

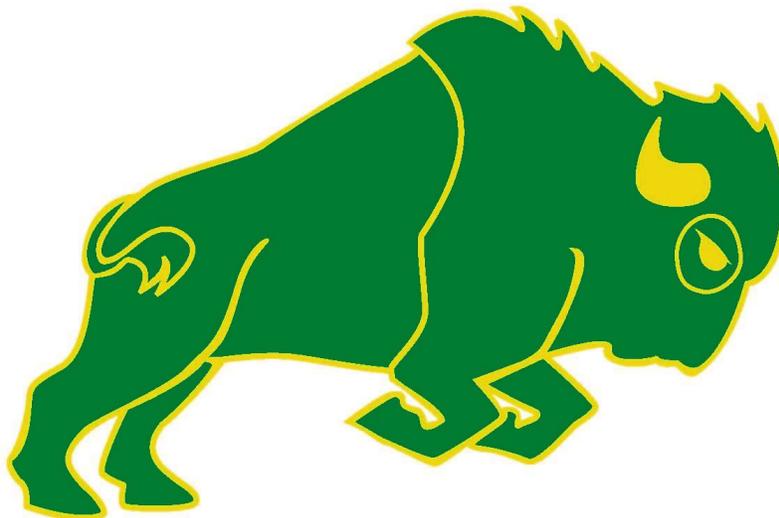
# The Villages®

## Charter School

**2023 - 2024**

**Elementary**

## **Parent & Student Handbook**



*www.tvcs.org*

**Grades: Kindergarten & First**

The Villages Primary Center  
420 Village Campus Circle  
The Villages, FL 32162  
(352) 259-7700  
Fax: (352) 259-7707

**Grades: Second & Third**

The Villages Intermediate Center  
521 Old School Road  
The Villages, FL 32162  
(352) 259-2300  
Fax: (352) 259-2056

**Grades: Fourth & Fifth**

Fourth & Fifth Grade Center  
350 Tatonka Terrace  
The Villages, FL 32162  
(352) 259-6850  
Fax: (352) 259-6859

**Grades Kindergarten - Fifth**

The Villages Charter School  
Middleton Campus  
2377 Stampeder Trail  
Middleton, FL 34762

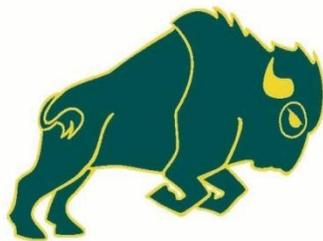
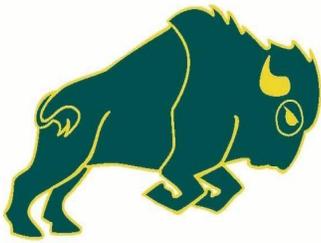


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## CORE IDEOLOGY

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### **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.

Thank you for selecting The Villages Charter School for your family. We know that one of the reasons you have chosen us is due to our high expectations and outstanding achievements. Our success is possible through the dedication, efforts, and mutual support of three distinct groups; faculty and staff, parents, and students.

Parent participation is an important role for the growth of each child. Many times as parents, we find that we are not sure what we can do to assist with the educational progression of our children. Below we have compiled a list of practices that have proven to enhance success in school. We appreciate and encourage your support toward providing your child with an outstanding education.

### **PROVEN PRACTICES**

- ❖ Read with your child every day.
- ❖ Show your child the importance of reading by being a reader yourself.
- ❖ Attend orientations, parent conferences, and other meetings to keep you informed of your student's progress and give you a feel for their everyday experience.
- ❖ Encourage your children to behave acceptably, respecting others' property and their rights to learn.
- ❖ Ensure your children attend school regularly and that they are punctual and complete each day.
- ❖ Notify the school of any concerns.
- ❖ Ensure that your child is prepared with the appropriate materials each day.
- ❖ Ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for school with appropriate uniform and athletic shoes.
- ❖ Get involved and complete your parent involvement hours early.
- ❖ Support your children's interest in extracurricular activities.
- ❖ Familiarize yourself with the curriculum and special programs.
- ❖ Provide solutions to challenges that you see.
- ❖ Utilize the school website to contact teachers and stay informed of school activities.
- ❖ Talk to your child about their day and check backpacks and planners for information sent home.
- ❖ Support the school by following through with the consequences implemented by the teacher/administration.
- ❖ Establish a reasonable bedtime.

**BUFFALO STUDENT EXPECTATIONS:**

**Policies, Rules and Procedures to ensure an optimal learning environment for all students**

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 that the most important members of our educational team include both students and parents. Students are ultimately responsible for their own success. That responsibility begins with good attendance, class participation and preparation, and includes making quality decisions about their life.

Students are expected to be an active stakeholder in their education by:

- attending school daily.
- being on time to school.
- completing and turning in all classroom & homework assignments.
- preparing for all tests.
- staying organized with the planner.
- arriving at class with all materials and ensuring materials are replenished throughout the year.
- backpacks (without wheels unless medically necessary and approved by administration) should be used.
- reflecting a positive attitude at all times.
- portraying the school's high standards on and off campus.
- being kind to others, speaking with the appropriate tone and language.
- protecting others' property, including the school's.
- following instructions the first time given.
- arriving in and remaining in school uniform.

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 as found in The Villages Charter School's Disciplinary Policy. Families who do not meet the charter school 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.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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.

## **GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT CONDUCT**

See “VCS Disciplinary Policy” for detailed information on attendance and behavior

### **ATTENDANCE: ABSENCES/TARDIES/EARLY CHECKOUTS**

Our teachers have spent a great deal of time preparing outstanding activities for your child. We cherish every moment we have with your child and strive to make each minute count. It is important that they are in class to experience every opportunity.

When it becomes absolutely necessary for your child to miss, send a note by the third class meeting after their absence. The note should include your child’s full name, teacher’s name, date of absence, and nature of absence. All absences without a note will be considered unexcused. In the event of an extended absence, please notify the school. We will be happy to gather make-up work and other assignments to give your child the opportunity to stay current with assignments. If an assignment has a previously determined due date, that date will be observed even if the child is absent on that day, unless arrangements have been made with the assigning teacher and approved by administration. Make-up work must be submitted within the number of days absent plus one.

Examples of excused absences are:

- an illness or medical/dental appointment; a doctor’s statement may be required.
- 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.

Unexcused absences include those that:

- are not accepted as excused.
- are for family trips/vacations.
- are caused by truancy.
- were not supported with documentation to the office by the third class meeting after the absence.
- are caused by disciplinary action such as suspension.

Please be sensitive to start times for each site. Arriving even five minutes late to school translates into missed instructional time. We have planned our school calendar so there are scheduled days off each nine week period. You may want to review these dates in scheduling doctor’s appointments and family vacations.

If you know in advance that your child will be absent due to a family trip or a scheduled event, an on-line pre-arranged absence form must be submitted at least three days in advance of the planned absence. The pre-arranged absence form is located on the Elementary School website under forms/documents. Teachers will then prepare a make-up work packet. This will assist your child by giving them the opportunity to return to school with the work completed thereby eliminating potential frustration in having to catch up with assignments.

### **BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES**

We want all of our students to have a positive experience everyday in an environment of respect. By providing behavior guidelines we are able to foster an enjoyable, cooperative, respectful and safe environment for learning. Members of the school community are expected to be polite and considerate of the rights of others. Our staff encourages students daily to consistently make good choices, and be responsible for their actions.

Students should cooperate with all teachers and staff members. Substitute teachers, student teachers, 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.

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. 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.

### **BULLYING/HARASSMENT**

Our Code of Student Conduct states that 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. Informational link on The Villages Charter School website is <http://www.stopbullying.gov/>

### **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, either during tests or in the preparation of homework assignments, is a form of cheating.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting ideas, words, or organization of a source, published or not, as if they were your 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 the work that you submit as your own. This would also include printing out actual web pages and turning them in as your own work. You may discuss assignments amongst yourselves or with an instructor, but when the actual material is completed, you and you alone must complete it.

All academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by you to an instructor, is expected to be the result of your own thought, research, or self-expression. If you feel unsure about the authenticity of your work, you should consult with a teacher to obtain clarification on the appropriateness of the material in question. Consequences for cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment and a possible one-day suspension.

## **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 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 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 to 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 1<sup>st</sup> through the 9<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> occurrence of an unexcused tardy, the teacher will submit a referral to administration for further consequences.

### **ANIMALS 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.

### **DRUGS OR ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

Any student known to have an alcoholic beverage, drugs / drug paraphernalia or a controlled substance in his/her possession, or known to be under the influence thereof, while in school or while participating in or attending a school-sponsored function, shall be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in suspension or dismissal from school.

## **The Villages Charter School 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 in the student's backpack.
- 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. They 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 agenda planner 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 your device 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/intellectualproperty/ccmcguid.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:
  1. Students will face suspension or revocation of computing and other technological privileges.
  2. Students will face disciplinary action assigned by administration.
  3. 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.
  4. Students MAY NOT:
    - access the data of another user.
    - erase, rename, move, or make unusable anyone else's files, equipment, or programs.
    - alter files of another user-this is considered vandalism.
    - authorize anyone else to use their account name or files for any reason.
    - conduct any illegal activities that utilize network resources.
    - access resources for gambling, gaming, shopping, trading, etc.
    - use network resources for any commercial purposes, private advertising, or personal hobbies, specifically, but not limited to: web hosting, game server, chat rooms, etc.
    - download copyrighted material for other than legal personal use.
    - post pictures, videos, or other recordings of another person.
    - post material authored or created by another without his/her consent.
    - 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.
    - 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.

### **INTERNET USAGE**

The Internet, also commonly known as the World Wide Web (WWW), is a vast source of information, and we are pleased to be able to provide our students with access to it. 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.

Usages that will not be tolerated include:

- shopping; gaming; chat rooms; instant messaging; accessing web-based email.
- access of web sites 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 restricting access to specific sites on the Internet. Any student found to be abusing the privilege of Internet access may face possible suspension or revocation of computing and other technological privileges as determined by administration. Depending upon the reason for the suspension or revocation, further disciplinary action may be taken.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT REQUIREMENT**

An essential element for the success of students at The Villages Charter School is the inclusion of parents in varied capacities. We encourage parents to be actively involved in their child's education. The parent/guardian(s) must complete \*20 hours every year for each school (Elementary, Middle or High) on campus where children are enrolled. **Ten (10) of your total hours must be informational hours.** The Primary Center, Intermediate Center, and 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Grade Center are one Elementary school and therefore count as one school. The maximum number of hours required for any family will not exceed 50 hours per school year. As a parent/guardian you may contribute time at any school, regardless of where your child attends. Please keep in mind that you can't earn PI time working in the schools/at events if you have children in your care at that time. VCS is sensitive to the needs of the single parent. **In the absence of a second parent a child's legal parent/guardian may appoint one adult per school year to assist their family with parent involvement responsibilities.** If PI time is not complete by the end of the school year, your child will be un-enrolled for the following school year. You may attempt to make up time owed during the summer and upon approved completion, may enroll, no guarantees that space will be available. Please refer to the Parent Involvement Handbook for more information which is available on our school's website.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

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 punishment 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 your 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.

### **TOBACCO POLICY**

It is unlawful for any person under 18 years of age to smoke tobacco in, on or within 1000 feet of the real property comprising a public or private elementary, middle, or secondary school between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and midnight. This section does not apply to any person occupying a moving vehicle or within a private residence (Florida Statute 386.212). Further it is unlawful for any person under 18 years of age to knowingly possess any tobacco product.

Anyone violating this statute commits a noncriminal violation punishable by:

- \* **For a first violation:** 16 hours of community service or, instead of community service, a \$25.00 fine. In addition, the person must attend a school-approved anti-tobacco program, if locally available;
- \* **For a second violation** within 12 weeks of the first violation, a \$25 fine; or
- \* **For a third or subsequent violation** within 12 weeks of the first violation, the court must direct the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to withhold issuance of or suspend or revoke the person's driver's license or driving privilege (Florida Statute 569.11). **No student, regardless of age, will be allowed to use tobacco or tobacco products while on campus.** Bringing, or using tobacco products, at school will result in disciplinary action under the school's Code of Student Conduct.

### **TOYS AND GAMES**

Toys, balls, digital music devices, and games (including electronic devices) should be left at home. If these items are brought to school, they will be collected. Only a parent may come to pick them up. It is very important that students concentrate on learning while at school.

## **2023-2024 School Year Uniform Policy for Kindergarten -12<sup>th</sup> Grade**

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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 your children into responsible, well-rounded individuals with entrepreneurial spirits.

#### **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:

## The Villages Charter School, Elementary Parent & Student Handbook: 2023-2024

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.

Pants or capris in solid navy or solid beige-khaki material may be purchased from any store and do not require an approved school logo. All other bottoms must come from our VCS approved vendor(s) selected from the school approved options and must have the VCS approved logo in the designated hemline area. Our school approved vendor information is listed on the VCS website.

**For the 23-24 school year** - VCS will observe a transition year to allow parents the opportunity to begin purchasing non-pant options from the school approved vendor(s). Students wearing shorts, skorts or jumpers must follow the appropriate length guideline of no more than 2" above the knee. If a student is not following the specified length requirement then they will be required to wear pants or capris until their school-approved items are purchased from our school approved vendor(s).

**Beginning in the 24-25 school year, all shorts, skorts or jumpers for grades 6-12 must be purchased from the school approved vendor(s). Grades K-5 will not be required to purchase uniform bottoms with a logo as long as the policy above is followed.**

### Shoes

Elementary school requires athletic shoes with closed toe and back due to the state-mandated daily PE requirement. 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 hair styles would be 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.

### **VHS Academy Uniforms (for Grades 11-12 Only)**

VHS Academies have a uniform that best fits the workplace of each academy. Orders can be placed at Custom Apparel also. Students are expected to wear their academy uniforms every day.

### **WEAPONS**

Weapons and other dangerous objects, including lighters, pocket knives, ammunition, fireworks, and the like, are not permitted on school grounds. Possession of a weapon is a serious offense and may result in suspension or dismissal from school.

## **ACADEMICS**

### **AGENDA PLANNERS**

Each student is required to purchase an agenda planner from the school. It will be used as a tool for planning. It is also a great way to communicate with your child's teacher. You should encourage your child to write down assignments and then ask your child about them. Organization is a skill your child will begin to experience.

Take a few minutes each week and clean out their backpacks. Place all loose papers in the proper binders and discuss assignments with your child.

### **CONFERENCES**

It is our hope that communication between home and school will be ongoing. At least one parent conference will be scheduled throughout the school year in Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grades. We value the opportunity to talk with you about your child's progress. Appointments for parent conferences may be arranged through your child's teacher. Usually a conference can be arranged within one working day after request. Parents can also communicate with teachers through The Villages Charter School website, [www.tvcs.org](http://www.tvcs.org). Each teacher has a link for email contacts and the site is filled with information for parents. Please do not use social media as a means of communication with teachers regarding school matters.

If your child is having a problem in school, we will do everything in our power to resolve the issue. Please trust your intuition, and if you feel something is not right call and let us help solve the problem. It is important that your child have a wonderful experience as they grow with us. There is never an issue that is too small for us to be informed about.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Education is not limited to the four walls of the classroom. Teachers may choose to take their classes to on-site locations for firsthand experiences. Field trips are planned as extensions of class activities. We encourage you to volunteer as a chaperone. Chaperones will be assigned supervision duties of children in addition to their own, so other children (sibling, relatives, friends, etc.) cannot come with you on these trips. You may be asked to wear specific attire on these trips. If you are interested in chaperoning please let your child's teacher know. **All chaperones must fill out a volunteer application and supply a copy of their driver's license each school year. A background check will be conducted.** In some cases, fingerprinting may be required. We encourage you to complete a volunteer application early in the school year. In some cases the number of chaperones allowed may be limited. If your child's conduct indicates that he/she might present a safety or security risk while off campus, you may be required to personally chaperone your child as a condition for participation. In some cases, they may not be invited to participate in the field trip.

All students must have a signed permission slip as well as any fees required for the trip turned in on time to participate on any field trip. The school will adhere to all payment and application deadlines set up for each field trip. Field trip payments are non-refundable.

## **GRADES**

Grading scale:

### Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Standards Based

- 5 – Exceeding Expectations
- 4 - Proficient
- 3 – Developing
- 2 – Approaching
- 1 – Not Yet Meeting Expectations

### 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grades

- 90 – 100      A
- 80 – 89        B
- 70 – 79        C
- 60 – 69        D
- 59 & below    F

- 90 – 100      E = Excellent
- 70 – 89        S = Satisfactory
- 60 – 69        N = Needs Improvement
- 59 & below    U = Unsatisfactory

### Core Values (formerly conduct)

#### Kindergarten -2nd Grade

Hospitality “I can show hospitality.”

- I can respect adults and peers.
- I can listen attentively.
- I can work cooperatively with others.
- I can respond positively to redirection.

Stewardship “I can demonstrate stewardship.”

- I can use materials appropriately.
- I can treat our campus with respect.
- I can follow the dress code.

Hard Work “I can exhibit hard work”.

- I can strive for quality work.
- I can demonstrate self-control.
- I can work well independently.
- I can follow rules and verbal directions.
- I can complete assignments.

Creativity “I can display creativity.”

- I can participate in class activities and discussions.
- I can use multiple strategies to solve problems

### 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grades

**Students will receive an E/S/N/U for the Core Values below. Some examples are listed.**

#### Hospitality (E/S/N/U)

- Respect adults and peers.
- Listen attentively.
- Work cooperatively with others.
- Respond positively to redirection.

#### Stewardship (E/S/N/U)

- Use materials appropriately & treat the campus with respect.
- Follow dress code.

#### Hard Work (E/S/N/U)

- Complete assignments (could include classwork and/or homework).
- Be prepared and strive for quality work.
- Demonstrate self-control.
- Work well independently.
- Follow rules and verbal directions.

#### Creativity (E/S/N/U)

- Participate in class activities and discussions.
- Use multiple strategies to solve problems.

Skyward gradebook viewer is the student information system of academic and attendance information for students and parents. A user name and password (obtained from the Enrollment Office) are required to access this tool from home using the internet through our Gradebook Viewer link on our school's website, [www.tvcs.org](http://www.tvcs.org).

### **HOMEWORK**

All teachers may assign homework on a regular basis. Please refrain from assigning more than 10 minutes per grade level on a school night, i.e. 20 minutes a night for 2nd grade, 40 minutes a night for 4th grade, or 70 minutes a night for 7th grade. The Villages Charter School expects all teachers to teach “from bell to bell” and this practice should eliminate the need for excessive homework. Make sure homework serves a purpose (such as reinforcing new concepts or extending learning) and is not just busy work. VCS is proud of our “project-based” approach that has proven very successful. However, large projects occurring regularly take great planning by our teachers. Teachers should also be aware of major educational and school events when assigning homework (such as State Testing dates, holiday, etc.) and the monetary impact of projects.

Homework is a planned extension of school activities into the home. Its purpose is to reinforce important facts or skills or to enrich a subject through personal experimentation or research. Correctly used, it helps to develop self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. Teachers may assign homework regularly.

The type and length of home assignments depend upon the teacher's methods and the student's performance level. Ordinarily the amount and complexity of homework will increase as the student advances. If homework is assigned, it should be to support instruction, not as punishment.

In addition to possible nightly homework, opportunities for project-based learning may be assigned. Examples could include Book Character Day, 100th day of school projects, Garbage Monster, Nature

projects, etc. Grade level projects must have a team consensus (across both campuses) with expectations, grading expectations, late policy and be approved by an administrator.

### **PUPIL PROGRESSION**

Decisions regarding pupil promotion and special placement are primarily the responsibilities of the school's professional staff; however, the final decision in regards to grade placement is the responsibility of the school's principal. When concerns arise you will be contacted and involved in the decisions being made regarding your child. All decisions dealing with promotion or retention are made in line with state and county requirements for achieving grade level expectations.

### **REPORT CARDS**

The report card is an evaluation of a student's continuous growth and progress in school. Report cards may be viewed on Skyward at the end of each nine-week period.

Each teacher will send you specific grading policies for your child's grade level. Progress Reports will be available on Skyward in accordance with the dates listed on the School Calendar as "Quarter Mid-Point." Should you not have access to a computer and wish to have a printed Progress Report sent home, please be sure to notify your child's teacher. Please contact the teacher with any grading issues or questions.

### **SPECIAL RECOGNITION PROGRAMS**

**Citizenship Award Program (Kg. - 5<sup>th</sup> grade):** Students are recognized and rewarded on a monthly basis for doing their best in the following areas:

- Behavior
- Academic Effort
- Attitude

**Principal's List and Honor Roll:** Principal's List and Honor Roll celebrations occur every grading period.

- Principal's List (3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade) is awarded to students who earn all A's, and adhere to the Core Values on their report card.
- Honor Roll (3<sup>rd</sup> grade – 5<sup>th</sup> grade) is awarded to students earning all A's, B's, and adhere to the Core Values on their report card.

### **TESTING**

Students will be assessed at the beginning of the year and educational strengths and weaknesses will be addressed in an academic plan. State guidelines require that parents of kindergarten through third grade students be notified if their child is non-proficient in reading.

A standardized test, STAR, will be given to kindergarten, first and second graders, while third through fifth graders will take the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) in English/language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Fifth graders will take the Florida Statewide Science Assessment. If you have any questions about the state required test or your child's scores, please contact the school counselor.

## **SCHOOL DAY**

### **ARRIVAL** *\*\*Please also refer to VCS BEFORE and AFTER SCHOOL POLICY*

We are pleased that we can provide not only top-notch educational opportunities for your family during the course of the school day, but also morning supervision and an enriching after school program. We provide supervision before school starts, beginning at 6:30 a.m. until the start of school.

The earliest your child can be dropped off is 6:30 a.m. Please form a single file line after merging at the bend (please merge from two lines, alternating every other car) and pull all the way up in the drop off lane in front of the school to let your child out. Do not park in the drop off lane during car line times. Everyone is anxious to get to work on time and the safety of our students is most important. **Never walk your child from the parking lot through the car line and leave them at the front entrance.**

### **VCS BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL POLICY**

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 drivers’ 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.

#### **Before School Procedures**

- All campuses are open at 6:30 a.m. for student drop-off. K-8 students will be directed to a designated area with supervision.
- Note: There is no fee for before school supervision.

#### **After School Procedures**

##### **K-8 Buffalo Ridge & Middleton Carline Procedures**

- 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.

##### **Middleton Only**

- Students 5th through 12th grade may walk or ride a bicycle to or from school.
- Kindergarten through 4th grade students may walk or ride a bicycle to or from school if accompanied by an approved adult or a sibling in 5th grade or above.
- 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.
- Pets are NOT permitted on school grounds at any time.

### **Buffalo Adventures Afterschool Program**

- 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.

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

- 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.

### **VHS**

All high school students are expected to be off-campus, in an organized activity, or in the cafeteria for academic support time by 2:50 pm (15 minutes after the release bell). Students reporting to the cafeteria for academic support time will complete an hour of classwork with certified teachers, then 90 minutes of enrichment time to include intramural sports (including eSports) and a weekly academy snapshot, and, finally, an hour of supervised flex time. Students will not be charged for the 2:35 pm - 4:00 pm academic support time. There will be a flat nine weeks upfront fee of \$100 for students who remain in the program after 4:00 pm.

### **CAFETERIA: BREAKFAST & LUNCH**

We have breakfast and lunch programs that are provided by our own Food Service Program. Menus are available on our VCS website along with meal prices.

Students should eat breakfast before going to their classroom.

Any student, who wishes, may bring a healthy bag lunch from home. Avoid sending sodas or candy with their meals. Gum is not allowed at school. It is recommended that you send ready to eat meals with ice packs and thermoses as needed. Students are not allowed to share food with others due to possible food allergies.

Research shows hydration has a major effect on energy levels and brain function, therefore, we encourage students to bring a non-breakable water bottle from home to keep in the classroom.

Applications for free or reduced lunches are available on our school website and will be available in the cafeteria. If your child is approved for reduced or free lunches, he/she is also approved for reduced or free breakfasts.

If you wish to have lunch with your child, adult meals can be purchased. After you sign-in at the front office, we will assist you in locating your child in the cafeteria. You may sit with your child at the parent table or sit with the class at their assigned table. Other children may not join you at the parent table.

### **CLASS PARTIES AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS**

Class parties are held for special occasions throughout the year. Birthday parties are not conducted at school. Make arrangements with your child's teacher ahead of time if you would like to provide a birthday treat for the class. **Invitations to private parties, unless issued to every student in the class, may not be distributed at school. The teacher can provide parents with a class directory of mailing addresses if given advance notice.**

### **LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY**

There are exciting educational activities planned for your child that occur at all times during the school day. Regular attendance is necessary for all students to achieve success throughout the school year. Please use prescheduled days off to schedule appointments and family outings. If you find that you have no other alternative than to sign your child out before the ending of the school day, please check them out through the school office.

The office staff will call your child out of class as to provide the least amount of disruption to other members of the class. If someone not listed on the Emergency Contact Form is to pick up your child, authorization must be granted in writing along with a signature from the parent or guardian.

There are special circumstances for some families where there may be individuals who are ***SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED FROM SEEING OR PICKING UP A CHILD***. If the court has directed these arrangements, **official court documents** should be on file at each respective school site and also noted on the Emergency Contact Form.

### **TRANSPORTATION/ CHANGING PLANS**

People listed on the emergency contact form or authorized through Pikmykid are the only persons that your child will be released to. We certainly understand that circumstances can change your regularly scheduled plans. If you foresee there will be a change in your routine, please send a note with your child or call the front office explaining how he/she is to get home.

Parents should stress to their children the importance of only going home with authorized persons and approved by their guardian/s. A special warning should be given so children will refuse to get into cars with strangers. It is the responsibility of the parent to report any change to the office in writing.

### **DISMISSAL *\*\*Please also refer to VCS BEFORE and AFTER SCHOOL POLICY ABOVE.***

The safety of your child is our top priority. Please be prepared with the Pikmykid app, your official Pikmykid car tag, and a photo ID upon picking up your child from school. If you (or your designated pick up person) does not have the Pikmykid app or car tag displayed for personnel to view, you will be required to return to the end of the carline where you will have time to download the app. During afternoon pickup at dismissal time, it is extremely helpful if you have the official Pikmykid car tag in the front window dash. You may make copies of the car tag to give to others you designate as authorized to pick up your child, however, they must be copies of the official car tag given to you by the school. Should it get lost, please request another one. NO OTHER car tags will be accepted. This helps to speed up the car line.

Students will be asked to wait in the pickup area and we will escort them to your car. Please follow the traffic pattern and stay in the car line. We do have a double car line in the afternoon. Use the lane closest to the building for Kindergarten, 2nd and 4th grade students. Use the outside lane for 1st, 3rd, and 5th grade students. If you have siblings in both grade levels of an elementary building (i.e. a child

in Kindergarten and in 1st grade, or a child in both 2nd and 3rd grades, or a child in both 4th and 5th grades), please use the lane closest to the building for pick up. Do not park, walk across and attempt to get your child from the pick up area. We will do everything in our power to maintain traffic flow without compromising safety.

Students not picked up from the car line within 15 minutes from the dismissal bell will be placed into our after school program, Buffalo Adventures, and those charges will apply.

### **BUFFALO ADVENTURES**

The Villages Charter School offers an after school enrichment and recreational program that provides a wide variety of activities from art to sports. It begins each day at school dismissal and ends at 6:30 p.m. for a nominal fee. Please refer to the Buffalo Adventures handbook, or for more information please contact the Buffalo Adventures Coordinator at each building.

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

### **CLINIC**

A clinic nurse or assistant is on duty in the clinic to assist students who are ill or injured. Parent Permission for Care must be granted through the online form in Skyward. With parent approval, your child can visit the clinic with teacher permission and a clinic pass. Parents will be notified if their child needs to be picked up from school.

**Parents must bring prescribed medicines directly to the office in the original bottle and fill out the necessary paperwork.** We cannot give medication unless you have completed the medication forms. An elevator pass may be obtained from the office when applicable if needed due to a physical restriction (a doctor's note may be required). In the best interest of all our students, students with nits and/or lice will be sent home. We can offer advice for treating such cases if needed. In addition, students may not come to school unless they have been fever free without medication for a minimum of 24 hours. Students must not have had any vomiting or diarrhea without medication for a minimum of 24 hours as well.

The most current up-to-date health information regarding allergies, asthma, seizures, etc., and current telephone numbers on the emergency contact form are required for the continued safety of your child. If you find that circumstances change during the course of the year, notify our front office and we will be glad to provide you with a new emergency contact form.

Feminine hygiene products are available in the clinic free of charge.

**New State Requirement for the 23-24 School Year:** A student may possess and use a medication to relieve **headaches** while on school property or at a school-sponsored event or activity without a physician's note or prescription if the medication is regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration for over-the-counter use to treat headaches. **Students must have a parent permission form on file, the medicine must be in the original container and students cannot share/distribute the medication. There will be disciplinary action for sharing/distributing medication. The Sumter County authorization form can be found on our website under forms/documents or in the clinic at each building.**

### **EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION (ESE) PROGRAMS**

The Villages Charter School offers limited programs for the exceptional student. Each student is scheduled individually and is placed into courses specifically designed to meet their needs where possible. If you have concerns about your child regarding exceptional student education, please speak with the school counselor.

### **GUIDANCE SERVICES**

The Guidance Program reinforces the foundations of The Villages Charter School in promoting the growth of the whole person in mind, body and spirit. Each adult in our school community has opportunities to influence and facilitate student growth. Our school counselors are more than an advisor to students, but are also a valuable resource to parents, faculty, and administrators. Our school counselors assist in counseling, testing, peer mediations, student assessment, staffings, and moral development.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

The school maintains an area for claiming lost belongings. Parents should mark their children's items with a permanent marker. The most frequently misplaced articles include jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, lunch boxes, and water bottles. Items marked with the child's first and last name are easy to return to their owner. Items not claimed will be donated to a charitable organization.

### **MEDIA CENTER**

We are very proud of the media centers and the wide range of literature and periodicals that our campus provides. You are welcome to be a part of any of the exciting activities that occur as a part of our media center programs. Students may check out books on a regular basis according to these guidelines:

- You are expected to take excellent care of all library books.
- Students in grades K - 1<sup>st</sup> can check out two books at a time.
- Students in grades 2<sup>nd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> can check out four books at a time.
- Students will be notified when books become overdue.
- Students with overdue books will be unable to check out additional books.

We ask that your child return the books in the condition in which they were received. In the event a book or other item becomes damaged or is lost, we ask that you pay for that item to be replaced. We value the collection that we are able to offer and take great strides in assuring that the materials will continue to be available for all children.

### **MENTAL HEALTH**

The Villages Charter School implements evidence-based Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) so that all students' mental health needs are met and are provided with proactive, timely and evidence-based interventions. We utilize a three-tier Response to Intervention/Problem-solving (PS/RtI) approach under the umbrella of the MTSS framework with varying levels of support beyond that used as the core curriculum.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **BUFFALO H.E.R.D.**

The Villages Charter School has an active parent association called Buffalo H.E.R.D., which stands for Buffalo families helping educate responsibly developed children. The Buffalo H.E.R.D. supports many activities for our school and raises funds for programs, which benefit our students. They sponsor a wide range of projects and we encourage your participation. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month, at 6:00 p.m. Please see the school website for meeting locations each month.

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT SHEETS**

Emergency contact sheets are kept on file in the office. The Emergency Contact Form is to be completed in Skyward. It is very important that we have accurate, current phone numbers, including place of employment phone numbers and addresses on every student. If you don't have a phone, please give us a neighbor's phone number to use if your child is sick or injured. **If any of your information should change during the year, please update via Skyward.**

### **GETTING THE NEWS**

The Villages Charter School has a website: [www.tvcs.org](http://www.tvcs.org). This interactive web site contains information about all schools, including the elementary school, as well as a "Teacher Connection" link that will keep you informed about events, activities, and homework in each class. Each teacher page lists their email address. Please enter "student" in the subject line of your email. Classroom teachers create newsletters which will be shared on a regular basis. Use of these tools will keep you informed about your child's school.

### **MOMENT OF SILENCE**

A moment of silence will be set aside during our morning announcements. Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss what a moment of silence is with their child and make suggestions as to the best use of this time for their child. Teachers are prohibited from making suggestions to the nature of any reflection for this time.

### **PARENT VISITATION**

For the safety of our students when visiting the school, please have your picture ID ready, use the call box located at the front entrance, and follow the receptionist's instructions. All visitors to the school will be required to present an approved form of identification, such as a state issued identification card to be entered into our visitors' management software system. Parents with messages or deliveries for students or teachers should leave the items at the front office; they will be forwarded during non-instructional times. Gift deliveries are discouraged, but will be delivered at the end of the school day.

### **PHONE USAGE**

Phones are available in the front office for student emergency use only. After school is not the time to call home to get permission for a friend to come over. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss after school pick up arrangements with their parents before leaving for school in the morning. If changes are to be made, they should be parent initiated, and the school will follow up with your child.

*Usage of cell phones and electronic smart watches is prohibited during the school day.*

### **SAFETY**

Safety is a top priority at The Villages Charter School. Students should be responsible in reporting unsafe acts or potential dangers to adults on campus. Students who have witnessed questionable behavior should tell an adult so that an intervention may take place. Students using language that includes threats or violence is inappropriate and will not be tolerated including those comments of a joking nature. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. It is our hope that students will learn how to be responsible citizens in creating the safest environment for their education.

Students will pay a nominal fee for their school issued ID card, protective sleeve, and clip at the beginning of the school year. Should loss or destruction occur, students will be required to replace

their ID card, protective sleeve, and/or clip at a nominal fee. School issued IDs are part of the school uniform policy and must be worn in accordance with the policy.

# The Villages®

## *Charter Elementary School*

2023 - 2024

**VCS Disciplinary & Attendance Policy Acknowledgement**  
**VCS Personal Device Agreement Acknowledgement**  
**Parent and Student Handbook Acknowledgement**

**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN**

My child and I have reviewed The Villages Charter School Parent & Student Handbook including The Villages Charter School Disciplinary and Attendance Policy and The Villages Charter School Personal Device Agreement and understand the contents described. By signing below, I am indicating my review of each of these policies, possible corrective measures, and my alignment with the philosophies of The Villages Charter School.

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

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

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

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Homeroom Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please acknowledge by signing this page. A copy of this form will be sent home with each student.***