

**Vegreville Composite High School**  
**Student Handbook**  
**2018-2019**



**“Education is the most powerful weapon which  
you can use to change the world.”**

***-Nelson Mandela***



## VCHS Student Handbook

**Cougar Pride** is the philosophy that guides us each day. It is based on the understanding that all students, staff and parents in our school community accept responsibility for maintaining and representing a positive school environment. We do this by adhering to our key virtue words; *Commitment, Empathy,* and *Enthusiasm*.

- **Commitment:** We resolve to do our best, always, in all ways.
- **Empathy:** We treat others as we would like to be treated. We try to “walk in others’ shoes” and understand their feelings.
- **Enthusiasm:** We make the best of each day. We actively participate in our students’ education and enjoy all that the school has to offer.

### **Our Learning Environment**

We encourage and promote responsible student behavior and call on all stakeholders to establish and maintain a positive school environment.

- Respect the rights and dignity of others.
- Actively involved in learning.
- Being punctual and attend school regularly.

In accordance with Elk Island Public Schools policies, VCHS is responsible for ensuring a positive tone in the school, based on the concepts of Alberta Learning’s Safe and Caring Schools Policies. This responsibility extends *beyond the confines of the school and the school “yard”*. In our community and on field trips students are representatives of the school and as such are expected to model positive behaviors and adhere to the Elk Island Public Schools *Administrative Procedure 350: Student Conduct*.

### **Behavior Expectations**

Individual behavior is most often governed by self-regulation, common sense, and mutual respect of others. School expectations are outlined below. Consequences will vary and are based on the seriousness and/or frequency of the infraction(s). Consequences may include: study hall, school community service, removal from class, or suspension as the occasion warrants.

### ***Student Responsibilities***

- To be responsible, caring, and honest and to treat others with respect and fairness.
- To attend school and do his/her best to learn and master his/her academic program.
- To follow class/school rules, regulations and policies.
- To assure that individual expressions do not interfere with the educational rights of others.
- To adhere to appeal procedures.
- To abide by provincial law and school board policies concerning substance abuse.
- To respect the property rights of others.
- To follow prescribed guidelines regarding extra-curricular activities.
- To remain informed about their academic progress through PowerSchool & myPass.
- VCHS is a hat free environment, please do not wear headwear at any time during school hours.



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### ***Parent Responsibilities***

- To take an active role in communication between school and home.
- To remain informed about their child's academic progress and attendance through the parent portal on our website (vegcomp.ca) and parent teacher interviews.
- To directly contact the appropriate teachers in matters of academic achievement.
- To treat all members of the school community in a courteous and respectful manner.
- To become familiar with school policies and procedures that involves their child.
- To be familiar with school correspondence, including accessing the Parent Portal on the school website.
- To assist in improving educational programming opportunities and progress for their child.
- To provide a home environment conducive to student success.
- To be cognizant of organizations and activities designed for parent participation.

### ***Staff Responsibilities***

- To provide a variety of programs and instructional strategies that will serve the needs of all students.
- To provide an orderly structure within which rules, policies, and expectations are enforced uniformly.
- To post students' academic progress and homework assignments through online tools (PowerSchool and Google Classroom) in a timely manner.
- To ensure a safe and caring learning environment is established.

### **Conduct Outside of School Time**

Student conduct while away from school has a significant effect on the reputation of the school and community. As per the School Act Section 24.1c, a student may be suspended if “the student's conduct, whether or not the conduct occurs within the school building or during the school day, is injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school”.

### **Attendance**

EIPS and VCHS recognize the positive relationship between regular attendance and success in school. Consistent attendance is a basic requirement for passing a subject and earning credits. Classroom instruction, activities, and discussions that take place in class are critical components of the educational process. We do require parents to contact the office in the event of student absence within 24 hours. The information we receive assures us that parents are aware of their child's absence. For all unexcused absences, students are required to make up that time during study hall, either at lunch, before, or after school.

On or before the day of the absence, parents are asked to contact the school at their earliest convenience. The automated parent notification system will call each day to inform parents of unreported absences.

Please note missed work is required to be completed. Whether their absences are excused or unexcused, students are expected to make up formative and summative assessments. Upon return to school, it is the student's responsibility to obtain materials they missed and discuss with the teacher a timeline for completion. In cases of extended student absence please contact teachers and administration directly to develop a plan for success upon return.



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### **Signing Out During the Day**

Students who leave school during the day are required to have a note or a phone call from a parent/guardian **prior** to leaving school and are to 'sign out' in the office. Students who become ill during the day and intend to go home must first report to the office. If parents cannot be contacted, students may use the school infirmary.

### **Lates**

Late arrivals to class are disruptive to the learning of others. Students are expected to be in class on time. Students who consistently arrive late will need to make that time up during study hall.

### **Office Referrals**

Students who are directed to the office are expected to comply immediately. Failure to do so is viewed as defiance.

*The following are potential disciplinary consequences:*

**Study Hall** – A 30-minute silent study period assigned during lunch, before or after school. Students must work while they eat their lunches.

**Class Suspension** – A student is removed from the class in which the infraction occurred and will do course work in a supervised area.

**In-School Suspension** – A student is suspended from all classes that day and will work under supervision to complete their daily work. Students must bring all necessary work and lunch. An in-school suspension may become an out-of-school suspension when the student does not comply with these expectations.

**Out-of-School Suspensions** – A student is suspended from classes, all school related activities, and prohibited from all EIPS school premises, school buses, and school property including practices, rehearsals, and work experience. When the days of suspension are on either side of a weekend, the student is not able to participate in school related activities during that weekend, including as a spectator. The student and a parent/guardian are required attend a reinstatement meeting before a student may return to class.

**Suspension to the Board** – A student is suspended from all classes and prohibited from being on school property until the Board of Education decides on reinstatement, expulsion, and/or other measures. Reasons for immediate suspension with referral to the Board of Education:

- Bomb threat.
- Possession/use of a weapon.
- Assault (depending on the circumstances).
- Drug possession and/or trafficking.
- Hacking into school network.
- Sexual misconduct.
- Dangerous/threatening behavior.



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### One to Four-Day Out-of-school Suspension

- Assault.
- Tampering with emergency equipment; interfering with emergency procedures.
- Profane language or gestures directed toward peers, staff or visitors to the school.
- Fighting/inciting fighting, watching fights.
- Tobacco infractions including e-cigarettes and vaporizers.
- Harassment including bullying and/or sexual comments.
- Disrupting regular business in other schools.
- Possession, use, suspicion of alcohol or other banned substances.
- Possession of drug paraphernalia.
- Conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school
- Open opposition to authority.
- Discrimination or racism.
- Vandalism.
- Breach of Network User Agreements.

### Discrimination and Harassment

Every person in Alberta is protected from discrimination on the following grounds: race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry or place of origin. Elk Island Public Schools requires all individuals to treat each other with dignity and respect and requires compliance with this policy by all individuals regardless of age.

Harassment is repeated unwelcome verbal, cyber, or physical conduct because of a person's race religious beliefs, sexual orientation, color, gender, physical or mental disability, age, ancestry or place of origin. If the harassment is insulting or intimidating, it is discrimination. Examples of harassment include; verbal or physical abuse, threats; derogatory remarks, jokes; innuendo or taunts about appearance or beliefs; display of pornographic, racist or offensive images anywhere, including lockers and binders; and condescension or paternalism that undermines self-confidence. Harassment can be bullying or outright physical assault.

Cyber bullying is discriminating or harassing behavior using technological devices such as iPods, cell phones, computers, social networking sites whether at school or elsewhere.

### Controlled Substances and Alcohol

Elk Island Public Schools considers the use of controlled substances, vaporizers and alcohol, as well as the misuse of prescription medication to be detrimental to the well-being of students and injurious to the moral tone of the school. EIPS has a comprehensive framework to address substance use that includes education, universal prevention strategies and tiers of intervention services.

### Electronic Devices

Students may bring their electronic devices to school. Students may use their electronic devices in the classroom where deemed appropriate by instructor. We encourage healthy communication between students and parents during non-instructional time. If there is an urgent matter, parents are strongly advised to call the office. Students may **NOT** use digital devices within the PE change rooms and hallway washrooms.



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### Academic Integrity

Please refer to the *Guide to Reporting Student Achievement 2017-2018* posted on the school website [vegcomp.ca](http://vegcomp.ca) for specific information regarding academic guidelines.

### Calculator Expectations

- At the beginning of any mathematics or science course, students will be advised of approved types of calculators.
- Calculators may be required by students to complete assignments, hence it is recommended that all students have their own calculators.
- Students must be familiar with the operation of their own calculators.
- Students must clear all programmable calculators before and after their exam and ensure they are in silent mode.
- Calculator covers must be removed and put away before every exam.

### Homework/Study

The assignment or review of academic materials to be completed outside of the regular school day is an integral part of education. The length of time a student will spend on homework or review will vary based on subject matter.

### Course Expectations

Individual teachers provide their students with a clear set of classroom/course expectations. Class procedures and instructional guidelines including course goals, class rules, homework and study guidelines, evaluation and assessment procedures, grading, and student accountability will be reviewed at the beginning of each course and will be posted on Google Classroom.

### Physical Education & Activity Courses

- Students are required to wear appropriate gym attire. Students must have footwear that is used in the gym only, outdoor footwear is **NOT** permitted.
- All students are expected to participate in activity classes to the best of their ability.
- When medical notes are presented to the teacher, students are expected to contribute to class in other ways, such as scorekeeping, refereeing, or other activities appropriate to each situation.

### Independent Study Courses

Students enrolled in an Independent Study class are required to report for attendance and work in the Learning Commons during their assigned block. Students must complete the course within communicated deadlines.

### High School Course Changes

A student who requires a timetable change must meet with administration for approval.



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### High School Diploma (Minimum 100 total credits)

The student must meet the graduation requirements established by Alberta Education including

- 15 credits in senior English
- 15 credits in senior Social Studies
- 10 credits in Math (min. Math 20-3)
- 10 credits in Science (min. Science 24)
- 3 credits in CALM 20
- 3 credits in Physical Education
- 10 other credits at the 30 level
- 10 CTS credits
- 24 other credits

### Spares

Grade 12 students are eligible to have one spare based on their credit requirements, with a maximum of 1 spare per year. Grades 10 and 11 are required to take full course loads.

### Lockers

All students are assigned a locker to be used for the storage of school-related materials and are responsible for all contents stored within that locker. Students are responsible for their own personal property while in school. It is the students' responsibility to properly securing personal items in their assigned lockers. Students may NOT switch lockers or share lockers.

Lockers and locks provided are the property of EIPS. **School administration has the authority to search lockers.** Students are responsible for cleaning out their lockers periodically and at the end of the school year, removing all belongings, and returning all books. Students failing to clean books and materials and/or graffiti from their lockers will be assessed a cleaning fee.

For PE and Activity courses, students will have shared lockers which means students should **NOT** store anything of value in these lockers as theft may be an issue.

### Learning Commons and Material Usage

- Books may be signed out for two weeks.
- Magazines may be signed out for one week.
- Reference books are for use exclusively in the library.

Students may use school owned materials but they have a responsibility to respect what they use and to not abuse this privilege. Students damaging material, including library books, textbooks, and chromebooks will be assessed for damages. Each library item, including textbooks are carefully inspected when they are returned. The condition of each book is noted so that when a book is given to another student, we have the history of any previous damage.

Damages are assessed for: damaged covers, water damage, ripped or missing pages, writing or underlining in the book, puncture marks, folded pages where students have turned over a page instead of using a book marker. Pages become torn easily when students use this practice. The librarian will use her judgment when determining the cost of damages. Textbooks must be returned the day of final exams. Students will be charged for lost and damaged books. Library material – students will be assessed charges for lost or damaged books, magazines etc.



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### Telephone

A telephone is available in the general office should student require to contact home.

### Internet Usage

All students must have an EIPS Network User Agreement consent form signed by their parent/guardian in order to use the school internet connections. EIPS has the right to restrict students from bringing information into the school if it is deemed offensive in any way. Computer usage may be suspended if students are utilizing inappropriate sites.

### Assemblies

From time to time student assemblies will be scheduled to support school educational goals and provide opportunity to have other educational stakeholders present to our students.

### Visitor Passes

All visitors must sign-in at the office and check out with the office when they leave.

### Infirmary

Students may use the infirmary after checking in with the office staff and receiving permission. First aid may be provided for students, but no medication is provided, including over-the-counter medication such as Tylenol.

### Vehicle and Student Parking

Bringing private motor vehicles, motorcycles, and bicycles to school is a privilege. Student drivers are subject to provincial and local regulations when operating a motor vehicle on school grounds. Students are extended the privilege of bringing a vehicle to school as long as they respect the safety and rights of others and abide by the following regulations:

- All vehicles must be registered through the school.
- Student parking is limited. Student parking is **NOT** allowed in any area designated as staff or visitor parking, or in front of the school at any time.
- Students must not park in “student drop-off lane” prior to 8:40am or after 2:30 pm.
- Unregistered or illegally parked vehicles on school grounds will be subject to towing at the owner’s expense.
- The school is NOT responsible for items left within or damage to vehicles while in the student lot.
- Items prohibited in school are likewise prohibited from vehicles.
- Inappropriate driving behavior will result in the student being banned from driving/parking on school property.
- During class time students are not permitted to loiter in the parking lot.
- Students failing to follow parking lot protocol may have their parking privileges suspended or cancelled.

### Bus Transportation

At all times, students are to conduct themselves in a manner that ensures safety. Students transported to school by school bus need to remember that upon entering the bus in the morning, they are “in school.” Inappropriate behavior on the bus may result in the loss of bus privileges or other disciplinary consequences. Please see Student Transportation for further information.



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### **Inclement Weather Policy**

Should inclement weather conditions occur, Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) will advise parents of bus cancellations using various communication tools, including automated telephone messages, details posted on the division home page ([www.eips.ca](http://www.eips.ca)), in the *Bus Status* section of our division and school websites, on our main switchboard (780-464-3477) and community hotline (780-417-8122), and through local radio stations.

EIPS believes it is the parents' right and responsibility to make choices for their children based on their beliefs and perceptions of safety during inclement weather conditions. Parents must use their discretion when sending their children to school during inclement weather, even when buses are running and schools are open.

EIPS' procedures state bus service may be suspended when the temperature reaches  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$  including wind chill factor as measured by Environment Canada at 5:00a.m. and/or due to adverse weather or road conditions. Bus service may be suspended on a region-by-region or route-by-route basis. When school bus services are suspended, schools shall remain open to students.

Should weather conditions be extreme or deteriorate during the day in a particular region/area, the Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent/designate may close the school to all students and staff. The Principal, staff and school bus operators must take steps to ensure students arrive home safely when they are dismissed earlier than the regular dismissal times. This includes contact with parents/guardians to ensure students have adequate access to residences.

If unsafe road conditions occur, an individual bus operator has the discretionary power to decide not to operate or to abandon completion of the morning route by returning students to their homes. The bus operator must ensure students have adequate access to residences. In the event that road and/or weather conditions are extreme, the Superintendent/designate may authorize that staff are not to report for work. For safety purposes, the Principal shall ensure that some staff be at school to temporarily accommodate students who report to school. For the safety of students it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that:

- Their children are suitably dressed for coping with weather conditions.
- Arrangements have been made for alternate shelter if no one is home.
- Parents who have brought their children to school on days when school bus services are suspended because of inclement weather or hazardous road conditions will be responsible for picking up their children.

### **Emergency Drills**

Periodically the school will hold emergency drills. As students and staff will never know if a signal is for a drill or a real emergency, each time the fire signal sounds, everyone must vacate the building immediately. Students out of class when the fire alarm rings should follow the directions posted in the area they are in, and meet their designated teacher in their assigned area outside the school. Students are to remain with their assigned teacher until instructed otherwise.

During a drill or real emergency students may not leave school grounds unless specifically instructed to do so by a school official. During drills, students will be expected to behave in an orderly manner. Pushing, running, playing games, shouting, or other inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Students are to remain outside of the building until instructed to return by a school official.



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To guarantee safety and accurate student attendance during Fire Drills, students may not enter parked cars. In the event of serious weather conditions or an extended emergency situation involving evacuation procedures, buses will be summoned for student and staff transport to appropriate facilities.

### School Emergency Plans

#### *Internal Emergencies*

1. In the event of a fire, serious chemical leak, structural collapse, or other similar emergency, the following actions shall be taken by school authorities:
  - The school fire alarm shall be sounded.
  - The school shall be evacuated immediately.
  - The Fire Department shall be notified.
  - All occupants shall be moved away from the immediate area of the school building to the Primary Evacuation Area immediately east of the school by the basketball courts.
  - All school occupants shall be accounted for by the classroom teacher, who shall report to the Principal.
  - The Principal shall notify the Fire Department of any unaccounted building occupants.
  - If the situation warrants, the Principal may dismiss the students from the school after accounting for all occupants.
  - The Principal may allow students back into the building once the Fire Department notifies him/her that the building has been cleared.
  
2. In the event of a bomb threat in the school building the following actions shall be taken by school administration:
  - Call the RCMP immediately when a threat is received.
  - Exit routes will be searched before removing people from the school.
  - If there is an apparent, immediate threat of an explosion, the school will be evacuated.
  - All school occupants shall be accounted for by the classroom teacher who shall report to the principal.
  - If there is no immediate threat of explosion, the most common procedure is to search the building and, if deemed required, to evacuate the building.
  - Initial searches are usually made by people who work in the school. The RCMP will assist or take over if necessary.
  - IF A BOMB OR SUSPECT EXPLOSIVE DEVICE IS DISCOVERED, DO NOT TOUCH IT. The RCMP Explosives Unit will dispose of the same.
  
3. In the event of a suspicious intruder/trespasser, the following action shall be taken:
  - Report the suspicious person to the office.
  - Office personnel will approach the person and offer assistance. If there is no response or their reaction is hostile, the RCMP and the School Board Emergency Operations Coordinator should be notified.
  - If there is reason to believe the intruder/trespasser is armed, office personnel will notify the RCMP and the School Board Emergency Operations Coordinator immediately. **Lockdown procedures may be implemented. DO NOT APPROACH THE INTRUDER.**
  - All School occupants shall be accounted for by the classroom teacher who shall report to the Principal.



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### *External Emergencies*

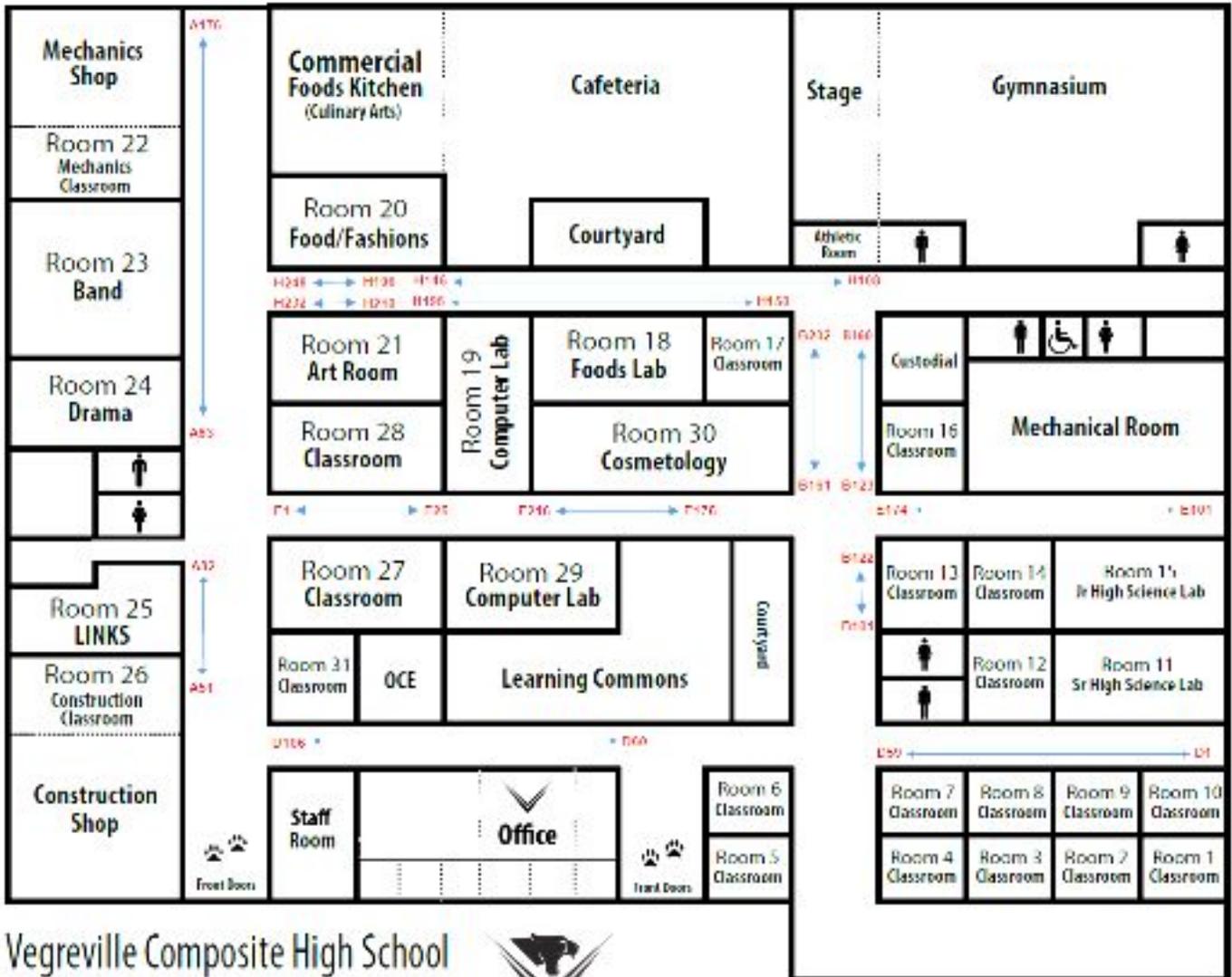
- In the event of a Severe Weather Warning (**tornado warning**), the school personnel shall activate the In-House Sheltering Plan as follows:
- Move the occupants away from windows, doors, outside walls or spaces with a large roof area.
- Evacuate occupants to interior hallways, washrooms or lowest floors if possible.
- Protect the heads of the occupants to the greatest extent possible. Cover the head with a towel, etc. to protect from blowing insulation, etc.
- The school will be evacuated only when notified by the Fire Department or RCMP.
- Following evacuation of the building, school personnel will account for all occupants.

In the event of a **toxic chemical release**, school personnel shall activate the In-House Sheltering Plan as follows:

- Stay indoors and move all occupants away from windows and doors to a secure area.
- Keep all doors and windows closed.
- Shut down all air exchange systems.
- Seal all openings (windows and doors) of the secure area with appropriate tape. (Does not need to be done during practice drills.)
- If the gas has been identified, turn off all sources of ignition. Do not operate light switches or electrical appliances.
- Do not vacate the building until notified by the Fire Department or RCMP.
- Following evacuation of the building, account for all occupants.



# VCHS Student Handbook



Vegreville Composite High School  
School Map

