

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. make every effort to attend all regularly scheduled and special 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. avoid deviating from the final 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. inform the 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, presenters and the public,
2. encourage and respect the free expression of opinions by fellow Board members and others,
3. raise your hand and wait to be recognized by the chair to comment,
4. abide by majority decisions,
5. by law, maintain the confidentiality of information and discussion conducted in properly convened Executive Sessions

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. Notify the administrative official to whom the stakeholder has been referred giving that person as much information as is available.

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, District or Superintendent
4. An individual Board member may not give directives to school administrators or employees, either publicly or privately.
5. Refer all media questions to the Board President or Superintendent.
6. Be careful in distinguishing between individual 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 may 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 roam or patrol buildings or grounds without the Principal’s or Superintendent’s knowledge and consent. When Board members do have cause to attend an event, they will contact the Superintendent and Principals to inform them of their intended purpose for their visit and make arrangements which will not interfere with building operations.
3. Board members will contact the Superintendent before attending a non-invitational District function or workshop.

Basic lines of all communications between Board members and District personnel in any capacity in all instances shall be through the Superintendent.

Board members may not act unilaterally absent authorization from the entire Board.

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