physical education. Hard soled or leather soled shoes are not acceptable due to safety considerations.

Students may be excused from gym classes only when the request is made by a medical doctor. The request must be in writing. It must state the reason the student needs to be excused from gym class and signed by a physician.

A primary component of the physical education course is the Presidential Fitness Program. Students participate in the components of this program over the course of the school year.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

### **Child Find-Screening and Evaluation Services for School-age Students:**

The Allegheny Valley School District provides a free, appropriate, public education to eligible students according to state and federal mandates. To be eligible, the child must be of school age, need specially designed instruction, and meet eligibility criteria for mentally, gifted, and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in the Pennsylvania State Standards; autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment including blindness.

The District uses the following procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating specific needs of school-aged students requiring special programs or services. Screening efforts are designed to identify potential signs of developmental delays and other risk factors that could indicate disabilities. These procedures, as required by law, are as follows:

As prescribed by Section 1402 of the School Code, the District routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing acuity in the following grades: Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, 7 and 11. Visual acuity is screened in every grade. Speech and language skills are screened in Kindergarten and on a referral basis. Gross motor and fine-motor skills, academic skills, and social and/or emotional skills are assessed by classroom teachers and support staff on an on-going basis. Screening activities include review of group-based data, such as cumulative enrollment and health records, report cards, curriculum-based and performance-based assessments, and ability and achievement test scores. Identified needs from these screening sources as well as information obtained from parents and outside agencies, are assessed and noted within student records. School records are always open and available to parents, and only to school officials who have legitimate "need to know" information about the child. Information from the records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization, which involves written permission, by parents. If it is determined that a child needs additional services/interventions, the instructional team will make adjustments relative to such things as the child's learning style, behavior, physical inabilities, and speech problems to be more in keeping with traditional classroom expectancies. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the planning and implementation of intervention strategies. When the student does not make expected progress with this assistance or the screening results suggest that the student may be eligible, the District seeks parental consent to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation.

If a MDE is appropriate, the District will provide "Permission to Evaluate" form to the parent outlining the purpose of the evaluation and the type of assessments that will be used. Parents must provide informed consent by signing and returning the permission before any evaluations can be completed. The purpose of the MDE is to establish the student's eligibility and need for special education and/or related services. Upon receipt of the signed permission, the District has 60 calendar days to complete the evaluation process. Parents who suspect their child is eligible may request an evaluation at any time to the building Principal or contact the Special Education Department. The request must be in writing. If the request is made orally, a copy of the "Permission to Evaluate" form will be provided to the

parents within 10 calendar days of the oral request.

After the assessments are completed, an Evaluation Report (ER) will be compiled with parent involvement. The ER will determine if the student has a disability and requires specially designed instruction. The report will include specific recommendations for the types of intervention(s) necessary to deal with the child's specified needs. A copy of the Evaluation Report will be provided to the parent and the instructional team working with the student. For the student who has been found to be eligible for and in need of special education services, a meeting of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team will be scheduled with parent involvement in order to develop the IEP for the student.

Eligible students are provided with a continuum of supports and services designed to meet their individual needs. These services may include supplementary aids and services, and/or itinerant, supplemental or full-time support. The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the parents and staff at the IEP team meeting and are based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and the intensity of the specified intervention. The school District also provides related services, such as transportation, physical therapy, and occupational therapy that are required to enable the student to derive educational benefits. Services are provided in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent appropriate. The IEP team must first consider the regular classroom with the provision of supplementary aids and services before considering the provision of services in other settings.

Prior to the initiation of services, a "Notice of Recommended Educational Placement" (NOREP) must be signed by the parent indicating approval for the services to be provided. Parents may obtain additional information regarding special education services and/or parental due process rights by contacting the child's school Principal or the Special Education Department.

### **Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools**

Parents of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is eligible and in need of special education services may also make a request for screening and/or evaluation. Parental requests should be made in writing and directed to the Allegheny Valley School District Special Education Department at 300 Pearl Avenue, Cheswick, PA 15024. Special education services are accessible to nonpublic school students through dual enrollment following the multidisciplinary evaluation and the development of the IEP.

### **Services for Protected Handicapped Students/Chapter 15 Regulations**

In compliance with state and federal law, the Allegheny Valley School District will provide to each protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids services, or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school programs and extracurricular activities to the extent appropriate to the student's abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability, which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs. To obtain additional information about the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students, contact the Special Education Department.

### **Services for Preschool Age Children**

Act 212, the Early Intervention System Act, entitles all preschool age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delays or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is responsible for providing services to infants and toddlers, defined as children from birth through two years of age. Contact: The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, 2100 Wharton Street, Suite 705, Pittsburgh, PA 15203, 412-431-1905. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool age children from ages three through five. Contact Project DART, 475 E. Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120 or by phone at 412-394-5739 for more information.

### Gifted Support

The Allegheny Valley School District makes every effort to identify gifted students and to provide these pupils with free, appropriate, and public education. The District has developed a program for these intellectually gifted students, which is an essential part of the total education program.

The Gifted Education Program provides enrichment and acceleration options to the curriculum. In the elementary program, I.E.P. goals are reached by concentrating on development of gifted behaviors. The secondary program takes this development a step further, concentrating on Advanced Placement classes, enrichment experiences, and acceleration in one or more academic disciplines. Both programs include many varied classes and activities to help students reach their full potential.

Evaluation for the Gifted Education Program is held year round at all three schools in the District. Parents must give prior written permission for an intelligence evaluation. It is important to note that parents have a right to be part of the evaluation process by providing any information that shall be considered in determining the student's educational strengths. A written educational report is prepared summarizing the results of testing. All test results are held in strict confidence and will be shared with only parents and appropriate school personnel. For more information contact Ms. Susan Mellon, GATE Coordinator at 724-274-8100 or the child's building Principal.

### Behavior Plans

In an effort to meet the individual needs of our population of students with emotional disabilities, it is the policy of the Allegheny Valley School District to implement the behavior intervention plans of all exceptional children who have them as part of their Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.). Parents and school-based teams have and will continue to have input into these plans. However, at any time unilateral actions may be taken by administrative personnel to insure the health and safety of the school community in matters such as drugs, alcohol, weapons, or physical violence.

### FERPA

As a parent, you have certain rights concerning your child's school records. These rights are guaranteed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 1974, and the Pennsylvania State Board of Education regulations. These rights apply whether your child is exceptional or non-exceptional.

Parents have a right to review, inspect, or obtain a copy of the records. They may make a written request for copies of their child's records at a fee not to exceed duplicating costs. If a parent believes that any information is inaccurate or misleading, he/she may challenge the contents of the records. Parents have the right to refuse individual consent where such permission is needed for releasing certain student information. Should a parent feel the District is not providing these rights, he/she may file a complaint with the FERPA Office, Department of Education, Room 4511, Switzer Building, Washington, DC 20202. If a child transfers to another school system, records will be forwarded after notification of enrollment is received from the new school.

According to FERPA, 1974, various, non-confidential information can be released to outside agencies without parental consent. This directory information consists of name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weights and heights of members of athletic teams, dates and attendance, degrees and awards received, and other similar information. If a parent does not want directory information released, he/she must notify the District in writing.

The District protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding exceptional and protected handicapped students in accord with state and federal law and the District's student records policy.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

### Counseling Program

School counselors are available at the elementary level to provide support to students in academic, social, and emotional areas. Counselors are available to meet with parents by appointment. Please note: this is not a therapeutic session; some students may request more intense professional assistance outside of the school setting.

### Early Intervention

The Allegheny Valley School District invites any parent of a child residing in the District with possible disabilities or who are in need of special education or related services to contact Mr. Daniel Swoger at 724-274-8100. Young children experiencing developmental delays or physical or mental disabilities and their families are eligible for early intervention services. At-risk children are eligible for screening and tracking.

### Project Discovery, Assessment, Referral & Tracking (Project DART)

The Pennsylvania Department of Education provides services to preschool children from ages three through five. Additional information may be obtained by contacting Project DART, Allegheny Intermediate Unit at 412/394-5904.

### English as a Second Language

Title 22, Chapter 4, Section 4.26 of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Curriculum Regulations requires that the school District provide a program for every student who is limited English proficient or an English Language Learner. Every school District shall provide a program for each student whose first language is not English for the purpose of facilitating the student's achievement of English proficiency and the academic standards. Programs under this section shall include appropriate bilingual, bicultural or English as a second language (ESL) instruction.

The District will provide every school age child with a home language survey to determine individual student needs regarding ESL services. Parents may contact the building Principal for additional information regarding these services.

### Math & Literacy Paraprofessionals

The Math and Literacy Paraprofessionals are individuals who work to help teachers with instruction and provide support for the individual learning needs of each student.

### Title I Schoolwide Program

A Title I Schoolwide program permits a school to use funds from Title I, Part A and other Federal education program funds and resources to upgrade the entire educational program of the school in order to raise academic achievement for all the students. This contrasts with a Title I targeted assistance program, through which Title I, Part A funds are used only for supplementary educational services for eligible children who are failing or are at risk of failing to meet state academic content standards. Schoolwide programs have great latitude in determining how to spend their Title I, Part A funds. Schoolwide programs do not have to identify particular children as eligible for services, or separately track federal dollars. Instead, Schoolwide programs can use their Title I, Part A funds in the manner they choose within federal guidelines, as long as they engage in reform strategies that increase the amount and quality of learning time and help provide a high-quality curriculum for all children, according to a comprehensive plan to help children meet the state's challenging academic content standards. Schoolwide programs serve all children in a school. All staff, resources, and classes are part of the overall Schoolwide program. The primary goal is to ensure that all students, particularly those who are low achieving, demonstrate proficient and advanced levels of achievement on State academic achievement standards.

### Title IX

The AVSD Board declares it to be the policy of this district to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their

maximum potential through the programs offered in the schools regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, or handicap/disability. The district shall provide to all students, without discrimination, course offerings, counseling, assistance, employment, athletics and extracurricular activities. The district shall make reasonable accommodations for identified physical and mental impairments that constitute handicaps and disabilities, consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations. The Board encourages students and third parties who have been subject to discrimination to promptly report such incidents to designated employees (*AVSD Board Policy #103*). Dr. Janice Nuzzo serves as the district's Title IX Coordinator.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS**

A child's home life has a great deal to do with his or her success in school. Starting the day in a happy frame of mind often means the difference between success or failure for the day. Parents will find the following suggestions helpful in achieving a successful day for the student:

1. Insist your child has adequate rest.
2. Provide a nutritious breakfast for your child.
3. Supply a clean handkerchief or tissues each day.
4. Prepare your child for inclement weather with rainwear, boots, heavier clothing, gloves, etc.
5. Talk with your child about his or her problems and interests.
6. Provide enrichment for your child in the form of reading opportunities, trips, conversation, recreation and other family planned activities.
7. Make your child responsible for tasks in the home.
8. Encourage your child to assist in keeping his or her school building and classroom neat.
9. Designate a place in the home to study or to complete homework.
10. Help your child become responsible for the completion of homework assignments.
11. Limit your child's computer, television watching, and video gaming time.
12. Keep your child home if he or she has signs of illness. Do not send your child back to school until his or her temperature has been normal for at least twenty-four hours. In cases of vomiting, the condition should have ceased for at least the same period of time before the child returns to school.
13. Require your child to come home **IMMEDIATELY** after school.
14. Remind your child **NEVER TO ACCEPT RIDES OR GIFTS FROM STRANGERS**. Explain who a stranger may be. A student must always report to his or her teacher, a police officer, a bus driver, other school personnel or his or her parents any strangers seen loitering on foot or in a car near schools, playgrounds or other places where children frequent.

**Official Note To Allegheny Valley School District**

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Name:

\_\_\_\_\_ Reason for Absence:

\_\_\_\_\_ Reason for Tardiness: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Reason for Early Dismissal: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Picked Up After School By: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Going to After School Function (Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian's Signature)

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\_\_\_\_\_ Picked Up After School By: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Going to After School Function (Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian's Signature)

