

# Vestal Central School District Board of Education Code of Conduct

The Vestal School District school board will cooperate with the Superintendent, district staff, and families to ensure the well-being and continuous improvement of all students. To that end, the following Code of Conduct has been established:

A Board member will:

1. attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings, be prepared, and be on time,
2. inform the Board Clerk and Board President if he or she is unable to attend a Board meeting,
3. review the information packet before each meeting,
4. focus on sticking to the agenda,
5. inform the Superintendent and/or Board President prior to the meeting if there are any questions or concerns (regarding an agenda item) which may require further information and or explanation,
6. take responsibility to acquire information discussed at missed meetings (do not expect the Board to revisit issues discussed and/or resolved in your absence)
7. notify the a sub-committee chairperson if you are unable to attend a scheduled sub-committee meeting.

During meetings, Board members will:

1. voice opinions respectfully and maintain good relations with other Board members, administrators, school staff, and the public,
2. encourage and respect the free expression of opinions by fellow Board members and others,
3. refrain from restating opinions/comments which have already been expressed,
4. be concise in all comments,
5. be aware that facial expressions (eye rolling, etc.) and body language can speak louder than words and should be avoided,
6. appear attentive during the meeting, especially during presentations,
7. raise your hand and wait to be recognized by the chair to comment (do not interrupt the person who has the floor)
8. abide by majority decisions (reserve the right to disagree but do not be disagreeable)
9. maintain the confidentiality of information and discussion conducted in Executive Sessions,

10. avoid showing approval or disapproval of comments by the public (this is a little tricky since we do wish to be supportive of students – when there is only one side to the issue)
11. be respectful and avoid attacks on other members of the Board.

Cell phones and other electronic communication device usage:

Texting and cell phone usage are discourteous and distracting – both to other Board members and to the public – and are to be avoided at any open or closed session of the Board of Education.

Guidelines for communicating with District stakeholders:

1. Listen attentively to the parent, community member, or staff member. Ask for the name and contact information of the stakeholder. DO NOT offer to solve, fix, or take care of the issue! Direct the stakeholder to the appropriate administrative official (or chain of command). Notify the person to whom the stakeholder has been referred giving that person as much information as you have.
2. Respect the confidentiality of privileged information. Do not discuss, or comment on, items that are not in the public forum.
3. Do not take any private action which might compromise the Board, Superintendent, or school district.
4. An individual Board member may not give directives to school administrators or employees, either publicly or privately.
5. Refer all media question to the Board Chairperson or Superintendent.
6. Be EXTREMELY careful in distinguishing between your personal opinions and “Board opinion/policy” or School District Policy
7. Recognize that a Board member has no legal authority as an individual, and that decisions can be made only by a majority vote at a Board meeting.

Guidelines for visitations to schools and certain district events:

1. Board member liaisons, as part of their responsibilities, often attend meetings, such as PTA or PTO, and events in their schools. They should inform the Building Principal, in advance, of their plans to attend.
2. Board members, when not attending Board of Education meetings and functions, are considered private citizens. As such they are not able to visit school buildings without the Principal’s knowledge and consent. They will call the Principal and inform him or her of the specific reason for the visit and when they would like to come. The Principal will advise them of whether such a visit is possible and of an appropriate time and date.
3. Board members will contact the Superintendent before attending a non-invitational District function or workshop.

Primary responsibility for the enforcement of the Code of Conduct shall lie with the Board members.