



# ELEMENTARY

## 2024-2025 HANDBOOK

### Office Hours

Monday - Friday  
7AM - 3:00PM

### School Day

Monday - Friday  
7:25AM - 2:15PM

**Address:** 3919 Southern Blvd. Youngstown, OH 44512

**Phone:** 330-788-8088

**Fax:** 330-788-7440

[vcsohio.org](http://vcsohio.org)

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# STATEMENT OF FAITH

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1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21).
2. We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30).
3. We believe in the deity of Christ (John 10:33), His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35), His sinless life (Hebrews 4: 15, 7:26), His miracles (John 2:11), His vicarious and atoning death (1 Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 2:9), His Resurrection (John 11:25, 1 Corinthians 15:4), His Ascension to the right hand of God (Mark 16:19), His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11).
4. We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ, and that only by God's grace and through faith alone are we saved (John 3:16–19, 5:24; Romans 3:23, 5:8–9; Ephesians 2:8–10; Titus 3:5).
5. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they are lost unto the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28–29).
6. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, Galatians 3:26–28).
7. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (Romans 8:13–14; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19–20; Ephesians 4:30, 5:18).
8. We believe that the term marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18–25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18, 7:2–5; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God's command is that there be no sexual intimacy outside of or apart from marriage between a man and woman.
9. We believe that God wonderfully foreordained and immutably created each person as either male or female in conformity with their biological sex. These two distinct yet complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26–27).

Our Statement of Faith is not exhaustive of all of our beliefs. The Bible, as the inspired and infallible Word of God, speaks with absolute authority about the proper conduct of mankind and is the unchanging foundation for all beliefs and behavior. The ACSI Board of Directors holds final interpretive authority on biblical meaning and application about faith, doctrine, policy, practice, and discipline.

# 1.0 PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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## 1.1 Mission Statement

Valley Christian School exists as a flourishing, faith-based education system to transform lives by loving more, expecting more, and being more.

## 1.2 Vision Statement

Valley Christian School will be the premier provider of education in the Mahoning Valley.

## 1.3 Philosophy Statement

### **Home & School Relationship**

Valley Christian Schools believe a child's education is the primary responsibility of parents; parents choose Christian schooling to help meet that responsibility and entrust their children to our care for their spiritual, academic, and personal growth. We believe the foundation of a successful educational experience is a healthy, proactive relationship between the parent and school. The relationship is one of covenant built on mutual trust, respect, and accountability.

### **Who We Serve**

Valley Christian Schools serves all who are willing in and around the Mahoning Valley. We embrace diversity: socio-economic, racial, ability-level, and denominational.

### **How We Teach**

Valley Christian Schools teaches students holistically through Christ-centered relationships and a faith-integrated curriculum to foster spiritual, academic, and personal growth. We offer differentiated instruction to honor and uphold the personhood of each student who is uniquely created in God's image.

### **School Culture**

Valley Christian Schools fosters a healthy school culture and climate with engaged stakeholders, professionally satisfied and developing employees, and students who are equipped for the next stages in their academic and life journeys. A growth mindset culture is present in all subjects and areas of the school including athletics and extracurricular activities.

### **What We Teach**

Valley Christian Schools values the needs of each student and is careful to foster community and collaboration as we personalize and individualize education. Each child is created as a unique individual who will grow spiritually, academically, and personally. Refer to the VCS Curriculum Guide for an overview of our Philosophy of Christian Worldview in each of these areas.

## 1.4 Expected Student Outcomes

At VCS students will demonstrate the following Expected Student Outcomes:

### **Spiritual Growth**

At Valley Christian Schools students will LOVE MORE by utilizing their VCS experience with God’s transformational love to exert positive spiritual influence with others in their peer groups, families, churches, and communities.

- Students will know Jesus as their Lord and Savior by having clear opportunities to receive Christ annually.
- Students will grow spiritually through bible classes, chapels, and at least one spiritual development event annually.
- Students will demonstrate service to others by participating in school-wide service learning projects annually.

### **Academic Growth**

At Valley Christian Schools, students will EXPECT MORE from themselves by successfully navigating a rigorous, high-quality, standards-aligned, faith-integrated academic curriculum focused on achievement and readiness for college, career, and life calling.

- Students will graduate at a 4-year rate of 100% (excluding students exempt from meeting graduation requirements because of an IEP).
- Students will show a minimum of one year annual growth in core subject areas through formative assessments, summative assessments, standardized assessments, and individual student goals.
- Students will be equipped to make wise, life-defining choices regarding their individual college, career, and life calling.

### **Personal Growth**

At Valley Christian Schools, students will BE MORE by demonstrating respect for God, others, and themselves, demonstrating empathy for the needs of others and demonstrating social-emotional skills necessary to mature into men and women conformed to Christ’s image.

- Students will grow socially and emotionally by participating in social-emotional growth activities annually.
- Students will appreciate and thrive in culturally and racially diverse environments.
- Students will be considerate of others with different viewpoints and perspectives on life.

## 1.5 Conflict Resolution

Conflict will inevitably arise from time to time among employees, students, parents, and any combination of the above. Each case is unique and cannot be evaluated nor brought to a conclusion in the same way. Therefore, the Administration follows guidelines listed below, allowing each situation to come to a just and fair resolution.

### **Matthew 18**

<sup>15</sup> “Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him



alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>17</sup> And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>23</sup> Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar and go your way. First, be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

**T = is it true?**

**H = is it helpful?**

**I = is it inspiring?**

**N = is it necessary?**

**K = is it kindness?**

### **Student-Parent/Teacher Conflicts**

Students or parents who have a concern over what they believe a teacher has said or done should always contact the teacher directly for an appointment at a time when sufficient time is available to discuss the matter adequately. The time at the beginning of the school day or between classes is not the right time for such discussions. The teacher will be required to attend to his/her teaching responsibilities and cannot take the necessary time needed to resolve the matter. In most cases speaking directly with the teacher will resolve most misunderstandings or conflicts as the teacher has the opportunity to explain the reasons for their decisions or actions.

Should a one-on-one conference with the teacher fail to resolve an issue, a parent or student may request the building Principal become involved. Then, based upon the merits of the grievance, the building Principal will hold a meeting with the parties concerned to determine the best solution to the problem. Please refer to the VCS Family Covenant for guidance.

### **Philosophy of Spiritual Life**

Valley Christian Schools is a community made up of parents, guardians, students, faculty, and staff. At the heart of this community are Christian educators who believe that actions speak louder than words and believe that both are a reflection of the heart. (Col 3:17, Luke 6:45)

At Valley Christian Schools, we believe that spiritual life is nurtured and developed through relationships in an environment created by faculty and staff who model a Christian journey in their daily words and actions. In addition, students will also engage in multiple, intentional opportunities for spiritual growth and development. Examples may include prayer, Bible class, chapel, service projects, and spiritual emphasis days. Through these daily interactions and intentional opportunities, our students will demonstrate personal spiritual growth, peer and community influence, consideration of others above themselves, and the ability to seek their life calling. (Prov. 22:6, Gal. 5:22-23, John 13:35)

## 2.0 ARRIVAL AND PICKUP

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The school day begins at 7:25 a.m. when the tardy to school bell rings, and ends at 2:15 p.m. Students should be in their seats and ready for opening exercises at 7:25 a.m. It is essential the students begin their day in a unified spirit of worship. A student who constantly misses the opening will be denied the most essential element of Christian education.

### 2.1 Arrival Process

- All car riders at the Elementary should arrive at school between 7:00 a.m. - 7:25 a.m. The tardy bell will ring at 7:35 a.m. and students must be in their classrooms ready to begin instruction. If your child is tardy, please bring them into the school through the West Entrance (Facing Southern Blvd). .
- Bus riders will be dropped off at the Elementary between 7:00 a.m. - 7:25 a.m. and will enter through the south doors.
- The south doors will lock after bus arrival and will only be used as the dismissal door. **If you need to make different arrangements for pick up, please contact the Elementary Administrative Assistant (330) 788-8088 ext. 1506 before 1:45 p.m.**
- Students who ride the bus will be called for boarding beginning at 2 p.m.
- If you have any questions please call the Administrative Assistant (330) 788-8088 ext. 1506

## 3.0 ATTENDANCE POLICY

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At Valley Christian, we believe that attendance and learning are directly related. Therefore, we emphasize student attendance to foster success in their educational endeavors. We believe student attendance is the parent's/guardian's responsibility, and student absences should be minimal.

Valley Christian Schools desires to partner with families as needs arise for student attendance. The following interventions will occur as students accumulate excused and unexcused absence hours.

- After 14 hours (2 Days) of unexcused absences or 35 Hours (4 days) of total absences, a school administrator will contact the custodial parent.

- After 28 hours (4 Days) of unexcused absences or 42 hours (6 days) of total absences, an intervention team will meet with the student and custodial parent/guardian to develop a support plan.
- If the school's efforts do not result in improved attendance, a student may be required to withdraw from school after 42 hours (6 days) of unexcused absences or 70 hours (10 days) of total absences.

### 3.1 Reporting an Absence or Tardy

If a student is absent or tardy, it is expected that the parent/guardian of the student will contact the school office and inform them of the reason for the absence or tardiness. If no contact is made from the parent/guardian, the school office will call the custodial phone number to notify the parent/guardian that the student did not report to school. Parents or guardians should contact the elementary school office to report their student off by 8 a.m.

Please clearly state the following:

- Parent/Guardian Name
- Child's name and grade
- Date of the absence or tardy
- Reason for the absence or tardy
- Approximate time of return to school

### 3.2 Excused Absences and Tardy

Students with excused absences will be allowed one day for each day absent to make up missed assignments. Students who have missed quizzes and tests during excused absences should schedule a makeup exam with their teacher on the day they return.

#### **Make-up Work Policy New Text:**

Students must provide a note to the office from a parent or guardian within 24 hours of returning to school after an absence. Upon receipt of the note, the absence can be excused. Doctors' excuses are required to excuse three or more consecutive absences. Students with excused absences are allowed one day for each day absent to make up missed assignments. Students who have missed quizzes and tests during excused absences should schedule a makeup exam with their teacher on the day they return.

Students with unexcused absences cannot make up missed assignments, quizzes, or tests.

The following situations are examples of excused absences as identified by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE):

- Illness with a doctor's note/medical verification. *Any absence for illness or injury of the child that exceeds three days absent*

*from school must be certified in writing by a physician or appropriate health professional.*

- Family death (3-day period, in certain cases, an extended period of time may be approved).
- Medical appointment with a medical excuse
- College visitation with proper verification
- An emergency or set of circumstances deemed as sufficient cause by the Principal

**Note:** Medical verification means that a physician has treated an illness or injury and has verified to the attendance office that because of the illness or injury, the student cannot attend school. **Medical notification must include the physician's name, phone number, and specific illness dates to be excused from school.**

Parents/guardians can write excuses for their child's absence in situations related to those mentioned above, as well as others deemed appropriate by the administration. **The parent or guardian must provide an explanation for the absence by email or written note to the school office and shall include the date and time of the absence.** All must turn in written notifications (both medical and familial) for excused absences to the attendance office within 1 day of the absence. Otherwise, the absence will be considered unexcused.

### 3.3 Planned Absences

When a student's absence is known ahead of time, **it is the responsibility of the parent and student to complete a "Planned Absence Application Form"**. Forms must be picked up in the school office and returned at least one week before the planned absence. Any major assignments, such as special projects or term papers, must be submitted to the teacher before the absence. Tests or examinations due during the period of absence will be administered immediately after the absence.

Planned absences must not exceed five days per school year except when the Principal approves. **Students who are designated as Excessively Absent or more will not be approved.** Teachers are not required to give additional aid or to notify students of requirements. Students must take the initiative to make the necessary arrangements for assignments.

**\*Note: Often, students who vacation while school is in session have much difficulty making up missed work. Parents are encouraged to plan vacations during school breaks when possible.**

### 3.4 Unexcused Absence or Tardy

The school day begins at 7:25 a.m. Students are expected to be in their classroom at this time. If students arrive after 7:25 a.m., they must sign in at the school office upon arrival. Students arriving at 10:30 a.m. or later will be counted  $\frac{1}{2}$  day absent. It is the student's responsibility to contact teachers for missing assignments, tests, and other information when they are absent. A student who is in attendance for less than half a class period will be counted as absent for the period unless excused by school administration. Teachers may be reached by email or phone. It is mandatory that excuses for absences and tardies be

turned in within three days so that our administration can accurately document attendance in student files. Excuses turned in late or not at all leaves a greater chance for error and miscommunication, which can result in the absence or tardy remaining unexcused. It is the desire of Valley Christian Schools to partner with families as needs arise to student attendance. The following interventions will take effect as students accumulate unexcused absence hours.

- After 20 hours of unexcused absences or tardies within a month, a school administrator will contact the custodial parent.
- After 32 hours of unexcused absences or tardies within a month, an intervention team will meet with the student and custodial parent/guardian to develop a support plan.
- After 44 hours of unexcused absences or tardies within a quarter a truancy referral will be made to the Mahoning County Juvenile Court if the intervention plan is not successful.

### 3.5 Early Dismissal Policy

VCS does not encourage early dismissal of students from class. A full day of instruction is essential to accomplish our academic goals. However, we understand that there may be a time when leaving early is necessary, such as medical appointments.

Parents who permit students to leave school must send a note to the appropriate school office **before the start of school** with the date, time of departure, time of expected return (if applicable), destination, and the reason for leaving school. Students must sign out at the Elementary school office. **Please Note: No requests for early dismissal will be accepted after 1:45 p.m. Students will not be released after 1:45 p.m. If you need your student for an appointment between 1:45 -2:15 p.m., you must pick them up before 1:45 p.m.**

If a parent or guardian calls to have a student released early, the student will not be released from class until the parent or guardian arrives. Children will only be released to those listed as Emergency Contacts.

**Please Note:** while it is acknowledged that emergencies do occur, doctor's appointments should be made before or after school hours to minimize disruptions in the student's school day.

### 3.6 Tardy to School Policy

Tardiness is defined as a student not being in the classroom when the class is scheduled to begin. Arriving late to school not only deprives the student of classroom instruction, it is a disruption to the class that is already in progress. Tardiness is calculated on an annual basis. Students who are not in their classroom and prepared to start the day at 7:24 am are considered tardy and must sign in at the appropriate office upon arrival. This means students must be **sitting in their seat** in their homeroom class when the bell rings at 7:24 am. Students arriving after 7:24 am or before 10:15 am will be considered tardy to school. Students arriving at 10:16 am or later will be counted ½ day absent.

The school administration will make the final decision whether a tardy is excused or unexcused. However, the following may be considered an **excused tardy**:

- Medical appointment accompanied by documentation from the doctor's office
- Inclement weather
- Transportation problems at home or on the way to school
- An emergency or set of circumstances, which in the judgment of the principal and/or the attendance officer, constitutes a sufficient cause for tardiness.
- Late bus confirmed by school bus garage

#### **Consequences for Unexcused Tardies:**

- **Fourth Unexcused Tardy:** Parent or guardian of the student will be notified of the student's tardy status by the attendance officer. The importance of school attendance and timely arrival will be communicated.
- **Five or More Unexcused Tardies:** The parent or guardian of the student will be contacted by building administration. Building tardy consequences will be initiated.
- **Ten or More Unexcused Tardies:** The parent or guardian will be required to meet with the building principal. The student will be placed on attendance probation which may affect the student's ability to participate in after-school activities, affect re-enrollment for the following school year, or result in dismissal from the school.

#### **Early Dismissal:**

VCS strongly discourages early dismissal of students from class. Parents who permit students to leave school prior to the end of the school day must send a note to the appropriate school office **before the start of school**. The note should indicate the date, time of departure, time of expected return (if applicable), destination, and the reason for leaving school. Students must sign out at the appropriate office, and students will only be released to individuals listed as an emergency contact.

If a parent or guardian calls to have a student released early, the student will not be released from class until the parent or guardian arrives at school. Early dismissals will be tracked and

building administrators may initiate student consequences for frequent incidences of early dismissal.

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### 3.7 Ohio Department of Education (ODE) EdChoice Scholarship Requirements

Our attendance policies are in compliance with EdChoice Scholarship requirements and attendance laws mandated by the state of Ohio. The following bullet points will explain regulations of EdChoice scholarship and attendance laws for the state of Ohio. If a student exceeds more than 20 days (130 hours) of unexcused absences, they will forfeit their EdChoice Scholarship.

## 4.0 CLINIC

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Students who become ill are sent to the clinic. If an emergency medical authorization form with signed permission to treat is not completed, VCS is not permitted to offer treatment to the student.

The student can rest in the clinic for only a brief period. If the student cannot return to class, the school nurse or administrative assistant will be requested to call the parent or emergency number so the student can go home.

A student may not make arrangements to go home without notifying the office and/or a written or verbal notification is given from the parent or guardian. If a student must leave the school premises for any reason, **THAT STUDENT MUST BE SIGNED OUT OF THE OFFICE BY THE PARENT OR AUTHORIZED PICKUP.**

No student shall knowingly be sent to school suffering from a communicable disease. Any infectious student shall be immediately removed from class, and arrangements shall be made for his return home. **The student must be fever and vomit-free for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medications) before coming back to school.**

## 5.0 SCHOOL HEALTH POLICY

VCS employs one part-time Registered Nurse, one full-time Certified Health Aide, and one full-time Licensed Practical Nurse. Their primary responsibility is to ensure a healthy and safe environment for all students and staff. They do not serve as a replacement for a family physician but are available to you as a resource for direction involving medical issues affecting a student.

*\*Note: By Ohio State Law: any person suspecting abuse of a child (physical and/or mental) MUST report such incidents to the Mahoning County Children's Services Board.*

### 5.1 Immunization and Exemptions

In accordance with Ohio Department of Health and Title XXX111 [33] Education Chapter 3313.367 and 3701.13 Boards of Education, all children entering school are required to have up-to-date immunizations. Kindergarten entrance requires a hearing and vision screen. A physician's certificate or school health record, with actual dates of immunization, is the only acceptable document of identification. According to Section 3313.671, all students must be up to date prior to beginning school. If a student does not meet the requirements, they may not attend school

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until they do.

However, a student may be exempt from the immunization requirement if:

- A physician or parent verifies in writing that the child has had natural rubella and/or mumps
- A child's physician has certified in writing that a particular immunization is medically unadvised
- A written statement from a parent or legal guardian that objects to immunization for a good cause.

When immunization updates are made, it is necessary to send the school a copy from your healthcare provider. **Students who are not current with their immunizations will not be allowed to begin classes on the first day of the new school year until this document is provided or a waiver is obtained.**

## 5.2 Policies

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to notify the school nurse of any changes in their child's health status, especially allergic reactions, medication, asthma, etc.

### Medications

Students needing medication are encouraged to receive the medication at home whenever possible. Suppose under exceptional circumstances, a child is required to take oral medication during school hours and the parent cannot be at school to administer the medication. In that case, only the nurse or medical assistant will be permitted to administer the medication.

### Over-the-Counter

If a student has over-the-counter medication, arrangements must be made with the school nurse or medical assistant for dispensing. The parent or guardian will be required to fill out a form (located in the [VCS Website](#) ) specifying the dosage and conditions under which the student is to have the medicine.

The nurse and medical assistant must receive a signed Request for the Administration of Over-the-Counter Medications by school personnel.

The law sets forth the following requirements which must be met before the drug may be administered:

VCS must receive a written request that the drug be administered to the student. This request must be signed by the parent/guardian or other person having charge of the student. There are two different forms available, one for prescription medications and one for over-the-counter medications.

### Prescription Medications

The nurse or medical assistant must receive a physician and parent request, allowing permission for Valley Christian to administer medication to the student. A Medication Form signed by the doctor prescribing the drug must be received. Medication Forms are available in the nurse's

office. The written statement should contain all the following information:

The parent/guardian or person having charge of the student must agree to submit a revised Doctor's statement, if any, if the information required changes.

The employee authorized to administer the drug must receive a copy of the statements required as stated above.

All medications must be in the original labeled container, in which it was dispensed by the doctor or pharmacist.

No teacher, staff member, or administrator can supervise, or administer medications (including over-the-counter medications) to any student.

Occasionally, students are treated with medication at home. It is important for the nurse to be notified so that appropriate personnel can be made aware of any possible problematic reactions during the school day.

#### **Excuse from Participation in School Activities**

If a student must be excluded from activities, such as physical education classes, for more than three days, a written excuse from a physician stating the diagnosis and dates of exclusion is necessary. If the date to resume activity is not specified in an original excuse, a follow-up release of when to resume activity is required by the physician.

#### **Food Allergies**

VCS is committed to the safety and health of all students with food allergies. We abide by the Ohio State Rules and Regulations pertaining to food allergies. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to notify the school of severe food allergies. Please contact the Kitchen Manager directly for dietary substitutions in the cafeteria menu.

#### **Student Screenings**

The school nurse conducts hearing and vision screenings. BMI is also calculated for students in various grades, in accordance with Ohio Health Department regulations. Screening, by its very nature, is a quick process and only identifies problems that are obvious. It does not replace parental responsibility to monitor the child's development in conjunction with the family dentist and pediatrician. There will be notification regarding all screenings. If for some reason a parent or guardian chooses not to have their student participate in a screening, written notification must be given to the school nurse.

## **5.3 Contagious Conditions**

#### **Chickenpox/ Shingles**

Students are excluded from school until all vesicles and scabs are dry. This usually takes about one week from the onset of a rash. Chickenpox is a reportable disease, and a parent or guardian must notify the school if a student contracts chickenpox. The school nurse will check the student prior to readmission to the school.

### Cold/Cough Symptoms

If a student is experiencing discomfort that would interfere with his/her school performance, it is requested that the student be kept at home until he/she is able to resume normal activity. If there is a prolonged cough with or without a fever a physician should be consulted. A student also may be sent home or asked to remain at home if there is a purulent or discolored nasal discharge. The student is permitted to return after the nasal discharge becomes clear.

### Conjunctivitis (Pink-Eye)

This condition is easily spread by direct contact with discharge from the affected eye(s). Students should stay home when their eyes are inflamed and draining. Prescribed treatment is normally antibiotics. A physician will indicate when it is appropriate for the student to return to school. A physician's note is required for readmission as proof of treatment.

### Fever

If a student's temperature is 100 degrees, or higher, it is Valley Christian School policy that the student remain at home until they are **fever-free for 24 hours without taking a fever-reducing medication**. The student must be accompanied with a signed note from the parent/guardian stating that the student has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. If the student's temperature is 100 degrees or higher while at school it is school policy that someone **MUST** come to pick up the student. This is a safety measure for the student with the fever and all other students.

### Head Lice (Pediculosis)

Head lice continues to be one of the most prevalent communicable childhood conditions among school age children. Once detected the student may not return to school until after treatment and the nit removal. It is recommended that the school nurse be contacted for advice on treatment. The student must be checked by the school nurse prior to readmission.

### Bed Bugs

If a student is found to have bed bugs on their person, they will discretely be removed from class and taken to the school clinic. The school nurse will follow the protocol listed below with complete discretion:

- Check student's clothing and belongings
- Non-essential items should be stored in a sealed plastic container for the day and overnight if possible.
- Contact the student's parents
- Ask the parents to send a clean set of clothes in a sealed plastic bag for the school to keep in case another bug is found on them.
- Send bed bug information home
- Student will not be excluded from school
- School custodian will clean and sanitize the classroom and locker

### MRSA

MRSA is a bacterial infection usually involving the skin that can be resistant to treatment with some of the more common antibiotics. It can be treated with stronger antibiotics. If a student is

diagnosed with MRSA, the school must be notified immediately. All information is kept confidential. A physician's note is required for admission to the school.

### Rashes

A suspicious rash with or without a fever should be evaluated by the student's physician.

### Ringworm

Ringworm is not caused by a worm, but by various types of fungi. Ringworm begins as a small red patch or bump that spreads outward, so that each affected area takes on the appearance of a red scaly outer ring with a clear center area. Itching often accompanies the infection. The nurse will notify parents/guardians of possible lesions. If the lesion can be covered, and the child is cooperative with leaving it covered the student is permitted to attend school. However, if the lesion is large and cannot be completely covered the student may not return to school until treatment has been started. If confirmed cases of ringworm are identified, a letter will go home to all students in the affected child's classroom.

### Sore Throat/ Strep Throat

A sore throat in conjunction with swollen glands may indicate strep throat. A fever is not always present with strep throat. Other symptoms may include a headache and/or upset stomach. A student with strep throat must be under the care of a physician and may return to school after twenty-four hours of antibiotic therapy.

### Vomiting/ Diarrhea

A child with vomiting and/or diarrhea should be kept at home until symptoms have subsided, and the child is able to keep down food or liquid. If the child throws up during the night or in the morning prior to school, the student should NOT come to school.

## 5.4 Missing School for Illness

If a student is sent home from school due to fever, vomiting/diarrhea, **they MAY NOT be in school** the next day. Please contact the Administrative Assistant the day after the student was sent home to record his/her absence.

## 5.5 Student Illness while in School

The nurse or designated school Administration will determine if a student is too ill to remain at school. If this happens, a parent or guardian will be contacted and arrangements to pick up his/her child should occur **within one hour**. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached the nurse will begin to contact persons listed on the emergency contact form until arrangements can be made for the student to be picked up. **If the student is not picked up within a reasonable amount of time or the parent fails to make arrangements with the nurse, the student will not be able to return to school until the parent has a meeting with the Principal to discuss the situation.**

## 5.6 Returning to School After Illness

A note must accompany the student when returning to school after an illness. Please contact the office if there are any questions concerning illness days.

## 5.7 Medical Action Plans

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VCS students with an active seizure disorder diagnosis must have an individualized seizure action plan on file with the school nurse. The plan should be updated yearly.

Students with asthma must have an asthma action plan and medication authorization form on file with the school nurse. The plan should be updated yearly.

# 6.0 SCHOOL DRESS CODE

**All uniform shirts are purchased by visiting the VCS website at [vcsohio.org](http://vcsohio.org) > Parent Resources Tab > School Uniforms Order.**

## 6.1 General Guidelines for All Students

The following guidelines describe a set of standards governing general appearance including grooming, and the uniform dress code. We consider **modesty** to be a guiding principle for student appearance both during the school day and at all VCS events on or off campus.

*\*Note: All clothing items must be size appropriate. **The administration reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of specific clothing, hairstyles, jewelry, etc.***

Students deemed to be out of compliance with the dress code that cannot be corrected (e.g. remove hoodie) will be sent to the office to call home. Acceptable clothing **MUST** be brought to the school.

## 6.2 Dress Code

K-2 School Uniform	
Article Type	Dress Code Stipulations/ Conduct

## **Personal Grooming**

### **Permitted:**

- Hair should be neat, clean and out of the student's eyes.
- Fingernails must be of appropriate length (no artificial nails)

### **Not Permitted:**

- Hairstyle may not be offensive, radical (i.e., unnatural hair color, mohawks, etc.), designed to be distracting, or draw attention.
- Body piercings (boys and girls)
- Vulgar or offensive visible tattoos

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Tops</h2>	<p><b>Permitted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All students must wear V.C.S. polo shirts</li> <li>● Polo shirts must not be longer than 3" past the beltline.</li> <li>● Layering of shirts is permitted if all layers are school permitted colors.</li> <li>● Undershirts or turtlenecks may be worn if solid gray, black, blue, yellow, or white</li> <li>● Undergarments must not be visible through the uniform shirt</li> </ul> <p><b>Outerwear:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plain dress sweaters that are solid blue, black, white or gray with no designs or patterns.</li> <li>● V.C.S. Track jackets worn over top of V.C.S. polo shirt</li> </ul> <p><b>Not Permitted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sweatshirts of any type</li> <li>● Hoodies</li> <li>● Other athletic wear (crew neck sweater, warm-ups, hooded jacket, etc.)</li> </ul>
<h2 style="margin: 0;">Bottoms</h2>	<p><b>Permitted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Solid colored, traditional uniform style slacks are required and must be black, navy blue or khaki beige.</li> <li>● Uniform style jumpers, skirts or skorts are permitted (girls only) no higher than 2 inches above the knee</li> </ul> <p><b>Not Permitted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sweats are not permitted.</li> <li>● Cargo pants are not permitted.</li> <li>● Jeans or denim material</li> </ul> <p><i>*Note: Uniform shorts may be worn any day that the outside temperature reaches over 70 degrees.</i></p>

<h2>Shoes</h2>	<p><b>Permitted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dress shoes must be black, tan, gray, or brown.</li> <li>● Solid colored boots that are mid-calf or below may be worn (black, gray, blue, white, or brown)</li> <li>● Snow boots may be worn to and from school (student must change into dress code appropriate shoes for the entire school day)</li> <li>● Any athletic shoes</li> <li>● Heels should not exceed 1 inch</li> <li>● Shoes must cover all toes</li> <li>● Socks or stockings must be worn with shoes at all times.</li> </ul> <p><b>Not Permitted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Heely shoes</li> <li>● Boots above the mid-calf</li> <li>● Moccasins, open sandals, slippers, Uggs, shower shoes,</li> <li>● Crocs, or flip-flops.</li> <li>● Shoes without backs.</li> </ul>
<h2>Accessories</h2>	<p><b>Permitted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Boys must wear black, navy blue or brown belts if pants are not elastic. Cloth belts are permitted.</li> <li>● Boys may wear clear or small stud earrings only</li> <li>● Backpacks must be kept on hooks in the classroom or hallways.</li> </ul> <p><b>Not Permitted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All facial piercings (i.e., nose, tongue, cheek, etc.), gauges, hoops, and makeup for boys</li> <li>● Backpack or large purses</li> <li>● Facial (i.e., nose, tongue, cheek, etc.) piercings for girls</li> <li>● Bandanas</li> </ul>



## 7.0 STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

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The Kingdom culture of VCS aims to create an environment that is safe and conducive to learning. We accomplish this through two of our four Spiritual Values: “CHARACTER Matters” and “HONOR Lifts”. The Staff will seek to teach and reinforce these values through behavior expectations individually and as a school community.

### CHARACTER MATTERS

- Be responsible and ready to learn
- Be prepared and arrive to class on time
- Give your best effort and work hard
- Grow in the “Fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-23)

### HONOR LIFTS

- Respect teachers and other adults
- Respect fellow classmates
- Follow rules with a good attitude
- Speak with kind words

## 8.0 VCS Elementary DISCIPLINE SYSTEM

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### 8.1 Progressive Discipline Policy

School-wide discipline seeks to ensure that the school culture and environment are safe and conducive to learning for all students. An effective school-wide discipline plan guides students toward Godly character as they honor their teachers and peers through words and actions. School-wide discipline will be applied consistently to all students.

At Valley Christian Schools, discipline communicates the love of Christ through consistent, fair, and restorative consequences. Administration, teachers, and support staff will carefully monitor individual student behavior and collaborate to determine the need for corrective action. Behavior issues requiring discipline will be evidenced through the student's behavior ladder or demerit count.

Some students may present behavioral, emotional and/or social issues which span both discipline and development. Students with moderate to severe behavior concerns will be developed and supported with consistent interventions through a tiered system of support and are expected to demonstrate behavior management progress.

Attending VCS is a privilege and not a right. Therefore, matters that come to the attention of VCS from outside of school may be dealt with at the discretion of the administration and impact a student's enrollment status at VCS. Students not adhering to the Student Code of Conduct may be asked to leave if progress is not made through development and support.

Consequences are confidential and only discussed with appropriate VCS staff, the custodial parent/guardian, and student. Additionally, VCS cannot disclose or discuss consequences for other students, as this would be a breach of confidentiality. Administrators have the right to exercise appropriate consequences on a case-by-case basis according to their discretion.

## 8.2 Pleasant Grove: Disciplinary Levels

### Level 1

*These minor behaviors are when a student fails to meet classroom expectations and/or the school's cultural expectations. These behaviors do not cause significant disruption to themselves or others yet are still a distraction or an act of defiance in some fashion.*

Examples may include but are not limited to:

- Dress code violation
- Classroom rules violation
- Misuse of cell phone
- Horseplay, minor shoving/pushing
- Minor disruptive behavior
- Inappropriate cursing or foul language
- Lying/cheating
- Inappropriate use of school property or materials
- Non-compliance

### Level 2

*These are moderately severe or minor chronic behaviors that persist despite receiving warnings or appropriate consequences.*

Examples may include but are not limited to:

- Major pushing/shoving (physical injury)
- Disrespect/insubordination
- Theft
- Major classroom disruption

### Level 3

*These are behaviors that may result in a greater level of defiance or threat of safety to the student body or staff in a way that disrupts the learning environment.*

Examples may include but are not limited to:

- Threat
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Fighting
- Damaging school property
- Immoral conduct
- Weapons on school property
- Other severe/destructive behaviors

## 8.3 School-wide Developmental Supports

VCS school administration, support personnel, and faculty will use the tiered support system to work with students, both in small groups and one-on-one, to increase positive behaviors and attitudes toward school and learning and to help students develop positive relationships with peers, teachers, and staff.

### Tier 1 - Universal

- Active supervision
- Safe & positive school climate
- Social skills instruction

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive and preventative in nature. School-wide systems of support for all students.</li> <li>• Delivered in classroom and school initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive, proactive classroom level discipline</li> <li>• Teaching school behavior expectations</li> <li>• Progress monitoring on classroom assignments and universal screeners.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tier 2 - Selected</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term, evidence -based interventions designed to provide rapid response for students not improving.</li> <li>• Each campus will determine when a student is placed in Tier 2 support according to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Behavior (20-30 demerits)</li> <li>○ Academic</li> <li>○ Attendance</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Delivered by the School Administrators, Support Staff, and Faculty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavior Intervention Plans created and/or supported through Branching Minds</li> <li>• MTSS Tier 2 interventions</li> <li>• Parent/Guardian meeting required.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples May Include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community supports</li> <li>• Specialized group interventions</li> <li>• Behavior report cards</li> <li>• Self-monitoring tracking system</li> <li>• Explicit instruction on a deficit skill</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tier 3 - Targeted</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term, intensive interventions for students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MTSS Tier 3 interventions</li> <li>• Parent/Guardian meeting required</li> <li>• Possible recommendation for withdrawal or expulsion</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples May Include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one instruction in SEL or behavior areas of concern</li> <li>• Last chance behavior contract</li> <li>• Remediation in deficit academic skills</li> </ul>

## 8.4 Definition of Terms

### Demerits:

Students receive demerit points for misbehaviors in Levels 2, and 3. No demerit points are assigned for Level 1. Only classroom level warnings or consequences are assigned. Excessive demerits may impact the student’s ability to participate in extra-curricular, athletic, and/or other school activities. In determining eligibility, school administration may consider all relevant factors, including but not limited to, previous disciplinary action, the nature of the misbehavior, and the student’s academic performance. Behavior probation will be determined by the demerits.

### Lunch Detention:

Students must report immediately to the assigned room after getting their lunch.

## 8.5 Saturday School

Saturday School will be held on a designated Saturday. Students will be assigned menial assignments to complete or assigned community service. No sleeping or visitors will be permitted at Saturday School. Assigned students will attend a continuous two-hour period. Students must arrive on time at the designated location. Students must provide their own transportation to and from Saturday School. Failure to report to Saturday School will result in “Out-of-school” Suspension. If the student is absent for Saturday School, they must serve it upon their return to school.

Note: Any student placed on suspension, whether in-school or out, relinquishes his/her right to participate in or be a spectator at any school event for the duration of the suspension.

## 8.6 In-School Suspension

In-School Suspension will be assigned to students for disciplinary offenses. Students must report to the assigned room at the time provided by the administrator with all books, materials, and supplies. During In-School Suspension, students are expected to follow the VCS Code of Conduct, rules, and policies. Failure to do so will result in Out-of-School Suspension. **If the student is absent from In-School Suspension, they must serve it upon their return to school.**

Note: Any student placed on suspension, whether in-school or out, relinquishes his/her right to participate in or be a spectator at any school event for the duration of the suspension.

## 8.7 Out-of-School Suspension

Out-of-School Suspension bans the student from being on school grounds. Student’s parents/guardians will be notified of the reason for suspension and the duration of time for it. Students who are serving out-of-school suspension will be permitted to make-up any assignments missed during the suspension period for reduced credit. Principals may use discretion in regard to student work in suspensions involving severe behavior issues.

Note: Any student placed on suspension, whether in school or out, relinquishes his/her right to participate in or be a spectator at any school event for the duration of the suspension.

## 8.8 Expulsion

A student whose behavior is determined to be a disruption to the learning of others or is hazardous to the health and safety of others may be recommended for expulsion at any time during the school year. The administration reserves the right to recommend expulsion of any student for reasonable cause. In making such a recommendation the administration will take into consideration the student’s attitudes, behaviors, and level of agreement with VCS core values and other school policies.

Parents will be asked to withdraw a student if all forms of remediation have been exhausted, and the parents are no longer in covenant with the values of VCS. If parents refuse to withdraw, the student will be expelled.

Students who are no longer eligible for enrollment at VCS may be restricted from attending VCS events for a period of time.

1.3.24

## 8.9 Anti-Bullying Policy

Valley Christian Schools is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. This policy aims to prevent and address harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) behavior, ensuring the well-being and academic success of our students. The school environment will be created through the spiritual life of students which is nurtured and developed through relationships in the school environment rooted in personal and spiritual growth.

### **Definition:**

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, in accordance with ORC 3313.666, means any intentional written, verbal, graphic, or physical acts, including electronically transmitted acts (i.e., Internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand-held device), either overt or covert, by a student or group of students toward another student(s) with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule or humiliate. Such behaviors are prohibited on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation, or at any official school bus stop.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include the following:

1. An imbalance of Power: those who bully use their power; such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
2. Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically, attacking someone verbally, and excluding someone on purpose with intent to harm emotions.

There are three types of bullying:

1. Verbal Bullying: saying or writing harmful things. This includes but not limited to:
  - o Teasing
  - o Name Calling
  - o Inappropriate sexual comments

- Taunting
  - Threatening to cause harm
2. Social/Cyber Bullying: Sometimes referred to as relational bullying, social bullying involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships on campus and off. This includes but not limited to:
- Leaving someone out on purpose
  - Telling other peers false statements regarding a person or persons
  - Spreading rumors
  - Using social media platforms to attack, spread rumors, induce fear or panic, and or intent to cause someone to self-harm via peer pressure. Social media platforms are not limited to the following: SnapChat, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, Messenger, WeChat, QQ, telegram, Douyin, Reddit, Discord, LINE, Stack Exchange, Twitch, Likee, Picsart, and Tieba.
3. Physical Bullying: Involved hurting a person's body or possessions. This includes but not limited to:
- Hitting/Kicking/Pinching
  - Spitting
  - Tripping/Pushing
  - Taking or breaking someone's personal belongings
  - Making mean or rude hand gestures
  - Intimidating someone by purposefully following them around and or making someone feel fearful.

Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school building, all outside threats will be handled in the appropriate fashion as laid out below.

Valley Christian Schools will not tolerate bullying and is committed to working toward a safe place for all people physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and socially.

### **Anti-HIB Procedures**

School personnel must report prohibited incidents of which they are aware to the school principal or other administrator designated by the principal.

Custodial parent(s) or guardian(s) of any student involved in a prohibited incident must be notified in accordance with the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974," and have access to any written reports pertaining to the incident.

### **Procedures:**

#### **Reporting:**

1. Any suspicions and/or evidence of bullying of any kind should be immediately brought to the attention of the administration or the school counselor.

2. Valley Christian Schools promotes two options to anonymously report information.
  - a. **Local Tip Line** - Youngstown Police Department Non-Emergency Number **330-747-7911**
  - b. **State Tip Line** - Ohio State Tip Line Number **844-723-3764**
3. School personnel must promptly report any prohibited incidents they become aware of to the school principal or another administrator designated by the principal.

#### Documentation, Response, and Investigation:

1. All reported incidents will be documented by the teacher or staff member in FACTS, including details of the incident, involved parties, witnesses, and any supporting evidence.
2. Upon receiving a report, the school administration will initiate a thorough investigation, respecting the privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved. VCS staff are considered mandated reporters and will notify law enforcement and child protective services if suspected abuse, harm, or danger is found. VCS must cooperate with investigations by outside agencies if notified by authority.
3. The school administration will respond promptly and take appropriate actions to address the reported incident, ensuring the safety and well-being of the affected student(s).

#### Prevention and Retaliation:

1. Valley Christian Schools is committed to our embedded VCS Spiritual Values of Character and Honor and using opportunities to educate students on the power of their words and actions to prevent new or recurring incidents of HIB.
  - a. The school will provide educational programs and initiatives that promote understanding, respect, empathy, and positive communication skills.
  - b. Retaliation against individuals who report HIB incidents in good faith is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

#### Disciplinary Procedures:

1. Any student or school personnel found guilty of harassing, intimidating, or bullying others will face disciplinary action, which may include but is not limited to counseling, detention, suspension, or expulsion, in accordance with the VCS disciplinary policies.
2. Disciplinary procedures will be fair and consistent, taking into account the severity and frequency of the behavior, the age and maturity of the student(s) involved, and any applicable legal requirements.

#### False Reports:

1. Making deliberately false reports of HIB incidents is a serious offense. Valley Christian Schools will respond promptly to such incidents and take appropriate disciplinary action.



VCS Training:

1. VCS Teachers receive training which is compliant with the Ohio ORC.
2. VCS school-wide emphasis is to develop a culture of caring and sense of belonging by acknowledging one another's unique qualities and worth in Jesus Christ. Intentional instruction on caring for one another is done from a Biblical worldview in Bible small groups, chapels, and counselor-led guidance lessons throughout the year. In addition, faculty and staff model care and respect for all students and adults on campus.

Valley Christian Schools is dedicated to creating a safe and respectful environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally as we seek to Love More, Expect More, Be More. We encourage open communication and collaboration among students, staff, parents, and the community to foster a positive school culture and prevent bullying behavior.

## **9.0 DRUGS, ALCOHOL, STEROIDS**

Valley Christian Schools promotes healthy lifestyle choices by its students. Valley Christian students who possess, use, or appear under the influence are in contradiction to God's Word, and interfere with the school's responsibility of providing a safe and healthy environment for all students. The use of such substances impairs the student's ability to learn therefore limiting the ability of the school to educate the student and accomplish our mission.

## **10.0 WEAPONS POLICY**

Valley Christian School considers student possession of, use of, or threats of use of weapons as a serious offense, and will not tolerate such by anyone enrolled as a student on school property or at school events. Statements made by a student claiming or boasting of a weapon at school or at school events will be dealt with in the same manner as a "threat".

Students who possess a weapon or who carry, exhibit, display, draw or threaten to use any of these items apparently capable of producing bodily harm in a manner which manifests intent to intimidate another or warrants alarm for the safety of others shall be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion. At any point, VCS administration may contact local law enforcement authorities.

A 'weapon' includes, but is not limited to: A firearm, which is a weapon or device from which a projectile may be fired by an explosive; an air gun, which includes any air pistol or air rifle, designed to propel a BB or pellet; any knife, cutting, or stabbing instrument with a sharp blade set in a handle; Stun gun; Slingshot; any explosive device including fireworks/poppers. These items may not be kept on school property and may include but are not limited to, lockers, backpacks, bags, vehicles, etc.

Any suspicions and/or evidence of threats of any kind should be immediately brought to the attention of administration or the school counselor.

## 10.1 Threat Assessment Policy

Revised 3.31.23

The VCS Threat Assessment Policy outlines protocol to maintain the safety of the school community in the event a threat of harm is communicated toward the school, member(s) of the VCS staff, or member(s) of the VCS student body.

**\*\*If there is a perceived threat of immediate danger, law enforcement should be contacted immediately.**

Any staff member or student who receives communication from an individual that is perceived to be a threat of harm toward the school, staff, or students should contact the building Principal. For the purpose of this policy, communication is defined as face-to-face communication, communication that occurs on a social media platform, telephone communication (verbal or text), and communication in the form of handwritten notes that is not perceived as immediate danger. If the communication is perceived as an immediate threat, law enforcement should be contacted immediately.

The individual communicating the perceived threat should not be left unattended while the staff member or student communicates the perceived threat to the building Principal or his/her designee. If necessary, the building Principal or his/her designee will come to the location of the student or staff member desiring to communicate the perceived threat.

Upon receiving communication in regard to a perceived threat, building Principal or his/her designee are responsible for ensuring the assessment of the credibility of the threat using the checklist established in this policy. Based on the results of the credibility assessment, building Principal or his/her designee will determine any actions needed to maintain the safety of the school, staff, and students.

If a VCS student is responsible for the perceived threat, building Principal or his/her designee will continue to attempt to contact the parent or guardians of the student until direct contact has been made. The school counselor (if available) will also provide necessary resources to the building Principal and assist with any needed referrals for the student. The building Principal will determine in collaboration with the President when a situation may warrant calling the local police department for school regarding

mandatory reporting. Due to confidentiality issues, any outcomes involving a student and a perceived threat will be shared on an as-needed basis.

Documentation of the threat or perceived threat and any actions resulting from the threat or perceived threat will be generated and maintained in the counselor's office. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

The building Principal and counselor (if available) will determine what further action is necessary for the individual who was the perceived target of the threat if applicable.

## 10.2 Threat Protocol

\*\* If there is a concern a weapon is involved, law enforcement should be contacted immediately.

1. An individual verbally communicates a perceived threat of harm or exhibits behavior that communicates a perceived threat of harm to a staff member or to another student. Communication may occur face-to-face, on a social media platform, through telephone communication (verbal or text), or through handwritten notes.
2. If the individual is present on a VCS campus, they should be located immediately and not be left unattended.
3. The school counselor, dean of students, or building Principal is contacted. The appropriate communication pathway is dictated by the age of the individual communicating the threat and whether or not the threat is being communicated during regular school hours. If the perceived threat is communicated by a student during the school day, please contact the Principal.
4. School counselors and the building Principal (or their designee) will meet with the individual communicating a perceived threat.

Steps five through nine will be implemented if the individual communicating the perceived threat is a student.

If the individual communicating the perceived threat is an adult, the building Principal will assess the credibility of the perceived threat using the threat checklist and determine needed actions based on the results of the threat assessment.

5. If the individual is a student, school counselors will contact the building Principal.
6. School counselors and the building Principal will determine the credibility of the threat using the threat checklist established in this policy.
7. The school counselor will continue to attempt to contact the parent or guardian of the student until direct contact has been made.
8. School counselors will assist the building Principal in providing resources, referrals, and any follow-up interventions that may be needed for the student who communicated the perceived threat up to and including when a student may return to school if applicable.

9. School counselors will generate proper documentation of the threat and maintain confidentiality.

### 10.3 Threat Credibility Checklist for Administration

- Does the individual have a detailed plan to threaten harm to the school, member of the staff, or member of the student body?
- Is there a specific target?
- Are there details outlining a specific act?
- Does the individual have access to weapons?
- Are there other people involved in the plan?
- Is this a manifestation of a disability? If the student has an IEP, contact the Director of Special Education immediately.
- Has any physical evidence been found to show a present threat (i.e., drawings, written plans, social media communications, text messages, emails)?
- Has the individual made any known comments or hints to teachers or friends?
- Has the individual shown any noticeable changes in personality, behavior, or academic performance?
- Are there any known family problems or difficult situations occurring in the life of the individual?
- Does the individual have a history of behavior problems or physically aggressive behavior?
- If the individual is a student, has he or she been having stressful interactions with peers?

Additional information:

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### 10.4 Protocol For A Credible Threat

- The individual who made the threat should be supervised at all times by the VCS faculty or staff member who is present during the threat. If an individual becomes aware of a threat they will locate the individual and contact administration. The building Principal (his/her designee) shall determine who will supervise the individual.
- President is contacted and told there is a credible threat.
- President in collaboration with the building Principal will contact local police authorities and Child Protective Services for school on next steps.
- President, building Principal (his/her designee), or school counselor will put school on lockdown or evacuate students and staff, if needed
- The building Principal (his/her designee) or school counselor will locate targeted individual(s)
- The building Principal (his/her designee) or school counselor will contact targeted individual(s) parents
- The building Principal (his/her designee) or school counselor will contact the parents or family member of the individual who made the credible threat.
- After the incident is resolved, the building Principal (his/her designee) or school counselor will work with the individual who made the credible threat and targets of the threat to

- process information and create a safety plan or check in on well-being.
- The school counselor will provide support, resources, and/or outside counseling referrals.
- The building Principal and school counselor will create a plan for the individual with specific information and steps for the individual to return to VCS.

## 11.0 TECHNOLOGY POLICY AND AGREEMENT

The Administration of Valley Christian School recognizes that an effective education system develops students who are globally aware, civically engaged, and capable of managing their lives and careers. The Administration also believes that students need to be proficient users of information, media, and technology to succeed in an ever-changing digital world. All terms and conditions in the VCS Technology Policy and Agreement are applicable to any campus within the VCS School System. As a prerequisite, students and their parents must sign and submit the signature page of the Valley Christian Parent-Student Handbook each year. Valley Christian Schools provide students, faculty, and staff access to desktops, laptops, Chromebooks, iPads, iMacs, printers, and any other network-connected device. As used herein computer(s) refers to any of the above-named devices connected to the VCS network. A computer network is defined as computers sharing resources and using common communication protocols for information sharing on or provided by network nodes. The school reserves the right to prioritize using and accessing the network. The use of technology is a privilege and not a right. Technology, when used responsibly, is a means to make life easier. Any use of the VCS Network or any of its property may not be used for discriminatory or unlawful purposes by students or staff.

VCS will not be responsible for any damages suffered by any individual, or other users. All VCS students, faculty, and staff are responsible for his or her actions regarding the use of computers, computer services, network access, passwords, files, and user accounts.

### 11.1 Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

In this diverse and challenging technological climate, advances in telecommunications and other technologies have made educational institutions need to rethink the strategy for providing digital resources to students. To support appropriate and adequate access to these resources students, faculty, and staff have access to the secure VCS Network. A *Network* is defined as all of the interconnected devices that share data and resources with each other. All use of the VCS network must support at least one or more student courses of study, and be consistent with the mission of VCS (Section 1.0).

The Internet is a gateway that gives access to any publicly available file server in the world. As such, it may be impossible to limit all access to only educational and research material when considering the varied learning styles, teaching styles, and varied instructional strategies utilized by teachers and staff. VCS in conjunction with its IT networking company has implemented various monitoring, filtering, and blocking strategies to ensure the safety and security of each student while utilizing the network, pursuant to the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Activities that are permitted and encouraged include but are not limited to the following:

- Investigation of topics and content assigned in school to provide educational enrichment
- Investigation of topics and opportunities outside of school related to employment, community resources, or further education
- Idea sharing with other VCS students, faculty, and staff.
- File sharing related to class activities and/or assignments (not including cheating or plagiarizing electronic content)

### 11.1.2 Prohibited Uses

Any attempt to log onto the Internet or the school's network/system as a systems administrator may result in a loss of user privileges at the school. Any user identified as a security risk by the school administration, teacher, or Technology Coordinator due to a **history** of actual or suspected unauthorized access to other computer(s), network(s), or system(s), may be denied access to school's computers, networks, and/or systems.

Activities that are not permitted include but are not limited to the following:

- Going live on social media on any school-issued computer at any time
- Sharing accounts, passwords, or assigned Chromebook with anyone
  - Students will change their passwords at the beginning of each school year and passwords are shared with the teacher. Each time a student changes his/her password, the teacher and Technology Coordinator will have access to the password.
- Sharing of personal information (address, phone number) about family, friends, yourself, or anyone else
- Unauthorized access to other school computers, networks, and information systems
- Downloading, installation, and use of games, audio files, video files, or other applications (including shareware or freeware) without permission or approval of the Building Principal
- Personal gain, commercial solicitation and compensation of any kind
- Hacking, cracking, vandalizing, the introduction of viruses, worms, Trojan horses, time bombs and changes to hardware, software, and monitoring tools
- Support or opposition for ballot measures, candidates or any other political activity
- Cyberbullying, hate mail, defamation, harassment of any kind, discriminatory jokes and remarks which include all social media account
- Any use that violates or encourages others to violate the law
- Information posted, sent, or stored online that could endanger others (e.g. bomb construction, drug manufacture)
- Accessing, uploading, downloading, storage and distribution of obscene, pornographic or sexually explicit material
- Interacting with any student or anyone else in any sexually explicit manner while on the VCS network

- Linking the VCS web page to a student's personal home page
- Attaching unauthorized equipment to the school network. Any such equipment will be confiscated and destroyed

Students are not permitted to use their own devices on the network. Executive Computer Management Solutions, Inc., (ECMSI) nor the VCS Technology Coordinator will install any applications or provide VPN on any personal device(s). Visitors to any campus may use the VCS guest Wi-Fi when applicable (Wireless@VCS!). Guests on the network are subject to all policies contained herein.

### **11.1.3 Remote/Home Device Usage**

Any VCS device used at home should still be used for academic purposes and assigned class research. This applies to approved high school students permitted to use their own device for the purpose of the College Credit Plus (CCP) or enrolled in district occupational programs (i.e. Choffin Career Center or Mahoning County Career and Technical Center) (MCCTC) accessing the VCS Network. Parents are encouraged to monitor the use of their child's device. Parents are responsible for setting a good example of proper usage of computers, network access, social media etiquette, as well as Internet browsing. Student devices are still monitored even when they are not on any VCS Campus.

## **11.3 Device Care, Student/Parent Responsibility, and Damage assessment Information**

VCS students are responsible for the Chromebooks they are assigned each school year. Students are to immediately surrender Chromebooks whenever a teacher, administrator, or Technology Coordinator asks. Chromebooks are also to be surrendered when a student withdraws, is expelled, and at the end of each school year. Teachers and administrators will decide if a student will retain their Chromebook if suspended. Students should make every effort to keep the device from damage. If damage of any kind is sustained to the Chromebook, charger, or case students and parents are responsible for any costs incurred. Damage can be defined as but is not limited to physical damage, water damage, heat damage, cracked screens, damaged keyboards, damaged chargers, and ripped cases.

Whenever there is damage to a device (at any campus), the student or parent should notify the Technology Department within 24 hours of the damage. If a device is damaged in school, the Technology Department will notify parents within 24 hours or after the damage is accessed. Once the device comes back from repair, the Technology Department will inform parents

Chromebooks, cases, and chargers that are damaged or are not returned in any mentioned scenario, will incur cost(s) based on the fees listed below:

Item	Fee/Repair Schedule
Total Chromebook Replacement (device is unable to be repaired)  Newly Purchased Devices Older Devices	\$270.00 \$150.00
Cracked/Broken screen	\$85.00
Chromebook Keyboard Replacement (this does not include regular wear and tear)	\$45.00
Misc. Chromebook Repairs	Other Chromebook repairs such as chipped devices, missing hinges, popped keys, and damaged ports can range anywhere from \$20.00-50.00
Chromebook Charger Replacement (All device models)	\$20.00
Chromebook Case Replacement	\$10.00

## 11.5 No Expectation of Privacy

Valley Christian School provides the network system, e-mail and Internet access as a tool for education and research in support of the school's mission. The district reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store, without prior notice, information about the content and usage of:

- The network
- User files and disk space utilization
- User applications and bandwidth utilization
- User document files, folders, and electronic communications
- E-mail
- Internet access
- Any and all information transmitted or received in connection with network and e-mail use

VCS utilizes *Go Guardian* class management and monitoring software as a means for faculty, administration, and the Technology Coordinator to keep students safe while online. This software



can and will be used to monitor the student's online activity while in school as well as outside of school.

No student, faculty, or staff user should have any expectation of privacy when using the school's network. Valley Christian School reserves the right to disclose any electronic message to law enforcement officials or third parties as appropriate. All documents are subject to public records disclosure laws.

## **11.6 Technology and Acknowledgement Agreement**

Parents are responsible for reviewing the entire VCS Technology Policy with his/her child(ren). Parents understand that Valley Christian School has made all reasonable attempts to provide a safe computing environment for students within the school's network. Parents are encouraged to set a positive standard for their child(ren) when using any computer or accessing the VCS network. Students and parents are responsible and accountable for the appropriate use of the Internet regardless of where they are, or when Internet access occurs.

The above policies and procedures are a general guideline of the responsibilities and expectations of all VCS students, faculty, and staff regarding the use of computers, computer services, network access, passwords, files, and user accounts and do not include all possible incidents that could arise. VCS reserves the right to change or modify any content contained within this Policy at any time.

By signing the signature page of the Valley Christian Parent-Student Handbook, both student(s) and parent(s) and/or guardian(s) are agreeing to follow the rules in the Technology Policy. You are also agreeing to report misuse of any computer or the network to any teacher, administrator, or Technology Coordinator. Misuse is described as any violation of this Policy or any other use not included in this Policy, but has the effect of harming another of his or her property.

## 12.0 PERSONAL ELECTRONICS POLICY

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The following policy regarding student possession of portable electronic communication devices applies to all VCS students.

VCS recognizes the need for students to have personal electronic devices for certain circumstances as determined at each campus. In general, devices will be powered down and put away unless otherwise designated for usage at a specific campus. Upon entering the building in the morning, wireless headphones **ARE NOT PERMITTED** to be used until the conclusion of the school day.

### 12.1 Guidelines

Parents are not to call or text their children on their cell phones during the school day. If a parent needs to reach a student while school is in session, they must call the school office. We ask that parents only call students in emergency situations.

Subject to the cellular phone guidelines set forth herein and with parental or guardian permission, students may be allowed to possess earphones, cellular telephones, smart phones, smart watches, laptops (collectively “electronic communication device”) while on school property, are to be powered off and stored out of sight upon entering the building. The student may retrieve the device at the end of the school day.

The school assumes no responsibility or liability if these devices are broken, lost or stolen, whether in the possession of students or if confiscated by school personnel.

If a member of the administration is made aware of inappropriate use of a cell phone or electronic device via, texting, tweeting, Instagram or any other social media transmitting applications, the student will receive disciplinary action as per the discipline procedure stated below. The parent will be called, and a mandatory meeting will be scheduled at which time an intervention plan will be put in place.

The administration may establish, and school personnel may enforce additional guidelines and/or consequences appropriate to campus needs.

## 12.2 Discipline Procedure for Personal Electronic Devices

### Cellphones, iPods, iPads, etc.

Students who violate this electronic communication device policy will be progressively disciplined according to the progression set forth below unless circumstances warrant otherwise.

If circumstances warrant otherwise, the school is not required to follow the progressive discipline steps and may skip steps and implement the degree of discipline appropriate to the level of the offense.

## 12.3 Refusal to Turn Over Devices When Requested

Students are required to turn electronic communication devices over to school personnel when requested. Students who refuse to do so shall be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to removal from class or other school activities, in-school restriction and out of school suspensions, regardless of whether they have any prior offenses.

## 12.4 Exclusions

This policy does not apply to medically-required electronic communication devices such as hearing aids and augmentative speech aids or to any electronic device which is mandated in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.

If other electronic devices are suggested to assist with education, then it will be up to the teacher's discretion whether or not it is appropriate for student's learning.

## 12.5 Nuisance and/or Hazardous Items

Items that disrupt or interfere with learning are prohibited during school. These include but are not limited to lasers, digital recorders, and media players. Students who bring inappropriate materials or items to school may have them confiscated. The parent or guardian will be contacted before the items are returned, and appropriate consequences will result.

# 13.0 CONFISCATION OF POSSESSIONS

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Students who bring inappropriate materials or items to school which tend to deviate from the normal course of study may have them confiscated. The parent or guardian will be contacted.

## 14.0 FAMILY COVENANT

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By enrolling your child in Valley Christian School you are choosing to enter into a Covenant Relationship with the school and its administration in fulfilling our mission to “Love More, Expect More, and Be More”. This covenant between you and the school is built on trust and open communication to ensure your child is getting the full educational and discipleship experience offered by Valley Christian School. A covenant requires a full understanding and commitment by both the school and the family (parent, guardian and student) of and to the following:

### Valley Christian School Promises to:

- Provide an environment of Christ-centered unconditional love, healthy and biblically based expectations, and setting ambitious goals academically and personally that are consistent with our school mission.
- **Disciple students to:**
  - **Apply** a Christian worldview that helps them confidently share their faith and guide future decisions through the application of **God’s truth**.
  - **Develop** a relationship with God through Jesus Christ that leads to a Biblically based, purpose-filled life that is rooted in **their identity in Christ**.
  - **Exhibit** the Fruit of the Spirit in the discipleship process by emphasizing the value of **Godly character**.
  - **Demonstrate** the love of Christ for all people in all areas through **biblical honor**.
- Provide the highest quality academic experience possible by employing cutting edge technology, rigorous curriculum and qualified, caring educators.
- Communicate as effectively as possible in matters related to your child and the school.

### Parent/Guardian Promises to:

- Partner with VCS in the mission of “Love More, Expect More, Be More” through love, healthy expectations, and goals in home life.
- **Value the;**
  - Foundation of **God’s Word (the Bible)** in the education and growth of my child.
  - Essential decision for my child to find their **identity in Christ** and grow as a Christian.
  - Importance of **Godly character** as a result of our faith in God and the work of the Holy Spirit.
  - Consistent demonstration of love for others in all areas in accordance with God’s command to “**honor** all people”.
- Read, support and adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in the Student Handbook.
- Support your child’s growth through supporting your child’s teachers, attending appropriate conferences and extra/co-curricular activities, and consistently praying for your child and VCS.
- Keep open lines of communication with your child’s teacher and school administration.
- Meet all financial obligations with the school.
- Support the premise that your child will be taught from the perspective provided in our statements of belief. (See the Statement of Faith located in Section 1.0)

### Student Promises to:

- Learn and apply God’s Word to my life. (“**Truth leads**”)
- Be open to a relationship with God through His grace that defines my value and worth and results in salvation and eternal identity. (“**Identity in Christ**”)

- Recognize that Godly character as defined by the Bible is a result of imitating Christ and should result in giving my best in every area. (**“Character Matters”**)
- Respect others based on God’s Word in loving my peers, friends, family, and authority and should result in showing mercy and grace to one another. (**“Honor lifts”**)

This covenant does not list all of the policies, procedures and expectations of Valley Christian School, therefore Parents, Guardians and Students are expected to review the Student/Parent Handbook on an annual basis.

Valley Christian School is a Chartered (Ohio Department of Education) Non Public (private school) accredited with the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). Enrollment is not a right but a choice by your family and the school to enter into relationship. By enrolling your child in Valley Christian School you expressly waive your right to FAPE (Free Access to Public Education). Valley Christian School agrees to maintain compliance with the Operating Standards for Ohio Department of Education and the accreditation standards of ACSI.

Trust is an essential element of any relationship and although all parties may strive to meet their expectations and obligations (as outlined in this covenant and the Parent/Student Handbook) even the best human efforts fail. Therefore we must strive always to trust each other and assume good intentions when dealing with missed expectations.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature (4-12)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
VCS Administrator/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# 15.0 ACADEMICS

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## 15.1 Grading Scale for Kindergarten, 1st Grade and 2nd Grade

### GRADING SCALE KEY

#### **4 = Exceeding Grade Level Standard**

Demonstrates advanced level of knowledge and understanding.

#### **3 = Meeting Standard**

Demonstrates solid knowledge and understanding,

#### **2 = Approaching Standard**

Demonstrates progress toward grade level standard, but not yet at standard. Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding.

#### **1 = Well Below Standard**

Not meeting grade level Standard

#### **NY= Not Introduced Yet**

## 15.2 Conferences

Parent/teacher conference days are arranged twice per year for each family. Other conferences are welcomed as needed. Appointments must be made with the teacher at a convenient time so as to not interfere with the learning of other students. Parents may also communicate with their child's teacher via email.

Any concerns of the parent or student should be dealt with by the individual involved. Questions regarding discipline, homework, other assignments, grades, and other student/teacher activities should first be shared with the teacher. If the issue is not resolved, the teacher, parent, or student may request a meeting with the building Principal.

## 15.3 Notification of Unsatisfactory Progress

At any time during the school year teachers may contact families regarding their student's academic/behavioral progress. Also, notification will be given at this time for poor attendance or

excessive tardiness. Families are encouraged to self-monitor grades or to communicate with the faculty through FACTS - SIS, our web-based parent information system.

## 15.4 Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is any type of cheating that occurs in relation to a formal academic exercise. It can include plagiarism, fabrication, deception, cheating, or sabotage. Using a person's work or ideas without giving credit is academically dishonest. Lying, cheating, or using unauthorized materials to prepare or use during a test also constitutes academic dishonesty.

Teachers at Valley Christian Schools set and maintain high expectations for Academic Honesty in the classroom. The classroom teacher is also responsible for using his/her professional judgment to determine whether a student has acted Academically Dishonest. (**Academic dishonesty is a Level 2**)

## 15.5 School Counselor

Intentional instruction and guidance are required to equip students to be responsible, independent, and confident adults. The Department of Counseling and Transitioning works collaboratively with the student, parent, educational staff, and administrative staff to assist students in achieving the following objectives:

- Develop an understanding of themselves and value the unique role that each individual play in society and the church
- Develop satisfying relationships with others
- Attain the greatest personal development through educational experiences
- Progress toward productive and rewarding careers
- Achieve the skills required to effectively transition into post-secondary life
- Connect students to their calling for college and career

## 15.6 Homework

Student learning is at the heart of the mission of every Valley Christian School campus. VCS teachers provide homework opportunities as a way to ensure students are learning the necessary concepts and skills. Since research emphasizes that only homework that is actually completed is associated with higher achievement, VCS is committed to ensuring students complete all assigned homework. Valley Christian adheres to the 10 minutes per grade level guideline when assigning homework for grade bands. For example, students in grade 3 may be assigned up to 30 minutes of homework. At the Elementary/Pleasant Grove campus, the following guidelines are in place for homework assignments:

### **Acceptable HW Assignments**



- Reading aloud for fluency, math facts practice

### **Frequency and Duration**

- Two days per week, 10 minutes for grades K and 1, up to 20 minutes for grade 2

Students who choose not to complete and submit homework assignments or classwork assignments to be completed as homework will be subject to the following:

**VCS Lunch-and-Learns:** Any student who fails to submit a homework assignment on the day it is due is required to attend a lunch-and-learn the next day to complete the missing assignment. Lunch-and-learns occur during the lunch period and students will eat lunch while working on the missing assignment. Teachers will provide help as needed.

## **15.7 Asynchronous Days**

Students will participate in 3-4 Asynchronous Days each school year. Students are expected to complete the classwork assigned and return it to the classroom teacher on the following school day. Students that do not complete the work given will be subject to the consequences outlined in the homework policy above.

## **15.8 Gifted Identification & Referral**

All Valley Christian students are screened for potential indicators of academic giftedness

The gifted screening process at Valley Christian School:

- NWEA benchmark scores will be screened.
- Screener will flag students whose NWEA scores indicate the potential for giftedness for administration of the CogAT.
- The CogAT will be administered by a trained and qualified proctor.

Exceptions: Teachers may make referrals for CogAT testing for any student who is not flagged by the NWEA screener but shows evidence of other criteria that may indicate giftedness. Teachers should complete the Teacher Referral Form and Gifted Rating Scale.

## 16.0 PHILOSOPHY OF RETENTION

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Students may be considered for retention if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Excessive absence (more than 10% of the required attendance days) causing a lack of access to the curriculum
- Achievement well below grade level expectations in the majority of the assessed standards in reading and math unless the building principal and the teachers of any failed subject areas agree that the student is academically prepared to be promoted to the next grade level.

\*A child's social and emotional maturity will be taken into consideration.

## 17.0 SPECIAL EDUCATION

Valley Christian School believes that all children deserve a Christian education and that children with disabilities are not only recipients of ministry, but also minister to others through their uniqueness and individuality reflecting the image of God in humanity. As one of the only Christian schools in the country to offer a fully functioning Special Education program, Valley Christian School embraces its role as a pioneer in the field of Christian Special Education.

### 17.1 Special Education Referral Process

Valley Christian School is committed to continuous monitoring of each student to ensure his or her academic and social success. The Special Education Director in collaboration with other campus staff will work with the student's teachers to monitor student response to interventions developed through the multi-tiered system of support for academic or behavior concerns. VCS will follow the referral process as required by YCSD to refer students for evaluation. Parents who suspect a disability may also directly contact the Special Education Director to discuss the process for referral. The Special Education Director will provide the public-school district with all relevant information about the student including but not limited to:

- academic records
- disciplinary records
- results of interventions implemented

The Principal and/or Special Education Director will also serve as an advocate on behalf of the family with the public-school district throughout the referral process.

Although Valley Christian School's status as a non-public school precludes us from directly identifying students as having a disability or developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP), we are committed to collaborating with public school districts to facilitate the special education

process.

### 17.3 Eligibility for Services

Valley Christian School offers Special Education services to students who qualify for such services under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act), have a current IEP (Individualized Education Plan) written by their public-school district, and have been awarded either the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship or Autism Scholarship. Valley Christian School may also consider for admission students with a 504 Plan or a Speech-only IEP who do not qualify for a state-funded scholarship program.

### 17.4 FAPE and Due Process

Parents who utilize a state-funded scholarship at a non-public school such as Valley Christian School waive their right to FAPE (Free and Appropriate Public Education). As such, parents waive their right to due process hearings with regards to services provided. However, Valley Christian School abides by all laws, policies, and procedures related to state scholarship programs and submits progress reports and cost statements for approval by the Ohio Department of Education. Valley Christian School also provides quarterly progress reports.

Moreover, Valley Christian School works in cooperation with the student's district of residence throughout the IEP and with Youngstown City Schools throughout the ETR (Evaluation Team Report) processes. Valley Christian School seeks to resolve conflict in a relational rather than a procedural manner and seeks to develop strong, enduring partnerships with families through regular interaction and providing quarterly progress reports.

### 17.5 Services Provided

- Intervention Services for academics
- Behavioral Intervention
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Speech screening, consultation, and therapy
- Transition Services

#### **Evaluation Team Report**

Valley Christian School will work collaboratively with the district of service, Youngstown City Schools, to conduct evaluations of students with suspected disabilities, and students with disabilities who require re-evaluation. This collaboration will include:

- Scheduling testing completed by the district and ensuring that the student is available for assessment.
- Completing evaluations and reports for areas including but not limited to:
  - Rating scales for adaptive behavior

- Rating scales for social/emotional functioning
- Academic reports addressing present levels of academic achievement in reading, math, and related subjects.
- Scheduling meetings with the public district, parents and Valley Christian School staff.

The Special Education Director will also serve as an advocate on behalf of the family with the public-school district throughout the evaluation process.

### **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

Valley Christian School will work collaboratively with the district of residency to develop Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities determined through an ETR. This collaboration will include:

- Academic reports addressing present levels of academic achievement in academic areas of weakness
- Suggesting IEP goals for consideration of the district of residency.
- Collaborating with parents to develop suggested transition statements and plans for consideration of the district of residency.
- Suggesting appropriate accommodations and services for consideration of the district of residency.
- Scheduling meetings with the district of residency, parents and Valley Christian School staff.

The Special Education Director will also serve as an advocate on behalf of the family with the district of residency throughout the IEP process.

### **Jon Peterson Special Needs (JPSN) and Autism Scholarships**

Valley Christian School is an approved provider for the Ohio Jon Peterson Special Needs (JPSN) and Autism Scholarships. Although parents waive FAPE as a condition of participation in the scholarship program, Valley Christian School is committed to providing high quality services to serve the goals identified on the IEP, and goals not on the IEP that have been requested by parents and authorized by the scholarship programs.

## **17.6 Termination of Services**

VCS will terminate a student's services under the following two circumstances.

### **Inability of VCS to Provide Appropriate Services**

While it is the goal of VCS to collaborate to provide all necessary services, if the special education team does not believe that VCS has the resources to serve a student, the team will recommend placement to meet the student needs. The decision of VCS in these matters is final. VCS will work collaboratively with the student's parent or guardian to facilitate a successful transition to the school or provider chosen by the parent.

### **Non-Compliance with VCS Discipline Expectations**

A student's services may be terminated if they fail to comply with the VCS expectations for appropriate behavior as indicated in the School wide Discipline system. While VCS makes every effort to take a student's disability into consideration when applying disciplinary measures, the school reserves the right to determine whether a student's disability impacts their behavior. Note that parents and guardians voluntarily waive FAPE by participating in the John Peterson scholarship and enrolling in a non-public school.

## 17.7 Confidentiality of Student Records

In order to provide appropriate educational services and programming, Valley Christian School must collect, retain, and use information about individual students. Simultaneously, Valley Christian School recognizes the need to safeguard students' privacy and restrict access to students' personally identifiable information.

Valley Christian School is responsible for the records of all students who attend or have attended the school. Only records mandated by the State or Federal government and/or necessary and relevant to the function of the school or specifically permitted by the school will be compiled by employees.

In all cases, permitted, narrative information in student records shall be objectively-based on the personal observation or knowledge of the originator.

Student records shall be available only to students and their parents, eligible students, designated school officials, and designated school personnel, who have a legitimate educational interest in the information, or to other individuals or organizations as permitted by law.

The term "parents" includes legal guardians or other persons standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the welfare of the child). The term "eligible student" refers to a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, or a student of any age who is enrolled in a postsecondary institution.

Both parents shall have equal access to student records unless stipulated otherwise by court order or law. In the case of eligible students, parents may be allowed access to the records without the student's consent, provided the student is considered a dependent under section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code.

A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, teacher/instructor (including substitutes), or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving as a school administrator; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks (including volunteers).

"Legitimate educational interest" is defined as a "direct or delegated responsibility for helping the student achieve one (1) or more of the educational goals of the school" or if the record is

necessary in order for the school official to perform an administrative, supervisory, or instructional task or to perform a service or benefit for the student or the student's family.

The School authorizes the administration to:

- Forward student records, including disciplinary records with respect to any current suspension and expulsion, upon request to a private or public school or school district in which a student of the school is enrolled, seeks or intends to enroll, or is instructed to enroll, on a full-time or part-time basis, upon condition that a reasonable attempt is made to notify the student's parents of the transfer, of their right to receive a copy of the record if desired, and of their right to have a hearing to challenge the content of the record;
- Provide "personally-identifiable" information to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if such knowledge is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals;
- Report a crime committed by a child with a disability to appropriate authorities and to transmit copies of the student's special education and disciplinary records to the authorities for their consideration;
- Request each person or party requesting access to a student's record to abide by Federal regulations and State laws concerning the disclosure of information.

The school will comply with a legitimate request for access to a student's records within a reasonable period of time but not more than forty-five (45) days after receiving the request. Upon the request of the viewer, a record shall be reproduced, unless said record is copyrighted, or otherwise restricted, and the viewer may be charged a fee equivalent to the cost of handling and reproduction. Based upon reasonable requests, viewers of educational records will receive explanation and interpretation of the records.

Only "directory information" regarding a student may be released to any person or party, other than the student or his/her parent, without the written consent of the parent, or, if the student is an eligible student, without the written consent of the student, except to those persons or parties stipulated by the school's policy and administrative guidelines and/or those specified in the law. No directory information shall be released for a profit-making plan or activity, or if the parent/guardian completes and returns the "Directory Information Opt Out Form" by August 31st of the current school year located in Appendix B.

No liability shall attach to any member, officer, or employee of this School as a consequence of permitting access or furnishing student records in accordance with this policy and regulations.

## 17.8 Non-discrimination Policy

Valley Christian School does not exclude, deny services to, or otherwise discriminate against any person on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sex, color, disability, age or ancestry in admission to, participation in, or receipt of the services and benefits under any of its programs and activities, whether carried out by Valley Christian School directly or through a contractor or any other entity with which Valley Christian School arranges to carry out its programs and activities.

## 18.0 TITLE I SERVICES

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This statement is in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Regulations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued pursuant to these statutes at Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 80, 84, and 91.

### 18.1 Tutoring and Remedial Services

Valley Christian School provides tutoring and remedial services via the Federal Title I program. Students whose public-school district provides Title I services will receive appropriate services at Valley Christian School. Students are identified on the basis of academic risk, which may include any of the following factors:

- Classroom grades
- Parent or teacher recommendation
- Standardized test scores
- Need to remediate tests or exams

Title I services may be provided in the following forms:

- Remedial reading and mathematics instruction as a push-in or pull-out program
- After school tutoring and support
- Summer School

According to the Parent Right-to-Know (NCLB/ESEA, 1111(h) Act), parents of Title I served students may request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's Title I teachers.





# 19.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

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## 19.1 Emergency Closings

If for any reason it becomes necessary to close VCS on short notice, the details will be sent by automated phone message, as well as the local television stations – **WFMJ channel 21, WKBN, channel 27, and WYTV channel 33**. Announcements will be made as early as possible during inclement weather. Please do not call the school to see if classes have been canceled.

If a particular school district in which a student resides is closed for inclement weather conditions on a day when VCS remains open, and the student relies on provided bus transportation from that district, it is the parent's responsibility to make every effort, within reason, to assure that their child arrives at VCS safely. Bus students residing in districts that implement a two hour delay, will be granted an excused tardy should the situation arise.

## 19.2 Field Trips

Activities away from the normal classroom make up a vital part of the instructional program. Field trips, which tend to develop growth spiritually or academically, will be scheduled from time to time. Students must submit the required permission forms from parents or guardians and have an Emergency Medical Authorization form on file to participate in these experiences. Related expenses, dates, times, and appropriate dress information will be given to parents for each activity. Parents may be asked to help with activities, furnish transportation, and serve as Chaperones.

## 19.3 Fire and Safety Drills

During the school year, fire, severe weather, environmental danger, and intruder evacuation drills are held as required by law or as recommended by local agencies. The goal is for students and staff to be trained with the correct procedures to be followed in the event of an Emergency.

## 19.4 Lost and Found

Lost and found items are sent to the designated lost-and-found area outside the Nurse's office. Items not identified with a name, and not claimed within a reasonable period of time may be donated to a local charity.

## 19.5 Food Service Programs

All students will eat in the cafeteria. Students receive a FREE school lunch or bring a packed lunch from home. Lunch consists of an entrée (two meats, two grain), fruit, vegetables and milk. Bottled water, 100% Juice, and a-la-carte items are available from the cafeteria for all students. Unless special permission is granted by the office, and Food Service Director, outside food is not to be ordered by students. Please note that VCS is a **closed campus**, which means students **may not** leave the school grounds to purchase lunch elsewhere. Lunch are not to be delivered to the school during lunchtime. No home packed lunches may be heated during lunchtime due to temperature cooking guidelines.

Applications for free or reduced cost lunches may be requested or a Household Income form at the school office, our [VCS webpage](#), or by calling the food service department at ext. 1113. These forms are updated yearly and required by September or parents are responsible for any lunch cost that occurs until forms are turned in. The food service department will notify parents of their eligibility status.

Visit The food service tab on our school web page for more information, Menus and updates.

Valley Christian Schools participates in NSLP, CACFP, SSO and FFV Federal Programs.

- Breakfast and Lunch are free
- A free afternoon fruit/vegetable snack will be served during class for K-3 at the Elementary and Central campuses. Dinner is Free, at Central after school for 45 minutes for all VCS students. Students eating dinner must be dismissed at 2:30 p.m. to ensure proper time for eating and clean up.
- Menus are posted online on our school web page and in all cafeterias. ([www.vcsohio.org](http://www.vcsohio.org)).
- Children will be served the posted menu along with an alternate meal option daily. Menus may change due to availability of product.
- Extras, snacks, and drinks are sold in the cafeteria (no charging of these items)

- **WAM** is offered at the central and PG campus. This is a program that if a child receives a meal then they may buy an extra entrée for a \$1.00 (with a meal)
- **All allergies must be submitted with proper documentation from a doctor for the food service department to comply with the request.**
- Lunches are Offer Vs serve in which a child must have three of five components on the tray. If the need arises that we need to prepare boxed meals, then each child will receive all five components of the meal with white milk.

Payments using the following methods are acceptable:

- Check or Cash sent to school in an envelope with Child's Name and Lunch number. We would like to limit the amount of cash in hand so sending a check with your student or keeping your account pre-loaded from the web page is best.
- Direct payment online Thru Linq Connect (app) (fee)

## 19.6 Office Hours

The Elementary office is open from 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. during the regular school year; and is open in the summer from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

## 19.7 Birthday Treats

Parents/Guardians that wish to celebrate their child's birthday at school with a special treat must first seek permission from the building principal. Parents/Guardians must contact the principal, **24 hours ahead of time**, via email or in writing, of the date that they would like to bring in the treat and what treat that they would like to bring. A treat can be a cupcake, cookie, or a non-food item. Treats must be approved, by the principal, due to student allergies and dietary restrictions. **No other food items are accepted. Party decor, such as balloons and tableware is not permitted.** Parents/Guardians will be contacted by the principal once approval is given and provided with a time to drop off the birthday treat. Parents/Guardians are not able to stay for the celebration. Students will celebrate with their class at a time designated by the classroom teacher.

## 19.8 Parental Communication

We make every effort to keep parents informed of upcoming events and schedule changes by use of e-mail, our website <http://www.vcsohio.org/>, automated telephone messages, text messages, and hard copy information. Please inform the school office immediately of any changes to your telephone number, street and/or email address, marital status, custody arrangements, or emergency contact.

All questions, concerns, complaints, or suggestions that you may have should be directed to the teacher or staff member involved. If a question is not answered satisfactorily, or if the situation is not resolved, please feel free to speak to the building Principal. We encourage parents to call, email, or visit when questions arise.

## 19.9 Recess

VCS believes it is important for children to get exercise and fresh air whenever possible. For this reason, all students in grades Kindergarten – 2 will be assigned to go outside during recess unless:

- The temperature is less than 32 F
- There is rain, mist, or wet snow falling
- The student does not have adequate protection to keep them warm and dry (boots, hats, gloves, warm coats, etc.). Parents should send adequate clothing for the students to wear outside.
- There is a note or phone call from the parent requesting that the student remain inside (this should be done each day that the parent wants the student to remain inside).
- Medical documentation

## 19.10 School Calendar

A calendar listing all major events, athletics, vacation times, etc., may be viewed on the school webpage at [www.vcsohio.org](http://www.vcsohio.org)

## 19.11 School Pictures

The date for school pictures is noted on the school calendar. Information and packet prices will be sent home prior to the designated date. Payment for school pictures must be made in advance. Notification of a new date will be provided via the FACTS SIS calendar.

## 19.12 Telephone Calls

Students are not permitted to use the phone except in cases of an emergency, and with permission.

## 19.13 Transportation

Transportation to and from VCS is the responsibility of the parents. All Youngstown City residents are eligible for bussing provided by Youngstown City Schools, in accordance with the rules established by YCSD. VCS provides the names of eligible students to the local bus garage. If you do not hear from Youngstown City Bus, please call them prior to the start of school at **(330) 744-9505**. If bus transportation is not provided to eligible students, you may qualify for reimbursement.

Students who qualify to ride the school bus (provided by the students' local school district) to and from school must realize that they are under the authority of the bus driver. Failure to cooperate can lead to denial of bus transportation. Good bus conduct is expected, and a student must follow the rules established by the bus driver. Student behavior on the bus reflects the values of VCS. Any misbehavior will be addressed by the Principal.

## 19.14 Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees are based on various payment schedules. Therefore, tuition, fees, and payments will not be returned but will be applied to any outstanding balance. Please make arrangements with the Business Office to set up a payment schedule or for further information.

**Fees Include:**

Elementary School Tuition - \$5,500.00

Athletic Fee - \$200.00 per student with a family max of \$400.00

Annual Family Fee - \$100.00 per family

Annual Re Enrollment Fee - \$25.00

## 19.15 Visitors

For the safety of children and staff, and in compliance with Section 2917.211 of the Ohio Revised Code, **ALL** visitors entering the school building must first sign in at the appropriate school office to receive a visitor's badge. Please print your name, the time of arrival, and the purpose for the visit on the sign in sheet. Any person who is not a school employee must be able to present a valid driver's license or state identification card.

## 19.16 Volunteer Service

Valley Christian School provides both students and parents many opportunities to volunteer and are encouraged to do so. Various events, athletics, and classroom assistance are just some of the areas of involvement. VCS has been able to profit from hundreds of hours of donated services from students, parents, and community members. Depending on the type of volunteer work, a background check may be required. Please see **Appendix A** for more information.

## 19.17 Withdrawals

All withdrawals must be made through the appropriate school office. A parent must fill out a "Withdrawal Form" when withdrawing his/her child from VCS. All pupil records and reports will be sent to the receiving school upon request and after obtaining a signed release of information from the parent.

In cases of financial indebtedness, or where school-owned materials or equipment have not been returned to the school, transfers will be made and records released only when all debts are paid in full. If a parent has questions regarding their financial indebtedness, he/she is to speak with the Business Manager.

# SIGNATURE PAGE

We acknowledge that we have read the 2024-2025 Valley Christian School Parent-Student Handbook and understand all of the information.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENTS/GUARDIANS: BELOW IS THE LINK TO THE GOOGLE FORM THAT YOU MUST COMPLETE INDICATING THAT YOU HAVE READ THE HANDBOOK! THANK YOU!**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScBMAQE9hLvslfPpmdn2E6W2JPJMu5lh-bF2mtGNQt2rbKcHQ/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScBMAQE9hLvslfPpmdn2E6W2JPJMu5lh-bF2mtGNQt2rbKcHQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)

# APPENDIX A - Parent Involvement Opportunities & Volunteer Policy

## Definition of 'Volunteer'

A volunteer is defined as an unpaid person assisting under the direction of a licensed teacher or administrator.

At Valley Christian, we strongly encourage and welcome parent volunteers in the classrooms, in the school, and with the PTL. In order to ensure a safe school environment, it is important that all parent volunteers including PTL members, complete the required Volunteer Application and return it to the secretary in the elementary office. A background check may be required if your volunteer

work is without staff supervision. Background checks are good for three years. Parents only need to complete the Volunteer Application process once, which will be good for the entire time your child(ren) are enrolled at Valley Christian. Thank you for your support!

Some activities that parents and community members can participate in to support the school and students include:

## Support at home:

The way that parents communicate with their children and support their children at home greatly impacts a student's success at school.

Parents can support their student's learning through:

- Role modeling
- Reading with their children
- Talking with their students about school
- Encouragement
- Support with homework

Communication with the school:

On-going communication with the school and teachers is vital to children being successful at school.

Parents are encouraged to:



- Informed through the Valley Christian webpage
- Check FACTS - SIS frequently
- Keep updated through the Valley Christian newsletter and classroom newsletters
- Attend parent-teacher conferences
- Email, call or set up a meeting with the classroom teacher

### **Volunteering:**

Parents can actively support the education of children by supporting the school and teachers in education in the classroom and during educational events.

Some volunteering options include (all volunteers must be approved through the application process, see above):

- Volunteer in the classroom supporting instruction or preparing materials
- Chaperone students on a field trip
- Help in the Media Lab
- Volunteer for a PTL committee
- Volunteer during a school event

### **Decision Making:**

Parent involvement in school decisions supports the school in ensuring a collaborative leadership model and in meeting the needs of all stakeholders.

Parents can support with decision making through:

- Become a member of the Parent Advisory Committee
- Attend a Parent Advisory Committee Meeting
- Take a leadership role on the PTL

### **School events:**

The Valley Christian Parent Teacher Association (PTL) in collaboration with the staff and administrators of Valley Christian plan events throughout the year.

Parents can support these events through:

- Supporting the PTL in organizing events
- Joining the fundraising committee of the PTL
- Volunteering at an event
- Bringing their children to an event

# VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby verify that I am in agreement with the Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Faith Statement of Valley Christian School, that I have disclosed my FBI/BCI background checks to the school, and that I feel called by God to serve in the capacity of a volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Special Training

Please list any skills/past experience you feel would be helpful:

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Name: (Last), (First) (MI) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be volunteering 10 or more hours a week: \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

When are you available to volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Preference(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level Preference(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Are you 18 years of age or older? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

I am a: \_\_\_ parent \_\_\_ grandparent \_\_\_ other

Name of Reference	Address and Phone	Years Acquainted

# APPENDIX B: VCS Directory Information Opt Out Form

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## DIRECTORY INFORMATION OPT OUT FORM

**\*\*\* DO NOT RETURN THIS FORM UNLESS YOU WANT TO OPT OUT \*\*\***

There may be a time when information is requested by a third party such as but not limited to colleges, scholarship institutions, athletics, educational opportunities or activities, and military. **No directory information shall be released for a profit-making plan or activity.**

“Directory information” includes: name, address, date of birth, place of birth, telephone number, email address, dates of attendance, extracurricular participation, achievement awards or honors, weight and height (athletes only), and date of graduation.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides parents, guardians, or adult students the right to prevent disclosure of directory information. Parents/Guardians of a minor student who do not wish to have directory information released must complete and submit this form to the school with enrollment documents.

Note: By returning the signed and completed form, your child’s directory information is **not released** to entities such as educational, military, scholarship institutions, and media.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

I do not want directory information about me (adult student)/my child released to anyone without my written consent.

Parent/Guardian Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (Signature) \_\_\_\_\_

This document was received by the undersigned.

Administrator Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_