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PARENT AND SCHOLAR HANDBOOK  
(CODE OF CONDUCT)



*EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION*

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THE 2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR  
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Updated: 07/28/2025

Dear Parents and Scholars,

Welcome to the 2025–2026 school year at Vision Academy Charter School! We are excited to begin another year filled with opportunities for academic achievement, personal growth, and community building. Our dedicated and caring staff are committed to delivering a high-quality, well-rounded education to every scholar.

At Vision Academy, we believe that education is a shared responsibility. The success of our school depends on the collaboration of students, families, and staff. Our mission is rooted in building strong partnerships among these key members of our community. Together, we shape a learning environment guided by our RACERS values—**Responsibility, Active Learning, Community, Empathy, Respect, and Self-Control**. These principles are evident in every aspect of our school, from classroom expectations to school-wide programs, and serve as the foundation of character and academic development at Vision Academy.

The policies and procedures outlined in this Handbook reflect our commitment to creating a safe, orderly, and supportive atmosphere conducive to learning. Inside, you will find important information about our school’s expectations, services, programs, and schedules. This Handbook also includes our **Code of Conduct**, which defines the values and behaviors essential to maintaining a positive school culture. We ask that all families read it carefully, discuss its contents, and refer to it throughout the school year.

We encourage you to become an active part of the Vision Academy Charter School community—whether by participating in classroom activities, joining clubs, supporting school events, or simply staying engaged in your scholar’s education. ***Your involvement makes a lasting impact.***

On behalf of our entire staff, we would like to thank you for entrusting us with your child’s education. We look forward to a successful and rewarding school year ahead.

Warm regards,

Dr. Adam, CEO/Founder

Dr. Coll, Principal

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY**

Vision Academy Charter School is committed to fostering an environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. We firmly believe that every student has the right to learn in an atmosphere that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, genetic predisposition, or other protected characteristics defined by law.

Harassment based on any protected characteristic is strictly prohibited within our school community. Under this policy, harassment refers to verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or displays hostility or aversion toward an individual because of their race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic as defined by law. Harassment also includes conduct that: (i) creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; or (ii) unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance. Examples of harassing conduct include, but are not limited to, the use of epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; engaging in threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; making denigrating jokes; and displaying or circulating written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or a group (including through email).

We would also like to draw your attention to the programs available for students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. These acts prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities in any program that receives federal financial assistance. A person with a disability, as defined by Section 504/ADA, is someone with a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, or working. Our school is responsible for providing reasonable adjustments, modifications, and necessary services to eligible individuals with disabilities.

Vision Academy Charter School is fully committed to ensuring that its policies and practices do not discriminate against individuals with disabilities, both among its personnel and students. We strictly prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities in any program or practice within our school.

We appreciate your cooperation in upholding these principles and creating a respectful and inclusive environment for all Vision Academy Charter School community members.

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Vision Academy Charter School is to prepare students in kindergarten through eighth grade to become responsible and articulate students and citizens by using a comprehensive curriculum designed to foster academic success and current technology to build self-reliance.

The core philosophy of the Vision Academy Charter School is that all students can achieve success through the fidelity of implementation of the five research-based pillars presented in this application:

- Precise scope and sequence supported through quality curriculum and extended day in a small school environment to ensure mastery of content.
- Calculated delivery model that is refined and improved through the use of data.
- Frequent demonstration of student achievement beyond the test through project based learning and on-line learning opportunities that will lead each student toward autonomous education advocacy.
- Consistent use of school-wide and individual positive behavior support systems.
- Authentic parent engagement that breaks down walls of education disenfranchisement and builds strong home and school relationships.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Vision Academy will build from the ground up a platform for learning that:

- Gives every child access to a rich, well-rounded, and rigorous curriculum;
- Helps every child understand the value of knowledge as a tool in upward mobility;
- Provides every child the appropriate amount of time and support for mastery of content;
- Utilizes technology to foster independence in learning and ownership of outcomes;
- Creates a safe and consistent setting that allows for exploration and calls for personal responsibility; and,
- Empowers families and students to define goals and create pathways to achieve those goals.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

To fulfill our mission, every member of the Vision Academy Charter School community is expected to respect others and contribute to creating a safe, orderly, and supportive environment that fosters physical, emotional, and academic growth.

This **Parent and Scholar Handbook** provides essential information, expectations, and policies to help ensure a successful and rewarding school experience for every student. It explains the behaviors, routines, and programs that support a positive and productive learning environment, where students, families, and staff work together toward shared goals.

Please use this handbook as a helpful guide to understanding how our school operates and how we can work together to maintain a respectful and academically focused community. We encourage you to review each section carefully and refer to it throughout the school year.

### **ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION**

For full details and access to all application and registration information, please visit: [www.vacharter.org](http://www.vacharter.org). Vision Academy Charter School (VACS) is a public charter school open to all students, regardless of background or immigration status. To be eligible for Kindergarten enrollment, children must be five (5) years old on or before August 31 of the enrollment year. Families interested in enrolling a new student must complete the [online application](#) through the [PowerSchool Enrollment Platform](#), accessible via our [website](#). For families who need assistance, staff will be available at the school and at designated community open houses.

### **HOURS OF SCHOOL OPERATION**

The regular school day at Vision Academy Charter School runs from 7:55 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, students are dismissed at 1:15 p.m. to allow staff to engage in Professional Development activities. Scholars must arrive before 7:55 am in order to be considered “on time” but may arrive as early as 7:30am and should arrive by 7:50 to enjoy the VACS breakfast.

Additionally, we offer an optional Beyond the Bell Extended Learning Program from 3:30 PM to 5:15 PM (Mondays through Thursdays). This program provides students valuable enrichment opportunities, athletic activities, and tutoring. We strongly encourage parents to consider allowing their children to participate in the Beyond the Bell Program. If your child is enrolled in the Beyond the Bell Program, please ensure they are promptly picked up by 5:30 p.m.

At Vision Academy Charter School, we strive to provide a well-rounded educational experience that extends beyond the regular school hours. These additional programs contribute to the overall growth and development of our students.

Students who are not picked up by 4:00 PM and are not enrolled in an Extended Day Program will be sent to Aftercare (if available and subject to a fee). If Aftercare is not available or the situation requires it, CYF or the Police may be contacted.

Likewise, students in the Beyond the Bell Extended Learning Program who are not picked up by 5:30 PM (Monday through Friday) will be sent to Aftercare (if available and subject to a fee), or if necessary, CYF or the Police may be notified.

### **BEFORE- AND AFTER-CARE PROGRAM**

Vision Academy Charter School does not offer before-care on any day of the week.

We are exploring the possibility of offering Friday-only aftercare, as scholars are dismissed early at 1:15 PM on Fridays. The program will only be offered if there is sufficient interest from families. If implemented, the tentative start date is Friday, September 5, 2025, and the program will run from 1:15 PM to 5:30 PM.

The proposed rate is \$100 per month (Fridays only), with payments due by the 1st of each month.

If you are interested in enrolling your scholar in this potential aftercare program, please complete the [Aftercare Application Survey \(2025–2026\)](#) by August 6, 2025.

### **WEATHER RELATED SCHOOL CLOSING POLICY**

In the event of inclement weather, Vision Academy Charter School may decide to close, open late, or dismiss early to ensure the safety of our students and staff. Timely communication is essential. We use multiple platforms to notify families, including:

- PowerSchool SchoolMessenger
- Email alerts
- Social media platforms

To ensure you receive these important updates, it is essential that your contact information is accurate and current in our system.

- If your phone number or email address changes, please contact the main office as soon as possible so we can update your information in our system.
- If there is a change in your child's home address, you must notify the main office immediately by emailing [secretary@vacharter.org](mailto:secretary@vacharter.org). In addition to our direct communications, families can also check local media outlets and their School Delay and Closing websites for updates regarding Vision Academy Charter School's status during severe weather.

By keeping your contact information up to date, you help ensure that you receive all critical notifications without delay.

# II. CALENDAR

July / 2025				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

Teacher days – 0  
 Student days – 0  
 Cumulative teacher days – 0  
 Cumulative student days – 0

August / 2025				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

Teacher days – 14  
 Student days – 4  
 Cumulative teacher days – 14  
 Cumulative student days – 4

September / 2025				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

Teacher days – 20  
 Student days – 20  
 Cumulative teacher days – 34  
 Cumulative student days – 24

October / 2025				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

Teacher days – 23  
 Student days – 22  
 Cumulative teacher days – 57  
 Cumulative student days – 46

November / 2025				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

Teacher days – 18  
 Student days – 18  
 Cumulative teacher days – 75  
 Cumulative student days – 64

December / 2025				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

Teacher days – 17  
 Student days – 17  
 Cumulative teacher days – 92  
 Cumulative student days – 81

## Vision Academy Charter School (VACS)

### 2025 – 2026 School Calendar

#### Schedule of Activities and Holidays



July 7 - July 31	Summer School/ESY
Aug 11	Summer Institute – Teacher In-Service Days – New Staff Only
Aug 12 - 22	Summer Institute – Teacher In-Service Days – All Staff
Aug 20	Parent Orientations @ 4:30-5:30pm (Grades K-2)
Aug 20	Family BBQ @ 5:30-7:00pm (Grades K-2)
Aug 21	Parent Orientations @ 4:30-5:30pm (Grades 3-8)
Aug 21	Family BBQ @ 5:30-7:00pm (Grades 3-8)
Aug 25	Teacher Classroom Set-Up
Aug 26	First Day of School for Students
Aug 26 - Aug 29	Early Dismissal for Kindergarten ONLY (1:15pm)
Aug 29	1:15pm Dismissal For ALL Students EVERY Friday (Starting Today)
Sep 1	Labor Day – School Closed
Sep 15	"Beyond the Bell" Extended Learning Begins (i.e. Afterschool Clubs & Sports)
Sep 15	Aftercare Begins
Sep 17	Back to School Night
Sep 23	Rosh Hashanah – School Closed
Oct 3	Picture Day
Oct 10	Trimester 1 Progress Reports Distributed
Oct 13	Teacher In-Service Day – No School for Students (on Indigenous Peoples' Day)
Nov 26	End of Trimester 1
Nov 27 & 28	Thanksgiving Holiday – School Closed
Dec 5	Grades Due From Teachers
Dec 9	Trimester 1 Report Cards Distributed
Dec 11	Parent/Teacher Conferences – Early Dismissal (1:15pm)
Dec 12	Parent/Teacher Conferences – Early Dismissal (1:15pm)
Dec 23	Early Dismissal (1:15pm)
Dec 24 - Jan 2	Winter Recess – School Closed (School Back in Session on Jan 5)
Jan 19	Martin Luther King Day – School Closed
Jan 23	Trimester 2 Progress Reports Distributed
Feb 2	Teacher In-Service Day – No School for Students
Feb 16	Presidents' Day – School Closed
Feb 27	End of Trimester 2
March 3	Grades Due From Teachers
March 5	Trimester 2 Report Cards Distributed
Mar 12	Parent/Teacher Conferences – Early Dismissal (1:15pm)
Mar 13	Parent/Teacher Conferences – Early Dismissal (1:15pm)
Mar 20	Eid-al-Fitr Holiday (End of Ramadan) – School Closed
Mar 30 - Apr 3	Spring Recess – School Closed
Apr 20 - Apr 24	PSSA Exams Eng/Lng Arts – Grades 3-8
Apr 27 - May 1	PSSA Exams Math/Science – Grades 3-8
May 4 - May 8	PSSA Makeup Exams
May 7	Trimester 3 Progress Reports Distributed
May 25	Memorial Day – School Closed
May 29	End of Trimester 3
June 2	Grades Due From Teachers
June 4	Last Day of School for Students – Early Dismissal (1:15pm)
June 5	Last Staff Day (Teacher In-Service & Wrap-Up Day)
June 5	Trimester 3 Report Cards Distributed

Color Code:  
  School Closed  
  Check Schedule for Details  
  Check Schedule for Details

January / 2026				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

Teacher days – 19  
 Student days – 19  
 Cumulative teacher days – 111  
 Cumulative student days – 100

February / 2026				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27

Teacher days – 19  
 Student days – 18  
 Cumulative teacher days – 130  
 Cumulative student days – 118

March / 2026				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

Teacher days – 19  
 Student days – 19  
 Cumulative teacher days – 149  
 Cumulative student days – 137

April / 2026				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

Teacher days – 19  
 Student days – 19  
 Cumulative teacher days – 168  
 Cumulative student days – 156

May / 2026				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

Teacher days – 20  
 Student days – 20  
 Cumulative teacher days – 188  
 Cumulative student days – 176

June / 2026				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

Teacher days – 5  
 Student days – 4  
 Cumulative teacher days – 193  
 Cumulative student days – 180

You can also access the calendar on our [website](#) by clicking on 'Quick Links' in the top right-hand corner.

### **III. ACADEMIC GUIDELINES**

#### **ACADEMICS**

At Vision Academy Charter School, our unwavering dedication lies in providing a world-class education to all our scholars. Through our comprehensive academic programming, we strive to establish a solid educational foundation that will shape the future lives of our students. We understand that some scholars may encounter academic challenges, and we offer a wide range of resources and support programs to assist them.

We provide various programs to address academic difficulties and foster student growth. These programs include W.I.N. Time, which offers targeted intervention and enrichment activities, our Beyond the Bell Extended Day program, tutoring services, mentor programs, E.S.L. support, and Special Education Services. We strongly encourage parents and scholars to promptly notify a staff member if they encounter any academic difficulties. If a scholar is struggling in any subject, we urge parents to immediately contact the respective teacher so that we can promptly address the issue.

Vision Academy Charter School employs an internet-based academic monitoring system called PowerSchool to enhance communication and academic monitoring. We highly encourage all parents to use this system, which can be accessed through our school [website](#). Furthermore, parents and scholars are encouraged to regularly visit the school [website](#) to stay informed about important updates and access valuable information.

By working collaboratively and leveraging the available resources, we can ensure that every scholar at Vision Academy Charter School receives the necessary support to excel academically.

#### **REPORT CARDS**

Scholars will have three grading periods. Report cards are made available electronically through PowerSchool. Vision Academy Charter School strongly encourages 100% of parents to visit their child's school and discuss the student's progress with his/her teacher.

#### **GRADES**

Grades are calculated by trimester, the final grade being an average of the three grading periods.

#### **GRADING SYSTEM: GRADES K–2 (STANDARDS-BASED)**

In Grades K-2, Vision Academy Charter School uses a standards-based grading system to list the most essential skills students should learn in each subject at a particular grade level. Instead of traditional letter grades, performance indicators are shared to convey how well students have mastered specific skills within a subject area.

**Performance Indicators:** Four progress indicators are noted on K-2 report cards using a numeric marking system (4, 3, 2, and 1). These indicators are used for Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The indicators are:

**1. Area of Concern**

- The scholar's performance currently does not meet the grade level standard.
- The student demonstrates a limited understanding of key concepts, processes, and skills.

**2. Approaching Grade-Level Expectations**

- The student's performance is approaching the grade level standard.
- The scholar produces inconsistent quality work and needs frequent skill reteaching.

**3. Meeting Grade-Level Expectations**

- The scholar consistently meets the grade level standard.
- The scholar produces satisfactory work and makes attempts to apply learned skills.

**4. Above Grade-Level Expectations**

- The scholar regularly produces work of high quality and applies learned skills consistently.

**GRADING SYSTEM: GRADES 3–8**

In Grades 3-8, student grades are determined by considering various factors, including classwork (tasks, assignments, and projects completed during class time), homework, major assessments (such as unit assessments, projects, and formal assessments), and minor assessments (ongoing checks for understanding, which may include quizzes, shorter assignments, and performances).

**Grading Policy:**

- Classwork: Tasks, assignments, and projects completed during class time.
- Homework: Assignments given to reinforce classroom learning.
- Major Assessments: Unit assessments, projects, and formal assessments.
- Minor Assessments: Ongoing checks for understanding, including quizzes, shorter assignments, and performances.

**Consequences for Failing Grades:**

- If a student fails or receives a grade of "F" for two consecutive trimesters, there may be consequences such as grade repetition or mandatory attendance at summer school.

**Progress Reports:**

- Scholars will receive a progress report halfway through each trimester to inform parents about their child's progress.
- This report provides valuable feedback to the student and their parents regarding the current performance status.
- It serves as an important reference point for identifying areas of improvement and enhancing overall academic performance

## **HOMEWORK GUIDELINES**

Homework assignments, referred to as Learning at Home activities, are flexible to accommodate individual students' diverse needs and learning styles. They serve as a means of communication between home and school, and parents are strongly encouraged to play a positive role in supporting their children's homework experience.

Homework encompasses a variety of tasks, including assignments that need to be completed and submitted to the teacher. It also includes scholars preparing for upcoming lessons, quizzes, and tests. These assignments should involve synthesizing information and practicing anticipated questions that will be covered in class.

Furthermore, homework includes daily independent reading. Scholars are encouraged to read a book at their appropriate instructional level. Additionally, it is strongly recommended that all students engage in a minimum of 15-20 minutes of recreational reading at home each day, either independently or with the assistance of a parent.

The amount of time dedicated to homework may vary, with a maximum of 60 minutes per day, depending on the grade level and teacher. Specific guidelines for homework assignments will be determined by each individual teacher and communicated to families. With parental guidance, students are expected to manage their time effectively, completing long-term projects within the given timeframe rather than waiting until the last minute.

## **DIAGNOSTIC TESTING AND PROGRESS MONITORING**

At Vision Academy Charter School, each student undergoes three i-Ready assessments in Math and Reading throughout the school year, specifically in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. Additionally, Grades 3-8 scholars participate in PSSA practice tests as part of the instructional program.

Based on the students' i-Ready scores, grades, and teacher recommendations, scholars are placed in mandatory intervention programs. These programs may take place during or after school. It is required for scholars to attend all sessions until they either demonstrate proficiency and are tested out of the program or receive a recommendation from their teachers.

In addition to i-Ready assessments, unit chapter tests are utilized to assess students' progress. To monitor the progress of students enrolled in intervention programs, the Acadience testing instrument is used. These assessment practices help ensure targeted support and intervention for Vision Academy Charter School students.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating on tests or quizzes, providing false information to school staff, forging teacher or parent signatures, or engaging in plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Such actions will be considered severe offenses with disciplinary consequences.

Consequences for academic dishonesty may include a disciplinary referral, which could lead to academic penalties such as reduced grades or the loss of academic credit. The specific disciplinary actions taken will be determined based on the severity of the cheating incident.

## **POLICY ON THE USE OF AI TOOLS AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

### **Policy Overview**

Vision Academy Charter School is committed to fostering a culture of academic integrity, independent learning, and critical thinking. As technology evolves, students must understand both the potential and the ethical limitations of tools such as artificial intelligence (AI), including but not limited to ChatGPT and similar platforms. The unauthorized use of AI tools to complete assignments or assessments is considered a violation of our academic integrity standards.

### **Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Plagiarism (copying work without proper citation)
- Cheating on tests, quizzes, or assignments
- Submitting work that was generated by an AI tool without the explicit permission of the instructor

Using AI tools to complete assignments, projects, essays, or exams without prior approval from a teacher is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

### **Acceptable Use of AI Tools**

Students may use AI tools in the following ways, provided they do so responsibly and with proper citation:

- For research and background reading
- To generate ideas or outlines with teacher approval
- As a study aid or to ask clarifying questions
- AI-generated content should not be submitted as a student's original work unless explicitly permitted by the instructor.

### **Consequences of Violating the Policy**

- **First Offense:** The student will receive a zero on the assignment in question. Additionally, the student will be required to complete a mandatory Academic Integrity Reflection Module, which includes:
  - A lesson on the importance of academic honesty
  - Examples of acceptable vs. unacceptable AI use
  - A written reflection or quiz to demonstrate understanding
  - A brief meeting with a staff member to review the module
- **Second Offense:** The student will receive a failing grade for the course or marking period (depending on the assignment's weight). A mandatory meeting will be held with the

student, their parents/guardians, and school administration to determine further corrective actions.

- **Third Offense:**The student may face suspension or expulsion from Vision Academy Charter School, depending on the severity and context of the violation.

### **Reporting and Investigation**

Any suspected violations of this policy should be reported immediately to the classroom teacher or school administration. Reported cases will be investigated thoroughly, and students will be given an opportunity to explain their actions before consequences are assigned.

### **Education and Awareness**

Vision Academy Charter School will provide:

- Regular lessons and workshops on academic integrity
- Training on the ethical and appropriate use of AI tools
- Ongoing support to help students develop their critical thinking and independent learning skills

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

Students are held accountable for completing any missed coursework due to absences. To ensure students do not lag behind academically, the following guidelines regarding make-up assignments will be implemented:

Unless absences are prearranged, students will be granted two days to complete assignments for each day they were absent. Upon returning to school, students need to meet with the teachers of the missed classes to obtain the necessary assignments. However, long-term assignments such as term papers or tests are exempt from the two-day rule, and the individual teacher will determine the due dates for such assignments.

### **PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY**

Placement, promotion, retention, and acceleration shall be made in the student's best interest after carefully evaluating all the factors relating to the advantages and disadvantages of alternatives. The educational program shall provide for the continuous progress of children from grade to grade. A student's achievement of the skills for the grade level to which he/she is assigned and his/her readiness for work at the next grade level shall be required before he/she is assigned to the higher grade.

The school recognizes that individual students' physical, social, emotional, and academic growth rates will vary. Since each student grows at his/her own pace, these personal growth characteristics shall be recognized in classroom programming.

Retention at the same grade may benefit the student when he/she is not demonstrating minimum competency in basic skill subjects about ability and grade level. In evaluating student achievement, each teacher shall use all available information, including results of unit exams,

curriculum-based assessments and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized-test results, and teacher observation of student performance.

The procedure to be used is as follows:

1. The classroom teacher informs the principal that a particular student is not progressing satisfactorily by the end of the second trimester. Parents will be notified through a letter, and a conference will be set to discuss additional interventions that can be tried in the classroom and at home. In addition, the possibility of retention must be addressed, as the consequences of such action.
2. During the conference, parents will be advised on how they might assist the student during the balance of the school year.
3. At the end of the school year, the parent, principal, and teacher will again meet to review the latest progress and determine if promotion or retention would best serve the student's needs.
4. The ultimate goal is to keep all children at grade level and age-appropriate grades. Therefore, the following factors should be carefully studied when individual retention or promotion is being considered:
  - a. Physical Maturity
  - b. Social Maturity
  - c. Emotional Maturity
  - d. Chronological Age
  - e. Achievement
5. Similarly, acceleration will be used only after consultation with all staff members involved with the child and the parents. The CEO/principal shall make the final decision.
6. Every effort shall be made to identify children's special needs and talents early in their school careers so appropriate placements can be made.
7. The final decision on whether or not to retain or promote a student shall be made by the CEO/principal after consultation with the parents and academic team

## **IV. BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE**

Vision Academy Charter School values the dignity of all members of the school community at all times. We respect the rights of students to make choices and to experience the consequences of those choices. Scholars are taught decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution skills to develop their ability to make sound choices.

### **SCHOLARS RIGHTS**

As citizens and members of the school community, students have a right to an education and basic security. Scholars have the right to choose how to behave and to know the consequences that will follow.

### **DUE PROCESS**

Scholars have a right to due process before their rights are restricted. The school mandates that all students shall be treated fairly and honestly in resolving grievances, complaints, or in the consideration of any disciplinary action, suspension or expulsion. Due process shall be defined as fair and reasonable approaches to all areas of student grievances and discipline on the part of all school officials in order not to arbitrarily deny a student the benefits of the instructional process.

If a scholar is determined to have violated the rules and regulations of the school to the extent a suspension or expulsion is deemed necessary the student will receive alternate instruction during the time of suspension equivalent to that provided to their peers.

### **DUE PROCESS AND SCHOLARS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES**

If discipline which would constitute a change in placement is contemplated for any student with an exceptionality, the following steps shall be taken: (1) not later than the date on which the decision to take such action is made, the parents of the student with an exceptionality shall be notified of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR 300.504; and (2) immediately, if possible, but in no case later than nine school days after the date on which such decision is made, the School Exceptional Scholar Team of the school and other qualified personnel shall meet and review the relationship between the child's exceptionality and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.

If, upon review, it is determined that the child's behavior was not a manifestation of his or her exceptionality, except as provided in 34 CFR 300.121 (d), which relates to the provision of services to students with exceptionalities during periods of removal. Upon notice to the parents or guardians and up to the date of review and determination of whether the behavior was a manifestation of his or her exceptionality, the child will receive alternative instruction equivalent to the instruction provided to his or her peers.

Parents may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination. Except as provided below, the child will remain in his or her current educational placement pending the determination of the hearing.

If a parent requests a hearing or an appeal to challenge the interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination resulting from a disciplinary action relating to weapons or drugs, the child shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided for in the disciplinary action, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and the school agree otherwise.

#### **SCHOLAR RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Scholars are expected to:

- Act in a responsible manner, exhibiting respect towards others.
- Participate in the process of their education actively.
- Accept responsibility for their behavior.
- Cooperate with the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and a disciplined environment.
- Follow established school and classroom codes of conduct and rules, including safety and school bus rules.
- Attend all classes regularly and on time.
- Maintain appropriate dress.
- Respect the rights and property of others.

#### **PARENT AND GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES**

Parents and guardians of students are expected to participate in their child's education in the following ways:

1. **Communication:** Communicate routinely and as necessary with your child's teacher.
2. **Stay Informed:** Keep informed about school policies and your child's academic expectations, including homework.
3. **Attendance and Preparedness:** Ensure your child attends regularly, arrives on time, and is prepared for school.
4. **Alert the School:** Alert the school to specific problems or difficulties that may impede your child's learning or well-being.
5. **Model Civility:** Model and follow the Vision Academy Code of Civility when communicating over the phone or in person.

#### **PARENT/GUARDIAN PLEDGE TO CODE OF CIVILITY**

As a Vision Academy Charter School parent/guardian who values a safe, civil, and productive environment, I pledge that I will:

1. **Courtesy and Respect:** Treat the Vision staff, scholars, parents, and community members with courtesy, honesty, and respect.

2. **Self-Control:** Show self-control with my verbal, written, and physical actions.
3. **Responsibility:** Take responsibility for my verbal, written, and physical actions.
4. **Active Participation:** Actively participate with everyone to ensure scholar success.

#### TEACHER AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Teachers and staff are expected to model behaviors consistent with the school's VACS Code of Civility, core values, staff code of conduct and with policies and school performance standards. All staff is expected to support a successful learning environment by modeling the following behaviors:

- Promote mutual respect between adults and students.
- Meet professional responsibilities associated with their respective positions.
- Develop and use cooperative discipline strategies and positive incentives for reinforcing the expected behaviors.
- Promote a sense of pride and community by contributing to an open and friendly environment, by supporting celebrations, clubs and activities, by maintaining spirit building routines and traditions, and by promoting service in the school community.
- Establish and maintain strong home to school communication, including but not limited to prompt communication of any serious infraction of the code of conduct.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

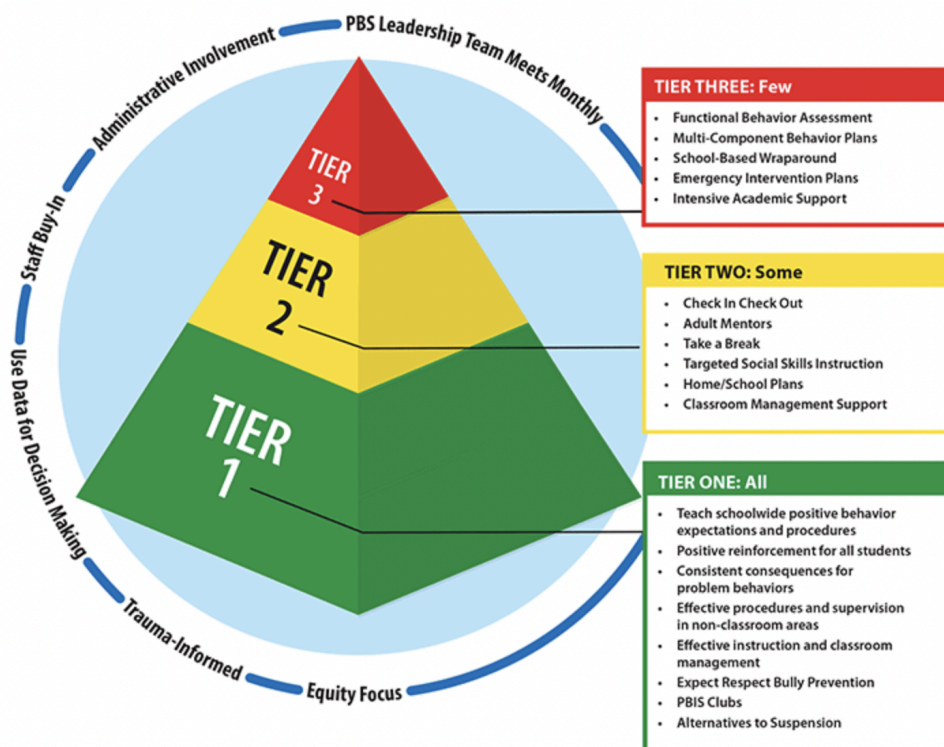
In accordance with State Law, access to student records is restricted to Vision Academy Charter School personnel who have a legitimate educational interest. Parents and legal guardians whose names are in the school's student database are also granted access. No one else will be allowed access to student records without a signed consent form from the custodial parent or guardian on file at the school.

#### CODE OF CONDUCT PHILOSOPHY

The PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) framework at Vision Academy CS is designed to incorporate evidence-based practices across multiple tiers, providing comprehensive support for all scholars' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development. These practices are implemented at the school, classroom, and individual levels. Our primary objective is to actively teach, prompt, model, practice, and foster positive social skills appropriate for each scholar's age.

PBIS reflects our dedication to addressing scholars' behavior through systematic approaches. When effectively implemented, it enhances social and academic outcomes for scholars while ensuring consistency in upholding a shared Code of Conduct language throughout Vision Academy Charter School. This goal is achieved through the collective efforts of our staff, families, and community members. Scholars at our school engage in problem-solving situations that involve open discussions, a consideration of others' feelings, and the development of personal responsibility.

## Three-Tiered Model of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support



By instilling The Power of 3 principles—*Respect Yourself, Respect Others, Respect Community*—we provide a pathway for our students, known as Huskies, to grasp the value of embodying these qualities throughout their lives. Our aim is for them to become lifetime RACERS: *Respectful, Active Community Members who Show Empathy, Responsibility, and Self-Control.*

### CONCERNING BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3*
Being in wrong/restricted area	Repeated Level 1s	Repeated Level 2s
Campus/class rule violation	Bullying/Cyberbullying	Abusive/Intimidating Language
Cheating	Chemical Substance Violation	Arson
Chewing gum/eating food outside of cafeteria	Disorderly Conduct	Assault
Cutting in line	Disruption During State Testing	Bomb Threat

Disrespect towards others	Forgery	Inappropriate Sexual Conduct
Dress code violation	Electronic Device or Usage Violation	Pulling Fire Alarm
Elopement	Inappropriate Touching or Exposure	Robbery
Lying	Possession of Weapon Replica	
Profanity		
Pushing/Shoving		
Stealing		
Teasing		
Transportation Violation		
Unexcused tardies		
Unprepared for class		

***\*Concerning behaviors listed under Level 3 are Major infractions.*** Behaviors listed under Level 3 at Vision Academy Charter School are considered major infractions. In the event of a major incident, it is mandatory to notify the parent or guardian. In cases where there is a violation of the law, police notification is necessary for reportable offenses. Additionally, certain incidents may result in consequences mandated by state and/or federal law under the Safe and Drug-Free School Act.

**RESPONSE TO CONCERNING BEHAVIOR FLOWCHART**

	<b>Minor (Level 1 or 2)</b>	<b>Major (Level 3)</b>
<i>Responsible Staff Members</i>	<i>Teacher/Staff</i>	<i>Culture and Climate Team</i>
Action Step 1	Reteach	Investigate- Family Communication
Action Step 2	Strategy	Refer to PA laws
Action Step 3	Intervention (Implement for 4-6 weeks and collect applicable data)	If applicable, utilize Restorative Practices including Re-Entry Circle

Action Step 4	Complete a BIR (Behavior Intervention Referral for review by Culture and Climate Team) <b>Possible Responses:</b> -Community Service -After School Detention (Friday) -Scholar Care Plan -Time Out of Classroom	File Necessary Reports
Action Step 5	On the 3rd detention in a trimester the consequence of In School Suspension (ISS) will occur and the 4th is Out of School Suspension (OSS).	Re-Entry Restorative Conference

- Strategy Examples:**
- Restate and Reteach Expectations (verbal and non-verbal)
  - Increased Positive to Corrective Interactions
  - Preferential Seating/Proximity
  - Relational Moments
  - Modified Work/Schedule
  - Motivation System
  - Movement Breaks
  - Reflection Sheet
  - Restorative Conversations
  - Family Involvement
  - Counselor Support
  - Climate and Culture Team Support

- Intervention Examples:**
- Goal Setting
  - Reset and Refuel Area (breathing, coping area)
  - Scheduled Breaks
  - Social Skills Sessions
  - Staff Mentor
  - Targeted Sensory Skills Instruction

**SCHOOLWIDE MOTIVATION SYSTEM**

The utilization of Class Dojo at our school aligns with our PBIS system, ensuring consistent expectations are set across all classrooms. These expectations, such as "Respecting others" and "Making responsible choices," are incorporated by teachers into their Class Dojo accounts. They provide specific, positive feedback to students based on these expectations. Additionally, teachers can offer neutral feedback through Class Dojo to help guide students in meeting classroom expectations.

All communications within Class Dojo, including feedback and updates, are accessible to parents/guardians. This allows for transparency and involvement in their child's progress.

To encourage adherence to the RACERS Core Values and maintain a uniform appearance, all scholars have the opportunity to earn 3 points per day. The Expressive Arts Team and each grade level collaboratively determine additional age-appropriate ways for scholars to earn points, promoting engagement and positive behavior.

### **USE OR POSSESSION OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL OR DRUG PARAPHERNALIA**

Possession or distribution of alcohol, drugs, or any similar substances is strictly prohibited by state law and Vision Academy Charter School's policy. Violations will be addressed according to the following guidelines:

1. Use or possession of alcohol or other drugs/drug paraphernalia:
  - a. First offense: A ten (10) days suspension period.
  - b. Disciplinary Hearing: The student will be required to attend a disciplinary hearing to further address the incident.
2. Distribution of alcohol or drugs:
  - a. Immediate referral to the Police Department or Sheriff's office: The school will promptly report the incident to the appropriate law enforcement agency for necessary legal actions.
  - b. Suspension from school pending recommendation for expulsion: The student will be temporarily suspended from school while awaiting the recommendation for expulsion.

These measures reflect our commitment to maintaining a safe and drug-free environment at Vision Academy Charter School.

### **SMOKING AND TOBACCO**

Vision Academy Charter School is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all students, staff, and visitors. Smoking and the use of tobacco products are strictly prohibited on the premises of our public school, including all buildings, grounds (including outdoor areas and off-campus school activities), and school buses. This policy outlines the consequences for students who violate this rule.

#### **Prohibited Actions:**

- Smoking or using any tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes and vaping devices, on school grounds, in school buildings, or during school-sponsored activities.
- Possession of tobacco products on school grounds.

#### **Consequences:**

- **First Offense:**
  - The student will receive a disciplinary referral and be suspended for 3 days.
  - Parents/guardians will be notified, and a meeting with the school administration will be required.

- The student will be required to complete an educational program on the dangers of smoking and tobacco use.
- **Second Offense:**
  - The student will receive a disciplinary referral and be suspended for up to 5 days.
  - Parents/guardians will be notified, and a meeting with the school administration will be required.
  - The student will be required to participate in a school-approved counseling program.
- **Third Offense:**
  - The student will face a suspension of up to 10 days.
  - A mandatory meeting with parents/guardians and school administration will be held to discuss further disciplinary actions, which may include expulsion.
  - The student will be required to complete additional educational and counseling programs.
- **Repeated Offenses:**
  - Continued violations may result in expulsion from Vision Academy Charter School, subject to review by the school's administration and board.

**Commitment to a Smoke-Free Environment:** We are committed to maintaining a healthy and smoke-free environment for all students, staff, and visitors, promoting the well-being and safety of our school community.

## **GANG POLICY**

Vision Academy Charter School is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors. The school has a zero-tolerance policy for gang-like or intimidating behavior. This policy outlines the actions and consequences related to any gang-related activity within the school.

### **Policy Details:**

**Zero Tolerance for Gang Activity:** Vision Academy Charter School strictly prohibits any gang-related activity, including but not limited to the use of graffiti, gang symbols, hand signs, attire, or any form of intimidation associated with gang affiliation.

**Disruption of School Environment:** Any gang-related activity is considered a serious offense as it disrupts and interferes with school programs and obstructs the school's lawful mission, processes, procedures, and functions.

### **Immediate Actions and Consequences:**

1. **Investigation:** Scholars suspected of gang-related activity will be immediately referred to the school administration for investigation.
2. **Police Referral:** The school will refer any confirmed gang-related activity to the Police Department for further investigation and appropriate legal action.

3. **Disciplinary Measures:** Students involved in gang-related activities will face severe disciplinary actions, which may include suspension, expulsion, and other measures deemed necessary by the school administration.

**Preventative Measures:**

4. **Education and Awareness:** Vision Academy Charter School will provide regular education and awareness programs about the dangers and consequences of gang involvement.
5. **Counseling and Support:** The school will offer counseling and support services to students at risk of gang involvement or those seeking to leave gang affiliations.

**Collaboration with Law Enforcement:**

6. The school will work closely with local law enforcement agencies to monitor and address gang-related activities, ensuring a coordinated approach to maintaining a safe school environment.

**Commitment to Safety:** Vision Academy Charter School is dedicated to maintaining a safe and conducive learning environment, free from the threats and disruptions caused by gang-related activities.

**FIREARMS, WEAPONS, AND DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS POLICY**

Vision Academy prioritizes the importance of a safe school environment. Students who use or possess firearms, weapons or other instruments which can be used as weapons, endanger the health, safety and welfare of students and staff and interfere with the proper learning environment. Vision Academy prohibits the possession and/or use of firearms, weapons, deadly weapons or dangerous instruments on school property, on school vehicles, at any school function, or while en route to or from school or any school function.

**Definitions:**

- **Weapon.** Weapon shall mean any object, device, or instrument designed as a weapon or capable of threatening or inflicting serious bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury, including, but not limited to: any firearm (as defined herein), whether loaded or unloaded, any knife, cutting instrument, or cutting tool, any nunchaku, slingshots, stun guns, any device which projects or emits gas, chemical agents such as pepper spray or mace, or other substances intended to produce discomfort or injury, or any other tool, instrument, or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily harm.
- **Firearms.** Firearms include, but are not limited to, any handgun, rifle, shotgun, machine gun, automatic or semi-automatic rifle, or any BB, pellet, air gun, zip gun or any other similar type of instrument. Firearms also include any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or any destructive device. A destructive device is defined as including, but not limited to, any explosive, incendiary, or poison, gas bomb or grenade.

- **Possession.** Possession shall mean a student in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student or under the student's control while on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school-sponsored function or activity, at any school event held away from school, or while the student is coming to or from school.

The school Principal or CEO shall make the final determination that a particular object is a weapon in any case where there is a question.

A student found or observed on any school property, on a school vehicle or at a school-sponsored event in possession of a firearm, weapon, deadly weapon or dangerous instrument shall be reported to the Principal/designee immediately and shall be referred to the Board of Trustees of Vision Academy Charter School. The Principal/designee shall immediately inform the CEO as well as appropriate law enforcement officials. The school administrator reporting the incident to the police shall provide the law enforcement officials with all known information concerning the matter, including the identity of the student involved and notice that a violation of the Criminal Code may have occurred.

The Principal/designee shall, where safely possible, take possession of the firearm, weapon, deadly weapon or dangerous instrument, which shall be turned over to the law enforcement officials.

Disciplinary action described below, shall be taken against students in possession of a weapon as defined in this policy. This is a ZERO TOLERANCE policy; however, the Principal/designee may recommend modifications of discipline for a student on a case-by-case basis. (24 P.S. § 13-1317.2(c)). The Principal/designee shall, in the case of an exceptional student, take all steps necessary to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20, U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*

- **Firearms:** A student will be suspended for a period of not less than one calendar year or expelled if the student is convicted or adjudicated as a juvenile delinquent for possession of a firearm or the commission of a crime while armed with a firearm, or knowingly possessing a firearm on any school property, on a school vehicle, or at a school-sponsored function.
- **Assault with a weapon:** A student will be suspended or expelled if the student commits an assault, against a teacher, administrator, board member or other employee or student, with a weapon, other than a firearm, on any school property, on a school vehicle or at a school-sponsored function. In the case of a suspension the Principal shall make the determination as to when the suspension shall end.

In all such cases, the student shall be immediately removed from the regular classroom program, and provided with home instruction or other suitable facilities or program until placement is available, or placed in an alternative educational program, if available, and required

to submit to a Child Study Team evaluation and a board hearing consistent with 22 Pa.Code § 12.8. The board hearing shall be held within fifteen (15) days of the notification of charges, unless mutually agreed to by both parties, with all due process rights provided. The Board will render a decision within five (5) days after the close of the hearing. An appeal of an adverse decision may be made to the appropriate court of the Commonwealth within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the adverse decision. If the student is eligible for special education, the Charter School will determine whether the disciplinary exclusion being contemplated is a change in educational placement. Students' rights shall be construed in a manner consistent with 20 U.S.C. Section 1400 *et seq.*

If the board determines that the student has not committed the offense as charged, the student shall be immediately returned to his/her regular educational program.

- **Assault without a weapon:** A student may be suspended or expelled if the student commits an assault against another student, a teacher, administrator, board member or other employee who is acting within his/her duties and in a situation where his/her authority to act is apparent, or as a result of his/her relationship with the school. The student shall be immediately suspended pending suspension or expulsion proceedings in a hearing before the Board, which shall be held no later than thirty (30) days from the day the student is suspended, with all due process rights provided. The decision of the board shall be rendered within five (5) days after the close of the hearing. An appeal of an adverse decision may be made to the Secretary of Education within 90 days. Student rights shall be construed in a manner consistent with 20 U.S.C. Section 1400 *et seq.*

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is a violation of policy for any student or member of the Vision Academy Charter School staff to harass another student or staff member through conduct or communications of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sex-oriented verbal "kidding," repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications, unwelcome touching, patting, pinching, or repeated brushing against another's body.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that violates Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is the school's policy to maintain a learning and working environment free from sexual harassment. Therefore, the Vision Academy Charter School prohibits any form of sexual harassment.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student or employee of the school to harass a student or employee through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined by this policy. The Vision Academy Charter School will act to investigate all complaints and discipline any student or employee of the school.

## **HARASSMENT POLICY**

Harassment of any type has no place in the school setting. The school will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment that is free of harassment. Therefore, the Vision Academy Charter School expects administrators and supervisors to make it clear to students and staff that harassment in the school building, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored functions will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion of students and termination of employment for employees.

Harassment may include but is not limited to sexual harassment, racial harassment, or harassment because of a physical condition or disability. In addition, it may include but is not limited to hostile, demeaning, or intimidating behavior or conversation.

## **ONLINE LEARNING SCHOLAR EXPECTATIONS AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

All Vision Academy Charter School (VACS) scholars participating in virtual instruction are expected to follow all applicable school policies, including this Virtual Learning Code of Conduct. These rules are in place to promote a respectful, safe, and productive online learning environment for all students and staff.

Scholars must access remote learning platforms responsibly, ethically, legally, and safely. While the internet is a powerful educational tool, it may also expose students to inappropriate content. We encourage parents to partner with us in promoting responsible digital behavior.

### **VIRTUAL LEARNING EXPECTATIONS**

Please review and follow the expectations below:

- Video Participation: Scholars are encouraged to have their video on during live lessons, especially during teacher-led instruction or when speaking.
- Cell Phones: Use of cell phones during online instruction is not permitted.
- Eating: Eating during class is not allowed. Scholars may have water in a bottle or closed container.

### **DRESS CODE FOR VIRTUAL LEARNING**

Scholars must be dressed appropriately during online instruction. Acceptable attire includes:

- School uniforms (optional), gym clothes, or modest, comfortable clothing (shirts, pants, or shorts).

#### **Unacceptable attire includes:**

- Pajamas, undergarments, or clothing with inappropriate language, images, or slogans
- No shirt or inappropriate exposure on camera
- Bonnets or hoods covering the head/face during instruction

### **COMMUNICATION AND CONDUCT**

- Scholars must address staff members respectfully, using appropriate titles (e.g., Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr.).
- Disrespectful, profane, or threatening language is not acceptable in any form.

- Scholars are expected to demonstrate integrity. Plagiarism, copying, or cheating will result in disciplinary action. All work must be original and completed by the student.

#### **TECHNOLOGY USE AND SAFETY**

- Online learning is not private—scholars should always communicate professionally.
- Never share passwords with anyone except a parent/guardian.
- Report any security issues or misuse of school platforms to a teacher or administrator immediately.
- Creating or spreading computer viruses is illegal and strictly prohibited.

#### **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS FOR MISCONDUCT**

If expectations are not followed, the following steps may be taken:

1. Parent notified via ClassDojo or email
2. Teacher phone call home
3. Director of Student Support Services or designee contacts parent
4. Behavior reflection was assigned and submitted to the teacher
5. Restorative conference with school staff and/or counselor
6. Virtual meeting with parent, scholar, and school staff
7. In-person meeting (with safety measures) with the Director or Principal
8. Disciplinary referral (CTR) completed for documentation
9. Suspension from virtual instruction if necessary

Maintaining a respectful and focused virtual learning environment is a shared responsibility.

We appreciate your support in upholding these expectations.

#### **BULLYING AND CYBER-BULLYING**

Vision Academy CS commits to providing scholars a safe, civil, and positive learning environment. Bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, VACS prohibits bullying.

VACS strives to provide a safe, positive learning climate for all students. Therefore, it is the policy of VACS to maintain an educational environment in which bullying and cyberbullying in any form are not tolerated.

1. Authority: All forms of bullying and cyber-bullying by students are hereby prohibited. Anyone who engages in bullying or cyber-bullying in violation of this Policy will be subject to appropriate discipline. Students who have been bullied or cyberbullied should promptly report such incidents to the Director of Culture and Climate or to the school guidance counselor. Complaints of bullying or cyberbullying will be investigated promptly, and corrective action will be taken when a complaint is verified. Neither reprisals nor retaliation will occur as a result of the submission of a complaint. VACS will inform students annually that bullying and cyber-bullying will not be tolerated.

2. Definition :Bullying is defined as “intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students. The act is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education, creating a threatening environment, or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of school.” Cyber-bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student, teacher, or employee of the school by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or Web site postings including blogs, “Facebook”, “Twitter”, “Instagram”, “Snapchat”, “Tumblr” and “YouTube”. All forms of cyberbullying are unacceptable, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive of the educational process at VACS, offenders will be the subject of appropriate discipline. The terms “bullying” and “cyber-bullying” will not be interpreted to infringe upon a student’s right to engage in legally protected speech or conduct.
3. Action: The bullying policy will be posted in each classroom and will be reviewed with all students at least once per school year. If a report of bullying or harassment is made but cannot be confirmed, there will be a conference with all students involved and verbal warnings issued where appropriate. At this time, all students involved will be asked if they would like to speak to the guidance counselor and their families will be called. If a report is confirmed, the student(s) found to be harassing or bullying will receive up to a three (3) day suspension and will be referred to a bullying program to be facilitated by a staff member. If the same student is reported after being referred to the program and the report is confirmed, they may be referred for expulsion. A student could also be suspended for up to 3 days and referred to a bullying program if they are reported on three occasions, even if the reports cannot be verified. Bullying Intervention/Prevention Program VACS is committed to making the school a safe and caring environment for all students, faculty, and staff. Members of the school community will treat each other with respect and refuse to tolerate bullying of any kind. The Vision Academy Charter School recognizes the negative impact that bullying has on student health, welfare and safety, and on the learning environment at school. Bullying is not prohibited on school property, at school-sanctioned activities or events, when students are being transported to school by the bus transportation companies. Bullying is prohibited against any student and will not be tolerated; this may include, but not be limited to behavior that is directed toward a student on the basis of his or her academic performance or against whom federal and state laws prohibit discrimination. All administrators, teachers, staff, and students share the responsibility to ensure that bullying does not occur at school, on school property, at school-sanctioned activities or events. This also includes transportation of students, staff

or faculty in any vehicle dispatched by the school, off school property when such conduct has a connection to school curricular or non-curricular activity or event.

### **BULLYING INTERVENTION**

1. All students who believe they have been victims of bullying in any such circumstance shall immediately report to an administrator or teacher at the school.
2. All students who witness student bullying in any such circumstance shall immediately report to an administrator or teacher at the school.
3. All staff and teachers who have bullying incidents reported to them, shall promptly forward the report(s) to a member of administration.
4. All teachers and staff who witness student bullying in any such circumstance shall immediately take appropriate action to stop the bullying, and shall promptly report the bullying to a member of administration.
5. The school administration takes the information given, and conducts a full investigation individually interviewing all witnesses, relevant parties, viewing social media sites if applicable, etc.
6. Based on the information obtained in the investigation, the school administration makes a determination if the event in question is an example of bullying, harassment, or conflict between students. If the event is an example of bullying, the student(s) will be referred to our bullying prevention program. If the event is an example of conflict, the student(s) will be referred to the Director of Student Support Services , Counselor or Principal.

### **COMPLAINT (GRIEVANCE) PROCEDURE**

Any complaints should be addressed through the following procedure:

#### **Step 1: Meeting with Staff Member**

Complainants may try to resolve problems promptly through informal dispute resolution with the person immediately involved. If such is not possible or the result is unsatisfactory, the complainant shall meet informally with the Principal. This administrator/supervisor will investigate and will reply to the complainant verbally or in writing, as the complainant prefers within five business days of the initial meeting.

#### **Step 2: Written complaint**

If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved through Step 1, the complainant may file a written grievance with the Principal within ten business days of disposition at Step 1. The written complaint must include:

- A clear statement of the alleged violation
- The remedy sought by the complainant
- The complainant's signature and date

Principal will conduct a full investigation of the grievance and will prepare a written report of the investigation that will include:

- A clear statement of the allegations of the grievant and remedy sought.
- A statement of the facts as contended by each party
- A statement of the facts as found by Principal and evidence to support each fact
- A list of witnesses interviewed and documents reviewed during the investigation
- A narrative describing attempts to resolve the grievance if valid

If the Principal believes the grievance is valid, she/he will recommend appropriate action to the Board of Directors (BoD).

The report will be filed with the BoD within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the written grievance. A copy of the report will be provided to the complainant.

The BoD will make necessary findings based upon the investigation and report of the Principal. If the grievance is valid, the BoD may accept the Principal's recommendations at their discretion. Any and all recommendations of the BoD shall immediately be implemented by the Charter School. A copy of the BoD's findings and/or recommendations will be provided to the complainant.

**Step 3: Appeal**

At any stage in this grievance procedure, the complainant has the right to file a formal complaint.

## **V. ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Interscholastic Athletic Program at Vision Academy Charter School (VACS) holds significant importance as an integral component of our comprehensive educational curriculum. It is specifically designed to aid our students in developing into well-rounded individuals and responsible citizens.

Participation in our sports programs is entirely voluntary. Students who wish to participate must be prepared to adhere to all the rules and regulations governing athletics. All participants must understand and accept these guidelines; failure to comply will result in ineligibility for participation.

To ensure clarity and accountability, all student-athletes must sign an acknowledgment page confirming their understanding of this Athletic Code of Conduct. By doing so, they commit to abiding by the established rules and regulations that govern their involvement in the Athletic Program at VACS.

The following rules, procedures, and standards of conduct and athletic achievement are crucial for all student-athletes to be familiar with. Many of these guidelines have been established by the league we are affiliated with. Non-compliance with these requirements may result in the loss of eligibility to participate. Therefore, it is imperative that all student-athletes thoroughly read and share these expectations with their parents or guardians.

### **a. Expectations**

1. Student-athletes will demonstrate good sportsmanship and convey emotion control at all times.
2. Disrespectful behavior aimed at opponents, officials, spectators, coaches, administration and/or team members will not be tolerated. This includes no tolerance for taunting opponents or questioning of official's decisions.
3. Student-athletes will win with humility and lose with dignity and will shake hands with opposing team members and coaches after each contest.
4. Student-athletes will be held accountable to follow the league rules and regulations, VACS rules and regulations, and individual team rules, as communicated by their coaches.

### **b. Injuries**

Any student-athlete who is treated by a physician for an injury or illness during a sports season must return his or her private physician's release form indicating the doctor's wishes with regard to continued practice or competition.

### **c. Transportation**

Student-athletes must travel to home games by the transportation provided by their parents or guardians. Student-athletes must travel to and from away games, via the transportation provided either by VACS or the Parent and Guardian. If a student-athlete must be driven by a parent or

guardian, the parent or guardian must notify the principal or the coach in advance to explain the circumstances. Student-athletes may be permitted to ride home from home and away games with their parents or guardians, provided the plan is approved by the coach. Failure to abide by these rules will result in loss of game privileges and/or removal from the team.

**d. Equipment**

The student-athlete is responsible for all equipment issued including uniforms and practice clothing. He or she will be expected to return that equipment/uniforms at the end of the season. He or she will be required to pay replacement costs for any items that he or she does not return or which he or she returns showing excessive wear or abuse. Issued equipment is not to be used for any activity outside of the practices and competitions. The student-athlete is not to use athletic equipment/clothing for gym classes, or wear them to school or at home (with exception of assigned jersey days), or for participation on teams outside of school.

Within one week after the close of a season, the coach and/or equipment manager will collect uniforms. Failure to return uniforms at this time will result in the following:

1. Written notice to student-athletes as to what is owed and the dollar value.
2. Letter to parent/guardian telling what is owed and the dollar value.
3. Withholding of awards until uniform obligation is met.

Students-athletes shall not be permitted to participate in another sport or after school club until they have met equipment/uniform obligations for a sport in which they have previously participated.

**e. School Attendance**

1. A student-athlete may not practice if he or she is absent from school the day of practice. Additionally, a student-athlete on suspension or detention is not eligible to practice or play on the days of a suspension/detention.
2. Frequent tardiness to school may result in cancellation of participation privileges.
3. A student-athlete who has been absent from school during a trimester for a total of 5 or more school days will not be eligible to participate in any athletic contest until he or she has been in attendance for a total of 60 days following his or her 5<sup>th</sup> day of absence. The exception is a consecutive absence of 5 or more school days due to confining illness, injury, or quarantine.

**f. Dress Code**

When traveling to different schools with an athletic team, each student athlete represents the community and VACS. The way he or she looks and dresses reflects on the entire community and, as such, the student-athlete is expected to wear clothes that are clean and appropriate, following the dress code of VACS. Coaches have the right to set more specific standards than outlined above and are expected to require appropriate clothing.

**g. Initiating/Hazing**

Under no circumstances will initiation and/or hazing of any student-athlete be permitted. Any student-athlete involved in initiation or hazing of another student-athlete will be dismissed from the team and appropriately dealt with under the VACS discipline policy.

#### **h. Academic Eligibility**

In order to be eligible for interscholastic athletics, a student-athlete must have passed all core subjects during the previous grading period or be passing core subjects during the current grading period. Core subjects at VACS include ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Languages.

At the end of the school year, the student-athlete's final grades in his or her subjects shall be used to determine his or her eligibility for the next grading period.

Student-athletes **MUST** be passing physical education in order to participate in middle school athletic events, including practice sessions. Student-athletes who have a medical excuse not to participate in physical education are not eligible to participate in athletic events or practice sessions.

The approved grading scale of VACS will be used in determining academic eligibility. An "F" grade will be considered not passing.

The athletic director/principal will inform the player and the coach if a student-athlete is ineligible to participate in any athletic event due to academics.

#### **i. Disciplinary Action for Student-Athletes**

Any student-athlete who is suspended or expelled from the VACS will be immediately suspended from the team and may be reinstated pending recommendation by the eligibility committee which includes the principal. The suspended student-athlete has the right to appeal the suspension to the coordinator of athletics.

#### **j. Social Media**

It is the expectation that student-athletes will use social media platforms in a positive and respectful manner to engage with family, friends, and the community at large. Disrespectful, insulting, abusive, and/or threatening content—be it original or "retweeted" or "liked"—has no place in VACS Athletics and will not be tolerated. Student-athletes who post offensive content or commentary aimed at opponents, officials, team members, and/or coaches will be subject to disciplinary actions.

#### **k. Summary**

This athletic code of conduct is intended to inform student-athletes and parents of rules and regulations governing our interscholastic program. This code of conduct is not all inclusive. There are many rules and regulations that are not included and, of course, each coach has a right to make reasonable rules that are more stringent than those listed here.

## **VI. ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The school recognizes the importance of regular attendance in achieving consistent educational progress. Classroom learning experiences are integral to the educational system and provide valuable opportunities for interaction and exchanging ideas among students and teachers. When students are absent, they miss out on lectures, discussions, and collaborative learning experiences. Therefore, Vision Academy Charter School considers consistent and timely attendance a significant responsibility for all enrolled students, regardless of age.

Scholars are expected to be present in their assigned classes every school day, except for excused absences due to illness or injury, family emergencies, or religious observances. The school administration monitors student attendance and communicates with students and their parents when attendance patterns do not meet school standards. The parents must ensure that their children attend school unless a valid reason for absence exists, and they must notify the school when their child will be absent.

The school campus officially opens at 7:30 a.m. Students are only permitted to enter the building after this time if qualified personnel are present to supervise them and ensure their safety. All students may enter the school building at 7:55 a.m.

Regardless of the reason for an absence, any schoolwork missed by a student during their absence must be made up.

At Vision Academy Charter School, we place great value on regular attendance, as it is crucial for students to fully engage in their educational journey and maximize their learning opportunities.

### **ABSENCE POLICY**

An absence is a day when a student in grades K–8 is not present for at least **6 hours** on a regularly scheduled school day. The School reserves the right to determine whether an absence is excused and if the student will receive credit for the day, based on the reason and documentation provided.

#### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

The following are considered excused absences when appropriate documentation is submitted:

- Illness, injury, or family emergency
- Extended absences due to physical, mental, or emotional disability
- Doctor or dental appointments (documentation required)
- Court appearances or legal obligations
- Death in the immediate family
- Religious observances
- Any other reason approved by the school administration in advance

#### **PARENT EXCUSE NOTES – 10-DAY LIMIT**

Under Pennsylvania law, parents may submit written notes to excuse their child's absence for up to **ten (10) total school days per academic year**. After the tenth absence, **a physician's note is required** for any additional absences to be excused.

Parent excuse notes must be submitted **within three (3) school days** of the student's return to School. Notes submitted after this window will result in the absence being recorded as **unexcused**.

#### **PHYSICIAN'S NOTE REQUIREMENTS**

A **physician's note** is required when:

- The absence lasts **three or more consecutive days**, or
- The student exceeds **ten (10) cumulative absences** for the year.

To be considered valid, the physician's note must include:

- Scholar's full name
- Date of the visit
- Reason for the visit and why the student could not attend School
- The date the student is permitted to return
- Any necessary follow-up information
- Doctor's name and signature

#### **EXCESSIVE AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

An absence is considered **unexcused** if:

- No proper documentation is submitted within three days
- The reason provided does not meet the criteria for an excused absence
- The absence extends a school holiday or vacation
- The student is absent without prior notice or approval

**Three or more unexcused absences** will result in the student being flagged for **truancy**, and the School may require official verification (e.g., doctor's note, court documents) for future absences. Continued unexcused absences may result in a **School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC)** and possible referral to the appropriate county attendance office.

#### **VACATIONS AND NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL**

Family vacations during the school year are **strongly discouraged** and will be counted as **unexcused absences**. Requests to extend school holidays or weekends will not be approved and may contribute to truancy status.

#### **MAKE-UP WORK POLICY**

Students will be allowed **up to 48 hours** to complete classwork for each day of absence, except for major projects or assignments with pre-established deadlines. Out-of-school suspensions are not considered absences, and work may be completed for full credit.

### **ABSENCE NOTE FORMAT**

All absence notes must include:

- Scholar's full name
- Grade level
- Dates of the absence
- Reason for the absence
- Parent/guardian name and contact number
- Parent/guardian signature

### **RETENTION BASED ON ATTENDANCE**

Students who accumulate excessive unexcused absences (e.g., 21 or more) will be reviewed by the School Attendance Team. In cases where chronic absenteeism has significantly impacted academic performance, a decision regarding promotion or retention will be made based on the student's academic record, performance data, and in consultation with parents/guardians.

### **TARDY POLICY**

Punctuality is a crucial component of academic success. It is the responsibility of every parent or guardian to ensure that their child arrives at school **on time**, by **7:55 AM** each school day. Students who arrive late miss critical instruction and begin the day at a disadvantage, which may impact their learning and engagement.

To promote strong attendance habits, Vision Academy Charter School tracks student tardiness closely. A **tardy** is defined as arriving at school **after 7:55 AM without a valid excuse**.

### **UNEXCUSED TARDINESS GUIDELINES**

- Students are permitted **up to three (3) unexcused tardies per trimester**.
- **Valid reasons** for excused tardiness include medical appointments, family emergencies, and other situations approved by school administration and supported by appropriate documentation.

### **CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FOR EXCESSIVE UNEXCUSED TARDINESS**

If a student exceeds **three (3) unexcused tardies** in a trimester, the following interventions may occur:

1. Parent/Guardian conference with an attendance committee member
2. Meeting with the school counselor to identify potential barriers
3. Family-school conference to address attendance concerns
4. Completion of a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP)

These steps are designed to support the student and their family in building positive attendance habits and preventing patterns that may lead to truancy.

## **IMPORTANT NOTE ON CHRONIC TARDINESS**

Repeated and unaddressed tardiness may result in the loss of instructional time and be considered part of a broader **attendance concern**, especially when combined with absences. In such cases, Vision Academy Charter School will take appropriate steps under Pennsylvania law to ensure school attendance, which may include a formal Student Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC).

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

Chronic lateness that results in a significant loss of instructional time will be addressed through a series of escalating supportive interventions. If the pattern of tardiness persists and impacts overall attendance, the school may refer the matter to appropriate external agencies as part of a comprehensive attendance response.

## **TRUANCY POLICY**

Regular school attendance is essential for academic success and the overall development of our scholars. Vision Academy Charter School is committed to working collaboratively with students and their families to address attendance concerns in a timely and constructive manner. This Truancy Policy is aligned with the **Pennsylvania Public School Code** (24 P.S. §13-1327 et seq.) and applicable state regulations.

## **DEFINITIONS (PER STATE LAW)**

- **Truant:** A student who has **three (3) or more unexcused absences** during the current school year.
- **Habitually Truant:** A student who accumulates **six (6) or more unexcused absences** during the current school year.

Unexcused absences are absences not accompanied by valid written documentation or that do not meet the criteria for an excused absence.

## **PARENT NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

- When a student reaches **three (3)** unexcused absences, the school will send a **written notice** to the parent/guardian within **ten (10) school days**, officially designating the student as **truant**.
- This notice will include information about the legal requirements, the consequences of further unexcused absences, and an invitation to collaborate with the school to improve attendance.
- All notices are delivered via **PowerSchool** or by other written means.

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT CONFERENCE (SAIC)**

When a student accumulates additional unexcused absences after the initial notification, the school will schedule a **Student Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC)** involving the student, parent/guardian, and school staff. The purpose of the SAIC is to:

- Review the attendance record

- Identify barriers to attendance (academic, behavioral, social, emotional, health-related, or family-related)
- Develop a **Student Attendance Improvement Plan** that outlines strategies and supports to improve attendance

The SAIC and plan will be **documented** and kept in the student’s record.

**CONTINUED TRUANCY & LEGAL OBLIGATIONS**

If a student becomes **habitually truant** (6+ unexcused absences), Vision Academy Charter School will take action based on the student’s **age**:

**FOR STUDENTS UNDER 15 YEARS OLD:**

- The school is **required** to refer the student to:
  - A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, or
  - The County Children and Youth Services (CYS) for possible services or disposition as a dependent child
- The school may also file a citation against the parent or guardian with the magisterial district court

**FOR STUDENTS AGED 15 AND OLDER:**

- The school may:
  - Refer the student to a school- or community-based attendance improvement program
  - **File a citation** with the local **magisterial district court**

**ENROLLMENT DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR**

If a student enrolls at Vision Academy Charter School mid-year, the attendance record will be monitored from the date of enrollment forward. The exact definitions and procedures for truancy will apply.

**OUR COMMITMENT**

At Vision Academy Charter School, we prioritize proactive support over punitive measures. We are committed to helping each student attend school regularly by identifying challenges early and partnering with families to overcome them. We believe every scholar deserves the opportunity to succeed, and regular attendance is the foundation of that success.

**EARLY DISMISSAL REQUESTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

To ensure a smooth dismissal process, we kindly request your cooperation with the following guidelines:

1. **Commitment to Attendance:** At Vision Academy Charter School, our goal is to ensure daily attendance to meet instructional requirements. While we understand occasional early dismissals or late arrivals for medical appointments or emergencies, we encourage scheduling such appointments outside of school hours whenever possible. Emergency situations will be accommodated. Excessive early dismissals, disrupting attendance and

educational progress, require a valid doctor's note. Adhering to these guidelines supports consistent attendance and maximizes learning opportunities. Please make every effort to adhere to regular dismissal times.

**2. Early Dismissal Procedures:**

- a. *Minimum One-Hour Notice:* If your child needs to be dismissed early, please call the school at least one (1) hour before the early dismissal or send a note with your child.
- b. *Authorized Adults:* Only authorized adults in our main office may pick up your child. Please provide the main office with the names and telephone numbers of adults allowed to pick up your child. Please update the information if there are any changes in your family situation.
- c. *Permission in Writing:* If someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, we require written permission. The note must clearly state the person's name, and they must be at least 18 years old.
- d. *Communication with Your Child:* Please communicate with your child that he/she has an early dismissal.
- e. *Meeting Point:* Meet your child in the main office and try to be on time. For early dismissals, please arrive before 2:30 pm.

**3. Timelines for Early Dismissal:**

- a. *Full Day:* On a full day, please notify us by 12:00 pm if your child will have an early dismissal. The student must be picked up by 2:30 pm.
  - b. *Early Release Day:* On an early release day, please notify us by 11:00 am if your child will have an early dismissal. The student must be picked up by 12:15 pm.
4. *Late Drop-Offs:* Late drop-offs are not permitted after 10:00 am unless accompanied by a doctor's note.
5. *Early Dismissal Procedures:*
- a. *Scholar's Responsibility:* Scholars must bring a note signed by the parent/guardian to the front office. The note should include a phone number for verification.
  - b. *Medical Documentation:* For an early dismissal to be excused, medical documentation justifying the early dismissal must be submitted to the front desk the following morning.
  - c. *Nurse Designation:* If a student leaves school early as the nurse directs, the early dismissal will be excused.
  - d. *Authorized Pick-Up:* Any student leaving early must be picked up by a parent or guardian on the student's emergency contact sheet.

- e. *After-School Activities:* Students who leave early for any reason are not permitted to participate in after-school activities without prior approval from the administration. This includes trips, dances, athletics, or other events.
- 6. *Unexcused Absences:* Scholars with three or more unexcused absences should refer to the Code of Conduct.
- 7. *Leaving School Grounds:* Students are prohibited from leaving school grounds without parental supervision. In an emergency, the student's parent or guardian must pick up the student and provide photo identification each time. If a parent or guardian cannot pick up the student, the adult must be listed on the emergency card and provide identification.
- 8. *Excused Early Dismissals:* Notes for scheduled early dismissals must be submitted to the front desk or classroom teacher one day before being excused.
- 9. *Homebound Instruction:* Students with medical conditions requiring an extended absence may qualify for homebound instruction. Please contact the school to schedule an appointment with an administrator. A physician's letter requesting homebound services, including the reason and projected duration, must be presented at the meeting. All requests will be reviewed by a physician appointed by Vision Academy Charter School.
- 10. *Lateness to School:* Students in grades K-8 who arrive after 7:55 am will be marked late. If a student is late due to an appointment (doctor or court appearance), adequate documentation must be provided for the lateness to be excused.

## **VII. BEYOND THE BELL EXTENDED LEARNING PROGRAM (AFTER SCHOOL)**

The Vision Academy Charter School Beyond the Bell Extended Day program is dedicated to offering scholars a comprehensive, enjoyable, and secure after-school experience throughout the school week. Our program focuses on providing educational support and offers a wide range of activities to enhance and enrich scholars' overall school journey. The program operates from 3:30 PM to 5:15 PM, Monday to Thursday and from 1:15 PM till 5:30 PM on Fridays, excluding school vacations, holidays, and snow days. The program is unavailable on early release days due to inclement weather. Scholars will have the opportunity to enjoy a snack from 3:00 PM to 3:30 PM in the cafeteria.

It's important to note that transportation will not be provided for the After-School/Extended Day Program. Additionally, participation in extracurricular activities requires students to attend school on the day of the activity.

### **Unless otherwise advertised:**

1. Scholars must be picked up by 5:30 PM on Monday to Thursday
2. Scholars remaining on campus after 5:30 pm will be checked into aftercare, if available, and charged the daily rate.
3. Siblings of scholars may not roam about the school grounds. Any scholars remaining on campus after dismissal must be in a club, or they will be checked into aftercare, if available, and charged the daily rate.
4. The local authorities will be contacted if scholars remain on campus at 5:30 pm.

### **SCHOOL TRIPS**

Field trips, also called school trips, are meticulously organized by dedicated staff members who prioritize the safety and welfare of the scholars. As a member of such a group:

- Scholars are expected to uphold proper conduct to safeguard the school's reputation. Any violation of this rule may result in scholars being disqualified from participating in future trips.
- Scholars who participate as attendees must utilize the transportation provided by the school unless a parent or guardian personally drops off and picks up the scholar from the event.
- Scholars who travel to an activity on a school bus must return using the same mode of transportation. The only exception to this rule is if a parent directly contacts the responsible teacher, informing them that the student will return with the parent.
- Scholars participating in a school-sponsored trip are expected to remain present at the activity location and must not leave without permission at any time.

- If a participant violates any of the rules mentioned above, they will be excluded from participating in the activity on that day.
- The VACS staff leading the trip maintain the right to revoke field trip privileges at any time, whether before or during the field trip.
- Chaperones accompanying school trips must provide valid clearances to the trip leader.
- Scholars with severe behavioral issues may be *ineligible* to participate in field trips due to potential disruptions to the overall experience and the safety of other participants.

### **SCHOOL PARTIES/DANCES/ACTIVITIES**

Proposed parties are to be approved by the Director of Student Support Services, and then checked with the schedule of events that is listed in the office.

1. All party arrangements and invitations are to be handled by an appointed student committee under the supervision of the advisor.
2. All school parties must be chaperoned by at least one faculty member, as many parents as is deemed necessary and possible police supervision.
3. Doors will be locked one hour after the party or dance is scheduled to start and no one may enter or re-enter after that time.

## VIII. UNIFORM POLICY

Uniforms are an essential part of the school's identity: It has a positive impact on students' learning and behavior in and around the school, serves to unite students, increase student pride, and eliminate barriers where all students are treated equally.

In addition, school uniforms offer many benefits to young students. For example, uniforms promote greater school spirit. Having pride in one's school can be a powerful motivator. Most schools with uniform policies see improvements in their student's schoolwork.

Uniforms also make it easier for the school's staff to spot intruders and improve student safety.

Vision Academy Charter School students must participate daily in our school's uniform policy. Scholars who violate the dress policy will be sent to the office. The following procedures will be followed to help students comply with the dress policy:

Each student will be given the opportunity to change into an acceptable uniform.

1. A phone call from the Director of Student Support Services to request that a parent or guardian bring the student uniform.
2. If a student repeatedly dresses in an unacceptable manner for school, he or she will be assigned a disciplinary action and a parent will need to come to school for a conference.

Disciplinary actions taken:

- verbal warning
- detention
- conference with Parents, Director of Student Services and Principal

### **Acceptable Uniform:**

Official school uniforms featuring the school's logo can be purchased at the Flynn O'Hara School Uniforms Store in Clifton Heights, PA. The available school uniforms featuring the school's logo are:

- Skirt (Girls) (must fall no higher than 1" above the knee)
- Blue khaki pants
- Navy Blue, Black, or Orange stockings under school-appropriate shorts or skirts
- Shirts
- Sweater
- Hoodies
- Zip-up Hoodies of school colors and neutrals (Navy Blue/Orange/Grey/Black/White) may be worn unzipped or under uniform tops
- Closed-toe shoes/athletic sneakers/boots
- On **gym** days, students must wear the school gym uniform.

### **Unacceptable Uniform:**

- Pajamas

- Undergarments
- Hoodies over their uniform top
- Jackets, Hoods or Hats on in the school building
- Beanies, Hats, Du Rags, Skull Caps, Bandanas, Bonnets, Scarfs
- Jeans
- Clothes with inappropriate sayings and quotes
- Accessories such as sunglasses, Applewatch, and ear buds may not be worn during school hours and must be stored in scholars' bags or appropriate classroom areas.

### **UNIFORM CHECK DAILY**

At Vision Academy Charter School, we prioritize maintaining a consistent and professional appearance among our students. As part of our commitment to enforcing the school uniform policy, we conduct daily uniform checks in the cafeteria. The following procedures will be implemented:

1. Monday and Tuesday: Students who do not comply with the uniform policy will receive a verbal warning. Additionally, our staff will contact the parents or guardians to inform them about the uniform violation.
2. Wednesday and Thursday: If a student violates the uniform policy, the Culture Team will intervene. They will meet with the scholars to address the importance of adhering to the dress code and reinforcing expectations.

Please note that the response to uniform violations may vary based on the student's grade level. The Culture Team will assess the appropriate action to ensure a constructive resolution.

Furthermore, students will receive Dojo marks for repeated uniform violations. This measure aims to provide a transparent accountability system and encourage students to take responsibility for their appearance.

By implementing the daily uniform check in the cafeteria and enforcing consequences for non-compliance, we strive to create a cohesive and respectful learning environment for all Vision Academy Charter School students.

## IX. HEALTH AND SAFETY

### WELLNESS POLICY & HEALTHY PRACTICES

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Wellness Policy requirements, Vision Academy Charter School is committed to fostering a school environment that supports the health, well-being, and academic success of all students. Our wellness initiatives focus on three key areas: **nutrition, physical education, and physical activity** for students in grades K–8.

#### PHYSICAL EDUCATION & ACTIVITY

We offer a structured **Physical Education program** aligned with state standards to ensure students receive age-appropriate instruction in fitness and lifelong wellness. In addition, teachers integrate **daily movement breaks** and physical activities into classroom routines to enhance focus and reduce sedentary time.

As part of our **Extended Day Program**, we also offer enrichment clubs that promote physical activity, including sports and recreation opportunities.

All students participate in a **20-minute outdoor recess during lunchtime**, weather permitting. Recess is considered a vital part of the school day, supporting physical and social development. Students are expected to participate unless they are ill—in which case, they should remain home. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather, especially during colder months.

#### NUTRITION & HEALTHY EATING

We encourage families to support healthy habits by providing **nutritious meals and snacks**. In alignment with our wellness goals:

- **Sugary snacks and treats** should not be sent to school; they will not be distributed during the day.
- If packed, such items may only be consumed during lunch.
- **Soda is not permitted**, except if it is sugar-free.

To assist families, we provide a list of **healthy snack ideas** and encourage ongoing collaboration between families and school staff to promote better nutrition.

If you have questions about healthy food choices or the wellness policy, please contact your child's teacher.

Together, we can promote healthy behaviors and support a school culture that prioritizes **nutrition, physical activity, and lifelong wellness**.

## HEALTHY SNACK SUGGESTIONS

In support of our wellness goals, here are some **nutritious snack options** your child may bring to school. These snacks align with our efforts to promote student health and meet PDE Wellness Guidelines:

<b>Crunchy Options</b>	<b>Chewy &amp; Grain-Based Snacks</b>	<b>Creamy &amp; Protein-Rich Snacks</b>	<b>Juicy &amp; Fruity Options</b>
Pretzels Popcorn (plain or lightly salted) Mini flavored rice cakes Baked chips Air crisps Cereal (low-sugar varieties) Baby carrots Celery sticks	Animal crackers Trail mix (nut-free preferred) Granola bars (low sugar) Chewy granola bars Graham crackers Graham treats Bagels (mini or sliced) Breakfast bars	Pudding packs Yogurt (low-fat or Greek-style) Cheese cubes or sticks Peanut butter (check for allergy guidelines) Milk (white or low-sugar flavored) Banana	Apples Raisins Dried fruit (unsweetened) Juice packs (100% juice) Applesauce (no sugar added) Canned fruit in natural juice Jello packs Cherry tomatoes Tangerines Oranges Grapes <i>All fresh fruit is encouraged</i>

Note: Sugary snacks, candy, and soda are not permitted during the school day. If such items are sent, students will be asked to save them for lunch only. Please support us in promoting a healthy learning environment.

## HEALTHY SNACK FOODS

At Vision Academy Charter School, we encourage families to send **nutritious, low-sugar snacks** that support our wellness goals.

**Rule of Thumb:** If sugar is listed as the first or second ingredient, please choose a healthier alternative.

### Smart Snack Choices:

- **Fresh Vegetables:** Carrots, celery sticks, cherry tomatoes, sugar snap peas, broccoli florets, etc.

- **Veggie Dips:** Low-fat ranch or yogurt-based dips served with fresh veggies.
- **Whole-Grain Crackers & Chips:** Graham crackers, rice cakes, whole-grain baked tortilla chips, or air crisps.
- **Bean Dips & Salsas:** Hummus, black bean dip, or mild salsa with crackers or veggie sticks.
- **Fresh Fruits:** Apples, bananas, grapes, oranges, pears, melon chunks, tangerines, and berries.
- **Dried Fruit & Veggies:** Unsweetened options such as raisins or brands like “Just Tomatoes.”
- **Nuts & Seeds:** Unsalted peanuts, pumpkin seeds, or sunflower seeds (only if allergy-safe).
- **Portable Cheeses:** String cheese, cheese cubes, or Laughing Cow minis (low-fat versions).
- **Whole-Grain Cereals & Breakfast Bars:** Low-sugar cereals or bars (packed dry).
- **Dairy & Fruit Options:**
  - Low-fat or nonfat yogurt
  - Low-fat or nonfat milk
  - Applesauce (no sugar added)
  - Canned or packaged fruits in 100% juice
  - 100% fruit or vegetable juice boxes
- **Protein Snacks:** Cheese or peanut butter (if permitted) served with whole-grain crackers.
- **Other Smart Snacks:** Pretzels, trail mix (nut-free), or chewy granola bars with limited sugar.
- Snacks to Avoid at SchoolCandy (including fruit roll-ups and gummies)
- High-fat chips (nacho cheese, corn chips, cheese curls, etc.)
- Cakes, cookies, cupcakes, or other sugary desserts
- Soda (only sugar-free options are permitted)

**SPECIAL OCCASIONS:**

Birthday celebrations must be coordinated in advance with your child’s homeroom teacher. We encourage non-food items or healthy alternatives.

## **X. EMERGENCIES**

In the case of a serious accident or injury, parents, guardians of the emergency contact person will be notified immediately and authorized medical attention will be given. For a very minor injury, the child will be treated in accordance with first aid procedures. Generally, this simply means cleaning a scrape or scratch with warm water and soap, applying antiseptic spray such as Bactine, and covering it with a band aid. You will be informed immediately of any accident or injury, no matter how minor, affecting your child's head or neck. Injuries other than those requiring minimal first aid are recorded on an accident form.

Scholar safety is a top priority at Vision Academy Charter School. The following emergency procedures are practiced at regular intervals so that students and staff are always prepared. Drills take place during regular and extended hours.

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & SAFETY PROCEDURES**

At Vision Academy Charter School, the safety of our scholars and staff is a top priority. The following emergency procedures are in place and practiced throughout the year to ensure preparedness and a calm, effective response to any situation.

#### **EMERGENCY RESPONSE TERMS**

- **Lockout:** Used when a threat exists outside the school (e.g., nearby police activity). All outdoor activities are brought inside. Instruction continues as normal indoors. Entrances are secured and monitored.
- **Lock-In:** Used when there is a potential threat or disturbance inside the school (e.g., unauthorized individual). Students remain in their classrooms or offices. Hallways are cleared, and instruction continues.
- **Lockdown:** Used for an immediate threat inside or near the building. Students and staff shelter in secure areas. Lights off, doors locked, silence maintained. No entry or exit is allowed. Police are contacted.
- **Evacuation:** Initiated when it is safer to leave the building (e.g., fire, gas leak). Students exit using the nearest route and gather at designated locations. Attendance is taken to ensure everyone is accounted for.

#### **DRILLS AND BEYOND THE BELL EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM**

Emergency procedures apply during both the regular school day and the Extended Day Program. The Extended Day Coordinator ensures all volunteers are trained in safety protocols and conducts regular building checks.

- **Fire Drills:** Maps and rosters are posted in every classroom. Students exit to assigned outdoor locations. Teachers confirm student accountability.
- **Evacuation Drills:** In certain emergencies, students may walk to an off-site location, announced via radio. Parents will be contacted if re-entry is not possible.

- **Lockdown Drills:** Announced via radio. Teachers lock doors, turn off lights, keep students out of sight, and follow safety procedures practiced during drills.
- **Tornado Drills:** Students move to interior hallways, face down, kneel, and cover their necks with their hands. Teachers ensure lights are off and conduct headcounts.

#### **FAMILY COMMUNICATION DURING EMERGENCIES**

To ensure the safety of all students and staff:

- Do not call or come to the school during an emergency. This allows emergency personnel and staff to manage the situation efficiently.
- We will notify families through:
  - PikmyKID app (*registration required*)
  - PowerSchool SchoolMessenger Communication System
  - Email and phone
  - ClassDojo
  - Social media ([Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#))

A follow-up message from the CEO or Principal will be sent after the incident is resolved.

#### **If Your Child Contacts You**

If your child contacts you during a Lockout, Lock-In, Lockdown, or Evacuation, please remind them to stay calm and follow adult instructions. In a Lockdown, silence is critical for safety.

#### **ILLNESS, INJURY, AND MEDICATION POLICIES**

##### **ILLNESS OR INJURY DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

Scholars follow these steps if they become ill or are injured during the school day.

1. Report to the Main Office or Health Office.
2. Parents or emergency contacts will be called if their child needs to go home.
3. In the event of a severe emergency, a staff member will call 911 if such action is warranted for the welfare of the child.

A new doctor's order for administering medication at school is required at the start of each school year, even if the same prescription was administered the previous year.

It is recommended that non-prescription medication, such as Tylenol, Advil, cough suppressants, Tums, etc. not be given at school unless deemed necessary by the student's physician. In this case, the parent must provide the medication and sign the "Request for Giving Medication at School" form. The medication must accompany specific written directions from a licensed medical practitioner. School personnel will not provide aspirin or any other over-the-counter medicine to students.

Vision Academy Charter School has a school nurse available to discuss or assist with medical problems or concerns.

## MEDICATION POLICY

Medication should not be brought to school unless it is essential to the health of the student.

If a student must take medicine at school, these procedures must be followed:

- The medication to be administered by designated school personnel must be sent directly from the pharmacy, or physician's office, *or* brought to school by the student's parent/guardian.
- The school must receive a Medication Administration Directions Form signed by the student's physician and parent/guardian.
- On the medication container must be clearly printed the following information:
  - Scholar's Name
  - Name of the medication
  - Dosage
  - Time the medication must be taken.
- Bring in only the amount of medication that is needed for a school day.
- In the case of prolonged need, send in the amount for a clearly specified period such as one week or one month. Extra medication will not be sent home with a student.
- All medication will be kept in a secure location in the main office.

Scholars are not allowed to carry any medication with them to school. Aspirin, Tylenol, and other patent drugs *are not* available from school.

Scholars may carry and administer their medication *if these two conditions are met:*

- It is warranted by a potentially life-threatening condition and advised by their physician and
- A Medication Self-Administration Form is on file in the office signed by the student's parent, physician, and Principal or his designee.

## **XI. SCHOLAR SERVICES**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Vision Academy Charter School is committed to supporting students with disabilities by providing special education and related services in accordance with the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004)* and Chapter 711 of the Pennsylvania Code. Services may include learning support, emotional support, speech/language therapy, and other individualized interventions.

Students experiencing academic or behavioral challenges that do not improve with classroom interventions may be referred for an evaluation. If eligible, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed in collaboration with the family to meet the student's needs.

All students with disabilities, regardless of severity, are identified, located, and evaluated through a systematic screening process. Parents may request an evaluation at any time. Procedural Safeguards outlining parental rights are provided annually and upon request.

For more information or to request an evaluation, contact:

#### **Dr. T.J. Coll, Principal**

Vision Academy Charter School  
153 Penn Blvd, East Lansdowne, PA 19050  
(484) 466-2124 Ext. 1212 | coll@vacharter.org

Additional resources are available at [www.vacharter.org](http://www.vacharter.org).

### **ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

Vision Academy's English as a Second Language (ESL) Program in Pennsylvania aims to enhance the English language proficiency of English Learners attending our school.

To identify students who would benefit from ESL services, Vision Academy Charter School utilizes the Home Language Survey and conducts parent interviews as assessment tools. We follow the guidelines outlined in the Basic Education Circular on the Identification of English Language Learners by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Pennsylvania Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan of January 12, 2018.

For students whose primary home language is not English, we conduct an academic records review to assess their English language proficiency. If no substantial evidence of English language proficiency is found, we administer one of the WIDA screening tools, such as the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) for kindergarten students or the WIDA Screener for students in grades 1-12.

The goals of our ESL Program align with the ESSA requirements and are designed to support English learners in the following areas:

1. Effective communication in social settings.
2. Academic achievement across all content areas.
3. Interactions in socially and culturally appropriate manners.

At Vision Academy, we are dedicated to providing English learners with the necessary tools and support to improve their English language skills and succeed academically while fostering positive social and cultural interactions.

### **HEALTH SCREENING**

Scholars at Vision Academy undergo regular health screenings in accordance with the guidelines set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. These screenings include measurements of height, weight, and body mass index (BMI). In addition to these measurements, students in specific grades also receive evaluations for vision and hearing. These screenings help ensure that our scholars' health needs are addressed and that they have the necessary support for their overall well-being.

### **COUNSELING**

The school counselors at Vision Academy play a vital role in supporting scholars' social and emotional well-being, both inside and outside the classroom. With their expertise and experience, school counselors address various issues that can impact scholars' success. They provide assistance in personal, vocational, and academic areas, ensuring that students receive the necessary support to meet their educational and social-emotional needs. The engagement and support of school counselors are facilitated through various services, including a check-in/out system, individual counseling (with or without Individualized Education Program requirements), small group instruction and support, and classroom lessons focused on developing life skills related to social-emotional and mental wellness. School counselors also contribute to implementing the schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) system. In addition to their proactive efforts, school counselors are prepared to respond to crises and provide interventions. They collaborate with outside referral agencies, the Intermediate Unit, case management, and social workers as needed. Scholars who wish to meet with a school counselor individually can complete a request form available at the office, on the school's website, or from a teacher, which should be submitted to the counseling office in advance. Parents seeking to discuss their child's well-being can contact the Secretary and Administrative office to be connected with a school counselor. A formal request form is also available on the school website under counseling services. School counselors work closely with scholars and families to ensure they understand graduation requirements and course descriptions and provide guidance on specific course or level recommendations. They meet with scholars to discuss high school readiness and transition and assist families with High School registration when needed. Additionally, new Vision Academy Charter School students can meet with a school counselor to facilitate a smooth transition and readjustment process. The school counselors are dedicated to supporting the holistic development of scholars and are committed to their overall success.

## **McKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESSNESS**

In compliance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as reauthorized in 2015 by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Vision Academy Charter School (VACS) is attempting to identify all children within the district that may be experiencing homelessness.

The term homeless children and youth is defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. This includes individuals:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;
- Living in a motel, hotel, trailer park or campground due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations or similar settings;
- Living in substandard housing (no running water or working utilities, infestations, etc.).

Children who are experiencing homelessness may qualify for assistance with free school lunch, school supplies/materials, tutoring and transportation so that they can remain in their school of origin throughout the duration of their homeless episode.

If you believe your child(ren) may qualify for this service, please contact the School Counselor and Homeless and Foster Youth Liaison by email: at [hill@vacharter.org](mailto:hill@vacharter.org) or call at 484-466-2124.

If your living situation changes during the school year, and you and your children become homeless, please contact the school. We will work with you so that your child(ren)'s education is disrupted as little as possible.

## **SCHOOL LUNCHEES AND BREAKFASTS**

Vision Academy Charter School participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a federal program that allows us to offer free breakfast and lunch to all scholars in grades K–8, regardless of household income.

- Breakfast is available daily from 7:30 AM to 7:50 AM, giving scholars a healthy start to their school day.
- Lunch and snacks are provided at designated times according to the school's master schedule.

Scholars may also choose to bring their own lunch if preferred.

Monthly menus are posted on our school website and can be accessed anytime via the following link:

👉 [Food Services – VACS Calendar & Menus](#) (also located under 'Quick Links' in the top right-hand corner of the homepage).

Participation in CEP reflects our commitment to removing barriers to student success and ensuring all scholars have access to nutritious, balanced meals every school day.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Vision Academy Charter School partners with local school districts to provide transportation for eligible scholars. To ensure proper arrangements, families must complete the following steps:

### **Step 1:**

Complete the **VACS Transportation Survey** for the 2025–2026 school year:

👉 [VACS Transportation Survey \(2025–26\)](#)

### **Step 2:**

Register your child for transportation services with your **home school district if:**

- You have not already registered, and
- Your child has not previously received district transportation to Vision Academy CS

You can find transportation registration guidelines for many districts here:

👉 [Transportation Registration Protocols \(2025–26\)](#)

## **BUS BEHAVIOR & SAFETY EXPECTATIONS**

To ensure a safe ride for all students, scholars are expected to follow all bus rules. Inappropriate behavior on the bus may result in the suspension or loss of transportation privileges. Remember, any distraction to the driver endangers everyone on board.

Scholars must follow these expectations while riding the bus:

- Remain seated and face forward when the bus is in motion
- Enter and exit the bus safely and respectfully
- Speak in quiet, respectful voices
- Follow the bus driver’s instructions at all times
- Keep aisles clear and feet inside the seat area
- Keep hands to yourself and inside the bus at all times
- Refrain from throwing items inside or outside the bus
- No eating or drinking on the bus

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR BUS MISCONDUCT**

Failure to follow bus expectations may result in disciplinary action. The following progressive steps will be taken:

- **1st referral** – Parent warning letter and meeting with the Director of Student Services
- **2nd referral** – Two-day suspension from bus transportation
- **3rd referral** – Five-day suspension from bus transportation
- **4th referral** – Two-week suspension and referral to the Director of Student Services for potential removal of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year

Maintaining a safe and respectful environment on the bus is a shared responsibility. We appreciate your support in reinforcing these expectations at home.

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

At Vision Academy Charter School, we are committed to ensuring the success of every student through a proactive and systematic approach called **MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports)**. MTSS is a school-wide framework that integrates **high-quality instruction, assessment, and intervention** to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all learners.

### **WHAT IS MTSS?**

MTSS is a data-driven, multi-level framework designed to identify students who need additional support early and provide targeted interventions. It includes:

- Standards-aligned, culturally responsive core instruction
- Universal screening and progress monitoring
- Tiered levels of academic and behavioral support
- Collaborative problem-solving among educators
- Active parent and family engagement

MTSS supports **all students**, including those who are advanced, those who need extra help, and those learning English. Teachers use ongoing data to group students, plan instruction, and implement strategies that best match each learner's needs.

### **How DOES MTSS Work?**

Students receive support through **three tiers**:

- **Tier 1:** High-quality classroom instruction for all students
- **Tier 2:** Small group interventions for students who need more support
- **Tier 3:** Intensive, individualized interventions for students with significant needs

Progress is closely monitored at each tier, and instruction is adjusted based on student response.

### **MTSS for English Learners**

English learners (ELs) are fully supported within the MTSS framework. We provide:

- High-quality ESL instruction aligned with core content
- Differentiated supports based on English language proficiency
- Assessments like ACCESS and W-APT to guide instruction
- Collaboration between classroom teachers, ESL specialists, and families.

If you have questions about MTSS or how it supports your child, please contact your child's teacher or email the Supervisor of Instruction and Curriculum.

## **XII. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

### **BUILDING ACCESS**

The only entrance to the school after the morning bell will be the main door at the front of the administration building by the school office. This is to better ensure the safety of all students during the day. All visitors and parents must sign-in in the main office when coming to the school.

### **SCHOOL VISITOR POLICY**

The Vision Academy Charter School encourages all parent(s)/ guardian(s) to visit our school facilities in accordance with reasonable procedures that have been established to ensure that such visits do not disrupt the educational environment or endanger the safety of students or staff.

We believe that parent(s)/guardian(s) who have students attending our school have a special responsibility to keep themselves informed about the day-to-day operations. The administrators shall encourage parents and guardians to visit the school and shall promote a spirit of mutual cooperation between home and school that will benefit students. Additionally, we shall make an effort to ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) of school students are aware of the school visitor policy and procedure and that you have a pleasant experience.

Because the safety of our students (your children) and employees are a top priority, all visitors during regular school hours, including parents, must sign in at the reception window, leave a picture ID with office personnel, and obtain a visitor's badge/pass. Visitors are not allowed to be inside the school without a visitor's pass at any time, which includes dropping off and picking up students. Anyone without a pass will be directed to the office to obtain one. We ask that you follow our procedure with courteous behavior. Failure to comply will result in the administration taking your behavior as a serious safety incident. We will not tolerate anyone jeopardizing our security plan.

A school visitor shall not be permitted to interrupt classroom instruction to speak with a staff member or his/her child unless the school administrator grants permission because there is an emergency. A school visitor shall not be permitted to visit any student who is not his/her child, unless permission for such a visit is granted in advance by that student's parent/guardian.

Except for persons attending scheduled school programs, all persons who visit VACS, during the school day, shall report to the school office upon arrival, sign in, announce the nature and purpose of the visit and obtain a visitor pass before proceeding to their destination.

### **SCHOOL VISITOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. All Visitors must be scanned by a Student Safety Officer and must report to the school office when entering the building between 7:55 am and 3:30 pm on a school day, except when attending scheduled school programs that occur during the regular school day. It is school policy that all visitors to the school must sign in at the front office - no exceptions.

2. The Visitor will then inform the school secretary of the staff member or student he or she wishes to see and ask the school secretary if that person is available. Regular school volunteers need only to complete the visitor logbook.
3. The following information in the visitor logbook:
  - A. Name and address
  - B. Whether he or she is a parent/guardian of a child attending the school
  - C. Name of the person/classroom he/she is visiting
  - D. Purpose of the visit
  - E. Time of arrival
4. Your valid government ID will be collected and returned to you when you exit. I.e. driver's license, permit, US Army Id.
5. You must then write your name on a visitor badge, affix the visitor badge onto your shirt or jacket and you will be escorted to the location or person to be seen.
6. Visitor must report to the school office after concluding the visit to:
  - A. Record his/her time of departure
  - B. Discard his/her visitor badge

All visitors and volunteers must wear their name badges in plain sight at all times while on school grounds or at school-related events or activities. Visitors will not, however, be asked to check in and out using this system during large evening meetings, school plays, programs, athletic events, etc.

### **Administrator Responsibilities**

1. Maintain a visitor log book that is available at all times during the school day in the school office
2. Enforce the school visitor policy and monitor the whereabouts of school visitors
3. Provide temporary and permanent visitor passes for all persons who visit the school building
4. Require all visitors, including persons seeking the preferential treatment afforded parents under this policy, to properly identify themselves.
5. Retain complete authority to exclude from the school premises any person(s) whom he/she has reason to believe may disrupt educational programs in the classroom or school, may disturb the teacher(s) or child(ren) on the premises or whom the principal believes are on the premises for the purpose of committing an illegal act.

### **ADMINISTRATOR'S AUTHORITY**

Adults and minors over 16 years of age who enter a school campus and fail to adhere to the posted "Visitor's Policy" or who defy the principal/designee's authority may be reported to the appropriate police agency and may be subject to criminal charges under the Pennsylvania Penal Code.

## **CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROCEDURES**

At our school, parent/guardian classroom observations are subject to specific procedures to ensure a conducive learning environment. To observe their child's classroom during a session, parents/guardians must obtain advance permission from the administrators. Upon receiving a request, the administrators will consult with the respective teacher and schedule the visit within one week.

During classroom observations, it is crucial for parents/guardians to respect the ongoing class activities and avoid interrupting the students or the teacher. If there are questions or a need to discuss matters with the teacher, arrangements for a separate conference should be made by contacting the teacher at a later time for an appointment.

To maintain an optimal learning environment for students, the administrators have the discretion to limit the number of visitors allowed in a classroom at any given time. They may also determine a reasonable duration for the observation period to minimize disruption to the educational process.

To ensure a focused learning atmosphere, parents/guardians are kindly requested to avoid bringing small children who may cause distractions during the observation. However, when appropriate, active participation in classroom activities is encouraged.

During the observation, it is important for observers to refrain from engaging in conversations with other visitors, as this can distract both the students and the teacher from their educational objectives.

Lastly, parents/guardians are welcome to exit the classroom quietly at any time during the observation period. We appreciate your adherence to these procedures and your cooperation in creating an optimal learning environment for all students.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

The school encourages parents to volunteer and participate in Vision Academy Parent Partners (VAPP) committees. The purpose of Vision Academy Parent Partners (VAPP) is to work in partnership with the administration, teachers, and parents for the continuous improvement of the Vision Academy Charter School Community. The VAPP develops an annual partnership and parent engagement plan to ensure a welcoming school climate and to conduct engagement activities linked to academic and behavioral goals for students in our *School Improvement Plan*.

Studies show that parental involvement in a child's education is one of the most critical factors in raising student self-esteem and academic achievement. Moreover, most experts agree that parental involvement should go beyond attendance at teacher conferences and open houses. Therefore, the school has many opportunities to assist our teachers, students, and staff.

## **VOLUNTEER RULES**

Volunteers must sign in and out in the main office, and get a volunteer pass, which must be worn at all times.

CONFIDENTIALITY must be kept. Please do not repeat anything you hear regarding students while volunteering at school. You should never discuss a student's grades, progress, or what goes on in the classroom with anyone except the staff. We need to remember that our children have a right to privacy.

If you sign up for a regular time with a specific teacher, we look forward to you being consistent with your attendance. The children look forward to you being with them, and the teachers plan your visiting time into their schedules. We hope you will not be absent, but please call the teacher or the main office if you must.

Discipline should be left to the staff and administrators. If you are experiencing a problem with a student, please consult the teacher. We expect our children to behave according to our Code of Conduct and all adults to be models of the Code of Conduct.

When volunteering, please dress comfortably. Please remember that when you are in school, you are also a role model.

Below is a list of sample jobs that may be filled by parents, family members, or other community members.

### **Sample Volunteer Jobs**

- Arrange for curriculum-related speakers, exhibits, and demonstrations.
- Assist in coaching a sport after school.
- Bring in refreshments for special events.
- Chaperone a field trip or event.
- Help during Lunch/Recess duty
- Help Hosting a Family Literacy Night (October 19th)
- Help Hosting a Family Math Night (October 26th)
- Help Hosting a Family STEM Night (November 2nd)
- Help Hosting a Scholastic Book Fair
- Help host a Taste of the World
- Help in a classroom.
- Help Organize a Thanksgiving Celebration Staff Dinner
- Join a school committee of Vision Academy Parent Partners (VAPP).
- Make copies for teachers
- Organize or participate in a special event.
- Plan an Author Visit
- Plan or assist with annual fundraising activities
- Prepare flyers, and write news releases for events for VAPP events
- Research and Coordinate Culture Programs
- Share a talent, interest, or hobby.
- Start and/or Lead a school club.
- Translate notices, letters, and forms into another language.
- Work at the office reception desk
- Volunteer as a School Picture Day Helper
- Help organize Culture Day/Night
- Participate in Career Day activities

- Volunteer for Informational meetings for parents
- Help prepare assemblies
- Update Parent Bulletin board
- Homework Helpers
- Computer Helpers

#### **CLEARANCE POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERS**

To ensure the safety of our students, Vision Academy Charter School (“Charter School”) has instituted a policy regarding volunteers, which follows Act 15 of 2015 (the Act). Volunteers, who have “direct volunteer contact,” with children at a school, meaning, the care, supervision, guidance, or control of children and routine interaction with children, must have background checks. “Routine interaction” is defined in the Act as “regular and repeated contact that is integral to a person’s employment or volunteer responsibilities.”

Volunteers must obtain the following certifications:

- [Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Records Check](#)
- [Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance](#)
- [Federal Criminal History Record Information \(CHRI\)](#)

A fingerprint based federal criminal history (FBI) submitted through the Pennsylvania State Police or its authorized agent is not required as long as: (1) the position the volunteer is applying for is an unpaid position; and (2) the volunteer has been a resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the entirety of the previous ten (10) years. Volunteers who are not required to obtain the FBI certification for these reasons must swear or affirm, in writing, that they are not disqualified from service based upon a conviction of an offense under Section 6344.

If a volunteer has not been a resident of Pennsylvania for the previous ten (10) years, but obtained their FBI certification at any time since establishing residency, they must provide a copy of the certification to the person responsible for the selection of volunteers. They are not required to obtain any additional FBI certifications.

If a volunteer has not been a resident of Pennsylvania for the previous ten (10) years, and has not obtained their FBI certification, they must obtain that certification.

Volunteers required to obtain clearances include persons who are responsible for the child’s welfare or who wish to visit the school regularly to serve as volunteers and to provide for the care, supervision, guidance or control of children. All Clearance Required Volunteers should obtain their clearances and the Charter School will reimburse the cost of clearances if such clearances are obtained solely to be used at the Charter School and after the volunteer completes ten (10) volunteering days. All Clearance Required Volunteers must obtain the required certification every sixty (60) months from the date of the individual’s most recent certification. Copies of all clearances should be provided to the Charter School.

Examples of volunteer situations requiring clearances include, but are not limited to:

- Homeroom parents
- Working with small group of students or individual students
- Driving a team/group to an activity
- Assisting in a classroom
- Recess and library volunteers
- Volunteer coaches and club advisors

Volunteers not required to obtain clearances include visitors who are not responsible for a child's welfare or are visiting the school irregularly and not providing for the care, supervision, guidance, or control of children. Although occasional visitors are not required to complete the clearances, they should continue to comply with building security policies such as signing in before entering the building.

Examples of situations in which volunteers typically would not need clearances include, but are not limited to:

- Attending a classroom presentation or party
- Attending a school-sponsored event
- Back-to-School nights
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Parent guest readers
- Halloween parades
- Collecting tickets to sporting events
- Working concession stands
- Chaperones for field trips and dances (so long as not routine or responsible for the child's welfare)
- Participating in "Career Day"

## **FUNDRAISING**

The Principal and Business Administrator must approve all fundraising projects. Tickets or articles of any kind, other than those associated with school-sponsored activities, are not to be sold on school property by students or outside organizations.

## **SIGNS AND POSTERS**

In order to ensure compliance and maintain a respectful environment, all signs, posters, and banners that scholars wish to display must be approved and initialed by the appropriate authority before they can be showcased. This process helps us uphold our standards and guidelines while promoting a positive and organized atmosphere for all.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

In keeping with the school's commitment to creating and maintaining a positive environment, there may be an occasion when an inappropriate item may be confiscated from a student.

Examples of such instances would be, but are not limited to, cell phones, headphones, recording devices, etc.

If any item is confiscated from a student, the parent or guardian will be notified via email or telephone. On the first offense, all confiscated items will be returned at the end of the day. The second offense will result in the item being confiscated until the end of the week with a Friday 1:30 pick up by a parent. Any student having any items confiscated three times or more, risks losing all retained items until the end of the year.

It is the student's responsibility to secure the item after the appropriate time. Any illegal items that are brought to school and confiscated will not be returned.

Use of school-issued devices (e.g., Chromebooks) must follow the **Chromebook Use and Care** policy, which includes expectations for appropriate use, digital citizenship, and care of school property.

## **NETWORK AND COMPUTER POLICY**

Computers are used to support learning and to enhance instruction. Computer networks allow people to interact with many computers. The Internet allows people to interact with hundreds of thousands of networks. It is a general policy that all computers are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner. Failure to adhere to the policy and the guidelines below will result in the revocation of the user's access privilege. Unacceptable uses of the computer include:

- Violating the conditions of the Education Code dealing with student's rights to privacy.
- Using profanity, obscenity, or other language that may be offensive to another user.
- Re posting (forwarding) personal communication without the author's prior consent.
- Copying commercial software in violation of copyright law.
- Using the network for financial gain, for commercial activity, or for any illegal activity.
- Damaging any part of hardware or software of a computer network system.

The person in whose name an account is issued is responsible at all times for its proper use.

Users must not give a password to another user. Users should change passwords frequently.

As the Internet provides connections to other computer systems located all over the world, users (and parents of users, if the user is under 18 years old) must understand that the school does not control the content of the information available on these other systems. Some of the information available is controversial and, sometimes, offensive. The school does not condone the use of such materials.

Responsible Users may under supervision use the internet to research assigned classroom projects.

### **RESPONSIBLE USERS MAY NOT**

1. Use the Internet for any illegal purpose.
2. Use impolite or abusive language.
3. Violate the rules of common sense and etiquette.

4. Change any computer files that do not belong to the user.
5. Send or get copyrighted materials without permission.
6. Users must not give their password to anyone.
7. Use the Internet to send electronic mail (email) to other users.

System operators will have access to all user accounts, including email. If any person does not follow the rules above, use of the network will be canceled. There will be no second chances. If the user is not sure how to do something on the computer, he/she is supposed to ask a teacher or the computer specialist in the school.

All student internet activity is monitored and filtered through **GoGuardian**. Violations of these policies may result in loss of technology privileges and further disciplinary action, as outlined in the school's Technology Use Agreement and Code of Conduct.

Students and parents are required to review and sign the Technology Use Agreement, which is part of the **Chromebook Use and Care** guidelines provided by the school.

### **BACKPACKS**

Scholars are prohibited from carrying backpacks during the school day for safety reasons. Because of this, backpacks should be placed on the back of the scholar's chair or designated spaces.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

There will be a lost and found area. If you find books, clothing or personal items on the school grounds, please bring these items to the office. If you lose something, check the lost and found. Every month unclaimed lost items will be sent to a charity and the school is no longer responsible for the missing items. The lost and found box can be checked before or after school only. A staff member and the main office will be responsible for lost and found.

Labeling all removable clothing and items students bring to school will eliminate much of this problem and prevent your having to replace expensive belongings. Indelible markers meant for labeling clothing are available at local stores.

### **WITHDRAWALS/TRANSFERS**

Withdrawal procedures are handled through the main office. Parents of scholars wishing to withdraw or transfer to another school must complete the following steps:

- Email [secretary@vacharter.org](mailto:secretary@vacharter.org) and request a Withdrawal Form.
- Fill out the Withdrawal Form that is provided by the secretary (either via email or physical copy).
- Return (or pay for) all school books and electronic devices (and other property, if applicable).

### **PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

Parents are advised to contact the classroom teacher directly should a concern or issue arise, in the belief that most problems are best solved by those directly involved. A simple phone call

is enough to clarify or resolve most matters. If a concern is not addressed to everyone's satisfaction, the Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction ([harriott@vacharter.org](mailto:harriott@vacharter.org)), Director of Student Services ([dahl@vacharter.org](mailto:dahl@vacharter.org)) or Principal ([coll@vacharter.org](mailto:coll@vacharter.org)) will provide further assistance. The staff welcomes your input and feels strongly that education is a team effort.

## **HOME VISIT PROGRAM**

Vision Academy Charter School has implemented a home visit program to foster a strong and cooperative home-school relationship. This initiative aims to enhance communication and understanding between families and the school community.

### **Purpose:**

- The home visit program provides an opportunity for students to forge stronger bonds with their teachers.
- It allows parents and guardians to engage with teachers in a more social and relaxed atmosphere outside of the school setting.

### **Implementation:**

- Teachers and other staff members will make home visits to as many families as time allows.
- The goal is for the teaching staff to visit every family at least once during the crucial elementary school years.

### **Benefits:**

- Strengthens the relationship between home and school.
- Provides a platform for parents to discuss their child's progress and any concerns in a comfortable environment.
- Helps teachers understand the student's home environment, which can contribute to tailored educational support.

**Commitment to Families:** Vision Academy Charter School is committed to building a supportive and collaborative community. Through the home visit program, we aim to ensure that every family feels connected and valued as part of the school community.

## **FORMS AND PERMISSION SLIPS**

A number of important forms are sent home at the beginning of the school year. These are required to assure the health and safety of your child, and to make your preferences known to the school with respect to optional opportunities and activities. Please return all required forms immediately and keep the others on file for use as needed.

# SCHOLAR CONDUCT CONTRACT

## SCHOLAR CONDUCT CONTRACT

Because all of you have elected to apply to VACS, we anticipate that all students will not only accept their rights as members of our school community, but also their responsibilities to other members of that community. We ask each of you to carefully read over and sign the student contract on this page and, as the school year unfolds, do your best to behave in ways that will enhance your own and others' ability to learn.

### Scholar Contract

(MUST BE RETURNED TO HOMEROOM TEACHER)

**As a scholar of VACS, I will do my best to do the following:**

1. I will show consideration for the rights and feelings of others, being careful not to hurt them physically or make them feel bad.
2. I will speak to others respectfully, not using profanity or uncomplimentary names.
3. I will show respect for all people working or helping in the school.
4. I will show careful regard for both my property and the property of others.
5. I will always ask permission before I borrow other people's things, and I will return them promptly and in good condition when I am finished.
6. I will attend school regularly.
7. I will be in class on time with all necessary materials.
8. I will make good use of class time and complete and turn in assignments on time.
9. I understand that I must make up assignments I missed because of an absence.
10. I will remain on campus during school time, including the lunch period. I will not leave the school grounds without the permission of the Lead Person.
11. I will do my best in my schoolwork, and I will let others do their best.
12. I will ask for help if I do not understand.
13. I will not bring any contraband items to school.
14. I will help keep the school building and grounds clean and tidy.
15. I will walk in the halls.
16. I will not eat or drink in classrooms, and in the hallways
17. I will follow the dress code and arrive at school in my uniform.
18. I will not participate in any behavior banned by the school.
19. I agree to follow all requirements of the VACS Scholar Handbook.
20. I agree to follow the VACS Code of Civility.
21. I agree to follow the Scholar Code of Conduct.

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Scholar Name	Scholar Signature	Date
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Parent/Guardian Name	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
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## COMMITMENT PLEDGE SIGNED PARENTS (GUARDIANS)

### COMMITMENT PLEDGE SIGNED PARENTS (GUARDIANS)

#### Attendance

- We believe that our child's attendance and timeliness are vitally important to his/her success in school.
- We will make sure that our child has a safe and reliable means of transportation to and from school each day.
- We are fully committed to a 10-month schedule and will ensure that our child will be in school September through June.
- We will not plan for family vacations or other extended absences to occur during school time.
- We will make certain that our child attends school every day, except in cases of illness or another legitimate reason.
- We will telephone the school prior to 9:00 am on the day of any absence to report why the child is out.
- We will not schedule routine doctor and dentist appointments during the school day.
- Consulting the Vision Academy calendar, we will try to schedule appointments on days or at times when school is not in session; or if such an appointment becomes absolutely necessary during school hours, we will return the child to school after the appointment.
- We will provide notes for any absences more than one day and will provide doctor's notes for any absence of more than three days or for repeated absences.
- We will see to it that our child arrives on time each morning, and fully understand that lateness will result in public apologies, detentions and loss of credit in the high school.
- We understand that 18 or more absences without a doctor's note will require that my child repeat the grade.

#### Uniform

- Our child will wear the Vision Academy uniform to school each day.
- We understand that our child is not allowed to substitute the required clothing and that uniform violations will result in the child missing class, being sent home or the parent bringing the proper items to school.

#### Homework

- We understand that our child will have 30 minutes to two hours of homework each night, including weekends.
- We understand that regular homework completion is one of the keys to academic success.
- We understand that it is our responsibility to see that homework is completed. We will check our child's homework each night to ensure that it is complete, accurate and neat.
- We will provide a quiet, undisturbed time and space for the work to be completed.
- We understand there will be a series of consequences for my child if homework is not completed, including after school detention, poor grades, possible retention and mandatory parent attendance to show completed work.

#### Parent Conferences and Report Cards

- We understand that parent conferences and the report card are essential to understanding a child's academic growth, strengths and weaknesses.
- We will pick up our child's report card on each Parent Conference day and will attend all parent-teacher conferences.

- We understand that if the report card is not picked up one day after the Parent Conference-day, our child will not be allowed to attend classes until it is picked up.

**Vision Academy Parent Partners (VAPP)**

- We will actively engage in Vision Academy Parent Partners (VAPP) by attending its activities, events, and workshops, and by participating in the annual elections of parent representatives to the Board and VAPP committees.

**Discipline**

- We have read, understand and support the Vision Academy Code of Conduct including all its rules, rewards and disciplinary consequences.
- We understand that teacher detentions happen on the day of the offense and that it is our child’s responsibility to contact us and let us know they are staying.
- We understand that our child cannot be excused from detention, extended day program or in school suspension unless there is a family emergency.
- We understand that if our child is suspended that s/he will have to be picked up from school on the day of the offense. Then we will have to accompany the child for a re-entry conference in order for the child to return to classes, and our child will have to present a sincere apology before the community.

**Promotion Policy**

- We understand that our child must pass all but one core academic class in order to be promoted to the next grade. More than one failure will result in retention.

**Parent – School Communication**

- We agree to support our child’s academic work by communicating regularly with my child’s teachers.
- We will attend conferences to help our child succeed academically
- Each week we agree to check and sign our child’s green folder containing important communications from the school.
- We also agree to post the monthly calendar so we are aware of events at school.
- We understand that we are not required to sign this covenant as a term of our child’s admission to Vision Academy CS, but do so voluntarily because we believe that Vision Academy is a partnership between parents and educators in creating the best possible education for our child.
- We agree to adhere to all policies and procedures outlined in the school Code of Conduct and pledge to uphold the Code of Civility.

Child’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to the Child: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**SCHOLAR PHOTOGRAPH/VIDEO AND WORK PRODUCT RELEASE**

As the parent/guardian of this student, I hereby consent to the publication of any photograph and/or video taken of my child in his/her classroom or school or in connection with a school district-sponsored event or activity in any school publication and also to its release to the media in connection with a school-sponsored activity or event.

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