

Valley Gardens Middle School

Student Handbook



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Our.Mission¿

At Valley Gardens Middle School, we foster a connected, inclusive community where every learner's voice is valued, individual strengths are celebrated, and well-being is prioritized — all in support of meaningful learning, success, and independence.

Valley Gardens Middle School

Students Entering the Building

Students enter the building through three entrances. The Grade six (6) students enter through the doors near the front end of the parking lot, the Grade seven (7) students enter through the door nearest the flagpole and the Grade eight (8) students enter via the door nearest Antrim, on the North-West corner of the building. The school opens for students at **8:40 AM**. Students must wait outside until that time unless they are participating in a club, have an appointment with a teacher or the weather permits entrance to the school.

Students Arriving Late to School

Students are expected to be in the building at the opening bell at 8:40 a.m. and 12:35 p.m. Students are to be seated in their classrooms when the bells sound at 8:50 a.m. and 12:40 p.m. Students who arrive late after Homeroom must sign in at the hallway late station near the front office. Frequent late arrivals will result in action by school administration. Parents will be contacted.

Student Absences

When a student is absent parents must call the school and leave a message. If the school does not receive a call by 9:30 a.m., we will “Call Back” to ensure that the student is at home with parental consent. We will call your home or your place of employment.

If your child is going to be absent,

please call the office at 204-668-6249

or email the school: vg@retsd.mb.ca

Student Messages

Please try to ensure any necessary arrangements for your child are made prior to the school day. Classes will not be interrupted for students to take phone calls. Students will not have access to personal devices for communication during class time. Messages will be given, and calls can be returned during lunch or after school.

If students have appointments that require dismissal prior to the end of the day, Parents or Guardians need to contact the school. **Text messages from student phones are not acceptable for dismissal**. Should a student become ill during the day, they must report to their classroom teacher before going to the office. Parents will be notified when it is necessary for a student to go home. When leaving the school, it is important to sign out in the office.

Lunch

Grade 6 students are expected to remain on school grounds, for the entire school day – unless they go home for lunch. If they go home for lunch parents are to contact their child’s teacher to let them know the plan.

It is strongly recommended that Grade 7 and 8 students stay on school grounds during the lunch hour. Students that choose to stay at school will be supervised by staff.

If students choose to leave the building at lunch, they are expected to be back at school at 12:35.

Expectations for behavior in the community remain in place over the lunch hour even if students choose to leave the school grounds.

Allergy Alert!

There are students and staff at VGMS who are seriously allergic to the following items:

- Peanuts and nuts
- Perfumes or any scented products, including hair spray, nail polish remover, aerosol deodorants, etc.

Do not bring these items into the building. **These allergies are life threatening.**

Fragrance Sensitivities

Students and staff are asked to be respectful of those individuals that are sensitive to certain fragrances. Colognes and perfumes (or other scents) that are very strong smelling can be overpowering to some individuals. Allergic reactions are not uncommon. Both students and staff are requested to minimize or eliminate the use of fragrances in school.

Sports, Clubs and Activities

At VGMS we believe in providing our students with a unique variety of extra-curricular opportunities to meet the diverse interests of our student population. We strongly encourage all students to get involved, try something new, and take advantage of the many activities offered throughout the year. Whether it's joining a sports team, participating in a club, or exploring the arts, these experiences help students build confidence, make new friends, and discover new passions. Getting involved not only enriches the middle school experience but also helps foster a strong sense of belonging and school spirit. There's something for everyone at VGMS – we can't wait to see what your child chooses to be a part of! Some of our clubs and teams include:

- Basketball, Volleyball, Badminton, Cross-Country, Divisional Track & Field
- Green Team
- Leadership
- eSports
- MYRCA
- Music Club
- Outdoor Ice Skating
- Intramurals
- And many more...

Accidents

Accidents must be reported to the school office immediately. In the event of injury, first aid will be administered, and the parents notified. Follow-up will be monitored as necessary. In the event of serious injury where the parents cannot be reached, the school may seek medical assistance and/or an ambulance at the parents' expense.

Administering Medication

School staff are prohibited from administering any medication to a student without the prior written and dated authorization of the parent/guardian. Parents are to make every effort to make arrangements with the student's physician to have medication taken at home. When this is not possible parents must:

- Complete the Authorization for the Administration of Prescribed Medication to Students form (River East Transcona School Division policy code JLCD-E1)
- Inform schools in writing if medication is to be adjusted or changed.
- Ensure that their child has received the necessary information and training if they are to be responsible for the self-administration of their own medication.
- Ensure that an adequate supply of medication in the proper dosage is at school and also available for field trips.
- Pick up unused medication at the end of the year. The divisional policy containing more detail and forms are available at the school upon request.

Medical Concern Expectations

It is the parent's responsibility to inform VGMS regarding their child's medical concerns. The Unified Referral and Intake System (URIS) can provide an in-school medical plan for your child. Please contact the public health nurse for your area or the school for more information. The River East Transcona School Division outlines in policies JLCD, JLCD-R and JLCD-E1 to E4 the procedures to follow in the Administration of Medication to students while at school. Note: As per Divisional policy, we cannot administer over the counter drugs without a physician's prescription.

School Lockers

Lockers will be assigned to all students by their homeroom teacher. Students are to use the assigned locker only. Locks on all lockers are assigned by the school and only school-assigned combination locks are permitted on lockers. Students are responsible for the lockers assigned to them and are expected to keep them in good condition and locked.

Report Cards

The school will post report cards on the Parent Portal in November, March and June.

Fire Drills & Lock Down Practice

We practice a minimum of 10 fire drills every year. It is important that all students sign in and out when they are arriving or leaving the building to ensure we have an accurate attendance report when evacuating the building.

As a precautionary measure and as per divisional mandate we practice two lockdowns during the school year. If we are able to do so we will place a sign indicating the school is in lockdown at the main and gym entrances.

In Case of Emergency

- Evacuation site: Bertrun E. Glavin School or Kildonan-East-Collegiate
- Parent Location: Terry Sawchuk Memorial Arena
- Media Location: Terry Sawchuk Memorial Arena

Code of Conduct

The purpose of the code of conduct is to promote a safe, caring, and inclusive school culture where high levels of achievement occur within a positive school environment. River East Transcona School Division believes everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Division staff, students, parents/guardians and community members will promote the development of beliefs and attitudes that foster a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment. Staff, students, parents/guardians, and community members are to behave in a respectful manner and comply with the code of conduct.

- An active student voice will be encouraged in all schools.
- Community-school initiatives will be encouraged.
- A continuum of supports and services will be used to address the unique academic and behavioural needs of students.
- Problem-solving and conflict-management skills will be developed.
- Parents/guardians will initiate discussion about their child through the classroom teacher or school administration.

The RETSD Code of Conduct can be viewed in its entirety at: <https://www.retsd.mb.ca/page/20706/code-of-conduct>

Positive School Wide Behaviour at VGMS

At VG we take a whole school approach to reinforce our behaviour expectations. We focus on four behavioural expectations that are positively stated and easy to remember. In other words, rather than telling students what not to do, we focus on the preferred behaviours we want to see. The underlying theme is teaching behavioural expectations in the same manner as any curriculum subject.

We have identified 6 key areas (locations) of the school. In each of these areas we have identified the preferred behaviours we would like our students to perform using the acronym BEARS. Each of these areas is taught at the start of the year and then retaught and referred to regularly to ensure behaviour expectations are met throughout the year. In addition to the generic bear paw expectations that are taught and exercised in every room in the school, each classroom will have a positive behavior matrix made to suit their learning space. This will be collaboratively designed with input from the teacher and students to ensure everyone within the space has ownership to follow these matrix expectations.



Valley Gardens School Matrix



Be	Engaged	Appropriate	Respectful	Safe
Hallways	On Time & Ready	Language & Volume	Hands and Feet to Yourself	Walking All the Time
Washrooms	Use Washrooms for Intended Purposes Only	Flush Toilets	Respect Privacy	Wash Hands with Soap
Assemblies	Active Listening - Eyes & Ears on Speaker	Sit as Directed	Maintain Personal Space	Follow Exiting Directions
Outside/ Playground	Be Active	Dress for the Weather	Respect the Community	Stay in Designated Areas
Lunchrooms	Eat your <u>own</u> Lunch in Assigned Area	Use your Manners	Follow Adult Direction	Leave Space Clean
Classrooms	Active and participating	On Time and Ready	Follow Adult Instruction	Hands and Feet to Self

Cell Phone Use at School

To maintain an effective learning environment, we do not allow cell phones to be used during class or on the school grounds. If your child brings a cell phone to school for use while walking to and from Valley Gardens in case of an emergency, please remind your child that the phone is to be turned off and securely stored in their lockers during school hours. Should you need to get in touch with your child during the day, please feel free to call our school office.

Please know that if we see any phones out during school hours, we will ask students to put them back in their lockers. If this happens frequently we collect the phone and hold them in the office. Families will need to come to the school to retrieve these devices. This policy helps us minimize distractions and maintain focus on education and making friends.

Social Media Concerns

There are many challenges that social media can bring for young people. We also know that conversations about safe, respectful online behaviour are happening at home and school. Platforms such as Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, and Discord are being used at times in ways that are unkind, hurtful, and even threatening. Even though most of these online interactions happen in the evenings and on weekends they can impact students' feelings of safety and belonging at school.

At school, we regularly talk with students about digital citizenship, online safety, and the importance of treating others with kindness and respect both in person and online. We will continuously work with our students to help them understand what it means to be kind, respectful Valley Gardens Bears — both on and offline.

We encourage families to continue supporting these conversations at home by:

- Continuing open conversations about online behaviour and kindness.
- Setting clear expectations for respectful communication, both online and offline.
- Monitoring social media use by knowing which apps your child uses and how they interact.
- Reminding students that there are real people with real feelings behind every screen.
- Reporting and seeking help when they encounter concerning online behaviour.

For more resources to support these conversations at home, please visit:

- [MediaSmarts – Social Media Literacy](#)
- [Protect Kids Online](#)

Alcohol and Other Drug Use by Students

In the interest of the health, safety, social and emotional well-being of all students, the board has adopted the following policy to address student alcohol and other drug use during school or at school related activities, functions and on school property.

The policy will have three principle components:

1. Education: curriculum and/or programming designed to present age-appropriate accurate information to students to help them make positive and healthy lifestyle choices and prevent alcohol and drug use.
2. Proactive Intervention: programming designed to identify and intervene with students with alcohol and/or drug related behaviour.
3. Reactive Intervention: a set of progressive disciplinary/responsive actions and supports that address alcohol or other drug infractions.

This policy refers to the following substances (collectively referred to as “prohibited substances”):

- alcohol;
- cannabis;
- restricted drugs (misused prescription or over the counter drugs, including steroids);
- illegal drugs (including steroids);
- pills or other substances which are misrepresented and sold or distributed as restricted or illegal drugs;
- products misused for the purpose of mind-altering affect (aerosols, solvents).

The following actions involving prohibited substances will be actively investigated and addressed through progressive discipline/responsive actions and supports

- attempting to secure or purchase;
- using or having used;
- possessing;
- intending or attempting to sell or distribute;
- selling or distributing;
- being knowingly present when used, possessed or consumed during the school day;
- possession of paraphernalia.

When students are found in violation of this policy, the principal or designate:

- will utilize progressive discipline/responsive support and actions that may include suspension up to five days;
- will notify parent/legal guardian and schedule a mandatory meeting to discuss actions taken and next steps and to review the policy;
- will submit a discipline referral;
- will require the student to complete Addictions Foundation of Manitoba assessment and counselling; and
- may refer to police for legal action.

The Alcohol and Other Drug Use by Students Policy can be viewed in its entirety at:

<https://media.retsd.mb.ca/media/Default/medialib/jich.85fa99852.pdf>

2025-2026 Calendar

September

2 – Meet the Teacher 4:30 – 6:00 pm
3 – First day of school!
10 – PAC Meeting 5:30 – 6:30 pm
25 – Terry Fox Activity
30 – No school (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation))

October

1 – Gr. 6 Immunization (morning)
1 – PAC Meeting 5:30 – 6:30 pm
8 – Picture day. More information will be sent out in September.
9 – No school for students
10 – No school for students
13 – No school for students (Thanksgiving)
23 – Celebration of Learning 4:30-6:30
23 – 50th Anniversary Celebration 6-7:30
24 – No school for students

November

5 – PAC Meeting 5:30 – 6:30 pm
7 – No school for students
10 – Remembrance Day Service a.m.
11 – No School (Remembrance Day)
18 – Report cards published
26 – Picture re-takes pm
26 – Vision & Hearing – Gr. 7

December

3 – PAC Meeting 5:00 – 6:00 pm
3 – Band/Guitar Holiday Performance 6:00
19- Early Dismissal @ 2:25 pm

December 20 - January 4 - Winter Break

January

5 – School Resumes (Day 5)
7 – PAC Meeting 5:30 – 6:30 pm
30 – No School

February

2- No School
4 – PAC Meeting 5:30 – 6:30 pm
4-6 – Asessippi Ski Trip
12 – Grade 6 Open House
16- No School (Louis Riel Day)

March

4 – PAC Meeting 5:30 – 6:30 pm
17 – Report cards published
20- No School
26 – Celebration of Learning 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
27 – Last day of classes before Spring Break

March 30 – April 3 — Spring Break

April

6 – School Resumes (Day 4)
8 – PAC Meeting 5:30 – 6:30 pm
10 – No School

May

6 – PAC Meeting 5:00 – 6:00 pm
6 – Guitar & Band Gala 6:00
8 – No School
18 – No School (Victoria Day)

June

23 – Report cards published
25 – Grade 8 Student Farewell Lunch/Dance
30 – Early Dismissal @ 2:25 pm
30 – Last day of school