



Vernon Christian School  
Heart for God - Mind for Truth

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# PARENT HANDBOOK

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to Vernon Christian School. We are an interdenominational school founded on evangelical Christian beliefs, and focused on providing a wholesome Christian education for Preschool to Grade 12.

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint parents and students with our vision, educational philosophy and principles of operation. It is our hope that it will answer some of your initial questions. For further information, please contact our school office (info@vcs.ca), and we will be happy to assist you.

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF VCS**

In 1974 a group of Christian families in the Vernon area were led to act upon the vision given to them by God to establish a school that would provide a Preschool to Grade 12 Christian Education for their own and future children.

Believing God gives parents the responsibility for educating their children, these parents formed the Vernon Christian School Society. Its objective was to establish a Christian Day School in Vernon whose purpose would be to serve as an educational arm of the Christian home. The vision became reality in 1977 when Vernon Christian School first opened its doors at its present Elementary Campus location. Within ten years the school had grown to a student population of 116 students. In 1989 a Kindergarten program was established at VCS. As the student population grew, so did the need for expansion of school facilities. The 1994/1995 school year was celebrated with the opening of a new gymnasium, and in September 1997 the concept of a Middle High School was introduced for Grades 7, 8 and 9. The opening of the Secondary Campus in 2004 completed the vision that started so many years ago!

## **AFFILIATION**

Vernon Christian School is associated with the Society of Christian Schools in B.C. Our representation to government and society is through the Federation of Independent School Associations.

## **EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

The educational philosophy of Vernon Christian School is based on a God-centered view of man and truth as presented in the Bible. Since God created and sustains all things through His Son, Jesus Christ, the universe and all life are dynamically related to God and have the purpose of glorifying Him. This is pointedly true of man who was made in God's image, different in kind from all other creatures, with the unique capacity to know and respond to God personally and voluntarily. Because man is a sinner by nature and choice, he cannot, in this condition, know or honor God in his life. He can do this only by being born again to do God's will.

The authority for education comes both from God's command that children be taught to love God and place Him first in their lives, and from the fact that parents are responsible for the total education and training of their children. At the parents' request, the Christian School, along with the Church, becomes a partner in this education. From this philosophy stem the following principles:

### **The Bible**

That God by His Holy Word reveals Himself and also renews man's understanding of God, of man himself, of his fellow man and of the world; directs man in those relationships including directing parents in the education of their children.

### **Creation**

That God created the world, and that in their education children must learn that the world, its development and history, can be understood only through its relationship to the Triune God who by His providence upholds all things.

### **Life**

That life in its entirety is service to God. We either obey or disobey Him. Education too, must be carried out in obedience to God.

### **Sin**

That sin alienates us from God, our fellow man, our world, the meaning and purpose of life and the wisdom God gives us to educate our children.

### **Jesus Christ**

That Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, by renewing our hearts through the power of His Spirit makes it possible for us to view the world correctly. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of man and life and in Him only are we able to rediscover the true meaning of life.

### **School**

That the purpose of Christian schools is to educate children for a life of obedience to Christ and to walk as image bearers and stewards of His creation.

### **Parents**

That the primary responsibility for the education of children rests with the parents, to whom God has entrusted them. Parents may not revoke that responsibility and give it over to the state, but seek to entrust their child's education to Vernon Christian School whose vision is to train a child to have a *heart of God and a mind for the truth.*

## **Teachers**

That Christian teachers giving instruction in Christian Day Schools in cooperation with parents, are responsible to God to give Christian leadership in all aspects of the curriculum and also to give example by their personal conduct.

## **Educational Freedom**

That Christian Schools organized and administered in accordance with lawful standards and requirements as set by the Department of Education of the Province of British Columbia, should be fully recognized in society as free to function according to their principles.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

The philosophy of the Vernon Christian School is embodied in the school's mission statement; it defines the role of the school as educators and enablers of children. It is founded on God as creator and Jesus as redeemer. At the same time the philosophy is implemented through the curriculum with the cooperation of the staff, parents, Vernon Christian School Society, the School Board and Education Committee.

### **Bible Studies, Devotions, Chapels**

Study of God's word in the Bible is the cornerstone of Christian Education. Through it, students are reminded that all true knowledge is and must be Biblically founded. Daily devotions give teachers and students a chance to tell one another of God's faithfulness to them in their own lives and to bring all things to Him in prayer. Chapels give the school community a time to celebrate and share God's goodness in a corporate setting. Chapels at the Elementary Campus follow the Christian calendar. They are held approximately every two weeks and involve much student participation and leadership. At the Secondary Campus chapels are held weekly and as at the Elementary Campus leadership students are very involved in the planning and delivery of chapels.

### **Curriculum**

Vernon Christian School follows the Society of Christian Schools in BC curriculum guidelines. The "Integrated Resource Packages" of the Ministry of Education of BC are being adhered to in as far as they agree with the schools educational philosophy. Materials from Christian School International and other Christian publishers are also used to supplement the different areas of study offered by Vernon Christian School. God's Word is applied to all subjects.

Preschool and the primary years from Kindergarten to Grade 3 welcome children into our community of learners at VCS. They are the foundational years for nurturing an attitude of wonder and delight in learning and for experiencing success in acquiring basic skills. Our curriculum includes prayer and study of

Bible stories, music and art, the enjoyment and reading of literature, phonics and spelling, writing and drama, PE and, science and social studies, math, special multi-age themes, and resource-based learning which integrate classroom study with library skills. Learning is structured so as to have a balance of direct instruction, meaningful practice, exploration of materials and ideas. Students are given daily opportunities to praise God, share, cooperate and serve others. Parents are welcome to be involved in their child's primary classroom. Reporting to parents primary will be anecdotal in nature.

Grades 4, 5 and 6 are the intermediate years in the elementary school program. The same area of studies is explored but learning shifts from the acquisition of "basic skills" to applying those skills to all subject areas at a higher level of thinking. There is also more cooperative group work for the students. At the intermediate level reporting to parents begins to include percentages grades.

The Vernon Christian Secondary school program addresses the needs of students in Grades 7 to 12. The program is divided into two areas: Middle School (Grades 7 to 9) and High School (Grades 10 to 12). The curriculum is presented from a Christian perspective, and follows the BC Ministry of Education guidelines. Students who graduate from Vernon Christian School receive a BC Dogwood diploma and are fully equipped to apply at university, Bible College, trade school or any other post secondary education path they choose. Evaluation is continuous and formal reporting to parents occurs four times during the academic year.

At Vernon Christian Middle High School the curriculum has been expanded to include unique learning opportunities that go beyond BC Ministry of Education requirements. The use of a variety of technologies is woven into the fabric of learning at the Secondary Campus, both in the computer lab and in the shops.

## **Service**

One of the most important components of the curriculum offered by Vernon Christian School is its focus on service. Service to others gives students a practical way to live out the gospel of salvation. It is how they can show the world that God is alive and real in their lives.

Students from Preschool to Grade 12 are given opportunities to serve in a manner that is appropriate for their grade level. For example, Grade 1 students have raised funds to purchase farm animals, personal belongings, and food for people in developing countries. Our school has also supported the Operation Christmas Child program. The High School students have served hot lunch to Vernon's homeless and have partnered with the Okanagan Gleaners to produce dried foods for disaster areas around the world. Our service program also includes a Grade 9 mission trip to Mexico that takes place in March.

## **Leadership**

Vernon Christian School is intentional about teaching leadership skills to students at all grade levels. Formal instruction begins in intermediate and continues on through to Grade 12. In intermediate grades students partner with a primary classes in a school “buddy” program. They provide leadership on the playgrounds reducing the need for parent intervention.

At the Secondary level we provide leadership training for all grades. Junior leadership is offered at Grades 7 to 9 and senior leadership in Grades 10 to 12 as part of the High School Bible program. Activities involve organizing school events to raise funds for local and global issues and needs.

## **Graduate Profile**

Vernon Christian School acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children. We walk along side of and support families in educating young people to have *a Heart for God and a Mind for Truth*.

It is the desire of the Vernon Christian School Community to honour God by graduating students who are:

- Striving to nurture, develop and apply their Biblical worldview in all facets of their lives.
- Loving neighbours and socially responsible citizens who display Biblical principles to honour the diversity of all people created in God’s image.
- Honest and effective communicators who are able to access, synthesize, and express their understandings in a variety of ways to a range of audiences.
- Democratic participants who as Canadians and global citizens, love godly justice and mercy, and act in ways that are considerate to the needs of others.
- Creative, innovative, knowledgeable, and skilled active learners who demonstrate high standards of performance and a commitment to lifelong learning.
- Humble servants of God and community contributors who willingly serve others and take the initiative to improve the quality of life for their neighbours, local and global communities.
- Wise decision makers who practice Biblical discernment.
- Collaborative workers who demonstrate courage and strong interpersonal skills.
- Healthy human beings who demonstrate personal spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and emotional well-being.

## **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

### **Introduction**

Vernon Christian School operates in accordance with the lawful requirements set by the Ministry of Education of British Columbia and is independent from the local school district. As an independent parent run school, VCS requires a high level of parental involvement in the school's operation.

### **Community Standards**

The Vernon Christian School Society functions as a Christian community where administrators, teachers, staff, board and committee members are called to promote and advance the mission of Vernon Christian School. In order to do so administrators, teachers, staff, board and committee members are expected to adhere to the Standards of Conduct, which the Society has established for itself.

### **Society**

The objective of the Vernon Christian School Society is to operate a Christian Day School in accordance with its educational philosophy. The Society is a non-profit, charitable organization made up of friends, supporters and parents of Vernon Christian School. Society meetings are held a minimum of twice a year, usually in November and June.

Membership in the Society is open to all who agree with the philosophical basis, purpose and character of Vernon Christian School, as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws.

Society members are urged to make every effort to attend the Society meetings.

### **School Board**

Members of the Society may be elected to the School Board at both the fall and at the Annual General Meeting of the Society in June. Duties of Board members include:

- Appointing, discharging and payment of teachers and the principal.
- Supervision of all monies and the setting of the annual budget.
- Determining the religious and academic curriculum in conjunction with the principal.
- Supervising adherence to the requirements of the Ministry of Education of BC.
- Appointing members to the various committees.

## **Committees**

The duties of the **Education Committee** include:

- Keeping informed about the Christian academic quality and character of the instruction given.
- Considering all matters relating to the educational program and making recommendations to the Board.
- Interviewing possible teachers and recommending suitable candidates to the Board.

The duties of the **Finance Committee** include:

- Supervising the bookkeeping and monitoring expenses and income in comparison to the annual budget.
- Making recommendations to the Board regarding the annual budget.

The duties of the **Capital Development Committee** include:

- Recommending to the Board and carrying out promotional and fundraising initiatives.

The duties of the **Building Committee** include:

- Providing the Board advice about the schools long and short term needs.
- Suggesting specific strategies and solutions to the above needs.
- Overseeing expansion activities when called upon to do so.

The duties of the **Community Relations Committee** include:

- Developing promotional materials for use by the society, to maintain contact with past supporters and alumni of the school and to all interested in Christian Education in the Vernon area.
- Publicizing special activities hosted by the school or society.
- Assisting the Board in maintaining positive public relations with the community, School District #22 and greater Vernon community.

The duties of the **Transportation Committee** include:

- Alerting parents to the transportation options available to them in the Vernon area.
- Pursuing further transportation alternatives for parents in the Vernon Christian School Society.

The duties of the **Maintenance Committee** include:

- Keeping informed about the state of the school property.
- Making recommendations to the Board regarding maintenance, repairs and adequacy of the buildings and school grounds.
- Advising the Board in all matters regarding the school custodial team.

The duties of the **Employment Relations Committee** include:

- Developing and fostering a positive work environment for employees at Vernon Christian School.
- Making suggestions to the Board and staff regarding policies that relate to working conditions, salary, professional development and teacher qualifications.

The **Auxiliary Committee** mandate is consistent with the philosophy and goals of the VCS School Board. Some of their responsibilities include:

- Fundraising for the specific purpose of supplying students with 'the little extras' that are not part of the yearly budget.
- Heightening school awareness and promoting positive school relations.
- Providing a monthly hot lunch program for the EC.

## **Staffing**

The School Board in consultation with the Education Committee and the principal have the responsibility of selecting teachers for the educational staff.

Appointments are made using the following criteria:

- i) Each appointee must be sincerely committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of their life.
- ii) Each appointee must make an affirmation of the philosophy of the school and agree to support the objectives of Christian education in Vernon Christian School.
- iii) Each appointee must hold a valid British Columbia Teaching Certificate.

## **Administration**

The **Principal(s)** are directly responsible to the School Board. Their duties include:

- i. Ensuring that the educational philosophy is implemented in the daily instruction at both campuses.
- ii. Seeing that the requirements of the Ministry of Education of BC are met.
- iii. Responding to parents' concerns regarding the education of their children.

The **Development Administrator** is directly responsible to the School Board. The duties include:

- i) Promoting and executing the vision of the school.
- ii) Developing and fostering a relationship with society members, corporate donors and others within the Christian community.
- iii) Planning for and executing different fundraising, promotional, and information initiatives within the school and larger community.
- iv) Responding to parents' comments and concerns with respect to public relations, fundraising and general information as required.

The **Business Administrator** is directly responsible to the School Board and the Finance Committee. The duties include:

- i) Maintaining all financial records in relation to the day-to-day operation of the school including tuition payments, accounts payable, payroll, government grant information and receipting.
- ii) Developing annual budget for the Board in consultation with the Finance Committee and the administration.

## **Procedural Fairness**

Vernon Christian School uses the general statement of principles from the Federation of Independent Schools Association document, *Procedural Fairness Best Practice Guidelines for Independent Schools* in order to ensure procedural fairness in the policies and procedures implemented.

## **Parents**

The primary responsibility for the education of children rests with the parents. They in turn delegate part of the academic and spiritual instruction to the teachers during the time the children attend school. Teachers are responsible to God and parents to give Christian leadership in all aspects of school life. A healthy relationship between teachers and parents is vital to ensure the success

of each child's education.

Parents are encouraged and welcome to visit the school and their children's classroom often. The parent/teacher relationship is further strengthened by parents volunteering their help for the various events and activities the school has planned.

### **Church**

Church/Home/School function harmoniously together in providing Christian education. Families are encouraged to be actively involved in a church of their choice. Churches should view the Christian School as an extension of their ministry.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

Vernon Christian School wants students to commit to academic excellence. To that end we will:

- Partner with parents to see students achieve their potential for learning in all of their classes
- Support students' academic needs
- Develop a plan for each student to be able to graduate

### **Assessing Student Achievement**

We believe that the purpose of grading is to communicate to parents, an accurate evaluation of a student's ability to meet the learning outcomes of each course/subject. Therefore, student progress is reported in two **separate** ways:

Grades: a percentage and/or letter-grade, which is a measurement of academic achievement (what a student knows and is able to do in relation to specific learning outcomes)

Behavior: descriptions of the characteristics, actions, and work habits that support achievement

### **Reporting on Student Progress**

Each child is a unique individual. Therefore, the evaluation of students is reflected through both personalized teacher comments and the student's marks.

Report cards are issued four times per year in Grades 7 to 12 and 3 times per year in Kindergarten to Grade 6, at the end of each term. They report on achievement as well as work-habits and behavior. All evaluations of students are written to indicate learning progress and to encourage further academic growth.

Reports given at primary levels (Kindergarten to Grade 3) may be more anecdotal in nature. In these early years, children are at many different stages of development. They learn at different rates and in different ways according to their abilities, interests and opportunities. We know that it is not beneficial to

make comparisons between children, so care is taken to evaluate each child in terms of what he/she can do.

It must be recognized that the report card does not present a complete picture of the student's progress. Therefore, in addition to report cards, interim reports (progress updates) will be made as needed via printouts, telephone, email, teacher/parent conferences, etc. The staff will inform parents immediately upon becoming aware of actual or anticipated difficulties. It is our expectation that there will be complete cooperation between teachers and parents in their mutual efforts to help students overcome difficulties, and to help students achieve their academic potential.

## **Homework**

### **Grades 1 – 3: Primary**

Homework will be mainly assigned to make up for work missed, or to help individual students strengthen skills. The workload is normally gauged so that the average child will be able to complete assignments during regular school hours. We do encourage parental cooperation to supervise assigned homework, such as memory work, reading practice, etc.

### **Grades 4 - 6: Intermediate**

At this level, good study habits and an increasing amount of responsibility will be developed. Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the various accomplishments of their children. Praise as well as criticism is necessary for a child's emotional development. Please help children schedule their homework time. We feel school work should be a priority. If homework cannot be completed, parents are asked to send a note of explanation to the teacher. Unfinished or late homework assignments may result in after school detentions and will hinder the student's learning. All writing should be legible and neat.

### **Grades 7 - 12: Middle & High School**

It must first and foremost be remembered that homework is an important part of the learning process for Middle and High School students, and is therefore an obligation not an option. It is expected that homework will be completed on time. In order to partner with parents in holding students accountable for their educational responsibilities, the Administration and staff at VCS are committed to providing a daily, supervised homework block. It is the goal of the school to teach positive attitudes towards homework and a good work ethic, as both are important for achieving academic success.

## **Student Recognition and Awards**

Formal awards for Intermediate, Middle and High School students are given for Academic Achievement, Athletics, Citizenship and Most Improved Student. Teachers meet in early June to make decisions regarding the recipients of the above awards. The awards are presented at the final chapel of the year at each

campus.

We believe that God desires all of us to accept responsibility for the development of our gifts. The Intermediate and Middle High School will honor excellence and hard work in our students in the following way:

### **Grades K-8**

**Honour Roll** Achieves a “3” or higher in all but one course, which must be a “2”. Year-end report card includes no “N’s or I’s” for Work Habits or Attitude and Behavior.

**Principal’s List** Achieves a “4” in all but one course, which must be a “3”. Year-end report card includes no “N’s or I’s” for Work Habits or Attitude and Behavior.

### **Grades 9-12**

**Honour Roll** Achieves a “B” or higher in all but one course, which must be a “C” or “C+”. Year-end report card includes no “N’s or I’s” for Work habits or Attitude and Behavior.

**Principal’s List** Achieves an “A” in all but one course, which must be a “B”. Year-end report card includes no “N’s or I’s” for Work Habits or Attitude and Behavior.

Students obtaining the above recognition will receive a certificate at the year-end Awards ceremony, as we feel it is important to acknowledge excellence in effort and achievement by students. It tells students that their labours have not gone unnoticed and encourages them to give their best effort in the future.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

### **Introduction**

The Administration and Teachers of Vernon Christian School, in cooperation with the parents, will create a positive learning environment through consistent discipline. All parents are required to read, and encourage their children to adhere to the school’s Standards of Conduct that have been established for both campuses. Parents and/or students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to sign the Consent Form showing their understanding and agreement to the Standards of Conduct. Corporal punishment is not practiced at Vernon Christian School. Discipline will normally be in the form of additional work, chores, detentions or suspensions.

## **School Discipline Policy**

Student disciplinary concerns are generally dealt with at the classroom level. Teachers will be sensitive to student differences and will notify parents, seeking their involvement early if necessary. If, however, a major disciplinary infraction or a series of minor infractions typifying a belligerent attitude occurs, the student will be sent to the Principal's office. Each campus has developed specific procedures for that campus.

## **Standards of Conduct**

At Vernon Christian School we are committed to walk faithfully with our God and to work together as a community to reflect His light in the world. It is therefore an essential part of education at Vernon Christian School to teach our students to live a life honoring to God by exercising good manners and correcting undesirable behavior.

## **Bullying and Harassment**

Bullying is when someone uses his/her power to hurt or scare others. It does not mean those casual occurrences in the corridor, or the sudden flare-ups that may occasionally occur. Bullying is about a planned assault, be it verbal, physical, psychological, sexual or emotional upon another person. A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons. It may be done through actions and words including:

- Direct physical contact such as hitting or shoving
- Verbal assaults such as teasing or name-calling
- Socially isolating or manipulating a student

Harassment refers to behavior, gestures, comments or displayed materials of a seriously racial, religious, gender based or personal matter that is intended to create a hostile or offensive environment for another person or persons.

Harassment and bullying are contrary to our Standards of Conduct and will not be tolerated at VCS. Staff, students and parents are strongly urged to report all incidents to the school administration.

## **VCS Dress Code**

Our scriptural principles for dress code comes from 1 Corinthians 10: 23 – 24: *“Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial. Every thing is permissible, but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.”*

At Vernon Christian School we believe that dressing modestly and neatly are important aspects of promoting an orderly and positive learning environment for all students in our school. We believe the school has a communal responsibility

to encourage students to present themselves in a Godly manner, which also includes appropriate attire for a school setting.

The following expectations flow from our school's Standards of Conduct and are consistent with our school's motto *A Heart for God, A Mind for Truth*.

#### Expectations:

- Midriffs will be covered
- Tops must conceal cleavage
- Undergarments are not to be visible
- All tops must have sleeves
- Shorts, dresses and skirts should be modest in length and fit and, when in question, shall reach the end of the fingertips when arms are down
- When wearing leggings/yoga pants, buttocks region must be covered with an additional layer – skirt, dress, shorts or a long shirt
- Hats are not to be worn in the building
- Clothing with words/logos or images of drugs, alcohol, sex, violence, prejudice or profanity are not acceptable

Note: The dress code applies to school functions as well as to each school day. However, on certain occasions (PE classes, field trips, beach-day, music programs, etc.), more casual or more formal clothing might be appropriate.

#### Response to Dress Code issues:

If students are dressed inappropriately for school, they will be asked to change. The office may be able to lend suitable attire to the student if required, or a parent may need to be called to bring clothing to the school. If an uncooperative pattern develops, parents will be notified and disciplinary steps will be taken with the student. Where differences of opinion concerning clothing exist, the administration has the responsibility to use its judgment.

#### **Appeals Procedures**

Parents may appeal the decision of the school regarding discipline matters at any stage of the proceedings. Parents must first go to the person directly involved before moving up the normal levels of authority as follows:

- Teacher
- Principal
- Education Committee
- Board

The final level of appeal is the Discipline Committee made up of one Teacher and one Education Committee member and two parents.

## **Attendance and Punctuality**

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance at school is an important ingredient for successful participation and achievement. Students are expected to attend school regularly, missing only due to illness, for appointments, or as a result of other unavoidable circumstances. Prolonged or frequent absence affects learning. In addition, it creates extra work for students and teachers. Government grants assigned to the school by the Ministry of Education are done so on the basis of daily attendance.

If a student is or will be absent, it is important that a parent/guardian contact the office at either [info@vcs.ca](mailto:info@vcs.ca) or [ecoffice@vcs.ca](mailto:ecoffice@vcs.ca), or by phone.

If a student is absent, he/she needs to take the following steps:

- 1) contact a class-mate for notes and a summary of class material and instruction
- 2) check their MySchool account for assignments and due dates
- 3) contact the teacher in advance or upon return for handouts or instructions

In the case of an extended absence, please notify the school as soon as possible. Teachers may be able to provide the student with materials in advance, but most work will need to be caught-up upon return. Students are responsible to contact the teacher and request special arrangements if they have or will miss a test or assignment. To compensate for missed instruction, students will need to seek help from classmates and/or research external materials and resources.

### **Late**

In order to maximize instructional time and limit disruption to the learning of others, students are expected to arrive for their classes prior to the start time with the appropriate materials. Each campus has established procedures to address students who are late.

## **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND PARENTS**

### **MySchool**

Our main method of communicating with parents and students is through our MySchool accounts. Report cards, homework, marks, messages, etc. are all stored here and accessible from any computer.

### **VCS Website [www.vcs.ca](http://www.vcs.ca)**

Another way for communicating with parents is the school website. It has a calendar that lists important dates and information regarding events current and upcoming that concern the school and community. It also includes information from Administration and the Board. The website is updated on a regular basis.

## **Email**

We encourage the parents, school offices, administration, Board and teachers to use email as the most direct way to communicate with one another.

## **Reader Board**

The reader board is strategically located on the top southeast corner of the Secondary Campus building. Please take time to read it regularly.

## **Parents - Teacher Interaction**

Your child's teacher is your best source of information regarding his/her achievement, performance and or any other information regarding your child. We suggest they be your first point of contact. If you are dissatisfied with the information or tone of that interaction then you should connect with the campus Principal. For general school information your campus secretary is the person to contact. In order to foster open and clear communication parents are encouraged to discuss any general concern, observation or suggestion for improvement with anyone on staff. We want your input.

Our teachers will communicate with you through formal reports and at parent/teacher interviews. They will also communicate with you via email, the phone and of course in face-to-face conversations.

## **Parents - School Board Interaction**

The School Board meets monthly and highlights important information from it on the school website. The Board also hosts school Society Meetings to keep parents informed about the direction of the school and provide opportunity for input from the society members. Individual Board members will be in contact with parents and are open to discuss any matters concerning the school. They may be contacted directly or through the school offices.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Vernon Christian School would not be as vibrant, friendly and successful if it did not have the prayers, involvement and commitment that it receives from its parent community. Parents may become involved in the following ways:

### **Gifts**

Vernon Christian School is a faith operation. Tuition, Government Grants and fees do not cover the total cost of education for the students. Gifts from parents and friends of the school are income tax deductible, and greatly enhance the school program.

## **Work Bees**

From time to time, “work bees” will be called to carry out projects on the school buildings and grounds that are impossible in the regular schedule. Parents who have trade skills may be asked to help with special jobs during the year. Work bees are also a great opportunity to meet other parents and further strengthen the relationships built here at VCS.

## **School Board and Committees**

Each year a number of committees are formed to promote various programs. These volunteers are vital to the operation of VCS. As the need arises, parents will be requested to offer assistance.

## **In The Classroom**

Each teacher is encouraged to have a Parent-Volunteer Coordinator to help the teacher organize various programs in the classroom. Cooperation of parents when asked is much appreciated.

## **VCS Auxiliary**

This school support group sponsors events and activities that serve to further promote and grow community spirit. Some of the events include an annual gift-wrapping fundraiser, monthly hot lunch days and community BBQ's.

## **Volunteer Data Base**

Each year the school sends out a volunteer questionnaire for parents to fill out. The purpose of the questionnaire is to compile a database for the school to access volunteers whose assistance can give support and in some cases save money on maintenance and repair costs.

## **SCHOOL LIBRARY**

The Library at each campus plays an important role in the lives of students, teachers, parents and society members. Books are carefully chosen to support the philosophy and educational program of the school. Resources for adults, especially for parents, are also available at either campus.

The Teacher-Librarian requests all students, staff and parents adhere to the following regulations:

- 1) The Library is primarily a place to enjoy reading, study and research.
- 2) Books must be checked out by the Teacher-Librarian, Library Technician or volunteer.
- 3) Please respect the due date.

- 4) Books being returned must be dropped in the return slot and not returned directly to the shelves.
- 5) Treat magazines with care and return them to the magazine holder above the drop-in box. Do not remove pages or pictures from any books or magazines.
- 6) No food or drink is allowed in the Library at any time and the room is to be left neat and orderly.
- 7) The Library is to be used at the designated times or under the control of a teacher.

Each class at the elementary campus is assigned a Library period when books may be checked out or returned. Students with overdue books may not sign out another book from the Library until the overdue book is returned. Books that are lost or badly damaged must be replaced by the student who had the book in their possession. Report cards are not issued until all books are returned or replaced. Parents and Society members are welcome to use Library resources.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Fire, Earthquake & Lockdown Drills**

Classes will be oriented in the emergency procedures of the school at the beginning of the year. Students are to treat earthquake drills, fire drills, lockdown drills and other emergency procedure practices with seriousness and respect. Parents and visitors to the school are expected to participate in all drills.

### **Lost and Found**

Students are encouraged to take personal belongings home every day. All items left behind are removed from the classrooms, bathrooms and hallways each day and placed in the lost and found box. Articles not claimed will be given to the Upper Room Mission.

### **Inclement Weather**

The teachers will decide when the weather conditions are severe enough for students to stay inside during recess, noon hour or prior to opening of school. If a child has to stay inside for health reasons, a note from the parent is needed. If a child will be staying inside for an extended period of time, a doctor's certificate is required.

### **Visitors**

Parents and others are encouraged to visit our school. However, common courtesy requires that prior arrangements be made with the teacher or principal

and that they sign in at the campus office.

## **Sledding**

VCS is blessed to have a facility that affords students wonderful opportunities for outdoor winter activities. With these activities, which include sledding, come certain risks. At the beginning of each sledding season staff review sledding safety guidelines with all students. All students are encouraged to and are responsible for using the hill in a manner that ensures their own safety and the safety of their peers around them. To this end students:

- are encouraged to wear appropriate clothing and head gear for their safety and comfort
- should use equipment that is safe for use (determined by staff)
- are to use the designated sections of the hill (typically demarcated by cones) for sledding and returning to the top of the sledding area
- should sled/slide down staggered, always maintaining a safe distance between sledders
- are to clear away quickly off to the sides once at the bottom of the sliding area.

Students who repeatedly violate these guidelines will not be allowed to sled on the hill for an amount of time determined by a staff member.

## **First Aid and Accident Procedure**

All injuries to students will be brought to the attention of a staff member. If the injury warrants, the designated first aid specialist on staff will be notified person in the school. The homeroom teacher will then fill out an Accident Report Form. Parents will be informed of injuries requiring an Accident Report Form.

## **Health Information**

The Public Health Nurse visits the school regularly and is available for consultation when necessary. Before enrolling in Kindergarten be sure to contact the health nurse at the local Health Unit to ensure that your child has the proper immunizations. The school has information regarding communicable diseases such as chicken pox or mumps, their incubation periods and how long they should be excluded from school.

Kindergarten students receive hearing, vision and dental screening. All grade 6 students receive Hepatitis B shots, and Grade 9 students receive a Diphtheria/Tetanus Booster shot, with the permission of their parents. Other inoculations may be administered but will be done only after parents have been informed and their permission is received.

Students required to take regular medication must leave the medication, carefully labeled, with the homeroom teacher or office. A **Request for Administration of Medication at School Form** must be filled out by the parent, or in some

instances, by the child's physician. It must also be signed by the Public Health Nurse and Teacher responsible for administering the medication. **If there are any changes to the amount or type of medication, a parent signature is required to verify the change.** This form is available upon request at the school office. Basic first aid supplies are kept at school, however **the school will not supply any medication to students.**

### **Textbooks**

All necessary textbooks will be provided for students. Students must remember that they are responsible for books issued to them. Defacing books in any way is not allowed.

### **Field Trips**

Educational field trips are taken in conjunction with different units being taught. A Consent Form along with pertinent information about the trip is sent home for each field trip. Parents/guardians must sign and return the form to school in order for their child to go on the field trip. A charge may be assessed for transportation or for admission. Parents may also be asked to help supervise or drive on field trips. ICBC recommends that drivers carry \$3,000,000 of liability insurance. School rules regarding conduct and dress are applicable on field trips.

### **Insurance**

The school carries an accident policy covering students during the school day and school trips. Details of coverage are available from the school office.

### **Internet Use**

The incredible resources of the Internet are provided so that students may utilize it as a research tool to enhance their educational experience while at VCS. To ensure proper respect and instill accountability, students from Grades 4 to 12 are asked to sign the Consent Form indicating their agreement and support of the guidelines indicated in the Internet Use Policy Agreement Contract. Students who do not sign the agreement will forfeit their Internet privileges. Students disregarding the guidelines may lose their Internet privileges and face additional disciplinary measures as well.

### **Supervision**

The school offers supervision before and after school as well as during recess and lunch hour. A teacher will be on supervision for the morning recess, a teacher and parent will be on duty during the lunch hour. A teacher or parent will be on duty for morning supervision that begins at 8:00 a.m. and goes until school starts. After school supervision goes from the end of the school day until 3:20 p.m. During supervision times, the school will be responsible for students in the building and/or on the playground. Other than scheduled extra curricular activities that extend beyond these times, parents will be responsible for their children. Keeping this in mind, please do not drop your children off before the

supervision begins in the morning or pick them up after 3:30 p.m.

Supervision at the Secondary campus coverage also happens at the same times as at the Elementary Campus.

### **Child Protection Procedures**

Vernon Christian School's procedures are consistent with current government legislation.

### **Student File Disclosure Procedure**

In the event that a parent wishes to have access to their child's school files, they must give the school five days advance notice.

### **Personal Information Privacy Act (PIPA)**

Vernon Christian School adheres to the PIPA in regards to all information collected from parents. Please visit the school office if you would like a copy of the Personal Information Privacy Act.

## ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

Vernon Christian School is open to people of all backgrounds. It is however, a Christian school that has its roots in evangelical Christianity. All new families interested in enrolling in the school must complete the Student Enrollment Forms and provide additional information requested on that form. An interview with school administration will precede the admission of new students. Parents must consent to support the educational philosophy, policies, Biblical principles and the Vision Statement of VCS.

As part of our admissions policy parents are offered the choice of becoming full or associate members.

**Full Membership** is reserved for those parents who fully support, agree and adhere to ALL of the Vernon Christian School Society Constitution and Bylaws. A full member is categorized as a person who is a 'born again' Christian' who regularly and faithfully attends a church and is an active part of that church. A full member is entitled to vote at all Society general meetings, may run for and hold a position on the board of directors, sit on or chair a society committee and are encouraged to participate in all school activities.

**Associate Membership** is for parents who may or may not have made a personal decision to follow Christ or do not regularly and faithfully attend a church. They do not fully support the items as outlined in the Vernon Christian School Society Constitution and Bylaws and therefore do have some limitations placed on them. An associate member does not have a vote at any general meetings, they may not hold a position on the Board of Directors nor will they be able to 'Chair' a committee. Associate members are encouraged to sit on a committee of their choosing and be an active and integral part of the parent community here at VCS. Associate members are encouraged to participate in all school activities.

Please refer to the membership section of the Vernon Christian School Bylaws for further information.

All parents and students in Grades 4 to 12 must signify their support of the school's Standards of Conduct by signing the Consent Form on the admission form.

New students are accepted for a probationary period of three months. Parents will be informed if the period needs to be extended.

Students will only be accepted if the school can meet their educational needs.

If school enrollment is full a wait list will be established. Families on the waiting list will be notified whenever a vacancy arises. Families with students on the wait list must confirm with the school after January 1 if they wish their child(ren) to be considered for enrollment in the following September.

## **TUITION FEES**

The funds needed to provide for the operation of Vernon Christian School are obtained from three main sources:

- 1) Donations from churches, friends, parents and families.
- 2) A government grant per child, which is presently 50% of the operating cost per pupil in the local school district; and
- 3) A tuition fee per family.

The tuition fee is set annually by the School Board and approved by the Society at the Annual meeting. It is the Board's goal to offer an excellent Christian education and at the same time keep the tuition fee as reasonable as possible.

The tuition fee is due on the first of the month. Parents have the option to pay their tuition fee in advance or in 10 or 11 equal monthly installments. The school accepts post-dated cheques or pre-authorized automatic bank debits.

It is expected that parents keep their tuition accounts current. If a family experiences genuine financial difficulties, we will be pleased to help and discuss alternate arrangements; however, we expect that parents inform the school before they fall behind in their financial commitment. It is expected that the school as well as the parents, maintain a good Christian witness by proper financial management and open dealings with each other.

A non-refundable registration fee is due each year. Payment is due from VCS families when they re-enroll and from new families when they apply for enrollment. This registration fee will be deducted from the following June tuition.

## **CONCLUSION**

We are not able to include every possible situation in this handbook nor are all possible situations covered by our policies. However, the school is committed to addressing all situations through the application of Christian principles. We will attempt to keep parents and students informed of all changes in this manual as well as changes made to our policies. It is our prayer that the Lord will reward our efforts to work together as a Christian community to provide our students with a good academic education, a wholesome Christian view of life, and consistent encouragement to become obedient to Jesus Christ and His Word. God bless you as you join us in this task.