

**Varenes Academy of Communications &
Technology-An Intermediate School
1820 Highway 29 South
Anderson, SC 29626**

**Phone: 260-5215
Fax: 964-2677**

Principal – Mrs. Jennifer Bufford



FORWARD

The purpose of this handbook is to enable parents and students to familiarize themselves with the regulations, policies and procedures at Varenes Academy of Communications and Technology (V-ACT). This book is not intended to cover every possible situation that might occur. The handbook will be helpful in answering many questions.

MISSION

Varenes Academy of Communications and Technology provides a safe, nurturing, and diverse environment where students are challenged and empowered to use communications and technology to reach their greatest potential.

OUR BELIEFS

1. That learning is the business of public schools and that knowledge and skills is our product with students as our central focus.
2. That each child has the right to a quality public education and with that right is the responsibility to earnestly participate in the educational process.
3. That each individual has worth and potential for growth and development.
4. That students have different educational needs because they learn in different ways.
5. That every student is entitled to a safe, secure learning environment.
6. That ethical values and a positive self-image contribute to the success of the individual.
7. That the understanding of individual, racial, and cultural differences will bring about harmony and strengthen relationships in our society.
8. That the family is critical in the development of the student.
9. That broad-based community support is the foundation of the school system.
10. That shared decision-making improves the educational process.
11. That effective education helps students apply knowledge.
12. That the quality of life in our community is improved by increasing the general education levels of our population.
13. Effective communication skills are critical to function in our global society.
14. Technology is essential to compete and succeed.

SCHOOL PLEDGE

I pledge to be respectful, to be responsible, and to be ready to learn today.
I will help make V-ACT a great place to be.

TITLE ONE

V-ACT is a Title One School. The goal of Title One is to provide a quality education for every child by providing additional programs for children who need it most. It is designed to improve learning skills so that children feel better about themselves, parents better understand the educational needs of their children, and teachers can benefit from suggestions and support from parents.

Title One offers smaller class size, additional teacher assistance, additional training for teachers, extra time for instruction, counseling and mentoring.

Title One welcomes parental involvement. Please feel free to offer any suggestion or ask any question that you may have. You may submit your suggestions or questions in writing and place them in the suggestion box located in the office area; or, you may simply ask one of the school personnel. If they cannot help you, they will direct you to someone who can assist you.

PARENT TEACHER STUDENT ORGANIZATION (PTSO)

Objectives:

*To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship.

*To raise the standards of home.

*To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.

*To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth.

*To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

All parents and faculty members are encouraged to join and participate in an active way.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL

The South Carolina Finance Act of 1977 requires the creation of Councils in every school in South Carolina to advise the school principal on programs. This gives parents, teachers and the principal a special chance to work together and improve school-community relationships. Each elementary school shall select at least two teachers elected by secret ballot by the faculty. Each elementary council shall have at least two parents elected by the parents.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Morning Program7:15 a.m. - 7:45 p.m.

Daily Schedule, Grades 3-5. 8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

We strongly encourage students to arrive at school by 7:00 a.m. By arriving at this time students can eat breakfast and participate in our instructional morning program and receive additional 30 minutes of instruction. Teachers enrich students with vocabulary and math instruction

ATTENDANCE

The Education Improvement Act of 1984 amended the Code of Laws of South Carolina in regards to school attendance. Credit may be denied when a student has missed 10 days of school. Promotion and retention are affected when an elementary student has missed 20 days.

Students are **required** to bring a written excuse from one of their parents on the first day back from an absence. The excuse must include the following:

- 1.) the student's name

- 2.) the date(s) of the absence(s)
- 3.) the reason for the absence
- 4.) a parent/guardian signature
- 5.) a telephone number where the parent/guardian can be reached (see example below).

John Doe was absent on 8/30 and 8/31 due to having a stomach virus.

Mary Doe: 222-2222

Habitual absences, lawful and unlawful, will require a parent conference with the principal. These could result in possible referral to Student Services located at the district office.

Attendance Punctuality

It is important that students arrive at school on time. Plan to have your child here by **7:30 am** in order for them to be prepared for class to start **promptly at 8:00**. Being tardy causes them to miss important instructional time and is disruptive to the class. Habitual tardiness will require a conference with the principal and could result in referral to Student Services located at the district office.

If a student arrives after 8:00 am, an adult must accompany the student into the office and sign them in.

MAKE UP DAYS

South Carolina law requires a school year of 180 days for students and 190 days for teachers. The school calendar includes three make-up days in case school is canceled due to inclement weather.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Classroom Interruptions: The Education Improvement Act of 1984 prohibits interruption of classroom instruction time.

Early Dismissal for Students: If your child needs to be dismissed early, you **must** send a note to the teacher stating the time of early dismissal, the reason for early dismissal and the name of the person who will come for your child. The student will be called for dismissal only after the person picking them up signs them out in the front office.

Change in Transportation: If a change in transportation home is necessary for your child, a note **must** be sent to the teacher that morning. If your child usually rides the bus home and you need to come for them and have not sent a note, parents need to come to the office before 2:15 pm. Phone calls for changes in transportation must be made between the hours of 7:45 am and 1:45 pm. **No phone calls for changes in transportation will be accepted after 1:45 pm.**

Parent Visitation: Parents are encouraged to visit V-ACT and observe their child's classroom at any time. We do request, however, that you check with the office personnel in advance. Students are not always in their classroom due to extracurricular activities such as music, art and PE. At the time of your visit to the school, it is necessary that you stop by the office, sign in, and receive a visitor's pass before proceeding through the building.

Money Sent to School: Children should not bring money to school except for specific purposes. Money brought to school by the child, should be in an envelope with the student's name, the amount of money and the purpose written on the envelope. Lunch money

envelopes are provided. Neither the teacher nor the school can be held responsible when money or other items are lost.

LUNCH MONEY

V-ACT has a pay-in-advance lunch policy. The lunch clerk handles the accounting for lunch money, which should be paid in full on Monday each week. If you prefer, you may pay for several weeks or a month at a time. Students who are absent on Monday should bring lunch money on their first day back. Lunches are not sold on a daily basis and are not served on credit.

If your child comes to school on Monday without lunch money, he/she will be given permission to call you to bring lunch money before his/her lunch time. All students are given at least two choices for lunch each day.

Forms are available to apply for free or reduced price lunches. Students who were approved for free or reduced price lunches last year will receive the same benefits for a maximum of 10 days this year. A new application must be approved by the 11th school day, or the student returns to paying full price for lunches. First-time applicants must pay full price until their application is approved. All students receive free breakfast.

ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBERS

The school **must** have current addresses and phone numbers of students **at all times**. Please notify the school immediately when there are changes. This information will not be released to others, but is necessary in case of an illness or emergency. Parents may also e-mail the secretary at kayhall@anderson5.net to update their personal information.

SCHOOL TELEPHONE AND FAX NUMBER

The school telephone number is **864-260-5215**. The fax number for the school is **864-964-2677**. The use of the school telephone is limited to school related and emergency situations. Neither students nor teachers will be called to the telephone except in an emergency. For safety purposes, please send a note or e-mail to kayhall@anderson5.net rather than calling when there is a change in dismissal.

STAFF TELEPHONE NUMBERS

The school will not furnish the telephone number of any staff member to parents. Messages will be delivered so that the staff member may return the parents' calls. Parents may also contact teachers via e-mail at anytime. All teacher e-mail addresses are located on the webpage www.varences.anderson5.net.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

V-ACT provides a curriculum that is designed to meet the needs of the students we serve. Academic subject areas include reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. All content areas and other areas of learning are required to meet the standards for classroom instruction established by the State Department of Education, the District Five Board of Trustees and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

MEDIA CENTER

The school's media center is an important part of V-ACT. The basic function is to help children learn by:

1. providing books and other media for the school's education program,
2. helping students develop an interest in reading, and

3. teaching students how to use the media center.

The media center is open from 7:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. We encourage students to come any time during these hours not only for reference work, but also for recreational reading and checking out books. There are no overdue fines. Books are checked out for one week and can be renewed. A charge is made for lost or damaged books.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Appropriate behavior in the classroom enables all students to receive the best education possible. Parent support is another important factor in discipline. Parents may be asked to conference with teachers as well as the assistant principal concerning behavior problems. Please make every effort to attend these conferences.

ELEMENTARY PROGRESS REPORTS

The elementary progress report is designed for use as a communication between school and home. The state standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies are reflected in this report. Our grading system should not be thought of as a competitive or comparative system, but as a way to look at the individual child's progress.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

In some instances, it is possible that some students benefit from the opportunity to continue in the same grade another year. Certain procedures are followed during the retention process. Promotion or retention will be made on the basis of the placement that promises to best serve the welfare of the individual pupil after consideration of all factors. Careful consideration of all factors will determine promotion or retention. The decision made will be one that best serves the welfare of the individual student.

HONOR ROLL REQUIREMENTS

Students must have all A's for the Principal's Honor Roll and A's and/or B's for Honor Roll.

PROJECT CHALLENGE ACADEMIC AND PERFORMING ARTS

The Gifted and Talented Program is committed to providing gifted students with an educational program that recognizes their unique characteristics and needs. Differentiated instructional opportunities encourage hands-on exploration, research, and inquiry that will develop a "love of learning," lead to a strong student work ethic and life-long desire for excellence and achievement.

Please visit the Anderson School District Five Office of Instruction website (<http://www.anderson5.net/Page/9931>) for more information in regards to Project Challenge and Gifted and Talented Services.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

A special education program is provided for students who have special needs. Due process procedures are followed in the placement of children. Written permission for a psychological evaluation and placement must be obtained from the parents. A staffing committee must recommend placement and an individualized educational plan must be written for the student.

At V-ACT we have a resource class. Special Education services provided at V-ACT include: resource, speech, OT & PT services. Our Special Education services will work with either individual students or small groups of students. When a special education student transfers

from this school to a school outside of Anderson School District Five, the Director of Special Education/designee will send a copy of the student's special education information to the receiving school. This procedure will facilitate the exchange of records between school districts and prevent delays in the provision of free and appropriate public education.

PERMANENT RECORDS

A permanent record is maintained in the school office for each student. All information in the permanent record is confidential and is accessible only to the professional staff, the student, and the student's parents or guardians.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences between the child's teacher and parents are scheduled during the first nine weeks. The first progress report will be issued at the close of the first nine weeks grading period. All parents are urged to attend this scheduled conference. Additional conferences can be scheduled at any time. Parents are encouraged to initiate conferences at any time by writing a note or calling the school office for an appointment with the child's teacher. Teachers will also request that parents come in for special conferences when they observe a need. As a general rule, teachers are available for conferences on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons.

TEXTBOOKS

The state provides free textbooks for all students in elementary school. However, students who pay full price for their lunch must pay a \$15 materials fee. If a textbook is lost or damaged by a student, the student must pay the assessed amount.

NEWSLETTER

One way of communicating with parents is through a newsletter which will be sent home several times during the year. Included in this newsletter will be information about school events in general.

ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES

Every effort is made to prevent accidents at school. However, in case of an accident, first aid is given by authorized school personnel. In all cases of serious accident or illness, every effort is made to contact the parents. The school will follow your directions provided on the information sheet and enrollment form in case we are unable to reach you and the child needs more than first aid. The school personnel will exercise extreme care and caution if a decision involving the health or safety of your child must be made following an accident or other emergency. Please make sure the school has your home phone number, business phone numbers of both parents, and at least two additional emergency numbers.

Please be sure the school has your home phone number, cell phone number, business number of both parents and/or guardians, and at least two additional emergency numbers.

GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

V-ACT has a guidance counselor who helps students with academic and personal problems. The guidance counselor conducts classroom guidance lessons, small group sessions, and individual sessions.

HEALTH ROOM

V-ACT has one full-time school nurse. She is available to assist students with illnesses and injuries. The health room does not have medications (Tylenol, Benadryl, cough drops/syrup, etc...). If your child is too ill to remain at school, you will be notified to come pick him/her up. Parent/guardian must sign students out in the office.

MEDICATION

Prescription Medication - In order for a child to be given prescription medication during the school day, a medication form must be completed by the child's doctor and the parent/guardian before the medication can be dispensed. This form is available from the school nurse. All prescription medication must be in the original container with the pharmacy label on it.

Non-Prescription Medication - These medications are sometimes called over-the-counter or OTC medications and can be bought without a written prescription from a doctor. In order for non-prescription medications to be given at school, a medication form must be completed by the parent/guardian before the medication can be dispensed. This form is available from the school nurse.

ALL MEDICATION (prescription and non-prescription) should be brought to the health room by the parent/guardian for safekeeping and MUST BE IN THE ORIGINAL CONTAINER. All medications will be kept and dispensed in the health room. The school reserves the right to refuse to administer any medication which may be unsafe or inappropriate in dosage. No aspirin will be administered without a doctor's statement. Studies have shown that using aspirin to treat symptoms of viral illnesses increases the chances of developing Reye's syndrome.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment of students by district employees or by other students is prohibited by Anderson District Five Board Policy. Policy JC and administrative rule JC-R specify the definition of sexual harassment, the behavior prohibited of all employees and students, the corrective actions to be taken, and the procedures used to report the harassment. A copy of this policy is available in our school office and online at www.Anderson5.net.

Any student who feels that he or she has been the object of sexual harassment is encouraged to file and may file a complaint with the principal or district superintendent.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY DRILLS

An emergency drill will be held once a month in accordance with state laws. Each teacher will be responsible for instructing pupils on the manner and route of exit during each drill. These rehearsals are necessary for helping children react quickly and responsibly in instances of emergency. Instruction and drill will be provided in preparation for tornadoes or severe weather conditions and for the evacuation of buses.

SAFETY BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL

1. Children should not arrive at school before **7:00 a.m.** There is **NO** supervision for them before that time and they will not be permitted to enter the building.
2. Parents should plan the route with the child if he/she is going to walk to school. Please instruct them on careful street crossing.
3. Children who are brought to school should be let out under the covered driveway and should get out of the cars on the side closest to the building.

4. When picking up your child at the end of the day, please remain in one of the lanes closest to the building. **The third lane, closest to the field, is a thru-lane only.** If you have business inside the school and must get out of your car during drop-off and pick-up times, please be sure your car is parked against one of the curbs well beyond the covered driveway (near the distance of the mailbox, but not blocking the mailbox).
5. Parents should not park under the front covered driveway at any time.
6. The covered area behind the school is for bus loading and unloading only.
7. **We cannot provide supervision for students after school. Parents should make arrangements to pick their children up promptly at 2:30 each afternoon.**
8. Written notices must be provided when transportation changes. Notes must be turned in to the office no later than **1:45 pm**. Phone calls will not be accepted for transportation changes. If your child needs to be a car rider and you did not write a note, please come by the school prior to **2:30pm** to let the office know.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AWARD

In Anderson School District Five we believe it is important to come to school every day. At V-ACT, we also believe it is important to be on time (before 8:00 a.m.) and to stay in school all day (until 2:30 pm). To support this belief, the principal closely monitors the absent reports, the tardy, and the early dismissal lists. On Awards Day at the end of the year, students measuring up to these three important aspects of attendance receive a special reward from the principal.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation to and from school is provided by the state for all children who live more than 1.5 miles from school. Parents must provide transportation for children who live less than 1.5 miles from school. The right of all pupils to ride on the bus is conditioned on their good behavior and observance of rules and regulations. Some of the rules for safety on the bus are given to student at the beginning of the school year.

Disciplinary action for bus offenses will be taken by the principal or a designee. Please view the Transportation Handbook for bus policy and discipline procedures.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an extension of the classroom activity and should be challenging and meaningful. The guidelines for V-ACT are:

1. No written homework over the weekend or during the holidays.
2. Written homework should be limited to no more than three subjects per day.
3. Teachers should take into consideration the amount of time required to complete each assignment.
4. Students who have been absent are encouraged to make up all work as soon as possible.

In order to become well-rounded, students in elementary school need to have time to participate in other activities after school. However, a definite time for reading and/or homework should be planned each day.

ITEMS NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL

1. Toys, playing cards, stuffed animals, etc. Such items will be taken away when found and returned to the student at the end of the year or if the parent comes to the school to get it.
2. Candy and soft drinks (except for class celebrations).
3. Cell phones and electronic devices of any kind.
4. Any potentially dangerous item.

SPECIAL DELIVERIES TO SCHOOL

Items delivered to students during the school day will not be accepted. Please send special delivery gifts to your home instead of the school. We have notified local vendors that **NO DELIVERIES WILL BE ACCEPTED** for students during the school day. Deliveries interrupt instruction and students who ride district school buses are not allowed to take balloons or flowers on the bus with them for obvious safety reasons.

V-ACT DISCIPLINE REFERRALS

Before referring a student to the office, the teacher must have done and documented all of the following:

- Verbal Warning
- Conference with student
- Classroom Consequence
- Contacted parent (Letter, Phone Call, Conference)- Use the parent conference summary form to document contact with parents

FIRST REFERRAL

- An administrator will conference with the student and initiate contact with the parent by letter.
- The referral action will be assigned and communicated to the teacher.

SECOND REFERRAL

- The administrator and the teacher will conference with the student and initiate contact with the parent through a phone call or conference. The student may be placed in another setting for the rest of the day.
- The guidance counselor may meet with the student in order to help the student set future behavior goals.

THIRD REFERRAL

- The administrator and the teacher will conference with the student and initiate contact with the parent through a phone call or conference.
- The guidance counselor may meet with the student in order to help the student set future behavior goals.
- The student may be suspended.

FOURTH REFERRAL

- The administrator and the teacher will conference with the student and initiate contact with the parent through a phone call or conference.
- The student may be suspended.
- The student may be referred to the intervention team.

Special Note: Teachers may call the office to remove an uncooperative or extremely disruptive student. Depending on the infraction, a student may be suspended on the first or second referral.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS HELPING STUDENTS AT HOME

- Provide a quiet place and designate a time for students to study without distractions of radio, television or telephone.
- Provide necessary materials such as paper, pencils, pens and notebooks as well as materials for special projects such as novels, graph

paper, magic markers, poster paper and special notebooks.

- Have available for students a dictionary and an abundance of reading materials including magazines, newspapers and books.
- Encourage friends and relatives to give educational gifts such as books, magazine subscriptions, educational games and manipulative toys.
- Check with students daily about homework assignments to help them plan for study.
- Review with students any work returned by teachers to help students learn from their errors.
- Have students explain lessons being studied, thereby increasing their understanding of the material.
- Help build your child's self-esteem and confidence by providing positive reinforcement.
- Encourage students to revise work that is not neatly and orderly.
- Assist students in memorization of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts at appropriate grade levels.
- Keep in touch with teachers and counselors about student's progress.
- Be supportive by showing interest in student's work and willingness to provide help when needed.
- Assist students in planning appropriate extracurricular activities to develop socially and physically as well as academically.
- Do not make excuses for things your child fails to do. Help them learn to assume responsibility for their choices. Hold them accountable for what is expected.
- Contact the teacher when you have questions or concerns. Expect regular reports of progress.
- Do not hesitate to ask for help or clarification.

V-ACT CODE OF ETIQUETTE

Varennes Academy of Communications and Technology believes that ethical values and a positive self-image contribute to the success of the individual. It is because of this belief that a Code of Etiquette has been established. Students at V-ACT are expected to behave in certain ways while in various areas and different settings of the school.

V-ACT Code of Etiquette:

School-wide Etiquette:

Respectful: Follow directions of teachers/staff

Responsible: Look/listen when someone is speaking

Ready: Have all materials and be on time

Bathroom Etiquette:

Respectful: Use good manners and allow privacy

Responsible: Practice good hygiene and leave area clean

Ready: Use time wisely

Hall Etiquette:

Respectful: Quiet voices

Responsible: On the right, line is tight, single line is divine

Ready: Hands at side and walking

Classroom Etiquette:

Respectful: Listen and cooperate with others.

Responsible: Follow class procedures and directions

Ready: Be prepared and ready to learn

Recess Etiquette:

Respectful: Take turns and include others.

Responsible: Use equipment and play safely.

Ready: Quickly line up at teacher's signal

Cafeteria Etiquette:

Respectful: Use a quiet voice. Use your best table manners!

Responsible: Get all items when you go through the line.

Ready: Pick up all trash around you and put your tray in the correct area.

Bus Etiquette:

Respectful: Walk quietly and directly to your bus.

Responsible: Walk carefully with your hands and feet to yourself.

Ready: Make it to your bus on time.

Communication Etiquette:

Respectful: Demonstrate appropriate body language

Responsible: Respond appropriately when spoken to.

Ready: Listen and respond clearly

Morning Circle/Assembly Etiquette:

Respectful: Practice good sportsmanship

Responsible: Listen and participate

Ready: Be prepared

Adapted from McLees Academy of Leadership

Student Information - Schedule

Student Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Room Number: _____

Related Arts Time: _____

Monday: _____

Tuesday: _____

Wednesday: _____

Thursday: _____

Friday: _____

Lunch Time: _____