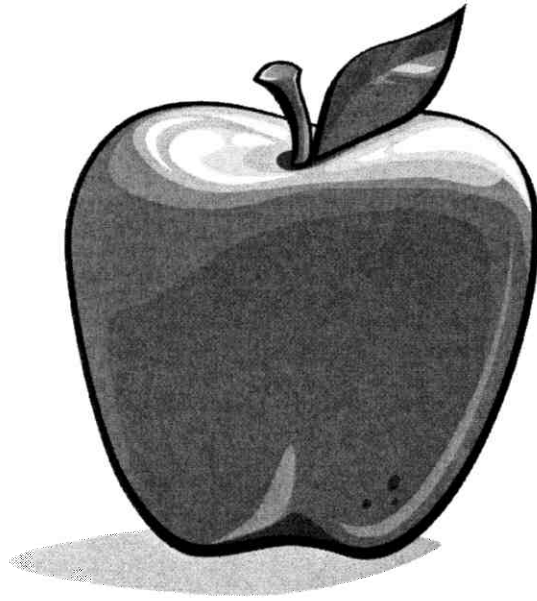


VIRGIL SCHOOL



PARENT

HANDBOOK

It is with great pleasure that we present the parents of Virgil Elementary School students with a copy of our parent handbook. We've tried to include the things that would be of interest to you. We hope this handbook will help foster good Home-School Relations. It is our intention to supplement it annually. Many things will remain stable, however, and are a reflection of things as they function generally.

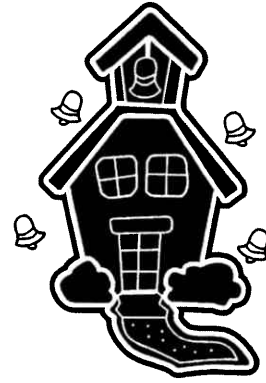
I'd like to thank the entire staff for their contributions. We hope you find the handbook both useful and informative.

Sincerely,

**Lisa S. Kaup
Principal**

IF A CHILD

**If a child lives with criticism,
 He learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility,
 He learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule,
 He learns to feel shy.
If a child lives with tolerance,
 He learns to be patient
If a child lives with encouragement,
 He learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise,
 He learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness,
 He learns justice.
If a child lives with security,
 He learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval,
 He learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
 He learns to find love in the world.**



Responsive School

We like to consider ourselves a responsive school. What does this statement mean?

It means that we use the key components of the responsive classroom – rules and logical consequences, morning meeting, classroom organizations, guided discovery, academic choice, and assessment.

We also use a very specific step procedure for discipline which includes a reminder, time-out in the room, time-out outside the room, and being sent home.

Additional information on specifics of each of the above categories is available from your child's teacher or the school office.

STEPS TO SELF-CONTROL

As part of our work to become a totally “Responsive School” and all that this entails, we want to tell you about the discipline process which will be in place throughout the whole building.

We will be using the following steps when children exhibit inappropriate behavior:

- 1. Students are given a single reminder about inappropriate behavior.**
- 2. Following a reminder, a brief time-out (2 minutes or less) or thinking time will be arranged for the student to gain self-control, after which the student will return to the lesson or activity.**
- 3. If, during a time-out, the student continues to behave inappropriately, a “buddy teacher” will be sent for by the classroom teacher. The “buddy teacher” will accompany the student back to his/her room for a time-out for the rest of the period, after which the student will return to his/her own room to resume regular activity.**
- 4. Should the student become disruptive in the “buddy teacher’s” classroom or continue to misbehave upon return, the “buddy teacher” will send for the principal or designee to retrieve the student and escort him/her to the office for a time-out until the end of the period or such time as the principal determines that the student is ready to re-enter the classroom. In this case, parents will be notified that step #4 has been reached. This will require the parent to come to school or call at the beginning of the next day to confer with the teacher to re-establish expectations at the outset of the new school day.**
- 5. In extreme situations where a student may be physically out of control, parents will be called and asked to pick up the child.**

Flagrant or repeated misbehavior may necessitate the jump past steps #2 and #3 and children may go immediately to the office or be sent home.

Please take time to review these steps with your child. Make sure they know you support the school and expect their best behavior.

GENERAL CURRICULUM SCOPE

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten our daily activities are geared toward developing responsible, independent, caring children. In order to accomplish this, we spend a great deal of time modeling behaviors that will lead to responsible, self-reliant, understanding students.

In math, we work with number relationships. With the use of manipulatives in kindergarten, the children better understand math concepts such as patterning, 1-1 correspondence, ordinal and cardinal numbers, addition and subtraction. The computer is set up to reinforce the above skills through the use of games.

In language arts, we expose the children to listening, speaking, reading, and writing according to their level of readiness. Bookmaking is an exciting part of our language arts program.

In science, units on Waterplay, Sunshine, Shadows and Silhouettes, and Plants and Animals involve the children in interesting activities.

A science table is set up for many unusual observations and discoveries.

The Growing Healthy program teaches about feelings, personal hygiene, making healthy choices, and being kind to others.

Throughout our day children are given the opportunity to make choices, interact socially, develop confidence, and promote self-esteem. The kindergarten setting provides a safe environment for these valuable life skills to develop.

Grade 1

The first grade program consists of developing and strengthening skills in the areas of reading, phonics, process writing, auditory and visual perceptual training, mathematics, penmanship, science, and social studies.

In reading, the students learn about sound-letter relationships, decoding, and comprehension skills. This is extended to their reading program which involves reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

In mathematics, the students are taught addition and subtraction, money, telling time, measurement, problem solving, coin identification, expanded notation (tens and ones), and recognition of shapes.

The students learn about people, social interaction, roles, seasons, and ways of work in social studies. Much of this extends into the science program and growing healthy program which deals with understanding the environment and taking care of our bodies.

Grade 2

The second grade curriculum concentrates on improving language arts skills, and exposure to classic, modern fictions, and non-fiction literature. Various forms of literature are read including stories, poems, and plays. They are introduced to writings of many celebrated authors and illustrators. Along with reading, children learn how to speak and write correctly. Spelling lessons are introduced. Children are expected to learn to spell words and learn strategies to spell many related words.

Mathematics is an important part of the curriculum. A great deal of hands-on instruction is used to develop strategies and to make math make sense. The children learn the basic facts of addition and subtraction to 20. Two-digit addition and subtraction is taught with “trading” or “regrouping” of tens and ones. Various strategies are taught to make the children good problem solvers.

The basic units taught in science are: Magnets, Patterns of Light, Bats, Organisms, and Plant and Animal Life Cycles. We do many integrated activities that are related to science.

Growing Healthy is our health curriculum. They learn about the functions of the eye and ear, as well as diseases and prevention of them.

In social studies we learn about our country and community. Current events and special days are also taught. Good citizenship and everyone’s responsibility to take care of our environment is also part of the curriculum.

Students learn beginning keyboarding skills with a program called Smart Applelet. They use a mini-keyboard at their desk called an Apple Smart.

Grade 3

Third grade is a very full year for the children. They learn to do many new and difficult things in preparation for the fourth grade program. Third graders learn cursive writing, multiplication and division, regrouping when adding and subtracting up to 4-digit numbers, as well as studying social studies, health, science, language arts, and further developing their overall reading skills.

Students learn beginning keyboarding skills with a program called Smart Applelet. They use a mini-keyboard at their desk called an Apple Smart.

Reading Grade 4

Materials used: *Scholastic Literacy Place*, skill work materials, novels, reference materials, and library book collections. Vocabulary work is kept in a spiral notebook. Several enrichment programs are used to develop independent reading, i.e. Pizza Hut Reading Incentive Program and Accelerated Reading.

Basic Skills:

1. **Decoding - Students will demonstrate the ability to apply a variety of decoding techniques by recognizing and pronouncing words encountered while reading.**
 - a. Demonstrate oral reading ability
 - b. Uses phonics (regular and irregular consonant and vowel sounds)
 - c. Uses word structure (root words, prefixes, suffixes, and syllables)
2. **Vocabulary - Students will demonstrate the ability to apply introduced new words by using them when reading, speaking, or writing.**
 - a. Uses context clues for word meaning
 - b. Uses prefixes and suffixes to determine word meaning
 - c. Uses dictionary and glossary to determine word meaning and word use
3. **Comprehension – Students will demonstrate the ability to apply a variety of comprehension skills about material read by responding to questions orally and/or in writing.**
 - a. Gathers and understands information and ideas
 - b. Interprets and analyzes information and ideas
 - c. Evaluates and makes judgments
 - d. Answers questions
 - e. Understands sequence of events (story order)
 - f. Recognizes story elements, including characters and author’s point of view
4. **Interest (Personal Reading) – Students will demonstrate the ability to choose, read, and appreciate a variety of reading materials. Students will need to successfully read 25 books throughout the year. Success will be measured by passing the AR test for that selection.**
 - a. Evaluates and makes judgments
 - b. Read and recognize various types of literature (fiction, non-fiction, and poetry)
5. **Work/Study Skills – Students will demonstrate independent ability to apply organizational and study skills by successfully incorporating them into completed projects.**
 - a. Uses resource materials (dictionary, encyclopedia, book parts, CD ROM, Internet)
 - b. Interprets charts, diagrams, and graphs
 - c. Organizes information (classifies)
 - d. Varies reading rates and techniques for different purposes and content.

Language Arts Grade 4

Materials used: *Scholastic Literacy Place* – Composition skills are taught using the process writing approach, textbooks, daily oral language, and patterned spelling lists. Work in the computer lab will focus on keyboarding and word processing of compositions. Language arts skills are integrated with other subject areas.

Basic Skills:

- 1. Writing – Students will write an average of 1000 words per month across all content areas and standards.**
 - a. Follows writing process**
 - b. Writes complete sentences**
 - c. Writes complete paragraphs with topic sentence and supporting details in sequence**
 - d. Writes compositions with a beginning, middle, and end**
 - e. Writes for a specific purpose or task**
 - f. Writes to an intended audience**

- 2. Spelling – Spelling is taught through a series of lessons based on patterned word lists. It is also reinforced in the other subject areas as well.**

Less Sequence –

 - a. Pretest**
 - b. Pattern identification and skill practice**
 - c. Spelling game or activity**
 - d. Post test**

- 3. Speaking – Students will be speaking on a daily basis across all content areas and standards.**
 - a. Uses effective speaking skills (eye contact, audible tone, gestures)**
 - b. Gives oral directions early**
 - c. Uses appropriate patterns of organization for formal presentations**
 - d. Uses vocal changes to emphasize meaning**
 - e. Reads orally using intonation, expression, and pace**

- 4. Listening – Students will be listening for content and understanding across all content areas and standards.**
 - a. Listens with accuracy and attentiveness**
 - b. Follows oral directions**
 - c. Responds to vocal characteristics**
 - d. Identifies rhyme and rhythm patterns**
 - e. Distinguishes between literal and figurative meaning of words and phrases**
 - f. Evaluates and applies persuasive techniques**

Grades 5 & 6

Most of our efforts in grades five and six are spent preparing the student for Junior High School; intellectually, emotionally, and socially. As this is the last year the student will study language arts as a subject, emphasis is placed on comprehension skills and the highest possible development of the student's reading ability. All of the basic facts in mathematics should be mastered, and the student should be able to use all four mathematical processes in computation. Also a student should be able to write reports and papers that will be required during the future junior and senior high years.

Hopefully, by the end of grade six, we will have a mature student who is responsible and interested in developing his/her own abilities and potential to their fullest.

Mathematics Grades 4-6

Due to the new testing by New York State, there has been a change in the way mathematical concepts are being taught. The new tests are now being given in 4th through 8th grades. Much more emphasis is being placed on a student being able to explain, in written form, how he/she arrived at their answer.

Manipulatives and hands-on materials are a very large component of the program. It is easier for children to understand new concepts if concrete objects are used first and then these are translated into the abstract.

Social Studies Grades 4-6

Social Studies in grades 4-6 begins with a month-long study of Geography of the World (6th), North America (5th), and New York (4th). This is done through the use of a unique teaching device – an individual desk map that he/she can write on with a crayon and wipe off when the lesson is complete.

For the rest of the year, 4th grade social studies is the study of New York State with the emphasis on our own surrounding area. We include a variety of community resources such as the Historical Society, Old Cemetery, library, etc., to enhance the curriculum.

Fifth grade social studies encompasses the study of the Western Hemisphere beginning with the Native American's trek across the Bering Strait from Asia to inhabit our continent until the present time. We study the historical, social, and economic growth of both continents with emphasis on our own nation – The United States.

Study of the eastern hemisphere is the focus of the sixth grade social studies curriculum. We begin with the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, and progress through history to the present time. Emphasis once again is on the historic, geographic, social, economic, and political growth of this hemisphere. During the spring semester, each student does an in-depth report on a country of his/her choice.

Science Curriculum Grade 4

The Elementary Science Program is designed to be a hands-on approach. There are five major units presented in Grade 4. The goal is to increase the students' science awareness and become familiar with the scientific method of inquiry. The units are:

1. **Electrical Circuits** – The student will become familiar with the workings of a complete circuit and the transfer and conversion of energy. The student will demonstrate knowledge by designing a complete circuit and testing materials for conductivity of electricity.
2. **Simple Machines** – The student will be introduced to the concept of work and methods to reduce the effort needed to accomplish such. A variety of machines will be created and tested to determine their effectiveness in saving effort.
3. **Astronomy** – The student will be introduced to the cosmos and our place in it. The student will become familiar with heavenly bodies, astronomical measurement, and the influence planetary positioning has on the weather.
4. **Density** – The student will discover that different objects of the same mass can have a different density. The student will demonstrate understanding by conducting various methods of measuring an object's density and predicting the outcome.
5. **Plant Life Cycles** – The student will be exposed to the workings of the plant world and its impact on our environment. Parts of plants, flowers, and seeds will be examined and their role in food production.

Science Curriculum Grades 5 and 6

In response to the change in New York State testing at the 8th grade level, Grades 5 and 6 will be using a text-based sciences series from Houghton Mifflin. Topics include the following:

Grade 5 –

- ❖ Systems in Living Things
- ❖ Populations and Ecosystems
- ❖ The Changing Earth
- ❖ Weather and Climate
- ❖ The Nature of Matter

Grade 6 –

- ❖ Cells and Microbes
- ❖ The Solar System and Beyond
- ❖ The Solid Earth
- ❖ Matter and Energy
- ❖ Forces and Motion
- ❖ Magnetism and Electricity

Both grade levels will experience a combination of text-based and inquiry learning. Students will demonstrate mastery by incorporating knowledge into various reports, projects, and writing assignments.

Health Curriculum Grades 4-6

The Growing Healthy Program is used in Health in Grades 4-6. Each level begins with wellness behaviors and the health factors we can and cannot control. Grade 4 concentrates on the Digestive System; Grade 5, the Respiratory System; and Grade 6, the Circulatory System. These systems are presented in detail – structure, function, and diseases, etc. There is an opportunity for dissection in grades 5 and 6, examining bovine and deer hearts and lungs.

Homework and Attendance

There are approximately 180 days of attendance for children. Your child's attendance in school is extremely important. As a result, we strongly encourage you to make doctors, dentists, orthodontists appointments after school or during vacations.

To aide you in doing that, we have sent home a calendar of the school year.

Needless to say, if your child is ill, they should stay home and get better. This is the number one priority. Homework assigned after a one, two, or three-day absence will be made up upon return to school. The children may need to use a number of recess days to complete the assignments. Between recess time and taking homework home after returning from an illness, children should be able to make up the work.

If for some reason you must absolutely schedule a family vacation or be absent due to a family emergency during the time school is in session, it will be at the teacher's discretion whether or not to send homework along.

When children are not in school, they miss valuable instruction on the curriculum. This instruction does not occur on an extended trip or during an extended absence. As a result, the child may not fully understand how to accomplish the assigned homework successfully.

Upon return to school, the child must bring an excuse stating the date(s) and reason(s) for the child's absence. This must be signed by the parent or guardian. We have sent home specially designed note pads for this very purpose. Please use them when needed.

POLICY

Subject: Homework

The Board acknowledges the educational validity of homework as an adjunct to and extension of the instructional program of the schools. For purposes of this policy, "homework" shall refer to those assignments to be prepared by the student outside of school or independently while in attendance at school.

Homework should be developed and assigned according to these guidelines:

- a) Homework assignments shall complement clearly defined school and classroom objectives, and shall be used to reinforce and enhance school experiences. Best results will be attained when teachers are sure that homework assignments meet individual needs, are of reasonable length, and receive follow-up recognition, evaluation, and timely feedback to the student.
- b) Homework should help students learn by providing practice in the mastery of skills, experience in data gathering, integration of knowledge, and an opportunity to remediate learning problems.
- c) The number, frequency, and degree of difficulty of homework assignments should be based on the age, abilities, and needs of the student.
- d) Teachers should recognize the role of parents by suggesting ways in which parents may assist the teacher in helping the student carry out his/her responsibilities.
- e) Homework should always service a valid learning purpose; it should never be used as a punitive measure.
- f) Teachers should be aware of overall assignment practices so that students are not overburdened with homework.

Suggested Time Allotments

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Maximum Daily Amount</u>
1 - 2	once or twice a week	20 minutes
3 - 4	three to five times per week	45 minutes
5 - 6	three to five times per week	1 hour
7 - 8	daily	1 to 1 ½ hours
9 - 12	daily	1 to 2 hours

These suggested time allocations do not preclude long-range assignments, which teach students to budget their time over periods of longer duration, nor are they to be construed as rigid but more as guidelines in the allocation of homework.

Library

Students in grades K-6 attend scheduled library classes once a week. The library is also available to staff and students any time that there is not a scheduled class.

All students develop an appreciation of literature through listening to stories, with an emphasis on outstanding literature, and participating in relevant activities. All students are taught how to efficiently use a library and its materials in order to become independent library users.

If a student loses or damages a library book, it will be necessary to pay for the cost of the book's replacement. If a lost book is found and returned to the school, the money will be refunded.

Technology

The computer lab offers students and staff a broad range of technologies with many software programs. A scanner, digital camera, laser printer, color printer, and LCD are some of the peripherals available for use by students and staff. The internet and e-mail accounts are accessible through the computer lab as per district policy.

Use of Lab

Teachers may sign up to use the computer lab with their classes. The sign-up procedure is on a first come-first served basis.

Students may use the computer lab with their teachers or during the noon hour. Computer passes are available to each classroom for students to use during the noon hour. Students may choose from a wide variety of software to improve their computer skills, as well as, critical thinking skills.

Expectations

The computer lab is supervised by an aide during the noon hour. Supervision at other times is to be determined by the teacher using the lab. Student behavior is monitored, as well as, their computer activities. Student exhibiting appropriate and responsible behaviors are always welcome in the computer lab. Inappropriate or irresponsible behavior will be reported to the appropriate staff and may result in loss of computer privileges.

Music Lessons

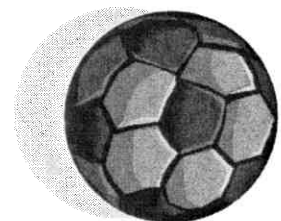
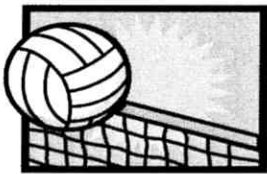
Music lessons are provided on orchestra and band instruments. Students in grades 3-6 can have a 15-minute instrument lesson once a week. Students also perform in the school band and orchestra. They are required to practice regularly and keep a practice log with parent signatures. Advanced students are asked to participate in Select Band or Orchestra, which meets after school at the Cortland High School.

Special Reading and Math

The school does have a program of special reading and math. Children in all grades who score below the district cut off in reading and math are selected to receive small group instruction during the school day. Letters are sent home at the beginning of the year to notify parents. New entrants into the district are also screened. Parents may serve on a Parent Advisory Council if they wish to have closer contact with the program.

Reading Recovery

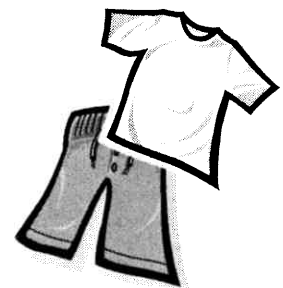
Reading Recovery is an early intervention program for first graders. It is designed to help reduce reading failure. Students that receive reading recovery, receive one-to-one instruction for 30 minutes daily. These lessons are in addition to their regular classroom instruction. During these lessons, they are taught effective reading strategies through many little books designed at their level of difficulty. Writing is also part of every lesson where they develop strategies for hearing and recording sounds in words. The program lasts about 16 – 20 weeks. The students are then “discontinued” from the program when they have developed independent, effective strategies for reading and writing, thus being able to function satisfactorily in the regular classroom reading group. At this time, new students are given a chance to participate in the program. The success of this program lies with the intensive training the Reading Recovery teachers receive, the support of the regular classroom teacher, and home support and guidance.



Physical Education

Physical Education is provided for all students two times a week on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday. Primary students are required to wear sneakers and appropriate clothing (jeans, running suits, etc.). Intermediate students are to have sneakers, a tee shirt, and shorts. A sweatshirt or pants would be advisable for cooler days. These students change clothes for class.

The synthetic gym floor needs to have sneakers on it – other types of shoes can damage it. The sneakers should also have white bottoms, as black soles leave ugly black marks which are hard to remove.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Daily Schedule

8:25 – 3:15

Grades K-6

Noon Hour Schedule

11:00 – 11:30

K

Cafeteria

11:30 – 12:00

1-3

Cafeteria

12:00 – 12:30

1 – 6

Playground

12:30 – 1:00

4 – 6

Cafeteria

School Secretary

The school secretary is undoubtedly one of the busiest people in the school. Her assignments and duties are numerous, as well as, varied. Much time is required on the telephone answering your many questions. She is happy to be of service. We have developed a note pad for use by our parents. Please use it to send us a note if your child was absent, will be leaving school for an appointment, or being picked up / going home a different way than usual. These notes make your child's life and our work much easier. The better informed we are, the better prepared your child will be for your requests and changes during the school day.

Immunizations Requirements for School Entrance/Attendance

- 3 doses of Diphtheria toxoid containing vaccine (DTP, DTaP, DT)
- 3 doses of Tetanus toxoid containing vaccine and Pertussis vaccine for children born on or after 1/1/05 (DTaP, DTP)
- 3 doses of Polio vaccine (OPV and/or IPV)
- 2 doses of Measles vaccine and one dose each of Mumps and Rubella vaccines
The first dose of Measles, Mumps, and Rubella vaccines (MMR) must be administered no more than 4 days prior to their first birthday
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B Vaccine (HBV)
- 1 dose of Diphtheria and Tetanus toxoid containing vaccine and acellular Pertussis vaccine for all children born on or after 1/1/94 who are enrolling in 6th grade
- 1 dose of Varicella vaccine
Administered no more than 4 days before their first birthday
Applies to all children born on or after 1/1/98 or children born on or after 1/1/94 who are enrolling in the 6th grade

Absences

Children absent from school require a written excuse upon returning indicating the reason for their absence. When your child is absent, the school nurse or secretary will call your home in order to hasten your child's prompt return to the classroom. Excuses are to include: child's name – date of absence – reason for absence – parent or guardian's signature. This excuse is to accompany the child the day he/she returns to school. Tardiness is considered a partial absence and requires an excuse.

Perfect Attendance awards are given monthly and at the end of the school year for children that have no absences for any reason – excused or unexcused.

Medical or Dental Appointments

If your child has to be absent for medical or dental appointments during regular school hours, a written excuse must be given to his/her classroom teacher. If possible, we ask that this be done outside school hours. Most doctors and dentists have been most cooperative in these matters.

Re: Medications Administered in School

Should it ever be necessary for your child to take medication during school hours, we are required by the State Education Department to have from you:

1. A written request from your doctor in which (s)he indicates the frequency and dosage of the prescribed medication.
2. A written request from the parent to administer the medications as specified by the physician.

Forms for this will be available in your doctor's office or at school. Medication should be delivered to the school nurse by the parent. The temptation to "share" medication is a real danger.

We will be able to dispense medication in the morning until 12:30 pm. There is no nurse in the building after that time. Parents are welcome to come in and medicate their child in the pm. When obtaining medication, your best bet is to ask the doctor for an am, noon, after school, and evening schedule of administration.

Under no circumstances should a child bring medication to "take himself". These are often left in or on desks and constitute a real threat to other children.



Nurse

Dear Parents:

Since head lice is a growing problem, it is important to take time to talk about this.

Head lice is transmitted directly by head-to-head contact. Head lice spreads rapidly, causing annoying itching and scratching and can quickly cause a large-scale epidemic.

Early detection and treatment are the keys to preventing an epidemic. In the school setting, a teacher is usually the first to notice a child frequently scratching their head. The child is then sent to the school nurse for a lice inspection. Children with live head lice are immediately sent home and the classroom is inspected. Since it is impossible for the school nurse to check everyone on a daily or weekly basis, it is ultimately the responsibility of the parent to check their own child's head a few times a week if not daily.

If your child becomes infested with head lice, there is no reason to feel embarrassed or ashamed. Head lice occurs in all walks of life, even in families who follow strict hygienic practices.

With more than six million elementary school children becoming infested each year, it's possible for head lice to appear in your home at any time. Because they multiply so rapidly, it's smart to check your child's head frequently, use an approved head lice treatment, and remove all eggs (nits) from the hair as this is the only way you can help prevent spread and re-infestation.

We are always sensitive to students' feelings during this time. Under no circumstances would anyone be allowed to make disparaging comments about any other child whether it be surrounding this topic or any other topic.

Proper Dress

There are times during the year when dress becomes a prime consideration because of weather. Summer recreation clothing creates a “schools out” attitude and should be saved for at-home play. With our tinted windows, the school remains quite cool during the hot spring days anyway. Therefore, we would prefer no shorts until May.

Generally, students go outside at noon hour to play. This occurs September through June. The children enjoy playing in the snow. All students will go outside. Provisions will be made for students who have been ill if they have a doctor’s note saying they should not play outside. However, students should come to school dressed for the weather. In winter this means snow pants, boots, hats, gloves, and scarves. Extra items can be stored in student lockers.

We also do not allow t-shirts with beer or smoking logos/promotions, bare midriffs, or mesh tops. Hats are not worn inside. Scarves across the forehead or “biker/rap” style are not permitted. Shorts should be long enough to fall below the fingertips when the child is standing up straight.

Footwear is also a concern. Clogs are dangerous and can be the cause of some serious ankle injuries or falls. Open-toed sandals or flip flops leave feet exposed to injuries on the playground.

Good sneakers or solid leather shoes are the best footwear for school children.

Tall Tales

After working with youngsters for many years, I’ve found that their ingenuity and imagination still surprises me. I will never master the things they say when they get home. Subsequently, if your child comes home with a “tall tale” that causes you concern, please check his/her story out with their respective teacher first and then the office.

Lost Books and Materials

Board of Education policy states that student who have lost textbooks, library books, and other instructional materials will be charged for such items if not found within a reasonable period of time. Charge back on lost items is computed on a prorated basis. Parents will receive a written receipt from the school office once payment has been made. If the book is found and returned in good condition at a later time, reimbursement will be made to the parent.

Student Identification

Each year hundreds of items are lost or unclaimed – lunch boxes, books, clothing, etc. To help minimize the situation and act as financial savings to parents, we suggest you inscribe your child’s name (magic marker) on all items when possible. Please write their names on lunch boxes, change purses, back packs, boots, and clothing.

Report Cards & Parent Conferences

Students in grades K-6 receive four report cards during the school year. Parent conferences are scheduled in early November.

Some 5, 10, 15, 25, and 35-week reports are also sent home for Outstanding Work or Unsatisfactory Work.

Parents having questions or concerns on any child's reports or progress are urged to contact the school. If you are unable to keep a conference appointment, please notify your child's teacher in advance so other arrangements can be made.

Special Services

The district employs nurses, social workers, and psychologists. Although they are not in all buildings on a daily basis, their services are obtainable when needed or requested. They are a positive part of our program.

Change of Address

Parents are requested to notify the school immediately in the event of a change of address, telephone number, or babysitter/care giver. This is extremely important in case of emergency.

Quiz Team News

Each year Virgil School sponsors a Quiz Bowl team to compete in the Knowledge Master Open and the New York State Thinking Cap competitions. The team consists of fifth and sixth graders who try-out for the positions on the team.

Each week during recess period, the team practices the needed techniques of teamwork, communication, and cooperation.

The events are very easy to compete in and take place three times a year. 100 questions are sent on a computer disk to each team in the event. Teams need about two hours to complete the contest. Although the event can be conducted at any time during the day, we usually compete from 12:00 - 1:00. Teams have 60 seconds to answer each question, points are awarded based on speed of answering and accuracy.

When the team finishes the contest, the computer displays the scores and the results are called into the sponsoring company (KMO or NYSTC). In 4 to 5 days we receive the complete results. Over the years the Virgil teams have placed first in the KMO competition and twice as NY State Champs.

Gifted/Talented Program

Our Gifted and Talented Program serves the top 3% of our student population. It is called Kaleidoscope. The children attend sessions once a week at the Randall Elementary School. The program runs the entire morning. Children are returned to their home school for lunch and their afternoon classes.

Before and After School Program

The Virgil Youth Commission sponsors a Before and After School Care Program at the Virgil Elementary School. The program starts at 6:30 a.m. Children can get breakfast at 8:15. The after school portion runs until 6:00 p.m. and a snack is provided. A supervised homework time is also provided. The prices are very reasonable. Contact the school for additional information.

Toys/Trading Cards/Electronic Games

We have had some difficulties with trading cards of all types (pokemon, magic, baseball, etc.), CD players, and hand-held electronic games. Due to these difficulties, it has been necessary to insist that these items not be brought to school. If they are brought to school, they will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school year. The parent could also come in to school and pick them up.

Children often bring other small toys to school. If these become a distraction in class, the teacher will take them away from the student and put them in his/her "June Box." The rules for use of toys in the classroom will be shared by the teacher. The student always has the option to make good choices but must experience the consequences of poor choices.

Parents should think about whether "expensive" toys should come to school. There is always the potential for damage. Please understand that these items come to school at your risk.

School Visitors

We ask that whenever entering the building, all parents, guardians, or visitors, should report to the main office first and sign in. It is the most expedient means of locating your child, as well as, a double check on insuring the safety of your child.

Bus Students

Students not wishing to ride the bus on a given day are required to give the homeroom teacher a written excuse in advance. This also applies to children who may be riding their bikes or walking to and from school on a given day.

Bus Safety

This is extremely important and an issue we find ourselves addressing quite frequently. Our children receive bus safety education frequently within school. They also participate in three bus drills each year. There are some basic behaviors we would expect from our children:

1. Be at your appointed bus stop on time.
2. Wait for bus well off roadway. Respect the property of others.
3. Enter bus in a single file and in an orderly manner.
4. Follow instructions of your driver. Do not talk to the driver while the bus is in motion.
5. Remain in your seat while bus is in motion.
6. Be courteous to your driver and your fellow passengers.
7. Do not smoke, eat, or drink on the bus.
8. Foul language, fighting, yelling, or throwing objects will not be tolerated.
9. Do not place your head or any other part of your body out an open window.
10. Always cross in front of the school bus. If you must cross, walk ten (10) feet in front of the bus, look both ways, and wait for the driver to signal you to cross.
11. Destruction of school property will not be tolerated; guilty parties will be penalized.
12. Treat others as you like to be treated, and then all of us will enjoy a safe school transportation program.

Students may be given a bus conduct report by the driver if they behave poorly on the bus. The principal receives the report and meets with your child. Parents will also receive a copy of the bus conduct report. If more than one report is received on a child, their bus privileges may be suspended for a designated number of days. The principal may ask that there be a meeting with the parents, bus driver, and transportation supervisor.

Field Trips

Periodically during the school year, various grade levels take short trips to points of interest within the village and surrounding areas. Permission slips are included in papers sent home at the beginning of the year. If your child is not allowed to participate in any of these events, whatever the reason, (s)he must, however, be in attendance at school. Please refer questions regarding field trips to your child's teacher.

School Rules

At the beginning of the school year, the teacher discusses "Our Hopes and Dreams" with their class. From this discussion they formulate their class rules. Two representatives from each classroom meet with the building principal to develop our school rules. These rules are presented to the whole school at an All-School Morning Meeting. It is these rules that are then posted around the building. Respect and responsibility are the key words in everything we do.

Speech

Speech therapy services are provided by the Cortland School District for children experiencing articulation, language, auditory, voice, or stuttering problems. Suspected communication problems are brought to the attention of the speech pathologist through new student testing, re-evaluation of children previously enrolled in therapy, and teacher referral. Once a child is identified as having a speech/language problem, he/she will be seen one to five times per week for a period of thirty minutes. If you have any questions concerning this service, please contact the school.

Religious Instruction

Release time is provided each Tuesday afternoon for religious instruction. Classes are held in the Virgil Methodist Church for all Protestant students. There is no Catholic instruction at this time. At the beginning of the year, a parent permission-to-participate is sent home. Please return this to school if you wish your child to be a part of this program.

Virgil Happenings

The Virgil Happenings is a newsletter sent home monthly (usually the 1st week of the month) to inform parents of what has happened the previous month, what is happening at the present and what is going to happen in the month ahead. News articles are received from the various organizations in the community, as well as, newsworthy items about the school.

Parent-Teacher Organization (P.T.O.)

The P.T.O. is an organization of parents and teachers that try to provide a connecting link between the home and school. We do this by having different activities where the teachers and parents can meet. We also sponsor many student activities such as the yearbook, class parties, and sixth grade graduation.

The P.T.O. is a self-supporting organization, and we raise money to provide these activities by sponsoring fundraising activities and the annual membership drive.

All parents and teachers are welcome.

Volunteers

We would like to encourage the people in our community to come into the school and volunteer. There are so many ways a person could volunteer their services. They could work with children, cut things out, do clerical work, correct papers, make copies, do some building maintenance chores, type, work in the library, inventory equipment and materials, etc.

There are millions of things that could be done. We'd like to encourage anyone who thinks they might be interested in volunteering to contact the school. Please do not think that you have no skills to offer. Your services could be invaluable.

Holiday Dinner

In December, Greek Peak provides a holiday dinner. The Greek Peak staff prepares and serves the food. There is no cost to students and staff.

The dinner is served to all students, staff, Virgil bus drivers, Board of Education members, and the Greek Peak staff. It is always a nice time for all.

Scholarship Fund

The P.T.O. awards two scholarships a year to two seniors (based on need and potential) who have been accepted to a college or university, with priority given to past students from Virgil. Funds are derived from fundraising activities.

Room Parents

Room parents arrange for and help serve refreshments at 3 parties: Harvest, December Holiday, and Valentine's Day.

Paper cups and napkins are supplied by the P.T.O. Refreshments are either solicited by the room parents or money collected from each child. We look forward to your cooperation on refreshments. If you have any ideas, please contact any room parent.

Sixth Grade Graduation

The sixth grade class at Virgil School is honored each year in June at its graduation exercises. This is a very special occasion in our school, as it marks the end of seven years spent in Virgil, and the entrance of our students into the Cortland Junior-Senior High School. Our graduation exercises are held in the evening, which allows the parents and relatives of the graduates an opportunity to attend. The Virgil P.T.O. sponsors a reception following the exercises, and this has been a highly successful and rewarding event.

Virgil Youth Commission

The Virgil Youth Commission is a town organization run with money from tax dollars, half of which are State funds. Each year four main programs are run to help the young people of Virgil learn responsibility and good sportsmanship, as well as, have fun.

Volunteers from the community help fund these programs. The programs consist of skiing, bowling, baseball, and a summer recreational program of arts and crafts. We also have a Halloween party and have initiated cultural gatherings through the County Arts Council.

The ski program is run with the help and assistance of Greek Peak. Every year the children of Virgil Elementary School are invited to learn how to ski. The equipment and instruction is provided by Greek Peak. This program is usually run after January 1st when skiing conditions are prime.

The bowling program usually starts around the middle of April and runs through the first week of June. Instruction in the basic fundamentals of bowling, as well as, good sportsmanship and team competition are encouraged.

Each year Virgil encourages the youth, both boys and girls, to participate in the t-ball, baseball, and softball programs.

The arts and crafts summer program is for students ages 6-14. This is run in conjunction with county recreation program. Instruction in archery, baseball, arts and crafts, nature study walks, and field trips to various parts are put to use.

With the cooperation of the Cortland Arts Council, a few programs of culture have been extended to the community of Virgil. Music, mime, dance, and other experiences are provided with instruction.

The Youth Commission also sponsor a Before and After School Program housed in the school. Children may arrive as early as 6:30 and breakfast is served at 8:15. They may stay as late as 6:00 p.m. Payment is made directly to the program director. The group is provided time to do homework. They also get involved with many activities.

Santa's Secret Shop

Santa's Secret Shop is a P.T.O. sponsored activity and is an unique shopping experience for Virgil students, their parents, and family. The grand opening is the evening of the Holiday concert. Offered for a nickel to five dollars is a wide variety of merchandise and handcrafted items. Anyone who is interested in selling their handcrafted items should call the chairperson.

Field Day

Each spring a day is set aside for Field Day activities. These activities are for K-6 graders. They are fun games and relays that everyone participates in. Teachers help as referees and organizers. This is a day of fun, controlled competition, and is culminated with a special treat which is supplied by the Virgil P.T.O.

Shared Decision Team

The Shared Decision Team is a building group with member representatives from the parents, staff, and teachers. Selection of members is for two-year terms with rotations arranged so that there is always an experienced member who remains on the team. The P.T.O. is responsible for nominating the parent representatives while the CSEA group nominates staff members and the C.U.T. nominates the teaching members.

The overall goal of the team is to work together to improve student performance on all State Assessments by impacting the 7 Correlates of Effective Schools in a positive way.

The group meets once a month from 3:30 – 4:30 on the last Tuesday of the month.

Wellness Team

Our building has a Wellness Team that works to support student, staff, and parent wellness. They meet the last Monday of every month and support healthy school initiatives. Past endeavors have included support of a walking program, hydration through water bottle use, hand washing school/community projects of support.

The group has been fortunate to have parent membership and this is encouraged.

Noontime

Noontime is a one-hour period during which children eat and have recess. Our children may go out after fifteen minutes of lunch, if they have eaten a good meal and have privilege time. There are also other options at noon. Some children may go back to the classroom to complete work or attend activities such as band, student council, quiz bowl, or any number of other activities.

We encourage children to eat but do not force them. We also allow them to take all the time they need and not throw away food because they feel they need more time.

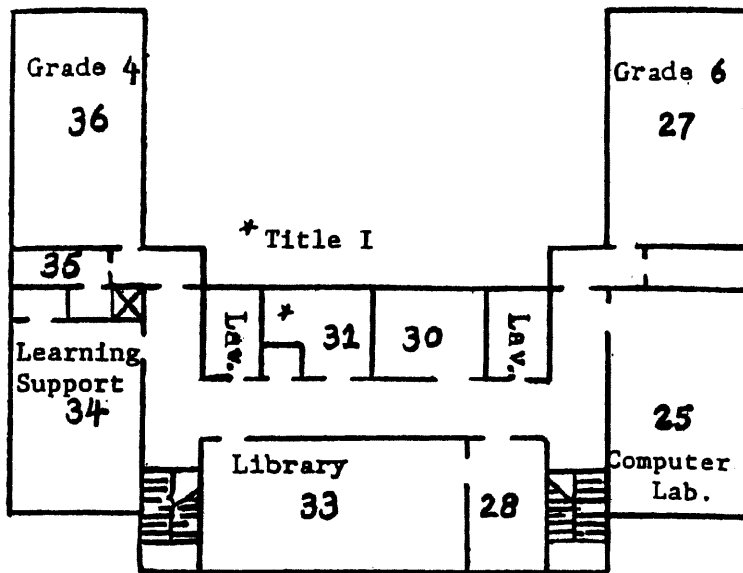
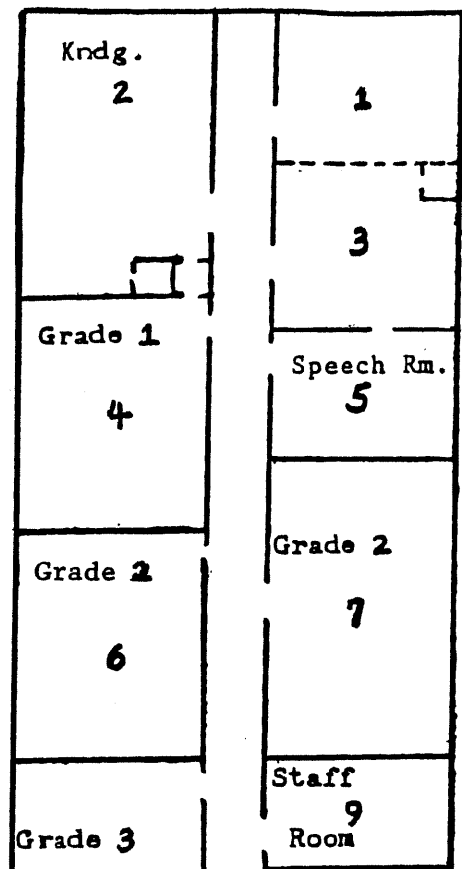
Children must be dressed for recess. It is their responsibility to remember to wear the appropriate clothing for the weather. Children participate in cooperative games, play on play equipment or group games. Everyone is encouraged to include fellow schoolmates while being helpful and careful.

Typical Student's Weekly Schedule Grades 4 – 6

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:25 – 9:00	Homeroom				
9:00 – 9:42	Core	Core	Core	Core	Core
9:44 – 10:26	Core	Core	Core	Core	Core
10:28 – 11:10	Core	Core	Core	Core	Core
11:12 – 11:50	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
11:50 – 12:00	Homeroom	Get Ready	For Lunch		
12:00 – 1:00	Playground	Lunch			
1:05 – 1:45	Social Studies	Music	Science	Art	Social Studies
1:47 – 2:27	Library	Science	Social Studies	Music	Science
2:29 – 3:09	Science	Chorus/Options	P.E.	Social Studies	Science
3:09 – 3:15	Homeroom/Dismissal 3:15				

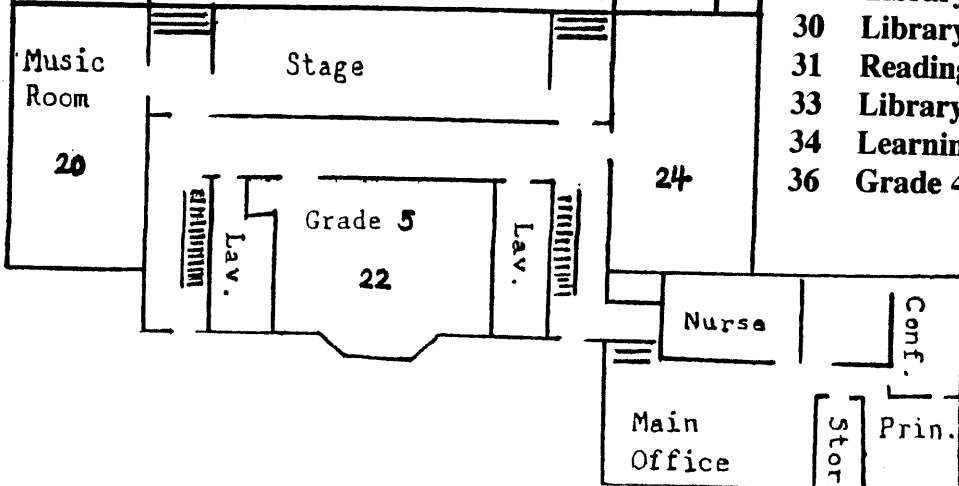
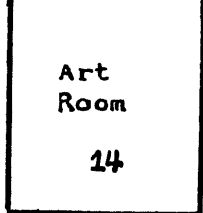
PARENTS MAY HELP STUDENTS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THEIR DAYS IN SCHOOL BY:

- 1. Stimulating the students to appreciate the opportunity to secure an education.**
- 2. Picturing the school as a happy, desirable place.**
- 3. Avoiding criticism of teachers or school and developing in the students habits of cooperation and respect.**
- 4. Encouraging punctuality and regular attendance, not permitting trifles to interfere.**
- 5. Showing an interest in the student's school work, athletics, and other activities.**
- 6. Providing a quiet place for home study with good light and ventilation.**
- 7. Seeing that students are dressed suitably in accordance with the weather.**
- 8. Stressing the value of nourishing food and sufficient rest.**
- 9. Encouraging students to respect the rights of individuals and property.**



2nd Floor

Virgil Elementary School
Floor Plan



- 1. Work Room
- 2. Kindergarten
- 3. Psychologist/Social Work
- 4. Grade 1
- 5. Speech Room
- 6. Book Room
- 7. Grade 2
- 8. Grade 3
- 9. Staff Room
- 14. Art Room
- 20. Music Room/Instrumental/String
- 22. Grade 5
- 24. Before/After School Program
- 25. Grade 6
- 27. Grade 6
- 28. Library
- 30. Library Work Room
- 31. Reading Specialist
- 33. Library
- 34. Learning Support Room
- 36. Grade 4