

# The Villages® *Charter School*

## **2024-2025 Middle School Student Handbook**



**Buffalo Ridge**  
251 Buffalo Trail  
The Villages, Florida 32162  
Main Office: 352-259-0044  
Fax: 352-753-1113  
Website: [tvcs.org](http://tvcs.org)

**Middleton**  
2453 Stampeder Trail  
Middleton, Florida 34762  
Main Office: 352-259-6860  
Website: [tvcs.org](http://tvcs.org)

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## **CORE IDEOLOGY**

### **VISION:**

We are a school where a supportive community of students, parents and staff tailor the educational experience to meet individual needs, resulting in successful, well-rounded, responsible individuals with an entrepreneurial spirit.

### **CORE PURPOSE:**

We are dedicated to educating a community where all can be successful, discovering and realizing their dreams.

### **CORE VALUES:**

#### **HOSPITALITY**

We create an atmosphere of support where people feel welcome, comfortable, and challenged to learn and grow.

#### **HARD WORK**

We are committed to excellence in all we do. Our high expectations and data driven decisions are reflected in our work ethic, in our personal pride at school, and in our community. We strive to exceed everyone's expectations with both effort and results.

#### **STEWARDSHIP**

We do what is in the best interest of the student, family, school, and community. We treat all resources as ours to nourish and protect.

#### **CREATIVITY**

We encourage and embrace innovation, risk-taking, and "out-of-the-box" thinking for the purpose of finding a better way.

Our mission is to provide quality learning opportunities that promote personal responsibility and inspire children's thirst for knowledge.

## **VCMS 2024-2025 BELL SCHEDULES**

<b>2024-2025 VCMS BELL SCHEDULE</b>	
<b><i>REGULAR SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULE</i></b>	
<b>VCMS</b>	<b>Regular Day</b>
Homeroom/1st Period	7:50-8:50
2nd Period	8:55-9:45
3rd Period	9:50-10:40
4th Period	10:45-11:35
5th Period	11:40-1:00
6th Period	1:05-1:55
7th Period	2:00-2:50
<b><i>ASSEMBLY DAY SCHEDULE</i></b>	
<b>VCMS</b>	<b>Assembly Day</b>
Homeroom/1st Period	7:50-8:43
2nd Period	8:47-9:30
3rd Period	9:34-10:17
4th Period	10:21-11:04
5th Period	11:08-12:21
6th Period	12:25-1:08
7th Period	1:12-2:02
Assembly Begins/Ends	2:12-2:37

# The Villages® Charter School

**VCS Disciplinary & Attendance Policy Acknowledgement**

**VCS Personal Device Agreement Acknowledgement**

**Parent and Student Handbook Acknowledgement**

**VCS Chromebook User Agreement in Skyward**

**THIS PAGE MUST BE SIGNED BY BOTH THE PARENT/GUARDIAN AND THE STUDENT AND BE RETURNED TO THE STUDENT'S MATH TEACHER BEFORE FRIDAY, AUGUST 18**

My child and I have reviewed The Villages Charter School Student Handbook including The Villages Charter School Disciplinary & Attendance Policy, The Villages Charter School Personal Device Agreement, and completed the Chromebook User Agreement in Skyward for 2024-2025. We further acknowledge that we understand the contents described. Our signatures below indicate we have reviewed each of these policies, possible corrective measures, and our alignment with the philosophies of The Villages Charter School.

**Failure to return this signed acknowledgement waives the privilege of attending The Villages Charter School.**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Math Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

The faculty and staff of The Villages Charter School are committed to excellence. Our belief is that high expectations produce high results, and we make a daily effort to provide an environment that produces student learning. We all know the most important members of our educational team are our students. You are ultimately responsible for your success. Your responsibility begins with good attendance, participation and preparation, and includes making quality decisions about life. We encourage and emphasize that you claim your education as your own and use it as a tool to achieve your goals and dreams.

You are expected to be an active stakeholder in your education by:

- Attending school daily.
- Being on time to all classes.
- Completing and turning in all assignments.
- Preparing for all tests.
- Staying organized with google classroom and the google calendar.
- Arriving to class with all materials.
- Responsibly using restroom facilities between classes or during lunch.
- Reflecting a positive attitude at all times.
- Portraying our school's high standards on and off campus.
- Being kind to others; speaking with the appropriate tone and language.
- Protecting others' property, including school property.
- Following instructions the first time given.
- Arriving in and remaining in complete school uniform - shirts tucked in, lanyards around the neck and visible, belts worn with belt loops, and appropriate footwear.

The Villages Charter School provides a unique privilege for families that have dedicated their lives to The Villages of Lake Sumter, Inc. Our charter schools are schools of choice providing an alternative outlet from traditional educational settings. The expectations of The Villages Charter School, Inc. are reflective of the core values and vision of the larger corporation that we serve. Parents have the opportunity to choose the best educational facility for their children, either within the charter school system or outside our area of influence. The Director of Education of The Villages Charter School, in consultation with building principal(s), has the authority to dismiss students for cause including, but not limited to, failure to maintain eligibility per Board policy or failure to comply with school rules and regulations found in The Villages Charter School's Disciplinary and Attendance Policy. Families who do not meet expectations or are not in alignment with the core ideology may be reassigned to their home school districts. Dismissal and re-enrollment of students who have been previously dismissed is at the discretion of the Director of Education of The Villages Charter School.

<b><u>KNOWLEDGE AND OBSERVATION OF RULES OF CONDUCT</u></b>
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<b>Parents/Guardians and students have the responsibility to become informed and observe all the established guidelines for behavior and school procedures.</b>
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## **GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT CONDUCT**

The purpose of behavior guidelines is to ensure an enjoyable, cooperative, respectful, and safe environment for learning. Students at The Villages Charter School (VCS) are responsible for their personal behavior at all times. Members of the school community are expected to be polite and considerate of the rights of others. We feel that you have chosen to attend our school because of our high expectations. Our guidelines allow us to continue providing an environment that is conducive to learning and promotes excellence.

You are expected to cooperate with all teachers and staff members. Student teachers, substitutes, visitors, and volunteers are to be treated with the same respect as teachers and staff. Physical violence and threats are considered to be serious forms of misbehavior and will not be tolerated. Remember, we are members of the same team and we are all here to accomplish the same goal.

A student may be excused from instruction, and/or reciting the pledge of allegiance, including standing and placing the right hand over his or her heart when his/her parent(s), as defined by Florida Statutes, files a written request with the school principal.

All students are expected to abide by the rules established in their classrooms and by the school. Rules are established to ensure a safe climate that promotes learning. When you make choices that compromise the environment established, you should expect appropriate consequences to be assigned. Bullying, harassment, and/or hazing will not be tolerated. All incidents of possible threats, signs or discussions of weapons, signs of gang activity, inappropriate use of technology, or the conditions that might invite or encourage violence MUST be reported to an adult. This may also include, but not be limited to, teasing, name calling, intimidation or spreading of rumors. An informational link on The Villages Charter School website is <http://www.stopbullying.gov>.

The Administration is primarily responsible for any student discipline that is referred to the office and has the authority to assign appropriate consequences. It is our goal to treat you as if you were our own. We realize that all students are individuals with unique circumstances. Every effort will be made to be fair and consistent with your best interests in mind.

Treating school materials with respect is considered stewardship and part of our Core Ideology. It is expected that damaged, lost, or stolen textbooks/library books/Chromebooks/school materials will be replaced at the cost of the parent. VCS is a campus of beautiful facilities provided to run our rigorous school programs. In honoring VCS Core Values, a new policy regarding the misuse of school property including desks, chairs, fixtures, and classroom materials has been adopted. Students who knowingly misuse The Villages Charter School property will receive a disciplinary referral to administration for appropriate assignment of consequences and may include a requirement for restitution of damages.

## **AFTER-SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

The Villages Charter School (VCS) is committed to student safety on the charter school campus. Due to our unique student eligibility policy, whereby students can reside in any county, it is not feasible for VCS to provide transportation to school. Parents are responsible for daily drop-off and pick-up of their children.

The Villages Charter School will not accept students who arrive at or depart from school

on foot or by bicycle at the Buffalo Ridge campus, however students attending the Middleton campus will be permitted to walk or ride a bicycle to and from school within the following guidelines:

- Students 5th through 12th grade may walk or ride a bike to or from school.
- Kindergarten through 4th grade students may walk or ride a bike to or from school if accompanied by an approved adult or a sibling in 5th grade or above.

The use of golf cars will be allowed for student drop-off and pick-up. Only adults (or students) with a valid “E” Florida driver’s license will be allowed to drive a golf car on the VCS campus. Student drivers and adults coming on campus using a golf car must follow all road rules AND must use the same car line regulations as all other motor vehicles.

All students will be dismissed through the PikMyKid app. If picking up in a motorized vehicle, assigned PikMyKid numbers should be visible in the windshield. Students designated as walkers/bikers in PikMyKid must report to either the 6th grade or 7th/8th grade designated staff member. It is **imperative**, for the safety of our students, that parents update PikMyKid with their child’s approved dismissal arrangement: carline, walk/bike, aftercare.

It is strongly recommended that students and parents discuss after-school pick-up arrangements **before arriving at school each day**. If circumstances require changes to be made, **parents may call the school office before 2:00 pm** to leave a message. The PIKMYKID app becomes active each day at 2:35 for the purpose of entering students’ numbers. Should the need arise to pick up students early from school, please avoid picking up students between 2:35 and 2:55 pm. Upon the completion of school each day, it is expected that students will remain in their 7th period classes until their number is displayed indicating they should report to their grade level carline. Students not dismissed to car line will report to one of the following locations immediately following the announcement to do so: athletic practice or Buffalo Adventures aftercare program until checked out. Students not picked up in carline will be admitted to the Buffalo Adventures after-care program and appropriate fees will apply. The PIKMYKID process will continue to be used by parents/guardians to communicate to the Buffalo Adventures staff that they have arrived to pick up their student(s). Middle school students not attending **Buffalo Adventures aftercare program must be accompanied by a parent when attending after-school athletic events**. Procedures are in place to ensure a safe climate at all times.

### **MIDDLETON ONLY**

- Students 5th through 12th grade may walk or ride a bicycle to or from school.
- Students walking or riding a bicycle will not be permitted to leave the building prior to dismissal time unless they are checked out with a parent who picks up the student.
- Parents, approved adults, or grade 5 and above siblings walking their student/sibling from school should meet the student at the Buffalo Gathering Spot.
- Students riding bicycles or walking cannot remain on campus unless enrolled in a Buffalo Adventures activity.



- Students remaining on campus after school hours will be charged the Buffalo Adventures fee unless they are scheduled for an academic session.

### **Buffalo Adventures Walkers/Bike Riders- Middleton Campus**

- When carline ends, remaining students in grades K-8 will join the Buffalo Adventures aftercare programs for supervised snack and homework time with optional services that include various extracurricular activities, intramurals, sports, clubs, childcare, and much more.
- Buffalo Adventures services are available until 6:30 PM at a fee of \$8.00 per day.
- A waiver/release for walking or bicycling must be on file.
- Buffalo Adventures students approved to walk or ride their bike home after activities will be taken to the designated “Buffalo Gathering Spot.”
- Parents must change the Pickup mode in the PikMyKid app to a time-specific “Walker” mode.
- K-4th grade walkers/bicyclers will only be released if accompanied by an approved adult or sibling in 5th-12th grade.
- Crossing Guards will be on duty until 6:30 PM.
- Walkers will not be released during inclement weather.

### **ANIMALS/PETS ON CAMPUS**

In order to maintain a safe campus environment, no private pets will be allowed on campus. Pets brought to the campus for the purpose of dropping off or picking up students must remain in the vehicle **at all times** while on campus. Only registered service dogs will be allowed in campus buildings with the approval of administration.

### **ATTENDANCE**

**To Report an Absence:** Absent/tardy students must submit approved documentation verifying that the absence qualified for excused status (parent’s note, doctor’s statement, or email) by the third class meeting after their absence; after that time, the absence will be recorded as unexcused and no documentation will be accepted at any point thereafter. The note should be dated and reflect the student's name, date of absence, specific reason for the absence, and parent signature. If absences are anticipated due to a family trip, or a scheduled event, the parent/guardian must complete the online pre-arranged absence form at least three days in advance of the planned trip so the student will be able to circulate a Pre-Approved Absence Form to teachers. The online form is located on the TVCS.org website by clicking on Middle School and then Forms/Documents/Newsletters. There will be a PDF document labeled 24-25 VCMS Pre Arranged Absence Request. Once the document is opened, click on the link provided.

**Absences:** Absences are classified as excused or unexcused, as determined by the criteria outlined below. To receive credit for missed work due to an absence, a student must turn in assignments upon returning to school the number of days missed plus one day. It is important to note, when students return to the classroom after being absent, they are responsible for the current work being assigned in class as well as their make-up work. However, any assignment

that has a previously determined due date must be observed unless arrangements have been made with the assigning teacher. Any variation of this must be approved by administration. Excused absences include:

- An illness with a note from the parent, medical or dental appointments with an appointment slip. A doctor's statement may be required by school officials.
- An incident resulting in injury to the student.
- A death in the immediate family.
- A subpoena by a law enforcement agency or a required court appearance.
- Insurmountable circumstances as determined by the principal (or designee).
- Unexcused absences include those that are:
  - not accepted as excused, i.e., vacations while school is in session.
  - caused by truancy.
  - not supported with documentation to the office within the timeline.
  - caused by disciplinary action such as suspension.

**School-Sponsored Activity:** Examples of school-sponsored activities include an academic activity directly related to the instructional outcomes of one or more courses, participation in a regularly scheduled school-sponsored athletic event, or an event that is designated as such by the Administration. If students are absent from class due to participation in a school-sponsored activity, they are responsible to make up work that is missed but the absence will not count against them.

#### **Check-Outs During the School Day:**

If appointments require that a student is checked out of school during the school day, **parents should avoid checking students out between 2:35 and 2:50 pm each day.** Students who return to school on the same day as they were checked out must sign in at the office before returning to class.

NOTE: Additional information regarding the attendance policy may be found in the VCS Disciplinary and Attendance Policy beginning on **page 23.**

### **BEFORE-SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

**STUDENTS MAY NOT BE DROPPED OFF BEFORE 6:30 AM.** Supervision will be provided beginning at 6:30 am. Students are expected to report to the designated holding area upon exiting their vehicle, with shirts tucked in, belts on with belt-looped pants/shorts, and lanyards with I.D. badge worn around the neck and visible. A limited number of Media Center Passes will be available at 7:15 each morning for students who desire to check out books. At 7:45 am a warning bell rings indicating it is time for students to report to 1st period homeroom classes. Students will be considered tardy if not in their homeroom by 7:50 am. At 7:50 am students should be seated in their 1<sup>st</sup> period class.

### **BULLYING**

The Sumter County Bullying and Harassment Policy communicates the following definition: Bullying means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture that is severe or pervasive enough to create an

intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to: unwanted teasing, social exclusion, threat, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, theft, sexual, religious, or racial harassment, public or private humiliation, destruction of property, cyber stalking, cyberbullying (including text messaging), and rumor or spreading of falsehoods.

Procedures for reporting alleged bullying incidents include self-reporting, peer reporting, parent reporting and/or staff reporting. In order for all students to feel that school is a safe environment, all students have immediate and private access to an electronic "Bothers Me" form that is emailed directly to the student's school counselor. This process allows students to inform administration and school counselors of students they feel are bothering them or a peer. School counselors check their email daily and meet with students to find out more about their concerns. Depending on the situation, administration may become involved. Parents are also encouraged to call or email their child's administrator with any concerns regarding alleged incidents of bullying or harassment which will result in an investigation being conducted as further outlined in the Sumter County Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Bullying on the part of any student or group of students at any time will not be tolerated. Students who bully other students will be held accountable for their actions whether it occurs on school grounds or off school grounds at a school-sponsored or approved function, activity, or event. Remember, we are all here to have an outstanding academic experience and learning to cooperate and support each other will add to the richness of our environment. Our diversity is our strength, and each one of us has a place in our school. Each student's individual talents and gifts benefit all.

#### **CAR LINE-PIKMYKID**

PIKMYKID is the app being utilized for communication between school personnel and parents/guardians or designees picking up student(s). Please download and register on the PIKMYKID app. Please display your student's assigned number on your dashboard, allowing school personnel to view it and call for your student(s) by their number. PIKMYKID number cards are provided during the Orientation event and then again at the beginning of the 2nd semester. Please be on the lookout for the school personnel in the carline who will relay your student's number to be dismissed and utilize all of the space between you and the next vehicle while in the carline.

**For the Buffalo Ridge Campus**, there are two assigned locations for students to be picked up when school is dismissed:

1. Morning drop-off will be on the North side of the school through the main entrance.
2. 6<sup>th</sup> grade students report to the **EAST** side of the school by the greenhouse for pick up and pick-up designees will drive around the parking lot, following the drive to the pick-up area.
3. 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will report to the **North** side of the school for pick up through the main entrance.

**For the Middleton Campus**, there are three assigned locations for students to be picked up when school is dismissed.

1. 6<sup>th</sup> grade students report to the **southwest** side of the school for pick up. This pick up area is in front of the fine arts and middle school gymnasium.
2. 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will report to the front, southeast side of the school for pick up.
3. Any student riding a bike or walking will exit through the southwest side (6th grade carline) or elementary pickup area.

4. 6th-8th Grade Middleton Students participating on VHS athletic teams will exit through the 7/8 carline and walk to the front of the building and cross with the crossing guard to the center median and proceed toward VHS. Students not participating in VHS Athletics may NOT walk to VHS.
5. For students who have a parent or guardian employed at VHS: 6th-8th Grade Middleton Students walking to VHS who do not have a K-5 sibling, will exit through the 7/8 carline and walk to the front of the building and cross with the crossing guard (2nd Buffalo Gathering spot) to the center median. Those who do have K-5 sibling(s) will meet their sibling(s) at the 3-5 carline area and will exit the building together through the K-2 carline exit. They will walk to the front of the building and cross with the crossing guard (2nd Buffalo Gathering spot) to the center median.
6. All students, including walkers and bicyclists, must be dismissed using the PikMyKid application.

**NOTE: BUFFALO RIDGE and MIDDLETON** - 7th and 8th grade students who have a 6th grade sibling must report to the 6th grade car line.

It is extremely important that students and parents follow car line procedures to ensure the safety of students. Students are expected to remain in 7th period classrooms until their PIKMYKID number appears on the screen and the teacher dismisses the student to their carline. Students should arrive at their car line, look for their vehicle, cautiously proceed to their pick-up vehicle, and get into the vehicle. Pick-up designees may pull away as soon as traffic clears in front of them.

### **CELEBRATIONS/REWARDS**

The Villages Charter Middle School provides several opportunities to recognize students. Students should make sure their choices allow them to participate in these exciting celebrations.

1. Quarterly Rewards: Issued by teachers to students who consistently meet the grade level requirements for good behavior and academic achievement. Students who earn these rewards will receive outdoor reward time with their peers.
2. Award Assemblies: As conditions allow, an assembly will be held at the end of each school year for students earning awards as determined by administration and teachers. An award assembly will be held for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students and their teachers and another for 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and their teachers on the final day of school. More specific information regarding awards for 6th and 7th grade students may be found on the VCMS website under Forms/Documents.
3. Promotion Event: A promotion event will be held for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students earning promotion to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Details about this event will be communicated to parents/guardians and 8th grade students from the 8th grade administrator.
4. Honor Roll: Students earning all A's in a quarter will be eligible for two (2) homework passes to be utilized in the next quarter. Students earning all A's and B's will be eligible for one (1) homework pass to be utilized in the next quarter. This reward will be available for quarters 1, 2, and 3 and must have the approval of the teacher of the course(s) in which the student chooses to implement their earned pass(es).

Please see the "Rewarding Deserving Students" document on the VCMS website under Forms/Documents for the end of year awards.

## CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Electronic devices include but are not limited to the following: Mobile Phones, Smart watches, IPODs, Laser Pens/Pointers, and hand-held games. It is recommended that students not bring cell phones and other electronic devices to school due to the possible risks of being lost or stolen. Use of these items during the school day is **prohibited** except as noted in the VCS Personal Device Agreement beginning on **page 27**. Inappropriate use of any electronic device will result in confiscation of the device as well as appropriate consequences. If students and their parents permit any of these items to be brought to school, upon arrival, they are to be **powered off and placed in the student's backpack throughout the school day**. Students with a mobile phone or smart watch visible should expect to have the device confiscated and receive a Level 1 mark on the Classroom Behavior Management Plan. If a student is using a mobile phone or smart watch, it will result in a disciplinary referral to administration as a Level 2 infraction. If a student is using any electronic device in an inappropriate manner, administration has the right to investigate the potential violation of school rules. Students are NOT allowed to use earbuds/wireless headphones. Parents may pick up confiscated devices from the school office at the end of the school day **before 4:00 pm**.

## CHEATING/PLAGIARISM

Cheating includes buying, stealing, or otherwise obtaining unauthorized copies of tests or assignments for the purpose of improving one's academic standing. During tests, quizzes, or in-class work, cheating includes having unauthorized information, and/or referring to unauthorized notes or other written or electronic information. Copying from others and/or providing information, either during quizzes, tests, or in the preparation of homework assignments, is a form of cheating. Students acting dishonestly or in violation of the established expectations are also examples of cheating.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting ideas, words, or organization of a source, published or not, as if they were the writer's own. All quoted material must be in quotation marks, and all paraphrases, quotations, significant ideas, and organization must be acknowledged by some form of documentation acceptable to the instructor for the course. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise work that is submitted as original. This would also include printing out actual web pages and turning them in as original work. Students are encouraged to discuss assignments amongst themselves or with the teacher, but when the actual material is completed, the student must complete it independently. Plagiarism includes the use of any artificial intelligence (AI) programs, such as ChatGPT, to generate answers, ideas, or words that are presented as a student's original work.

All academic work, written or otherwise, and submitted to a teacher, is expected to be the result of original thought, research, or self-expression. If there is doubt about the authenticity of work, clarification should be obtained from the teacher prior to completing and submitting assignments. Consequences for cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment and a referral to administration for assignment to In-School Suspension.

## CLINIC/ILLNESS/INJURY/MEDICATION

Students who begin feeling ill during the school day must ask their teacher for a clinic pass before proceeding to the school's main office. Upon arrival, the student's needs will be assessed and addressed. Students will receive appropriate attention resulting in a return to class or a call to parents to go home.

**Prescription medication and over-the-counter medication must be brought to the office by a parent or guardian and must be in its original container with the original label or pharmacy label intact. A medication form must be filled out and kept in the office before medication may be administered. The school nurse will notify teachers of student medication schedules. Students may NEVER share any type of over-the-counter or prescription medication. All schools need up-to-date health information regarding allergies, asthma, seizures, etcetera and current telephone numbers provided by parents using the Skyward database.**

**Essential oils are concentrated liquids containing volatile aroma compounds from plants. An oil is "essential" in that it carries a distinctive scent, or essence, of the plant. The problem that schools have with these oils is that they are not regulated by the FDA and are not prescribed by physicians.**

**According to Florida School Health Administrative Guidelines, since the ingredients of non-regulated herbal or "natural" substances are often not clearly delineated, it is recommended that school districts refuse to allow school personnel to administer such substances during the school day. Parents may be permitted to come to school and administer such substances to their children unless the scent from these remedies triggers an asthmatic or allergic reaction to other students or staff in the school. Parent administration of such substances (i.e.; essential oils, or creams and lotions containing essential oils) will be at the discretion of clinic personnel due to the safety of students and staff. Essential oils cannot be kept in the clinic or in the student's possession.**

**Students with allergies:** For all students with allergies, we require that the allergies be noted in Skyward and completed for each student every school year. The parent/legal guardian should also contact the clinic staff within the first week of school, and the school will provide a planning form to be completed by the child's doctor/certified healthcare provider. The plan will outline the specific allergies and the action steps/medication to be given if they are exposed to any of these allergens. It is very important to keep the school up to date on any changes to students' medical conditions so the best care may be provided.

## DETENTION

One of the consequences students may receive as a result of poor choices includes assignment to after-school detention. Any VCMS employee, including Teacher Assistants and non-instructional faculty, may issue a detention. Students are issued an Assignment to Detention form listing their infraction as well as the assigned date and time of the assigned detention. Students are expected to take the form home in order to obtain a parent/guardian signature and return the signed form to the faculty or staff member who assigned their detention the day after receiving the form. **If the signed form is not returned the next day, the student will be assigned an additional day of detention.** Students who do not attend their assigned detention(s) will receive a referral to administration and may be assigned to In-School Suspension. Detention assignments will be rescheduled for students who are absent from school on the

day of their assigned detention as well as for student athletes who are scheduled to compete in an interscholastic game with their team. Students are limited to six detention assignments in each marking period. Students receiving multiple detentions may be placed on a referral to administration only status.

## DRESS CODE

### **2024 - 2025 School Year Uniform Policy for Kindergarten - 12th Grade**

**This uniform policy has been created to ensure all students have the opportunity to learn and grow in a business-like environment conducive to learning. It is our hope that holding them accountable for these expectations will continue our success in growing them into responsible, well-rounded individuals with entrepreneurial spirits. The school-issued ID badge worn on a lanyard and visible at all times is part of the uniform and school safety policies.**

### **Please note, Buffalo Stampeder apparel is not school uniform approved.**

**Uniform Shirts:** Logo shirts are available in five different colors. "VHS logo" shirts are for VHS students only.

**Outerwear:** All outerwear must have a VCS logo and must be purchased at the school store or through school programs, this includes sweatshirts.

### **School Uniform Tops & Outerwear**

**School uniform tops and outerwear may be purchased at Custom Apparel's location in the Southern Trace Shopping Plaza ~ 3451 Wedgewood Lane, The Villages, FL 32162 ~ Phone: 352-750-1600**

**Hours are:** Monday - Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

### **Uniform-Style Bottoms**

Pants, capris, jumpers, skorts, and shorts are allowed and must be in solid navy or beige khaki material. Embellishments such as contrast stitching, sparkles, glitter, lace and embroidery, as well as holes, cut-offs, or frayed hems are not allowed. No denim of any color is allowed.

### **Shoes**

Middle and high schools require a **closed toe shoe with a closed back or a strap around the back ankle**. Flip flops or sandals are **NOT** permitted.

**To ensure that all students meet our high expectations, Administration reserves the right to determine if any part of a student's physical appearance is a distraction to the learning environment.**

**The following rules will be observed:**

- Shirts will be worn tucked in at all times. Please help with this expectation by making sure your child is prepared upon exiting the family car.
- All undershirts must be plain white or the exact color of the uniform shirt worn (no writing or graphics).
- Shorts, skorts and jumpers must be worn at no more than 2” above the knee.
- School issued picture ID must be worn at all times while on campus.
- Undergarments cannot be exposed while standing, sitting or bending over.
- Tights or leggings are permitted; however, leggings must be worn under the uniform bottoms and be the same color as the bottoms (only colors allowed are khaki/beige or navy); any length is acceptable as long as it looks like it is part of the uniform bottoms.
- Belts must be worn with all clothes having belt loops.
- Middle and high school students are required to dress out for P.E. (uniforms sold in school store).
- On special dress-up days, if a student is not dressing in appropriate "theme" clothing they must wear their regular uniform.
- Hair must be of a color that occurs naturally in human nature. Hair should be styled in a way that is not deemed a distraction to others. Examples of unacceptable hairstyles are Mohawks.
- Facial piercings or other body alterations/displays and tattoos that are visible are prohibited.
- Hats or hoods on outerwear may not be worn indoors during the school day.

**In all dress, professionalism and appropriateness will be expected.**

**DRESS DOWN REWARD DAYS**

Students may be awarded a dress down day as determined by the building principal. **The following guidelines must be followed when dressing down or parents will be called to bring a change of clothing that is appropriate:**

- Clothing must be free of frays, holes & tears – including jeans.
- Undergarments must not be visible.
- Shorts, skirts, or skorts must be **no more than 2” above the knee.**
- No leggings or tight-fitting yoga pants.
- Inappropriate graphics will not be tolerated.
- Tops must cover the chest, midriff, stomach and hip areas.
- Sleeveless tops are not permitted.
- No hats of any kind - unless a specific reward day to include hats is announced to students.

**EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

VCS encourages students to participate in extra-curricular activities allowing for exploration of extra educational, leadership, socialization, and volunteer opportunities. It is believed that when students participate in athletics, school clubs, and/or organizations, they are more likely to have a good sense of confidence, self-esteem, and school spirit, which all contribute to a positive school experience.



In order to participate in extracurricular/co-curricular activities or athletic programs, students must adhere to school board policies, school-based criteria, and applicable law. It is important for students to understand that the behavioral expectations placed upon them by the school can extend beyond the classroom and school campus. Pursuant to Florida Law, the school board has the authority to withhold participation privileges from students.

With this in mind, any student who has been formally charged with a felony or similar offense by a prosecuting attorney shall be excluded from participation in extracurricular/co-curricular activities and athletics for a minimum of one calendar year. If the student is not found guilty or if the charges are dismissed, the student may return upon presenting documentation of the court's decision.

Any student who has committed a level III hazing offense shall be excluded from participation in extra-curricular/co-curricular activities for a minimum of one calendar year.

The Villages Charter School has established student eligibility standards and related student disciplinary actions regarding student participation in extracurricular/co-curricular activities. These eligibility standards are included in the Code of Conduct for Athletics that is provided to each participating athlete. Please refer to the Athletics webpage on the VCS Middle School website for tryout dates and further information regarding available sports during each season.

Interscholastic athletic opportunities are governed by the FHSAA and the Citrus/Sumter County Middle School conference in which VCMS athletes participate. Academic eligibility requires that student athletes earn a Grade Point Average (GPA) no lower than 2.0 for each marking period. If students begin a season meeting the GPA eligibility requirement and then post a GPA lower than 2.0 at the next marking period, the student will be removed from the team as no longer eligible.

**Students must be in attendance at a minimum from 11:30 am and complete the school day in order to participate in a school-sponsored event on the same day.**

#### **VCMS National Junior Honor Society**

The Villages Charter Middle School inducts new members into the National Junior Honor Society each school year. To be eligible for membership consideration, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students must have a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.8 or higher. The GPA is calculated using final course grades in all courses during 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Eligible students will be invited to complete a candidate packet showing strengths in the areas of leadership, service, citizenship, and character. Candidates who complete and submit a packet will be evaluated by a Faculty Council consisting of five (5) voting members of the faculty appointed by the Principal and/or designee. Invitations for membership will be extended to candidates selected by the Faculty Council. An induction ceremony will be held at the beginning of each school year upon completion of the selection process.

*Leadership* is based on the student's participation in community or school activities such as student council or school clubs. To meet the *service* requirement, the student must have been active in-service projects in the school and community. *Citizenship* is measured by the student's participation in civic-related organizations and/or activities. *Character* is measured in terms of integrity, behavior, ethics, and cooperation with both students and faculty.

## **FIELD TRIPS/SCHOOL-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES**

Field trips may be planned as extensions of class activities. Student conduct and choices throughout the year will determine eligibility to attend these exciting activities. In some cases, the parent/guardian may be asked to personally chaperone as a condition for participation. A disciplinary referral or a failing course grade is cause for ineligibility to attend a field trip or participate in a school-sponsored activity. Students are considered ambassadors of The Villages Charter School and ultimately of The Villages. Student behavior is a direct reflection on classmates, teachers, and our school. Our high standards do not stop at the school doors but follow students as they represent us. Examples of this are while on a field trip, during extra-curricular activities, listening to a guest speaker at our school, attending or participating in sporting events or other competitions. Please remember that proper behavior is critical to attending future field trips; if a student makes a poor choice while out of the school building, parents will be called to come and pick up their child. Students must have an official, signed permission form and have paid all fees required for the trip, prior to participating in any field trip.

When attending school-sponsored activities, on-campus or off-campus, students will be governed by the authority of school personnel. Failure to comply with school rules and regulations or failure to obey instructions of school personnel may result in consequences as outlined in the VCS Disciplinary Policy.

### **Field Trips - When Scheduled**

Students with more than one disciplinary incident resulting in out-of-school suspension may be ineligible to attend field trips.

## **GETTING THE NEWS**

The Villages Charter School has a website: [www.tvcs.org](http://www.tvcs.org). This interactive website contains information about the campus, as well as a “Teacher Connection” link that will keep parents and students informed about events and activities in each class. All teachers utilize Google Classroom and will provide an embedded calendar on the “Teacher Connection” page to help parents and students keep track of assignments and due dates. Each teacher page lists their email address. If students or parents choose to send an email, please enter “student” in the subject line of the email. SKYWARD is an excellent source of academic information for students and parents. Parents may want to consider obtaining the SKYWARD app for smartphones which parents have reported as being very user-friendly. Use of these tools will keep parents and students informed about campus life. Students are encouraged to share this important information with parents.

## **HALL PASSES**

Students will have access to a digital hall pass during class time for emergency restroom use, media center, or the main office. Passes for the clinic are specific to the clinic and provided by the school nurse to teachers. Restroom breaks should occur during class changes. **NOTE:** Only four students should be in the restroom at a time. If the restroom is at capacity, students should form a line outside of the restroom. Students not following this procedure are subject to disciplinary consequences. Restroom passes during class time are for emergency situations only and are issued at the discretion of the classroom teacher. If the teacher’s permission to leave class is abused, teachers will communicate the concern to parents and students may receive documentation to administration for disciplinary action, resulting in the loss of the privilege of hall passes for a specified time.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is a planned extension of school activities into the home. Its purpose may be to reinforce important facts or skills or to enrich a subject through personal experimentation or research. When correctly used, it helps to develop self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. The standard used to determine the appropriate amount of time spent on homework or studying each night is 10 minutes per grade level, i.e., 6<sup>th</sup> grade = 60 minutes and 8<sup>th</sup> grade = 80 minutes.

The type and length of homework assignments depend upon the teacher's methods and student's performance level. Ordinarily, the amount and complexity of homework will increase as students progress. When a teacher assigns homework, it will be for instruction and not as punishment.

**LATE WORK- Our belief is that high expectations produce high results; therefore, assignments turned in 1 day late will be accepted for a maximum of 60% and those turned in 2 or more days late will receive a zero. If a teacher assigns homework a week in advance or larger projects with set due dates of one week or more, there will be no exceptions for late work.**

## **INTERNET USAGE**

The internet can be a vast source of information and we are pleased to be able to provide access to students. All internet access throughout The Villages Charter School is monitored at all times. Access to the internet is provided for school usage, and, therefore, it is expected that students utilize it in a businesslike manner. The following internet activities will not be tolerated:

- Shopping; gaming; chat rooms; instant messaging; accessing non-school email.
- Access of websites or information that is vulgar, profane, rude, offensive, sexually implicit or explicit in nature.
- Using another person's password, files, or directories.
- Any use which would reflect poorly on The Villages Charter School.

**The Villages Charter School reserves the right to restrict access to the internet, as well as to restrict access to specific sites on the internet. If a student is found to be abusing the privilege of internet access, access will be suspended immediately. Depending upon the reason for the suspension, further disciplinary action may be taken.**

## **LUNCH/SNACKS (Including Breakfast)**

Breakfast and lunch are a valued part of any school day. A La Carte items as well as a second lunch are available for purchase each day in addition to the regular school menu, which will be provided at no cost to the student. Menu selections are posted on the school website each month.

Classes will be assigned tables and students are expected to clean up after themselves before leaving the cafeteria. The following behavior expectations are in place for the cafeteria:

- Stand in a straight, quiet line and respect personal space,
- Be courteous of cafeteria staff, teachers, and volunteers,
- Use indoor voices and sit at assigned tables only unless permission is given by teachers or administration to sit elsewhere,
- Do not play with food, utensils, trays, or toys,

- Do not share food, ask others to buy food, or touch another student's plate,
- Clean up the entire area, including what is spilled on the floor, at the end of lunchtime,
- Do not take anything out of the cafeteria except bottled water that has been purchased,
- Highly caffeinated drinks such as energy drinks are not permitted at school.

Students are permitted to bring a **healthy** snack item in their backpack to school to eat at a designated time as determined/permitted by their **3<sup>rd</sup> period teacher**.

Due to severe food allergies and food sensitivities in many students, as well as the potential harm in undiagnosed cases, parents may only bring food items to the school for their child(ren).

**No food or candy items are permitted outside the cafeteria. Bottled water (no additives) is the only acceptable beverage allowed in classrooms and hallways. Students caught chewing gum will receive an immediate assignment to after-school detention.**

### **MEDIA CENTER**

Students are encouraged to take “*excellent*” care of all textbooks and library books. When students are assigned a book or borrow one from the media center, it is their responsibility to make sure it is returned to the school in the same condition. If it is not, the student will be required to reimburse VCS for the full value of the book so the book may be replaced. Students are permitted to check out up to two (2) books at a time and may keep them for up to two (2) weeks. Students with overdue books will not be allowed to check out additional books. The following policies have been established to encourage students to demonstrate the core value of stewardship as they use media center resources:

- A book may be renewed by bringing the book to the media center.
- Students will be charged a fine for all overdue books at the cost of 5¢ per book per day.
- If a student renews their book or turns it in on or before the due date, the student will not have a fine.
- There is a FIVE-day grace period after the due date.
- Students **may not** check out books until overdue books **or** unpaid fines over \$1.00 have been cleared.
- A computer printer for black/grayscale printing for school purposes only is available.

#### **Book Check-Out Procedures**

In order to check out a book, students must complete a digital pass with their teacher's permission to go to the Media Center from their assigned teacher. Students may check out books before school starting at 7:15 with a Media Center pass provided by the morning supervisors in the gymnasium or the cafeteria. After eating lunch, students may also take advantage of passes to go to the Media Center and check out a book. Students may check out books after school until the Media Center closes for the day. Please check the Media Center webpage for more specific information.

## **MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)**

The Villages Charter School implements an evidence-based Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) so that all students' educational and mental health needs are met and are provided with proactive, timely and evidence-based interventions. A three-tiered Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) approach under the umbrella of the MTSS framework is implemented for students that require varying levels of support beyond what is provided in the core curriculum.

## **POLICY OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment occurs when one person (student, adult, staff, or teacher) subjects another person (student, adult, staff, or teacher) to any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature on school property or at a school-sponsored event. Anyone who engages in such conduct or falsely accuses another of similar conduct will be subject to a range of punishments up to and possibly including dismissal from our school. Sexual harassment is illegal under both state and federal laws. In some cases, the individual may be susceptible to prosecution under the criminal sexual conduct laws.

Examples of sexual harassment may include but are not limited to the following: verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature; subtle pressure for sexual activity; repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implication (for example, a person's body, clothes or sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats; display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures or written materials). It is the student's responsibility to report any forms of harassment, no matter how apparently minor, to any school personnel. School personnel will then report to the Administration to initiate a formal investigation process. The outcome of the investigation will be shared with all parties associated with the event and their parents, if applicable.

## **PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION**

The Villages Charter School is an institution of learning. As such, public displays of affection including, but not limited to, holding hands and kissing are not permitted. Students who violate this policy should expect disciplinary consequences.

## **REPORT CARDS**

It is important that students are aware of their progress in every class and should know what their approximate grade is at all times. Parents and students unsure about grades are encouraged to make use of SKYWARD, the web-based online gradebook to check on academic progress as well as speaking with their teachers.

### **Grading Period Ends:**

1<sup>st</sup> 9-Weeks Ends: October 10  
2<sup>nd</sup> 9-Weeks Ends: December 20  
3<sup>rd</sup> 9-Weeks Ends: March 12  
4<sup>th</sup> 9-Weeks Ends: May 23

### **Report Cards Available in Skyward:**

October 18  
January 10  
March 19  
TBD

## STUDENT TRANSFER PROCESS

Thirty (30) days prior to the beginning of each semester, The Villages Charter School will post a list of the out-of-field teachers on its website. A parent whose student is assigned an out-of-field teacher may request that his or her child be transferred to an in-field classroom within the school and grade in which the student is currently enrolled. Any parent may request his or her child, with an out-of-field teacher, to be transferred to another classroom teacher once during a school year. The request must be made in writing and given to the school principal. The parent does not have the right to select the specific classroom teacher. These requests may not put a classroom over the state mandated class size. The principal must approve or deny the transfer within two weeks after receiving the request. If the request is denied, the principal must notify the parent and specify the reasons for denial.

## SUSPENSIONS

There are two different types of suspension: In-School (ISS) and Out-of-School (OSS). If a behavior choice results in being assigned ISS, students will receive an ISS Instruction and Assignment form. Instructions for students are provided on the ISS Instruction and Assignment form. Failure to follow these instructions will result in further disciplinary action. ISS days do not count as absences. **The ISS Instruction and Assignment form is the responsibility of the student. If a student misplaces or chooses not to ask their teachers to fill in their form, there will be additional consequences.**

Students may be assigned ISS for reasons including, but not limited to, failing to attend assigned after-school detention or as the consequence for a disciplinary referral. If a behavior choice results in being assigned OSS, parents will be notified of the suspension day(s) and scheduled to meet with administration to sign a Behavior Contract for their child. Students may be assigned OSS for reasons including, but not limited to, failing to follow ISS instructions, gross disrespect to staff, fighting, or vandalism. Students are limited to three (3) ISS assignments each semester and additional infractions may result in OSS and a Behavior Contract at the discretion of administration.

### The Villages Charter School (VCS) Disciplinary & Attendance Policy

The design of the VCS Disciplinary Policy enables consistent and uniform enforcement of its provisions. The Administration is responsible for determining the level of the offense as well as determining the appropriate consequence. In all disciplinary actions, the appropriate level of due process shall be observed.

The factors to consider prior to corrective measures being taken include, but are not limited to:

- Seriousness of offense
- Premeditation or impulsiveness
- Strength of evidence
- Cooperation or remorse
- Disciplinary history
- Age or disability

All students will be held accountable for their behavior during all aspects of the school day, including Buffalo Adventures and any other school-sponsored activity. Any behavior occurring off campus

requiring law enforcement action is expected to be reported to school officials so that a full circle of support and an action plan can be created. If the behavior is deemed to be of a nature as to not maintain respect for all stakeholders of VCS the student may be asked to return to their home school.

**CONSEQUENCES** Students are faced with a barrage of choices each day. These choices come with consequences, good or bad. In an effort to provide the best environment for learning to take place, it is anticipated that everyone will behave and abide by the expectations previously stated. When students make choices that do not follow school rules, appropriate consequences will be assigned. The consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- **Conferences** – Conferences are scheduled meetings that will serve to inform all stakeholders of behaviors and possible solutions.
- **Contracts** – An agreement between the school, the student and the student’s family identifying the future possible dismissal of the student if specified requirements are not met. Contracts are used to improve behavioral choices as well as attendance (including tardies and early check outs).
- **Detentions** – Detentions will be scheduled before or after school. Students will not be admitted late into detention. If students are late or do not show up for detention they will have additional consequences assigned. Students will work on academic or behavioral assignments. Detention may also include campus maintenance activities.
- **Felony Transfer** –The Villages Charter School has the ability to deny access to our educational system based on felony charges from the Judicial System.
- **In-School Suspensions** – Students will be in a supervised area and be expected to be on task with assigned school work at all times during the day. Full credit will be given as earned for completed work. Failure to attend or comply with all rules during in-school suspension will result in additional disciplinary action.
- **Loss of Privileges** – The Administration has the authority to exclude students from participating in school-related activities if the conduct at school or outside of school, is deemed unacceptable. The period of time is to be established by the Administration.
- **Out-of-School Suspension** – Students are not to be on school property on the day(s) assigned and this/these absence(s) will be considered unexcused (please see attendance policy). This includes any sporting, extra-curricular, or other after-school activity. All schoolwork missed while serving an out-of-school suspension is due the number of days out of school plus one.
- **Restitution** – Students will restore or pay for damaged or stolen property.
- **Saturday School** – The session runs from 8:00 a.m. – noon. Students will not be admitted late into Saturday School. If a student is late or does not show up for Saturday School, further consequences will be assigned. Students will be participating in a variety of activities and must complete the entire scheduled day. Some of the activities include completion of homework, reading, and campus maintenance.
- **Temporary Removal from Setting** – Students will be removed from an academic setting for a specific amount of time to be established by the Administration.
- **Work Detail** – Students will be assigned age appropriate work on the school campus as determined by the Administration.

If students are referred to the office for behavioral choices, the following events will occur to ensure that they are treated fairly and that an appropriate consequence is decided upon and carried out:

- Students will be given the opportunity to explain their behavior.
- If additional information is needed, it will be obtained in the most efficient manner possible.

- The Administrator will evaluate the severity of the infraction and associated corrective measures outlined in the disciplinary policy.
- Parents will be notified verbally as well as provided a copy of the discipline referral. In order to maintain timely and efficient communication with parents, school personnel rely on the provision of current and accurate phone numbers including cell, home, and work phone numbers and email addresses. Emergency contact forms are provided at the beginning of each year and should be updated as needed throughout the course of the year.

Students' individual needs will be considered and appropriate actions will be taken to ensure the integrity of the school and learning environment are protected. The disciplinary policy is created to address each situation as unique and to determine actions that will deter the behavior from repeating itself. The listing below is grouped in levels, with the minor levels listed first.

The level of the infraction and the corresponding and appropriate corrective measure is coded according to the Sumter County Schools Conduct Report from PP-SR-004 for Elementary and PP-SR-037 for Secondary.

Multiple Level III infractions may result in dismissal from The Villages Charter School. The Director of Education of The Villages Charter School has the authority to dismiss students for cause including, but not limited to, failure to maintain eligibility per Board policy or failure to comply with school rules and regulations that are found in the VCS Disciplinary & Attendance Policy. Dismissal and re-enrollment of students who have been previously dismissed or have withdrawn from school is at the discretion of the Director of Education of The Villages Charter School after consultation with the building principal. Additionally, the building principal and the Director of Education may deny enrollment to new students based upon a review of their discipline & attendance records from their previous school using the VCS Disciplinary & Attendance Policy as a guide. Any previously dismissed student, who is approved for re-enrollment will automatically be placed on a behavior and/or attendance contract. An appeal of any dismissal of a student may be made to the Board of Directors of The Villages Charter School, Inc. by written request within ten (10) days of the dismissal date.

Sumter County School Board will be notified when dismissal of a Sumter County student occurs as a result of discipline infractions. All appropriate discipline documentation will be forwarded to the receiving school when applicable.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Florida Law requires regular attendance. A full school term for the State of Florida is 180 days for students. The nature of school choice places the responsibility for punctual attendance on each family. Therefore, students with excessive absences, including tardies and early check-outs, will be held accountable and action may be taken by the Attendance Review Committee. The makeup of the Attendance Review Committee at the direction of Director of Education may include the principal (or designee), the vice-principal, the student's counselor, and a teacher of the student.

Absent/tardy students must submit approved documentation verifying that the absence qualified for excused status (parent's note, doctor's statement, or email from parent or doctor) by the third class



meeting after their absence; after that time, the absence will be recorded as unexcused and no documentation accepted at any point thereafter.

To receive credit for missed work due to an absence, a student must turn in assignments upon returning to school within the number of days missed plus one day except as noted under the Consequences section of the Disciplinary Policy. However, any assignment that has a previously determined due date, that due date must be observed unless arrangements have been made with the assigning teacher. Any variation of this must be approved by the administration.

The function of the committee will be to determine what further action is warranted after reviewing the student's attendance record. Further action that may be deemed appropriate could be the initiation of an Attendance Contract, demonstration of mastery of the course material by passing the semester exam with a 75% or better, and/or other actions. The committee will be responsible for the execution of the Attendance Contract should the student fail to meet the contract requirements.

Students with a combination of 10 absences, tardies, or early check-outs (excused or unexcused) within a semester grading period are considered to be excessively truant and the Attendance Review Committee will convene and may initiate an Attendance Contract. Non-compliance with the specifications of the Attendance Contract will result in dismissal from The Villages Charter School.

At The Villages High School, if a student receives 10 or more excused or unexcused absences in any class during a semester, the student will be required to pass semester exams with a minimum of 75% in order to prove mastery and receive appropriate credit for the class.

### **TARDINESS/EARLY CHECK-OUTS**

Criteria for an excused tardy include tardies for religious instruction or a religious function, tardiness due to sickness, injury, court appearance, or any other insurmountable condition as determined by the principal (or designee). Students who are tardy must bring in approved documentation verifying that the tardy qualifies for excused status (parent's note, doctor's statement, subpoena, etc.) by the next day after the tardy to school; after that time the tardy will be recorded as unexcused and no documentation will be accepted at any point thereafter. When the student arrives at school after the start of the school day, the student must report to the school office. An Admit Slip will be issued at which time the student will report to class to begin activities for the day. In middle and high school, students will be marked absent for any class in which they miss the entire class period and tardy to the class that is entered after the bell has rung.

#### **Elementary**

The school will monitor all attendance marks, including absences, tardies, and early check-outs. Upon the 8<sup>th</sup> attendance mark, the parent may be contacted for help in finding a solution for better attendance. If the issue is not corrected and attendance marks continue, then at the 10<sup>th</sup> mark, the attendance committee will meet to decide if an attendance contract needs to be initiated.

## Secondary

Each classroom teacher will monitor unexcused student tardiness/early check-outs from the 1st through the 9th occurrence and assign appropriate and natural consequences that may include, but are not limited to, forfeit of daily bell ringer points, after-school detention, removal of points for class participation, and parent contact. On the 10th occurrence of an unexcused tardy, the teacher will submit a referral to administration for further consequences.

### VCS PERSONAL DEVICE AGREEMENT (PDA)

The use of technology to provide educational material is not a necessity but a privilege. Students do not have the implicit right to use their personal laptops, cell phones or other electronic devices while at school. When abused, privileges will be taken away. When respected, they will benefit the learning environment as a whole. Students and parents/guardians participating in the PDA program are expected to act in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner in all areas identified below.

Personal devices include, but are not limited to laptop computers, cell phones, iPods, CD players, MP3 players, iTouch, iPads, and other web browsing devices. The use of cell phones and other electronic devices:

- May only occur during times designated by the teacher and/or school. At ALL other times cell phones and/or electronic devices shall be kept turned OFF and out of sight.
- Will be subjected to all guidelines outlined in this Personal Device Agreement when used on campus or at any school-sponsored event.
- Are prohibited in the locker rooms, bathrooms, and all other locations on campus during school hours at all times with the exception of cell phones to be used in the VHS cafeteria and VHS media center only during the student's lunch period and may be allowed for educational purposes at a teacher's discretion.

**Please read every statement carefully as *no student will be permitted to use personal technology devices unless the required VCS Student Handbook signature page is signed and returned.***

- Students take full responsibility for their devices. The Villages Charter School, Inc. is *not* responsible for any electronic device that is misused, lost, damaged, or stolen, or for the loss of any data due to faulty connections or equipment failure.
- All laptops used on The Villages Charter School campus are required to use the school-provided Wi-Fi connection.
- Students understand that bringing devices on the premises with the intention of infecting the network with a Virus, Trojan, or program designed to damage, alter, destroy or provide access to unauthorized data or information in violation of the PDA policy will result in disciplinary actions.
- Students MAY NOT modify, damage, or compromise any technological device, computer system, or network, or attempt to gain unauthorized access to technological devices, network systems, the Internet, or the work of others, or use any type of computer hacking software, pirated software, or P2P (peer to peer) file sharing software.
- Students are required to enable password protection on their devices. Passwords are to be protected as private information and shall not be disclosed by the student to others.
- It is recommended that non-offensive skins (decals), engravings, or other custom markings are used to physically identify devices owned by the student from others.

- Personal technology, including computers, smart phones, or network access devices may be used only with teacher permission in the classroom. The Villages Charter Elementary restricts bringing and using personal devices at school unless requested by the individual teacher.
- Personal electronic devices cannot be used during assessments unless specifically required by the instructor.
- Teachers are facilitators of instruction in their classrooms. They cannot spend time fixing technical difficulties with students' personal devices in the classroom.
- Students must *immediately* comply with teachers' requests to shut down their devices or close the screen.
- Students can only access files on the computer or Internet sites which are relevant to the classroom curriculum.
- Students agree to follow copyright laws and fair use\*\* practices. Words, photographs, music, video, and all intellectual property belong to the creator and are protected by copyright. Students will never post the work of others without providing proper citation. All material on the Internet is considered copyrighted unless otherwise stated.

\*\*Copyright and Fair Use guidelines may be found at:

<http://libguides.uflib.ufl.edu/copyright>

<http://copyright.columbia.edu/copyright/fair-use>

<http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualperperty/cemeguid.htm>

- Students should not expect that files stored on or transmitted via VCS resources will be confidential.
- Students of The Villages Charter Schools, Inc. **MAY NOT** use the school's network or technology resources for accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, uploading, downloading, transmitting, displaying, or distributing inaccurate, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, racially offensive, harassing, sexually explicit, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language, images, or other content at any time. Cyber bullying is specifically prohibited.
- All digital transmissions are subject to inspection and/or monitoring by VCS employees, members of the IT team, and other officials. In addition, VCS reserves the right to view ALL communications generated on school systems, on school property, or at any school-sponsored event. This policy expressly applies to students' personal electronic devices.
- Students suspected of violating school policy using their personal electronic device understand the VCS administration can search their personal electronic device as part of normal discipline infraction protocols.
- Personal devices are to be charged prior to bringing them to school and run off their own batteries while at school.
- Printing directly from personal laptops will not be possible at school.
- Student abuse or misuse of school technology will result in one or more of the following penalties and will be assessed at the discretion of the school administration:
  - a. Students will face suspension or revocation of computing and other technological privileges.
  - b. Students will face disciplinary action assigned by administration.
  - c. Students will be required to make full restitution to The Villages Charter School, Inc. for resources consumed. Students and/or parents and guardians may face legal action to recover damages.
- Students **MAY NOT**:
  - a. Access the data of another user.
  - b. Erase, rename, move, or make unusable anyone else's files, equipment, or programs.
  - c. Alter files of another user-this is considered vandalism.
  - d. Authorize anyone else to use their account name or files for any reason.
  - e. Conduct any illegal activities that utilize network resources.

- f. Access resources for gambling, gaming, shopping, trading, etc.
- g. Use network resources for any commercial purposes, private advertising, or personal hobbies, specifically, but not limited to: web hosting, game server, chat rooms, etc.
- h. Download copyrighted material for other than legal personal use.
- i. Post pictures, videos, or other recordings of another person.
- j. Post material authored or created by another without his/her consent.
- k. Construct, own, or contribute to a web site that negatively affects the name of the school or any of its students, faculty, staff, or administration.
- l. Install or run any software on the VCS network.

VCS does not have control of the information on the Internet or incoming e-mail, and although the Internet filter is utilized across the campus, it does not always prevent users from accessing the full range of information available. Sites accessible via the Internet may contain material that is defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, illegal, or otherwise inconsistent with the mission of The Villages Charter School, Inc.