



Family Handbook

393-3900

www.venturelearning.org

**605 Grant Ave
Ogden UT 84404**

Excellence * Service * Leadership

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Board of Directors Information

The Board of Directors meets the second Friday of each month in the Venture Academy library. Please check the website for times, meeting changes, or updates.

2008-2009 Board of Directors

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Ann Mortensen, *Art*

Joanna Walker, *Adventure PE*

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Mission

The mission of Venture is to **inspire** the rising generation to reach the heights of their potential, **ignite** their curiosity to venture into challenging new learning experiences, and through service, **empower** them to be leaders who are committed to family and community.

Then... they can **achieve** their dreams and shape their world.

Values

Enthusiasm: We believe that learning is a choice. As we create the atmosphere and inspire the mind, students passionately pursue their interests and develop a love for learning.

Excellence: We believe in striving for excellence. Within a school climate that supports each person in reaching his or her personal best, students and teachers rise to the high standards expected of them.

Leadership: We believe that through the teaching and practicing of sound leadership principles, students will be empowered to take the initiative in shaping their world.

Service: We believe that service to others makes learning meaningful and is vital in the development of good leaders. We make service within the classroom and the community an integral part of our curriculum.

Respect: We believe all people have value and deserve respect. Our students and staff show proper respect to others, property and self by appropriate communication, dress and actions.

Integrity: We believe in honesty, accountability, diligence, and loyalty.

Patriotism: We believe that love for country is developed at an early age. We encourage civic responsibility in the community. We teach and live the principles taught by the founding fathers of the United States of America.

Individuality: We believe each student is gifted and offers a unique contribution. We know each individually and tailor teaching methods to fit individual needs.

Adventure: We believe outdoor adventure helps participants learn teamwork, courage, craftsmanship, perseverance and compassion, while discovering they can accomplish more than they thought possible.

Family: We believe that the family is the fundamental unit of society. The greatest influences in shaping a child's future are the experiences and teachings that happen within the walls of their own home.

School hours

Monday-Friday 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM

Kindergarten AM 8:30 to 11:15

Kindergarten PM 12:15 to 3:00

Please do not schedule student arrivals before 8:20 AM. If a student is late, the parent must sign them in at the office. Additionally, it is very important that your child be picked up promptly at the end of the school day.

No student will be released to a person not listed on the emergency card during school hours without the written or verbal permission of the parent. The person to whom the child is being released is required to sign the log in the office. Identification will be required if the person is not known to staff. Teachers never release a child to an unknown adult unless they have been notified about the situation from the Director or secretary.

School Cancellation due to Weather

Venture Academy will follow the lead of the Weber School District in making the decision to cancel or delay classes due to weather or other unusual conditions that require the closing of school. **The Venture Academy voice mail greeting will also announce any cancellation or delay (393-3900).**

Policies & Regulations

Attendance

At Venture, important work and learning happens every day, and regular attendance is required for students to fully benefit from the educational opportunities we offer. If your child is absent for any reason, please call the office prior to 9:00 a.m. Parents will be notified if absences exceed 10 in a semester.

For extended absences or vacations, parents must send written notification to the office stating dates of absence, as well as check with the teacher to make up missed assignments *where possible and practical* (Please understand that the school does not assume the responsibility to re-create experiences that were missed, nor to create alternatives to the work and learning experiences that students would have had had they been in attendance).

Cold Weather Recess

Normally all students go outside for recess. Students are expected to come to school dressed appropriately for the outside weather conditions. Students recovering from illness may stay in from recess for one day with a note from home. Students will not be sent outside in case of rain, or when temperatures are below 15°.

Fieldwork

Venture Academy provides compelling learning experiences both within school walls and outside in the larger community and natural surroundings. There is value in direct research and in visiting relevant sites of interest, such as conferring with local experts visiting resource-rich locations like museums, libraries, research institutions, operating businesses, farms, etc. Students at Venture participate regularly in fieldwork that may also involve overnight excursions, such as camping. Safety protocols will be strictly observed on all excursions. Students are encouraged to wear Venture Academy logo clothing while on fieldwork.

Communication Policy

Venture recognizes the central role communication plays in the success of the school. We expect and encourage open, responsible, and respectful communication is supported and expected. If parents have a concern, question or suggestion the appropriate line of communication is to first approach their student's teacher or one of the school's secretaries. If the issue is not resolved, parents may request a meeting with the school Director.

Internet Use Policy

Venture Academy has the Internet available for educational purposes only. Students may use the Internet only when there is an adult present and may only access sites that contain appropriate material for school use. Any attempt to access inappropriate material will subject the student to discipline under the school's discipline policy. Students may not download or install any programs on any computer except when expressly given an assignment to do so by a teacher.

Distribution of Materials Policy

Written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials may not be sold, circulated, or distributed on Venture property by a student, parent, or a non-student without the prior approval of the administration. School equipment such as copiers, computers, fax machines and other technical equipment shall be operated only by authorized personnel for education related purposes.

Visitors

All visitors to the school, including parent volunteers, must sign in and out in the Main Office and wear the provided visitor or volunteer tag. All visitors must enter and exit the building through the front main entrance.

Personal Items at School

Personal property that is not needed for educational purposes should not be brought to school (e.g. radios, portable music players, electronic devices, cards, games, toys, etc.). Venture Academy will not be responsible for personal property that is lost or stolen. Guns (or look-a-likes), knives, or other weapons are not allowed and are subject to severe penalty.

Cell phones may be brought to school under the following conditions, the parent and the student must:

- The parent must give permission to bring the phone to school;
- The student and parent must agree that it will be turned off during the day and remain in the student's locker or backpack throughout the day and may only be turned on and used after school dismisses.
- Parents and students must accept that phones will be confiscated from students who do not abide by these rules. **A CONFISCATED PHONE MUST BE PICKED UP IN THE OFFICE BY THE STUDENT'S PARENT(S).**

Students who need to make calls during the day must use the school phones by permission of a teacher or the office staff.

Administration of Medication

Parents must fill out appropriate forms before students are allowed any medication in school. Please see the complete Administration of Medication policy in the school office before expecting students to take medication at Venture.

Uniform Policy

The purpose of the Uniform policy is to improve the learning environment by:

- Ensuring that clothing is modest and non-offensive.
- Reducing peer pressure and emphasis on clothing that tends to encourage divisions, classes, cliques, etc. and tends to distract students from intended learning.
- Minimizing health and safety concerns
- Helping children learn that the way they dress influences the way they act, and that appropriate dress shows respect to others and to the important work that goes on in the school.

Tops

Students may wear a collared, solid **Red, Navy or White** shirt * that:

- Is a polo style shirt, button, or turtleneck
- Is long enough to be tucked in when touching the ground in a squatting position.
- Has no printing or graphics on it any larger than 1.5" square (the school logo, which may be larger, is also accepted).
- Has sleeves that cover the shoulders and under the arm.
- Is not sheer or otherwise revealing.
- Is not torn or purposely frayed.

Students may wear any shirt underneath their collared shirt as long as it is consistent with the dress code colors and has no visible printing on it.

Inside the building, students may wear a solid sweater, vest or jacket over their collared top as long as it is consistent with one of the allowable shirt colors (garments with attached hoods are acceptable, but students may not wear the hood inside the building). Winter coats, gloves, hats, and boots are not subject to the uniform color restrictions.

*Note: After the first year, one additional color may be chosen for middle school students annually to be used for that year only. The method of choosing will be determined by the administration.

Bottoms

Students may wear any solid **tan** or **navy** pant, Capri or skirt that:

- Is not made of “sweats cotton” or other tight fitting, stretch-type material.
- Goes to the knee or longer.
- Has no holes.
- No blue jeans.

Denim blue jeans and solid t-shirts that match the school colors may be worn on some adventure activities. Students will be notified of these times in advance. All other rules apply.

No low-riding bottoms or visible undergarments will be allowed. Belts must be conservative.

Dresses

Girls may wear any solid **Red, Navy or White** dress that:

- Goes to the middle of the knee or longer.
- Has sleeves that cover the shoulders and under the arm.
- Is not sheer or otherwise revealing.

Shoes

Students may wear any shoes that have a strap or some kind of back on the shoe so that it doesn't slip off the feet.

Students **may not** wear:

- Shoes with wheels.
- Slippers.
- Flip-flops.

Swimwear

When swimming or water activities require swimwear, boys may wear regular swim trunks (no speedo-type), and girls may wear one or two piece swimming suits with no midriff showing, no low-cut bodice, and no high cut legs. During outdoor water activities such as white-water rafting, canoeing, etc., boys will wear t-shirts with their trunks, and girls will wear shorts and t-shirts over their swimsuits.

Hair

Students may wear their hair in any way that does not distract from the learning environment. Extreme hairstyles and unnatural colors will not be allowed.

Accessories

Body piercing will be limited to earrings only (no gauging), that do not draw undue attention or present a danger to the person wearing them. Other jewelry may not be excessive or distract from the learning environment. No chains may be worn other than around the neck or wrist. Tattoos must be covered and unseen at all times.

Other Attire

Students may choose other attire such as backpacks, purses, etc. that are not offensive and are appropriate to our learning environment. Hats may not be worn inside the building.

Uniform items not specifically covered but considered inappropriate or contrary to the purpose of the Uniform Policy are subject to review by the Board or interpretation by the Administrators in charge of executing the Uniform Policy. Uniform compliance is mandatory with no opt-out policy other than stated below and consequences for violation will be enforced.

Uniform Policy exemption will be granted by the director based on:

- Religious beliefs
- Extenuating circumstances.

The administration will develop ways of assisting economically disadvantaged students who are unable to meet the dress code requirements because of their economic circumstances.

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATION OF THE UNIFORM POLICY

If a teacher determines that a student has come to school inappropriately dressed according to the Uniform Policy, the student will be sent to the office.

- Parents will be called to bring proper clothing and the student will remain in the office until clothing arrives. If parents are unable to do so in a timely manner, and it is a minor breach of the policy, the office may provide some interim clothing so that the student may return to class.
- For subsequent violations, students will be subject to the progressive discipline policy, including the provisions regarding persistent violation of school rules and persistent disobedience, which may result in suspension and eventual expulsion.

Discipline Policy

Student misconduct can be divided into two general types: major and minor.

Minor misconduct is defined as a situation where physical, emotional, or social safety of students or staff is not seriously threatened but where there is a problem to be resolved, such as disputes between students, leaving messes, name calling, yelling, and class disruptions.

Major misconduct is defined as the willful and wanton acts of disrespect toward School staff members, students, or property. Examples of major misconduct include fighting; acts of defiance, insubordination, or disrespect; harassment/intimidation; possession, distribution, or accessing of pornography (printed, electronic, or otherwise); blatant use of profane language; willful destruction of School property; possession or use of alcohol, drugs, or weapons; and where persistent disobedience in minor misconduct areas become chronic (such cases may, in sum, become classified as major misconduct).

Neither minor, nor major misconduct are permissible at Venture Academy.

Discipline and confidentiality. School officials shall strictly protect student confidentiality in matters of discipline and take all reasonable measures to keep information dissemination on a need to know basis.

Minor Misconduct: General Guidelines

Inappropriate behavior is handled simply and directly at Venture.

General Classroom Discipline Process

Behavior consequences will bear a reasonable relationship to the severity of misconduct. So, for instance, a teacher may move directly to #5 below, if necessary. But generally speaking, the process proceeds as outlined below.

1. **Redirection.** Teacher uses eye contact, body language, or an indirect suggestion to redirect student behavior.

If behavior does not improve...

2. **Verbal Reminder.** Teacher offers low key, but direct, verbal reminder.

If behavior does not improve...

3. **Private (short) conference.** Teacher invites the student to discuss the issue (not in front of the rest of the class, where possible). The teacher clearly identifies the inappropriate behavior, *and offers a choice*. A positive way forward is agreed upon.

If behavior does not improve...

4. **Private (longer) conference.** The teacher seeks to understand where the behavior is coming from. Are there underlying circumstances that are contributing to the problem? Teacher seeks ways to help. However, in spite of background circumstances, expectations of proper behavior are reiterated and the student's obligations are made very clear.

- a. If direct consequences are in order, Teacher seeks, where possible, to find consequences which have a reasonable relationship to the misconduct—even if doing so may require “delayed” or “extended” consequences (see Love and Logic).
- b. The teacher *may* have the student write out a behavior agreement that addresses questions such as:
 - i. What happened?
 - ii. What could I do differently?
 - iii. How can my teacher help?
 - iv. Does my action build community or break down community?
 - v. My plan for working on this behavior is...
 - vi. What should happen if I continue to have poor behavior?

If behavior does not improve,

5. **Call home to Parents.** Lack of improvement or multiple incidents regarding the same behavior will lead to a phone call to parents. The teacher may arrange for a parent/guardian to participate in a student led conference regarding the issue.

If behavior does not improve,

6. A teacher may **remove a student from class** when the actions of the student continually disrupt the educational process of the classroom, and the student will not cooperate in improving the situation. Such removal may be referred to as an extended “time-out” or detention.

Note: **Persistent disobedience or consistently poor behavior** may become classified as major misconduct and be subject to discipline under that category. Under such circumstances teachers are advised to document the behavior, advise parents, and if the behavior persists, place the student on a formal written behavior plan that clearly communicates:

- the unacceptable behavior;
- the “triggers” associated with the behavior, where applicable;
- strategies for better behavior;
- consequences for misbehavior;

Major Misconduct: Consequences

Students who are unable to meet the behavioral expectations of the School may be suspended or expelled. “Suspension” shall be exclusion from the regular School program (outside of school property) for a definite period of time. A long-term suspension is suspension for more than ten (10) days. “Expulsion” shall be the permanent exclusion of a student from this School. Students suspended more than three times during an academic year may be subject to expulsion.

A teacher may independently suspend a student for up to one day. The decision to suspend a student for any number of days from more than one (1) to ten (10) is made by the Director in consultation with the teacher involved in the incident and the student’s primary teacher or advisor.

Students will be expelled for behavior that is unlawful and/or that seriously threatens the health, safety and welfare of the student and/or others. In addition, students will be expelled in those situations where the same is required by law. Students subject to long-term suspension or expulsion, who qualify under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504, will have their suspensions and expulsions administered under the requirements of the respective act(s).

Suspension

Offenses that may result in suspension include, but are **not** limited to:

- Fighting (fist or otherwise) with the intent to do bodily harm to another person
- Assault
- Verbally abusing others
- Not following directions outside the building, or off school property
- Defying the valid authority of a teacher, administrator, or other adult at the school
- Bullying, or otherwise threatening another’s physical or emotional safety
- false report of fire/explosion
- racial or sexual harassment
- possession, distribution, or accessing of pornography (printed, electronic, or otherwise), etc.
- use of alcohol or drugs
- Stealing or attempting to steal school or private property
- Defacing school property or property of others
- Unauthorized use of equipment
- Inappropriate use of the internet
- Committing an obscene act or engaging in habitual profanity or vulgarity

Expulsion

Offenses that may result in expulsion include, but are **not** limited to:

- Attacking another person
- Placing the well-being of others in serious risk
- Causing serious injury to another person.
- Possession of, use, sale of, or furnishing any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object.
- Unlawful possession of, use or sale of any controlled substance.
- Distribution of, or facilitating access to, pornography (printed, electronic, or otherwise), etc.
- Robbery or extortion

- Offering, furnishing, or selling drug paraphernalia
- Criminal behavior
- Three or more suspension in one year

Venture employees or volunteers may not inflict or cause the infliction of physical pain upon the body of a minor child as a discipline measure. **Corporal punishment** is defined as the intentional infliction of physical pain upon the body of a minor child as a disciplinary measure. Employees who use corporeal punishment are subject to grave disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment and criminal charges.

This policy does not prohibit the use of reasonable and necessary physical restraint or force in self-defense or otherwise appropriate to the circumstance to:

1. Obtain possession of a weapon, other dangerous objects, or controlled substance in the possession or under the control of a child.
2. Protect the child or another person from physical injury.
3. Remove from a situation a child who is violent.
4. Protect property from being damaged.

The Director shall establish emergency procedures and guidelines to be used in crisis situations including the use of redirection, physical restraint, manual restraint, contacting appropriate emergency personnel, etc.

In the event that emergency procedures are utilized, staff will document all periods of emergency behavior control. A parent or guardian will be contacted as soon as possible.

Harassment Definitions and Guidelines for Response

Harassment of any kind is not tolerated.

Sexual Harassment includes sexually motivated actions that intimidate, humiliate or otherwise interfere with a student's life at school.

Ethnic Harassment may include but is not limited to slurs, verbal references, gestures and other behavior, which tends to demean, humiliate, intimidate and/or threaten others on the basis of race, ethnic group or nationality.

Religious harassment includes slurs, verbal references, gestures, or other behavior which tends to demean, humiliate, intimidate and/or threaten others on the basis of creed or religious affiliation.

General harassment may include but is not limited to:

- bullying
- other verbal or physical conduct or communication that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment on school property or at any school sponsored activity.
- Written or graphic abuse aimed at intimidating, threatening, or otherwise hurting another.

Students should report incidents of harassment to their teacher or other supervising staff immediately and provide any available supporting evidence. The teacher will examine the evidence and, if merited, speak directly to the person alleged to have harassed the complainant. The teacher will confer with the school Director. Consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Referring the offender to an outside agency, and/or
- Initiating discipline measures up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Searches and Seizures

The school has the responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of its students. Fulfilling this responsibility may include searches and seizures.

All searches of student property by school officials shall be witnessed by a third party (administrator, office staff, teacher, etc.).

Student Lockers

Lockers are school property and may be searched at any time by school officials with or without cause. Once a locker is opened for search, any search of student belongings contained within the locker must comply with the guidelines for searches of personal belongings.

Searches of Students and Student Property

Searches of a student's person or personal property (coats, hats, backpacks, book bags, purses, wallets, notebooks, gym bags, etc.) may be conducted whenever there is reasonable suspicion that a particular school rule or law has been violated and that the search is reasonably related to the suspicion. Circumstances warranting a search include those in which school officials have reasonable suspicions that the student or student property is concealing weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, unsafe contraband, or lost/stolen/misplaced items.

Searches of Personal Belongings

Personal belongings may be searched directly by a school official or a student may be asked to open personal belongings and to turn over personal property for search by a school official. Wherever possible and prudent, the student shall be present for the search of his/her locker. All searches of student property by school officials shall be witnessed by an objective third party (such as another administrator, teacher, or police officer) to observe that the search is not excessively intrusive. One of the observing or searching parties must be the Director or designee.

All contraband discovered in a search by school officials shall be immediately confiscated and turned over to law enforcement officers if school officials have reason to believe the contraband is related to the commission of a criminal act.

Searches of Person

School officials shall make sure the search meets the following guidelines:

- School officials may ask the student to remove his/her hat, coat, shoes and socks, turn pockets inside out, and roll up sleeves to see if the student is hiding contraband.
- Under no circumstances may school officials require students to remove any other items of clothing or touch students in any way during the search.
- If this limited search does not turn up suspected contraband and school officials have reasonable suspicion that the student is concealing contraband in his/her inner clothing (i.e., hiding drugs, weapons or other contraband underneath shirts, pants or underwear), law enforcement officers shall be summoned immediately to conduct further search and investigation.

Documentation of Searches

School officials shall thoroughly document the details of any search conducted of a student's property or person. Documentation shall be made at the time of the search, or as soon as possible thereafter, and shall include the following:

1. The time, place and date of the search
2. The reasonable suspicion giving rise to the search (what did school officials suspect to find during the search)
3. The name and title of individuals conducting and observing the search
4. A statement about evidence that was found or not found as a result of the search
5. A statement about who took possession of contraband (i.e., police, school, etc.)
6. Information regarding the attempts of school officials to notify parents about the search.

Except in an emergency it is recommended that the building principal or his/her designee have another adult present during a locker search.

The building principal or his/her designee shall not be obligated, but may request the assistance of a law enforcement officer in the course of conducting a locker search. The building principal or his/her designee shall respect the privacy rights of the pupil regarding any items discovered that are not illegal or against school policy or rules.

Due Process Guidelines and Procedures

In imposing discipline on students, Venture will adhere to the requirement of state and federal law and constitutional due process.

- The student must always be treated with fundamental fairness,
- has a right to be fully informed about his/her alleged breach of behavior and
- must be provided with an opportunity to respond to such charges.

1. Informal Hearings. Discipline problems not leading to long-term suspension (more than 10 days) or expulsion may be reviewed through an informal hearing involving the student, parent/guardian, relevant teacher(s) and the Director. During the hearing,

- the student and parent/guardian hear the charges, evidence and consequences.
- the student tells his/her side of the story.
- Various problems-solving strategies may be used.

There is no formal hearing or appeal process for suspensions of less than ten (10) days.

2. Formal Hearings. Parents/guardian may request a formal hearing as a part of the due process procedure for long-term suspensions (more than 10 days) and all expulsions. A three person administrative panel reviews a case and determines if the recommendation to suspend or expel a student is supported by evidence presented at the hearing.

The Director, or designee, after reviewing witnesses' statements and any other relevant documents or items, schedules a hearing within ten (10) school days of the disciplinary action.

The student is afforded the following procedural due process:

- Written notice of prohibited misconduct
- Written notification of hearing (time and location) and procedures to be followed.
- A formal hearing
- Access to available evidence
- Opportunity to present witnesses and evidence on his/her own behalf
- Option to Appeal the decision of the Formal Hearing to the Board of Directors

The participants, including the student, parents or guardian, advocate witnesses, three panelists (such as, Board President, and two other board members, or other designee if 3 board members constitutes a quorum), and the Director/designee sign in for the hearing. The hearing agenda will include the following items:

1. Introduction of all participants.
2. Director's statements of the charge and the disciplinary action recommended followed by presentation of case. Panel may ask questions.
3. Student and/or his/her advocate respond to the charges and finish with closing statement. Panel may ask questions.
4. Director gives closing statement.
5. The chair informs the group of the decision process. (Within two school days of the hearing, the chair will notify the student and his/her parents/guardian(s), orally or in writing, of the panel's decision to uphold, modify or reverse the suspension. Written notification must follow an oral notification.)
6. The chair dismisses the group.
7. The three panelists discuss the evidence and proceedings and may make the following decisions:
 - Waive charge(s)
 - Reduce charge(s)
 - Change/modify the administrator's recommendation or disciplinary action.
 - Support the administrator's recommendation and disciplinary action.
 - Increase the recommendation and disciplinary action.

The Appeal Process

A. SUSPENSIONS OF ONE (1) TO TEN (10) SCHOOL DAYS. There is no *formal* appeal process for suspensions of one (1) to ten (10) school days.

B. SUSPENSION EXCEEDING TEN (10) SCHOOL DAYS. A parent/guardian may appeal the decision of the three-person administrative hearing panel to the Board of Directors. This appeal, directed to the school Director (CAO), must be made in writing within five (5) calendar days following the receipt of the decision and must specify reasons for the appeal.

During a regular meeting, the Board of Directors will determine whether or not to hear the appeal.

The decision of the Board will be communicated in writing to all parties concerned by the Secretary of the Board.

The suspension remains in effect during the appeal process.

The appeal hearing will follow the same agenda structure as a formal hearing.