

Val Vista Academy FAMILY HANDBOOK 2023-2024

Val Vista Academy and Ball Charter Schools reserve the right to amend or clarify this handbook at any time for the safety and well-being of students, staff, and visitors, as well as to comply with local, state, or federal policies or mandates.

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DISCLOSURES

Per [A.R.S 15-183](#), teacher credentials, certification(s) and years of experience are available in the main office and can be viewed upon request.

Governing Board notices and minutes of the Board meetings are posted in a bulletin case outside the front office and can be found online [here](#).

[Annual financial reports](#) and [Academic, Financial, and Operations Dashboard](#)

Val Vista Academy uses security cameras for the purpose of campus safety. Access to cameras and recordings are limited and protected by password.



Important Links

[Val Vista Academy website](#)

- VVA Student Homepage
- VVA Payments (Lunch, events, etc.)
- VVA Tax Credit/Donation Payments

[Val Vista Academy Facebook](#)

[Ball Charter Schools website](#)

[Transparency](#)

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Grading Standards

Report cards are issued at the conclusion of each quarter. Grades for citizenship are issued. The marking system is as follows:

Grades K-4 Core Classes & Specials

Proficient..... P

Developing D

Area of Concern..... C

Proficient- Student meets and at times exceeds the grade-level standards and produces work that demonstrates a thorough understanding of grade-level standards

Developing- Student often approaches and at times meets the grade-level standards and produces work that demonstrates partial understanding of grade-level standards

Area of Concern- Student often falls below or far below the grade level standards and produces work that demonstrates a minimal understanding of grade-level standards

Grades 5 – 8 Core Classes, Citizenship & Specials

Excellent Achievement . . . 90% - 100% = A

Above Average 80% - 89% = B

Satisfactory Progress 70% - 79% = C

Below Average 60% - 69% = D

Failing. Below 60% = F



Homework

Homework is a typical part of the academic program. Its purpose is to provide meaningful practice and study, to extend the learning beyond the classroom to real-world applications, and to help families know what their children are learning in school. Homework is not normally assigned over weekends and holidays, although it is sometimes helpful to complete long-term assignments such as projects or reports during these times.

It is recognized that not all children require the same amount of time to complete homework, and the suggested times presented below are averages. Parents should notify their child's teacher if homework takes an excessive amount of time for their child.

Kindergarten	15 minutes	4th Grade	35 minutes
1st Grade	20 minutes	5th Grade	40 minutes
2nd Grade	25 minutes	6th - 8th Grade	60 - 90 minutes total
3rd Grade	30 minutes		

Make-up Work due to Absence

Students should check for work via Google Classroom. Required hard copies may be arranged by contacting the teacher. One day to make up work will be given for each day of absence during the assignment. Students can request make-up work upon their return to school.

Students who are absent with a medically documented illness, requiring long or frequent periods of absenteeism, may request and receive assignments and directions for at-home work as medically required.



Promotion/Retention

In accordance with state law ([A.R.S. 15-521](#)) and [ASBA Policy](#), teachers make the decision for promotion or retention of students. Retention is considered only after careful examination of the student's growth and development. Promotion to the next grade level is not automatic.

Decisions for promotion will be based on the following criteria: (1) the student's academic achievement; (2) attendance records; (3) standardized and alternative assessment results; and (4) any other information considered to be pertinent to the recommendation. Decisions for retention will be made only after review of input from a variety of sources, which may include teachers, the principal, parents, or a school psychologist. A student will be retained when it is in the student's best interest and will facilitate his or her educational growth. Parents will be notified when the school believes there is the possibility of retention for the following year, per established retention procedures.

Promotion from 8th grade is primarily based on academic performance in the four core classes (language arts, math, science, and social studies). Students who earn failing grades in these critical areas may be required to complete an approved credit recovery course(s) during the summer months to be considered for promotion. Upon completion of a summer course(s), transcripts must be provided to Val Vista Academy.



Student Recognition- Vipership Awards

At Val Vista Academy, we strive to recognize students for their all-around effort and performance in multiple areas.

How are Vipership awards determined?

Each classroom teacher will determine the students who will be presented a Vipership award. That teacher may confer with other teachers and staff (specialists, resource, etc.) as well. Students who excelled in demonstrating characteristics that represent what it means to be a Val Vista Viper will be honored. 3-4 students per class will be selected each quarter based on character, citizenship, academic growth/achievement, modeling the [Code of Conduct](#), and/or accomplishments related to classroom goals.

[Academic Achievement](#): May include Core classes and Specials

[Academic Growth](#): Students achieve growth in benchmark assessments, classroom-based metrics, or growth toward goals established in individual plans

[Citizenship](#): Demonstrating positive behavior as indicated in [Code of Conduct](#), consistent [attendance](#); perseverance and effort with classwork/[homework](#) completion; and the like



Admission

Val Vista Academy is a public, tuition-free, charter school and does not restrict enrollment based on “boundaries.” Eligible students are admitted to Val Vista Academy based on space availability. An open enrollment period is conducted in the winter. Should the number of eligible enrollment applications exceed the capacity of a grade level, the school will utilize a lottery system. The lottery will also determine the waiting list order for any unselected applications. Applications received after the open enrollment window closes will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Preference will be given to returning students, siblings of attending students, and the children of staff and board members. ([Info here](#))

Per [ARS 15-821](#) and [ASBA Policy](#): A child must reach the age of five (5) prior to September 1 of the current school year to be eligible for kindergarten, and six (6) years of age prior to September 1 of the current school year to be eligible for first grade. Administration may admit children to kindergarten or first grade who have not reached the required age as prescribed above if it is determined to be in the child’s best interest. Determination of placement shall be based on space availability and one or more consultations with the parents(s)/guardian(s), the child, the teacher, the school principal, and/or professional consultants. ([continued](#))



Admission

(continued)

Val Vista Academy will not limit admission based on ethnicity, national origin, gender, income level, disabling condition, proficiency in English, or athletic ability. Val Vista Academy reserves the right to limit admission based on program capacity. Current-year open enrollment closes at the end of the third quarter of the school year.

A pupil who has been expelled by any school or school district, who is not in compliance with a condition of disciplinary action imposed by any other school or school district, or with a condition imposed by the juvenile court shall not be admitted. Acceptance for enrollment may be revoked upon finding the existence of any of these conditions.



Admission- Student Placement

We have a defined process for placing students in classrooms. The most important goal is to ensure our students are placed in the most effective learning situation possible.

Teachers and administration work together to build the best learning environment possible and use criteria which include achievement mixture, group dynamics, comparable class sizes, parent/guardian input and special needs. To achieve this goal, we make class placement decisions considering both group and individual needs. Because parents/guardians know their children best, we give an opportunity for input about how we can most effectively meet each child's educational needs.

On rare occasion, it becomes necessary to revisit the placement of a child in a classroom. Our process for changing placement requires enough time to elapse, typically at least 30 days, for all concerned to make an informed decision. An administrative committee will consider teacher, student, and parental/guardian input and concerns to determine if a change is warranted and is in the best interest of the child. At no time will parental/guardian request alone be the basis for change in placement.

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Attendance

Arizona State Law ([A. R. S. 15-802](#)) and [ASBA Policy](#) require compulsory attendance for school-age children. Students are required to be in school except in cases of emergency, illness or religious observance. **Students who are not in school 90% (18 absences) of the school days may be retained.** Documentation and successful completion of the grade level is required before a student will be considered for promotion. It is the parents' and/or guardians' responsibility to inform the school of an absence.

Val Vista Academy needs cooperation from parents/guardians in the matter of school attendance and punctuality, particularly in regard to the following:

- Ensuring your child arrives at school between 8:00 a.m. and 8:25 a.m. each day
- Scheduling medical and dental appointments outside school hours except in cases of emergency
- Not removing children prior to the end of the school day
- Contacting the school and informing the office of any absences
- Scheduling family vacations during the school's vacation days

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Attendance- Absences

Parents/guardians must call the school office (480-656-5555) before 9:00 a.m. of the day of the absence. After 9:00 a.m., school officials will notify parents/guardians about the absence via email, call, automated call, or text. Please make sure the school office has the most current contact information on file.



Attendance- Tardies

Tardiness is disruptive to the learning process and has a negative impact on the entire class. Parents/guardians and students share responsibility for being on time to school.

Any student who is not in class by 8:30 a.m. is considered tardy. Students who arrive after 8:30 must be checked in at the front desk by a parent/guardian, then go to class independently or with a Val Vista Academy staff member. To limit any disruptions, parents/guardians must say their goodbyes in the front office.

Tardiness will be handled in the following manner:

- Tardies may result in loss of participation in class activities.
- Excessive tardies will result in parent/guardian contact and potential consequences to curb this type of recurrent problem. This may include but not be limited to: detention, loss of participation in extracurricular activities, reduced citizenship grade, or other actions as deemed necessary by administration.



Attendance- Excessive Absences

School attendance is not only a good habit, but state law requires it. Arizona State Law ([15-802.E15-803](#)) and [ASBA Policy](#) require every person who has custody of a child between the ages of six and sixteen years shall make sure the child attends school for the full time school is in session unless unable to attend due to illness or another legitimate reason.

Students with 18 absences (10% of total school days) or more may be retained. For students with excessive absences during the semester, Val Vista Academy will follow this procedure:

- After five absences, a letter identifying the number of absences will be sent to the parent. A conference may be requested.
- After ten absences, a letter identifying the number of excessive absences and the state mandatory attendance statute will be sent to the parent. A conference with administration will be arranged.
- Students with 18 absences (or 10% of total school days) or more may be retained and authorities may be notified for educational neglect or habitual truancy at the discretion of the principal.



Attendance- Excessive Absences

The education of your child is extremely important to us. To encourage and improve school attendance, Val Vista Academy has implemented a program in partnership with Maricopa County Juvenile Court. This truancy program is called [C.U.T.S. \(Court Unified Truancy Suppression\)](#). When a student has excessive absences (excused or unexcused), the student can be referred to the program.

This program is another way that Val Vista Academy is working with the community to ensure a quality education for all students. Please note that Val Vista Academy also reserves the right to have a C.U.T.S. officer speak at orientations and assemblies, as well as to individual groups of students regarding the importance of school.

Additional information on student absences can be found here: [ASBA Policy](#)



Attendance- Truancy

Truancy is any absence without the prior knowledge and consent of the parent/guardian which is in violation of [state law](#), [ASBA Policy](#) and school disciplinary procedures. Truant absences may result in a loss of credit for class work and the student will be subject to the [Val Vista Academy disciplinary process](#). If necessary, the appropriate law enforcement agency will be notified or a referral to the [C.U.T.S. program](#) will be made.



Closed Campus

Val Vista Academy maintains a **closed campus**. Students are not to leave the school grounds from the time they arrive on campus until school ends without being signed-out by an approved adult. Once students leave, they may not return to the campus unless accompanied by a parent/guardian and signed in at the front office.

VVA reserves the right to deny anyone access to campus for any reason, namely for the purposes health/safety of students and staff, maintaining order, and preventing disruption of instructional time.

In the case of a visitor who engages in disruptive, disorderly, or threatening behavior, or any behavior that potentially risks the safety of students and staff, the principal or designee may restrict the person's access to the school for an extended period of time, including indefinitely. This could also include any visitor who refuses to follow our school procedures or staff directives.

Val Vista Academy uses security cameras for the purpose of campus safety.



Closed Campus- Access to Campus

Access to the front lobby is controlled, and visitors must be “buzzed in.” Anyone who attempts to circumvent this system will be considered a threat to campus safety and will be handled as such.

All visitors must be prepared to digitally sign-in with a valid, state-issued ID. Those who are unwilling or unable to do so may be denied access to campus. If the system’s background check has flagged the visitor, the school reserves the right to deny access.

See also: [Closed Campus- Visitors](#)

VVA reserves the right to deny anyone access to campus for any reason, namely for the purposes health/safety of students and staff, maintaining order, and preventing disruption of instructional time.



Closed Campus- Arriving on & Leaving Campus

The first bell rings at 8:25 a.m. and students are expected to be ready for class to begin at 8:30 a.m. Students are welcome on campus at or after 8:00 a.m. Supervision will not be available until that time. *Students arriving prior to 8:00 a.m. will be signed into the before school program at parent/guardian expense.* For the safety of all students, every family is required to sign up for emergency care. Any student who is not in class by 8:30 a.m. is considered tardy.

All K-4 students are dismissed at 3:00, Grades 5-8 are dismissed at 3:30 on a normal release school day. *Early Release is 12:50 for K-4, 1:10 for 5-8.*

If a child needs to be picked up prior to dismissal, the office will call for the student once the parent has arrived. Parents/guardians will be required to sign out the child. Students will only be released to authorized individuals and will be required to show identification.

Students need parental permission to stay on campus and be involved in school-sanctioned activities before or after school hours. For safety reasons, once the dismissal process is complete all remaining students will be signed-in to the after-care program at parent expense.



Closed Campus- Carline

School drop-off and loading areas are marked. **Do not use the parking lot to drop-off your children;** you must use the carline for safety reasons. Pull forward and pay close attention to the directions of those assisting in the carline. If you pull into the parking area, you must park, exit the vehicle with your children and escort them all the way to the front gate. Students are not permitted to cross in front of traffic without adult supervision.

Please do not try to meet with teachers while they are supervising carline. There is no smoking, vaping, use of tobacco products, etc. while on campus, which includes the carline and parking lot areas, and there is **no use of cell phones while in the carline**. At dismissal, please do not arrive earlier than 15 minutes before your child's dismissal time as this blocks our fire lane and inhibits emergency vehicles from entering our facility. VVA Carline Signs must be presented or displayed for children to be released.

Val Vista Academy and Arizona Ball Charter Schools are not responsible for damage to vehicles or theft. Please secure all valuables and use caution while moving through the parking lot and carline areas.



Closed Campus- Visitors

Visitors are welcome at Val Vista Academy. However, to preserve the integrity of instructional time as well as student and staff safety, limits must be placed on visitors and their activity. *VVA reserves the right to deny anyone access to campus for any reason, namely for the purposes of preserving the health/safety of students and staff, maintaining order, and preventing disruption of instructional time.*

All visitors to campus must check-in at the front office. Visitors will be given a badge that identifies them, and this badge must be visibly worn and not removed until checking-out. Visitors may only be on campus for the reasons approved at check-in (attending an event, eating lunch with a child, etc.) and may not engage in other activities. Visitors must check-out at the front office before leaving campus.

In the case of a visitor who engages in disruptive, disorderly, or threatening behavior, or any behavior that potentially risks the safety of students and staff, the principal or designee may restrict the person's access to the school for an extended period of time, including indefinitely. This could also include any visitor who refuses to follow our school procedures or staff directives.

Val Vista Academy uses security cameras for the purpose of campus safety.

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Code of Conduct

Be Respectful • Be Responsible • Be Safe

We are committed to providing a safe, respectful environment for students, staff, and all visitors to campus. All students have the right to learn, and it is our goal to keep students in school and engaged in learning. Code of Conduct expectations are in effect on campus at all times and in all areas, as well as off campus when students are part of school activities or school-sponsored events.

Courtesy, respect, and problem-solving strategies are practiced by all staff members and students. Students are expected to consistently follow school rules of conduct, set a positive example for others, and always be conscious of how their behavior affects others.

ASBA Policy re: [Student Conduct](#)



Code of Conduct- Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

- Their own actions
- Attending school on a regular basis and being on time
- Completing all academic work as assigned
- Bringing appropriate materials to class
- Obeying school and classroom rules
- Respecting the rights of others, including their right to learn and feel safe
- Practicing respect for self and others, which includes no over-displays of affection
- Using school-appropriate language
- Respecting school property
- Complying with directives of school employees
- Dressing appropriately for school
- Speaking up when they witness or are aware of something that is wrong or unsafe
- Asking for help when needed



Code of Conduct- Laws

School Related Criminal and Civil Laws

Parents' Liability ([A.R.S. 12-661](#)) and [ASBA Policy](#): Upon complaint of the Governing Board, the parents/guardians of minors who have damaged school property shall be held liable for all damage caused by their children.

Abuse of School Employee ([A.R.S. 15-507](#)): It is a violation of the law for a person to knowingly abuse a school employee on school grounds or while the employee is engaged in the performance of school-related activities.

Interference with the Peaceful Conduct of an Educational Institution ([A.R.S. 13-2911](#)): A person commits interference with the peaceful conduct of educational institutions by knowingly:

- Going upon or remaining upon the property of any educational institution in violation of any rule of such institution, or for the purpose of interfering with the lawful use of such property by others or in such manner as to deny or interfere with the lawful use of such property
- Refusing to obey a lawful order given by school officials



Code of Conduct- Personal Property

All personal property such as toys, trading cards, sports equipment, electronics, etc., may be confiscated if the item has caused a disruption to the school day. At administration discretion, confiscated items will be returned to the student or may require parent/guardian pick-up.

Students are responsible for loss or damage to personal property. The school will endeavor to protect personal property, but is not responsible for any item. Personal [lost and found](#) articles should be reported to the school office. All unclaimed articles will be donated to charity periodically.

It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to make the decision whether to allow their child to ride a bicycle, skateboard, scooter, or other similar mode of transportation to school. Bicycles, skateboards and scooters, etc., must be walked on and off campus and must be parked and locked in the bike rack. Val Vista Academy assumes no responsibility for damage or theft of bicycles, skateboards, or scooters, etc. brought on campus.



Code of Conduct- Electronics

Use of personal electronic devices, including but not limited to cellular telephones, digital imaging or any similar devices during the school day, is prohibited. All electronic devices must be turned completely off and kept out of sight but not on a student's person. This includes "smart watches" or similar technology. Devices used for monitoring medical conditions will be permitted with documentation from a doctor and the approval of administration.

Electronic device usage is not allowed from the time a student arrives on school campus until the student leaves campus. If these items are on campus, they must remain turned off in the student's backpack or can be given to a staff member to keep in a locked area, such as a file cabinet or closet. Special permission to use an electronic device may be granted by a teacher or by administration and then under direct supervision. Students who violate electronic device restrictions shall be deemed to have created a disruption to the instructional environment and are subject to disciplinary action. The school will not be responsible for damage, loss or theft of any of the above items.



Code of Conduct- Textbooks and Materials

Textbooks, library books, Chromebooks, and other curricular materials are on loan to students for use during the school year. These materials are to be kept clean, handled carefully, and must be surrendered at the request of school officials. Students are required to pay for lost or damaged materials. Students may be excluded from extra-curricular activities, athletics or promotion ceremonies, or may have purchased items withheld (ex: yearbook) until payment for lost or damaged materials is received.



Code of Conduct- School Technology, AUP

Acceptable use of the electronic information services requires that the use of these resources be in accordance with the following guidelines (Acceptable Use Policy, or AUP) and support the educational goals of Val Vista Academy and Arizona Ball Charter Schools.

The user must:

- Use the computer system for educational purposes only. Use for purposes other than what has been directed by teacher/staff is strictly prohibited.
- Agree not to submit, publish, display, retrieve/download, print, or knowingly access any inappropriate material, including material that is defamatory, abusive, obscene, profane, drug-related, gang-related, sexually threatening, racially offensive or illegal.
- Not attempt to harm, modify without system administrator approval, gain unauthorized access to school systems or data, destroy software, or interfere with system security.
- Not reveal nor share login credentials, passwords, or other such information with any student or other user. ([continued](#))



Code of Conduct- School Technology, AUP

(continued)

- Notify an administrator if a password is lost or stolen, or if there is reason to believe that someone has obtained unauthorized access to the system or to your student account.
- Not use the network in a way that would disrupt the use of the network by others.
- Understand that email on networks should not be considered absolutely secure or private.
- Not reveal home addresses or personal phone numbers over the computer system.
- Not use the computer system to make any unauthorized purchases or to conduct a non-approved business.
- Abide by all copyright regulations, and refrain from illegally copying copyrighted software or materials.

The use of computing resources at Arizona Ball Charter Schools is a privilege, not a right. Any action by a user specifically referred to in the document or determined by a system administrator to constitute inappropriate use of computer system or network system is subject to consequences. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, students will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the [Disciplinary Action](#) section of the Family Handbook. Users will also be subject to all applicable laws.

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Code of Conduct- School Technology, AUP

GoGuardian ® Filtering and Monitoring Software

Disclosure: Val Vista Academy and Ball Charter Schools utilize GoGuardian ® with the purpose of making sure students are safe and using technology appropriately. GoGuardian ® is ‘attached’ to student logins, not individual devices.

Any time a student is logged into their school-issued Google account (ex: name@valvistaclassroom.org), their activity will be tracked and can be viewed by their teacher(s) and school administration. If a student is using the technology inappropriately or visits “flagged” website, an alert will be immediately sent to the teacher and administration. Inappropriate use of technology may result in loss of privileges or other disciplinary action.

IMPORTANT: If using a personal device, please be sure your child logs-off of their school account when they are done with school-based work. Further, we very strongly recommend that you verify any personal device that was previously used for school-based work is not connected to the school-issued Google account when the device is being used for personal purposes.



Communication

At Val Vista Academy, we believe in a shared partnership between school staff and families and recognize you are a vital member of this team. We also recognize open and consistent communication is key to the success of our children as they learn and grow in a safe and caring learning community.

Agenda Books

Some classes utilize agendas. Use of the agenda book will promote improved student organizational skills, timely completed assignments, and greater academic success. Lost or destroyed student agenda books will be replaced at student expense.

Apps

VVA teachers may use communication apps. These apps work like text messaging and allow for quick contact between school and home. *We ask that you respect teachers' non-working hours and choose not to text or expect responses from teachers during these times.* Thank you.

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Communication

Conferences

Conferences are scheduled twice per school year. If you need to meet with your teacher between conference times, please contact him/her directly to make arrangements.

PowerSchool

[PowerSchool](#) is an online grading and attendance program. PowerSchool allows students and parents/guardians 24/7 access to check their grades, homework, and attendance online. It is the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian to login regularly and monitor student progress.

School Website and Social Media

Val Vista Academy's website at: www.valvistaacademy.org is a valuable resource of information to keep you informed and up to date. Information about events and other school-related activities can be found on our [Facebook page](#). ([continued](#))



Communication

Telephone

Students may not use the school telephones for personal calls. Permission may be granted in the case of emergencies. Misplaced homework, forgotten assignments or other materials, or permission to go home with a friend, for example, do not constitute emergencies. Students will be called out of class to receive telephone calls only in the case of emergencies.

Students may not use personal cell phones during the school day or anytime they are on campus for a school event or activity.

Teachers will not be called out of classes during school hours to speak to parents/guardians. School staff will take messages or transfer calls to the teacher's voicemail. Teachers are encouraged to return calls by the next school day.



Discipline

NO STUDENT HAS THE RIGHT TO IMPEDE THE EDUCATION OF ANOTHER STUDENT.

Any behavior which is disruptive to the learning environment will not be tolerated and the steps described in the disciplinary process will be followed. It is important that parents/guardians strive to work with their children and school personnel in establishing clear expectations for student behavior ([A.R.S. 15-841](#) and [ASBA Policy](#).)

Severe infractions of the [Code of Conduct](#) or disruptions considered serious by school personnel will warrant immediate teacher or principal intervention. Parents/guardians will be notified of serious behavior issues immediately.



Discipline- Academic Dishonesty

The virtue of Academic Integrity is valued and expected of VVA students. Whenever a student has demonstrated academic dishonesty (see below), the teacher shall investigate the nature of the violation. Depending on the circumstances, the teacher may collect the student's work, have the student redo the assignment, provide the student an alternate assignment, mark a zero for the work, reduce the student's citizenship grade, or restrict class privileges. Administration may enact other [consequences](#), depending on the nature of the violation. The parent/guardian will be notified as to the action taken.

Acts of plagiarism, collusion (supporting or contributing to academic misconduct by another student), duplication of work (ex. submitting the same work for two different assignments), or any other behavior that gains an unfair advantage for a student or that affects the results of another student are considered academic dishonesty.



Discipline- Banned Substances

“Banned substances” include, but are not limited to: drugs, tobacco, vaping devices, alcohol, drug paraphernalia, etc. Any student who sells, gives, possesses, uses or is involved with, or is under the influence of narcotics, dangerous and illicit drugs (which may include prescription drugs or medications), tobacco or tobacco products, e-cigarettes and vaping products, alcohol, or any similar substances on the school property or at school-sanctioned events shall be:

1. Suspended from school and recommended to the Governing Board for consideration of [expulsion](#)
2. Reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency for violations

Students who promote the use of such substances are also subject to [disciplinary action](#).

Smoking/vaping by anyone is prohibited on the campus and at all school-sponsored activities. The rules apply on the way to and from school, during lunch, at school activities, to and from school events or extra-curricular activities, and during the school day.



Discipline- Safety

“Be Safe”

Any actions that threaten the safety of those on campus will be investigated. Depending on the nature of the action, disciplinary steps will be taken.

Dangerous items are not permitted on campus. “Dangerous” is ultimately determined by administration and may include but not be limited to: [banned substances](#), matches, fireworks, weapons of any kind, simulated weapons and “toy” weapons, laser pointers, etc.

Bringing dangerous items to school, threatening to bring items, or alluding to possession of dangerous items on campus is considered a serious offense. In addition to school-based [disciplinary actions](#), violating this rule may require school officials to contact law enforcement.



Discipline- Bullying and Intimidation

Bullying and Intimidation

(*See also [General Statement of School Harassment Policy](#))

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Bullying can take the form of physical contact, words, or more subtle actions. A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to intentional negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself. This definition includes three important components:

- Bullying is aggressive behavior that involved unwanted, negative actions.
- Bullying involves a pattern of behavior that is repeated over time.
- Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

(www.apa.org/topics/bullying and http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/recognizing_bullying.page)



Discipline- Bullying and Intimidation

Bullying is NOT:

- Excluding someone- It is not considered bullying if children exclude someone on the playground now and then or don't invite someone to a party. Repeated and deliberate exclusion, however, can be bullying.
- Disliking someone- Children may verbally or nonverbally communicate their dislike of another child. This is not bullying, as long as they don't start rumors or verbally abuse the other child.
- Accidental physical harm- A child might unintentionally bump into or trip another child. This is not bullying if it is not deliberate.
- Being "bossy"- It is natural to want friends to play a certain way, and some children take the role of being the director. Learning to lead skillfully is a lifelong process, and most kids haven't mastered it.
- Telling a joke about someone- While this is not great behavior, it is not considered bullying unless there are repeated instances. Of course we should teach our children that one single joke about someone may hurt that child's feelings, and it's not okay.
- Arguments- We all argue, and arguments will inevitably happen at school.

<https://compassionit.com/2016/02/11/what-is-bullying-and-what-isnt-bullying/>



Discipline- Bullying and Intimidation

The Arizona Ball Charter Schools Governance Board supports a Non-Bullying Policy that affords students a multiple methods to report incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying. The school focus on safety and character education includes practicing respect for others. Administrative investigation, action, and consequences for the student(s) are illustrated in the “[Disciplinary Action](#)” section. Submitting false information and accusations are also [Code of Conduct](#) violations.

A person who uses derogatory language (written or spoken) toward another person regarding their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetic information will face disciplinary action.

Bullying can be reported to any trusted staff member in person, via note/private chat, or via email. It can also be reported online via this form, [Suspected Bullying Reporting Form](#). With this form you may submit your name or remain anonymous, and email addresses are not collected.



Discipline- Hazing

The act of intentionally, knowingly or recklessly contributing to an act of potential physical harm, mental harm or personal degradation committed in connection with an initiation into, an affiliation with or maintenance of membership in any organization that is affiliated with Val Vista Academy is considered an “act of hazing” and is prohibited. Hazing in any form described as well as soliciting, aiding or abetting another person who is engaged in such action and is a violation of the [Code of Conduct](#) and is subject to disciplinary action. The staff works together toward the goal of preventing mistreatment of all students.

Hazing will result in loss of membership in any club, sport or organization affiliated with any of the Arizona Ball Charter Schools. The school staff works together toward the goal of preventing mistreatment of all students.

Reports of hazing can be made in the same manner as bullying, and the [Bullying Reporting Form](#) can be used, if needed.



Discipline- Tiered Infractions

Students who choose to break school rules and regulations also choose the consequences of their actions. Infractions of VVA Policies and the [Code of Conduct](#) are responded to based on the “tier” system noted below:

Tier 1 infractions are handled by the teacher or staff member responsible for the students at the time of the infraction. These might include but not be limited to: Not following directions, excessive talking, causing a distraction, inappropriate language, disrespect, horseplay, teasing, running in the hall, or other behaviors that disrupt the learning environment of the classroom. Consequences might include reminder/redirection, having “refocus” time, removal from activity, loss of privileges, making reparations/restitution, etc. Parental/guardian notification may or may not be required, depending on the nature of the infraction. ([continued](#))



Discipline- Tiered Infractions

Tier 2 infractions are handled by the teacher or staff member responsible for the students and require parental/guardian notification and a referral to administration. These infractions might include but not be limited to: Repeated Tier 1 infractions, back-talk/disrespect, academic dishonesty, certain types of vandalism, violation of cell phone or technology policy, throwing items, fighting, theft, forgery, unsafe physical contact, etc. Depending on the circumstances, teasing, verbal aggression, or bullying may be a Tier 2 infraction. Consequences might include parent/guardian-administration-student conference, behavior plan, loss of privileges, removal from class, detention, community service, making reparations/restitution, etc.

Tier 3 infractions require administrative intervention and parental/guardian contact. This might include but not be limited to: Repeated Tier 2 infractions, physical aggression that causes harm, bullying, threats of violence, certain types of vandalism, truancy/leaving campus without permission, harassment (sexual or physical), anything noted as grounds for suspension or expulsion (as delineated in the Appendix- “Disciplinary Actions”), etc. Parent/guardian-admin-student conference will be required. Consequences might include loss of privileges (including extra curriculars or athletics), removal from class, behavior plan, in-school or out-of-school suspension, recommendation for expulsion, etc.

Administration retains the right to include and address additional infractions not specifically listed above.

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Discipline- Reasonable Restraint/Removal

Corporal punishment is not allowed at Val Vista Academy. However, while acting within the scope of their duties and responsibilities, employees may exercise the amount of physical restraint reasonable and necessary to protect the safety of students and/or themselves. School staff uses procedures that safely and effectively remove from that setting, disruptive students who significantly interrupt the teaching and learning environment. ([ASBA Policy](#))



Discipline- Search and Seizure

Val Vista Academy reserves the right to search and seize when there is a reasonable belief that there exists some material or matter which is detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the students or employees. In addition:

- Searches of school property may be conducted at any time.
- Illegal items or other possessions reasonably determined to be a threat to the health, safety or security of any person will be seized by school authorities and may require reporting to law enforcement.
- Items which are used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process may be removed from a student's possession.
- Items seized by the school may be held by the school, returned to the student's parents/guardians, or turned over to the appropriate law enforcement agency. The school will maintain records of items seized and their disposition.
- Strip searches of students will not be conducted by the school and will not be permitted.



Disciplinary Action

Informal Due Process: The student shall receive verbal notice of the alleged misconduct and the evidence that exists to support the allegation. The student shall be provided with the opportunity to explain his/her version of the facts. The school official(s) involved shall make reasonable efforts to verify facts and statements prior to making a recommendation regarding discipline. Administration may choose another disciplinary alternative or exonerate the student.

Refocus Process: Students will engage in refocus activities to resolve inappropriate behavior.

Conference: A formal conference is held between the student and one or more school officials.

Parent/Guardian Involvement: Parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified by telephone, personal contact, letter or certified letter. A conference may be conducted between the student, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), appropriate school personnel, and any other individuals concerned. ([continued](#))



Disciplinary Action

Child Strategy Team: CST is a solution-based meeting that may involve the student, parents/guardians, the principal, classroom teacher, and any needed staff members. Interventions are established to assist the student in improving their behavior.

Removal from Classes: The student is temporarily removed from one or more classes, but remains at school during these class periods, and may receive other disciplinary action, such as detention or suspension of privileges. Parents/guardians will be notified and the action will be recorded in the student's file.

Removal from Activities: The student is temporarily excluded from attending and/or participating in school activities, including sports and club activities, dances, and field trips.

Assignment to Detention or Community Service: During detention, students may be required to work on classroom assignments or may be asked to take part in an activity that provides restitution (such as writing an apology letter or drafting a plan to prevent future issues). Community service is typically performed during the student's lunch recess or other free time. The student may be working on projects for a particular teacher or may be assigned to the custodian, particularly if the offense was related to custodial problems. ([continued](#))



Disciplinary Action

Short-Term Suspension: Short-term suspension means the temporary withdrawal of the privilege of attending Val Vista Academy for a period of ten or fewer consecutive days after following Informal Due Process. The school principal or principal's designee has the authority to impose short-term suspensions. A written record of the decision will be kept in the student's contact file. There is not a right to appeal a short-term suspension. In addition to imposing a short-term suspension, the school administrator may recommend to the governing board that a long-term suspension or expulsion be imposed.

Long-Term Suspension: Long-term suspension means the withdrawal of the privilege of attending Val Vista Academy for a set period of time of eleven or more consecutive school days after following Informal Due Process. If a long-term suspension is recommended, a written Notice of Intent to Impose a Long-Term Suspension shall be mailed or hand-delivered to the parent/guardian. This letter will explain the offense, the recommendations, and the rights of the parent to request a formal hearing. All documentation will be recorded in the student's contact file. ([continued](#))



Disciplinary Action

Expulsion: Expulsion means the permanent withdrawal of the privilege of attending Val Vista Academy unless the Governing Board reinstates that privilege. The student and parents/guardians will be informed when a student is subject to expulsion from school. Expulsion requires official action of the Governing Board. Formal notification will include instructions regarding the school's due process procedure. All documentation will be recorded in the student's cumulative file. ([ASBA Policy](#))

Students on suspension are not allowed on campus. Additionally, students who are suspended may not participate in or attend any extra-curricular or athletic activity during the suspension.

Depending on severity of the act, the first incident of the actions noted below may result in suspension, expulsion, or program transfer:

- Defiance of authority (in accordance with [A.R.S. 15-841](#))
- Assault - the act of inflicting physical harm or unwanted physical contact upon a person, or a threat or attempt to commit such an action ([continued](#))



Disciplinary Action

- Fighting - two or more students engaged in physical aggression or violence
- Drugs - using, possessing, promoting, or selling any dangerous, illegal or look-alike drugs, paraphernalia, non-approved prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications
- Alcohol - using or possessing any alcoholic or look-alike alcoholic beverages
- Tobacco - using or possessing any tobacco or tobacco products, e-cigarettes or vaping products
- Gambling - wagering or betting money or other stakes on the outcome of any activity
- Theft - stealing property of another person or of the school
- Weapons/Dangerous Items - Bringing items to school that are considered dangerous, threatening to bring or alluding to possession of dangerous items on campus
- Arson, threat of mass violence, false alarm - starting or attempting to start a fire, threatening to cause harm to the school community, or erroneous report of an emergency causing unnecessary panic and/or bringing resources to a place where they are not needed



Student Records

Annual Disclosure

Access to educational records is governed by federal law ([Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#)), or FERPA. Parents/guardians and previous students 18 years of age or older, have the following rights in connection with educational records:

- To inspect and review the student's educational records.
- To request amendment of the student's educational records, ensure that the records are not inaccurate, misleading or in violation of students rights, including the right to a hearing, if necessary.
- To consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except that information deemed "directory information" may be disclosed without consent unless the parent/guardian/eligible student directs in writing that this information not be made public without prior consent. Disclosure may also be made without consent in certain circumstances allowed by FERPA. ([continued](#))

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Student Records

- To file complaints with the U.S. Department of Education.
- To obtain a copy of Governing Board policy on Student Records, by requesting a copy from the Governing Board Coordinator.

Information regarding special education records can be found [here](#).

Noncustodial and divorced parents have equal rights relating to student records unless the school has been provided a court order to the contrary.



Student and Parent/Guardian Rights

Complaint Procedure

Honest disagreements and complaints are inevitable in public schools. If parents/guardians have a complaint or disagreement concerning the school, the following procedure has been set up to guarantee that the problem will be heard.

First, arrange a meeting with the person against whom the claim is directed. Most disputes are resolved at this level.

If the situation remains unsolved, you may contact the school for a Parent Complaint Report form. Once completed, the form will be forwarded to the principal who will provide resolution assistance.



General Statement of Harassment Policy

It is the policy of Val Vista Academy to maintain a learning environment that is free from harassment because of an individual's race, color, sex, national origin, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation. The school prohibits any and all forms of harassment because of race, color, sex, national origin, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation. It shall be a violation of school policy for any student, teacher, administrator, or other personnel of this school to harass a student through conduct of a sexual nature, or regarding race, color, sex, national origin, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation as defined by this policy. It shall also be a violation of Val Vista Academy policy for any teacher, administrator or other school personnel of this school to tolerate sexual harassment or harassment because of a student's race, color, sex, national origin, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation, as defined by this policy, by a student, teacher, administrator, other school personnel, or by any third parties who are participating in, observing, or otherwise engaged in activities, including sporting events and other extracurricular activities, under the auspices of the school.

For the purpose of this policy, the term "school personnel" includes school board members, school employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, or persons subject to the supervision and control of Val Vista Academy. The school system will act to promptly investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment because of race, color, sex, national origin, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation; to promptly take appropriate action to protect individuals from further harassment; and, if it determines that unlawful harassment occurred, to promptly and appropriately discipline any student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who is found to have violated this policy, and/or to take other appropriate action reasonably calculated to end the harassment.



Dress Code/Uniform Protocol

By choosing to attend Val Vista Academy, you recognize and accept that you have chosen a uniform school. While VVA offers special days and activities that allow for non-uniform attire, it is imperative that you understand and comply with the school uniform protocol.

Val Vista Academy believes that appropriate dress contributes to a productive learning environment. We strive to create a safe environment in which each student can focus on learning, develop character, build self-esteem and self-discipline, and model respect and good citizenship skills.

Although school staff will be responsible for enforcing the Dress Code, it is the responsibility of both parents/guardians and students to ensure compliance with the Dress Code. **Administration reserves the right to make determinations on Dress Code compliance as well as to further define or clarify the school Dress Code.** Questions or requests for exceptions based on religious or cultural grounds should be directed to administration.



Dress Code/Uniform Protocol

Note: *New trends, styles or terms to describe attire may be deemed a violation of VVA Dress Code/Uniform Protocol at any time and at the discretion of administration.* With that in mind, we strongly encourage parents/guardians to consider the intent and spirit of the dress code when choosing clothing for your children.

Uniform Tops-

- Val Vista Academy polo-style shirts (short or long sleeved) in white, navy blue, Viper red or black, with an official and visible VVA logo
- Tops must be sleeved and be unaltered in appearance
- Undershirts may be worn but must be in solid white, navy blue, Viper red or black
- Undergarments may not be visible or show through tops
- Polo-style dresses and jumpers (of appropriate fingertip-length) with the VVA logo are appropriate



Dress Code/Uniform Protocol

Bottoms-

- Color: Solid colors of navy blue, khaki or black
- Fit: Traditional uniform fit ([see images](#))
 - Bottoms must fit a student's body in such a way that undergarments, undergarment lines, or the anatomy of the posterior or genitalia cannot be seen, nor should movement be restricted.
 - The hemline should be finished and not drag on the ground.
 - In lieu of expecting or prohibiting certain 'cuts' of bottoms (ex: wide-leg, straight-leg, skinny, etc.), it is expected that ***whatever a student wears is adherent to the terms and spirit of this protocol.*** (i.e.: A "walking short" might be too short on a tall student)

([continues](#))



Dress Code/Uniform Protocol

Bottoms-

- Style: Traditional uniform fabrics
 - Must be free of embellishments, holes, tears/distressing or similar effects
 - Must be at least “fingertip length” when student is standing with arms down at sides; if bottoms have slits, the top of the slit must be at fingertip length or lower
 - Must have finished hemlines and may not drag on the ground nor be gathered
 - Leggings, tights, and the like are only permitted under skirts, jumpers, etc. and must be in solid white, navy blue, Viper red or black
 - Middle school students (5th-8th grades) may wear solid black jeans (straight leg or bootcut style); “fit” as noted above; free of embellishments, holes, distressing, and tears; hemline/bottom may not be rolled



Dress Code/Uniform Protocol

Outerwear-

- Sweatshirts or sweaters (lightweight) in white, navy blue, Viper red, grey or black may be worn
 - Small logos, stripes, or other accents are allowed as long as they are also approved school colors.
 - Images or pictures or words (that are not the logo), or anything inappropriate, are prohibited.
 - *Regardless of intent to “wear outdoors only,” any lightweight outerwear item must meet the above-mentioned rule*
 - *Students will not wear sweatshirts/sweaters inside-out*
- School-sponsored sweatshirts or sweaters may be worn (must display VVA logo, school name or clearly be a school-sponsored event)
- Hats, sunglasses, headcoverings, and outerwear hoods may only be worn outdoors
- Jackets and coats (heavyweight for cold weather) may be worn outdoors only with no restrictions on color



Dress Code/Uniform Protocol

Shoes and accessories-

- Athletic-style shoes only. Shoes such as boots, sandals, flats, and light-up shoes are prohibited.
- Socks that are visible will be white, navy blue, Viper red, black, or grey
 - Small logos, stripes, or other accents are allowed as long as they are also approved school colors.
 - Images or pictures or words (that are not the sock logo), or anything inappropriate, are prohibited.
- Jewelry must be simple and complement the uniform without being distracting, unsafe, or have the potential to cause injury or harm
 - Oversized earrings are not permitted
 - Headbands with points (ex: cat ears) or with large embellishments are not permitted
- Belts should complement the uniform without being distracting, unsafe, or have the potential to cause injury or harm



Dress Code/Uniform Protocol

Grooming-

- Hairstyles and hair color should be modest, and not cause a distraction to the learning environment
- 5th-8th graders may wear makeup that is conservative, natural, and does not cause a distraction to the learning environment
- Tattoos and temporary markings that are inappropriate or cause a distraction to the learning environment must be covered.
- Markings or tattoos as a result of religious practice or tradition (ex: ash cross on forehead for Ash Wednesday, or bindi or pottu) are acceptable.



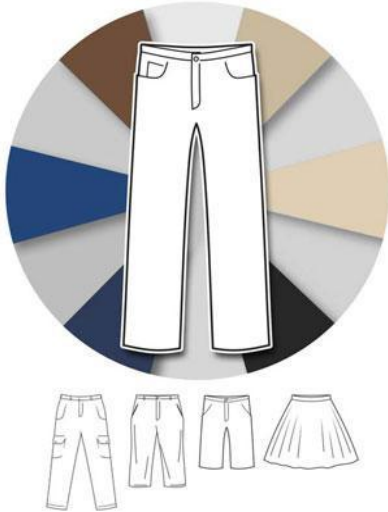
Dress Code- Casual Dress

Casual Dress-

“Casual Dress” Code applies to school-sponsored activities (i.e.: Dollars for Duds, Spirit Day, Spring Personality Pictures, etc.), or other non-uniform dress days (ex: in-class pajama day):

- School rules and Dress Code standards apply (i.e.: length and fit of bottoms; fit of clothing; distressing; frayed hemlines; the wearing of leggings or sweatpants, light-up shoes or sandals, etc.)
- Casual attire must be free of inappropriate or offensive logos, images, words, embellishments, and the like (address logos that represent drugs, alcohol, etc.)
- Sleeveless tops, tank tops, and tops with spaghetti straps (including dresses with these types of sleeves) are not permitted unless a sleeved shirt is worn underneath

Dress Code- Exemplars of Fit and Style





Health, Safety, and Wellness

Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act

Val Vista Academy has developed an Asbestos Management Plan in accordance to regulations established in the [Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act \(AHERA\)](#). A copy of this plan is located in the main office and is available for public review.

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills are held monthly (both announced and unannounced) throughout the school year. When drills are held, it is important for all students, staff and visitors to:

- Follow the instructions of the staff.
- Walk. Do not talk. Listen for directions from staff or authorities.
- Move quickly and quietly to the designated area.
- Be aware of posted emergency directions and information.



Health, Safety, and Wellness

Health Service

A health professional is on duty during the school day. If at any time your family is faced with an unusual health situation which could affect your child's performance in school, please notify the health office.

Please note: After an illness, a student must be fever-free without assistance of medication and with no vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child is ill and/or vomiting before school please keep them at home.

Parents/guardians must complete an emergency medical card for each of their children. This card tells us how to contact you or another responsible adult if your child becomes ill or is injured at school. It lists health problems, including allergies to food, medicine and insect stings. Parents/guardians must immediately inform the school when there are changes in address, home phone, business or emergency phone numbers. ([continued](#))



Health, Safety, and Wellness

(continued)

Medical Emergencies

Like you, we want to do what is best for your child. If we cannot reach you in an emergency, we will activate EMS and allow the medical professionals to determine the next steps for medical treatment or care. This may include having an ambulance transport a child to the hospital. The cost of this service is the parents'/guardians' responsibility.

Hearing and Vision Screening

Val Vista Academy performs a mono vision and hearing screening for all new students, and students in grades K, 1, 2, 6 and special education. Any concerns indicated in this initial screening should be considered by the parent/guardian for follow up by a physician or specialist.



Health, Safety, and Wellness

Immunizations

Before a student may attend school, Arizona State law ([A.R.S. 15-872](#)) requires parents/guardians to present a documented immunization record which includes dates of all required immunizations. Children who have not had chickenpox and are attending child care, kindergarten and grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 during the school year are required to show proof of varicella immunization. Val Vista Academy will accept a parent's/guardian's report that their child has had chicken pox. Children who have not had chickenpox need to be vaccinated.

The Arizona State Department of Health requires that all children in 6th and 7th grade, who are 11 or older, must have one Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis) vaccine and one MCV (Meningococcal vaccine) to attend school. ([continued](#))



Health, Safety, and Wellness

Required Immunizations

- DPT, Dtap, DTap: Six doses properly spaced, unless fourth or fifth dose was received after fourth birthday. A booster of Tdap is given after age 11 and then every 5 years after the last Tetanus/Diphtheria dose has been received.
- Polio: Four doses properly spaced, unless a third dose was received after fourth birthday.
- MMR: Two doses after the age of 12 months, at least one month apart.
- Hepatitis A: Two doses required for Preschool and Day Care up to age 6.
- Hepatitis B: Three doses properly spaced.
- Varicella: One dose after age 1 for Preschool - 4th grades, and 7th - 10th grades. If first dose is given after age 12, two doses are required.
- Meningococcal vaccine: One dose at age 11 or entering 6th grade, whichever occurs first.



Health, Safety, and Wellness

[Verification for all immunizations](#) must include the child's name, birth date, type of vaccine, date of vaccine, and name of doctor/agency administering the vaccine. Records must be signed or stamped by the agency providing the immunizations. A previous school record is also acceptable (does not include preschools). Record must be provided before school starts. Children can be exempted if:

- A physician certifies one or more of the immunizations would endanger the child's life
- Parents/guardians submit a signed statement that immunizations are contrary to their religious or personal beliefs

Although the law allows exemptions, the [County Health Department](#) may tell us to exclude your child from school if there is an outbreak of any of these diseases.



Health, Safety, and Wellness

Medication

State law rigidly controls dispensing medication to children by a school health professional. These requirements are made for the protection of all children. When students must take medication at school, either by a physician's order (prescription medication) or by parent/guardian request (non-prescription medication), the following procedure must be utilized:

1. A medication consent form provided by Val Vista Academy must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian prior to dispensing any medication, either prescription or non-prescription. A new form is required each year. No medication will be dispensed without parent/guardian consent.
2. Medication must be delivered to the health professional in the original prescription bottle or over-the-counter container.
3. The prescription label must have the student's name, current date, name of medication, dosage and the time to be given. ([continued](#))



Health, Safety, and Wellness

4. Students with certain chronic or life-threatening conditions may carry certain medication, provided a medication consent form is on file in the school health office. Please speak to the school health professional for more information.
5. If dosages should change while the child is on the medication, such changes need to be submitted to the health professional from the doctor and a new prescription bottle must be provided with the changes listed. A new consent form must be completed prior to the new dose being administered. Changes will be made with a doctor's authorization only.
6. The dosage of a non-prescription medication must be within the manufacturer's recommendation as printed on the label. ([continued](#))



Health, Safety, and Wellness

7. Medicines needing refrigeration must be left in the Health Office during the dates to be dispensed and the parent/guardian should keep a needed amount at home. This will assure that medicines are properly preserved.
8. Only school staff may keep and administer medication on field trips.

Medicines brought to the school and not meeting necessary requirements will not be dispensed by the health professional and will be locked in the office until a parent/guardian verifies the medicine in written form and follows the procedure or takes it home. Medication must be brought to the school Health Office by the parent/guardian. Parents must pick up all medications at the end of the school year, or they will be discarded. Parents/guardians must initial the consent form when picking up medication.



Health, Safety, and Wellness

Wellness

The following guidelines are intended to provide health and nutrition standards for the students and campus community of Val Vista Academy. These guidelines are based on recommendations from nationally recognized authorities including the Surgeon General of the United States, the National Association of State Boards of Education and the American Dietetic Association. Complete health and wellness policies are available for review upon request.



Health, Safety, and Wellness

- An additional recess (besides lunch recess) will be provided for students in grades K-5, per [ARS 15-118](#).
- Students are prohibited from sharing their food and beverages with one another during lunch or snack times.
- Aerosol sprays (body sprays, deodorants, perfumes, etc.) present a respiratory hazard and are prohibited at school.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to have their children bring in healthy, non-junk food snacks. Inappropriate snacks will be determined by the classroom teacher and if clearly deemed inappropriate, the snack may not be allowed to be consumed in class.
- Birthday parties are not allowed during the school day. Birthday treats are allowed to fall outside of the nutrition guidelines, and teachers will determine an appropriate time to distribute treats. Homemade foods are not allowed due to Arizona State health and safety recommendations. Only pre-packaged, ready-to-eat foods are allowed.
- Some food-based curriculum activities are an exception. ([continued](#))



Health, Safety, and Wellness

- Students receive 20 minutes for lunch recess and 20 minutes for lunch. Students will be given time between to wash or sanitize hands before consuming food.
- Milk is available for purchase for students already receiving a school lunch and wanting additional milk and also for students bringing a sack lunch.
- Soda and energy drinks are not permitted for students at any time.
- Water consumption is encouraged throughout the day and students are allowed to bring water bottles as long as they do not become a disruption as defined by each teacher.
- All students are provided opportunities for physical activity during the school day through daily recess periods, physical education classes and the integration of physical activity into academic curriculum.
- Students will spend at least 50% of PE class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity. A parent/guardian, caregiver or physician's note will be required for non-participation.



Special Education Services

Val Vista Academy provides Special Education services for students with disabilities. Programs are available to serve children with many needs, including learning disabilities and speech and language impairments. All students entering Val Vista Academy are screened within 45 days of enrollment for possible disabilities. If concerns are noted the student is referred to the Child Strategy Team. All children with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services shall be identified and evaluated.

Federal and state law requires school districts, charter schools and other public education agencies (hereafter referred to as the “school”) to provide a [free, appropriate public education](#) to eligible children with disabilities. This free, appropriate public education refers to special education and related services, described in an [Individualized Education Program](#) and provided to the child in the [least restrictive environment](#). ([continued](#))

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Special Education Services

Children with disabilities and their parents/guardians are guaranteed certain educational [rights](#), known as procedural safeguards, from birth through age 21. The law and its implementing regulations also provide methods to help you assure that your input is considered. If you would like a copy of the procedural safeguards ([English](#), [Spanish](#)), use the links or please call the special education department at Val Vista Academy.

If your child is having difficulty in school, please check with the teacher to determine what interventions have been tried to help your child succeed. If the interventions are unsuccessful, a referral to a CST (Child Strategy Team), and ultimately Special Education, may be necessary. You may contact the school principal if you wish to make a referral personally.



Special Education Services

If special education disabilities are suspected, we are required to evaluate your child to identify and document whether your child has any disabilities that affect his or her learning and, if so, to determine what special education and related services are required.

The evaluation will be done only after we have explained what we plan to do during the evaluation. We will use tests and procedures selected specifically for your child. The evaluation will not include basic tests or procedures used routinely for all students within a class, grade or school. This evaluation will be conducted according to federal and state requirements and will include information you provide. Following the evaluation we will provide you the complete results within 60 calendar days of your written consent.

If your child is found eligible for special education services, we request that you serve as part of a team to help us identify the special education and related services your child needs. You may ask others to be present at the IEP meeting, if you wish.

Student Support Services- McKinney-Vento



McKinney-Vento Homeless Educational Assistance

Every state is required to have a coordinator for the education of homeless and highly mobile children and youth, and every school district is required to have a liaison for homeless students. These individuals will assist you with the implementation of the [McKinney-Vento Act](#). You can contact us by any means necessary (note, phone, email, call, etc.) and we would be glad to direct you to the liaison.

Homeless Children and Youth will be granted immediate enrollment if space is available and will provide transportation upon parent/guardian request. Val Vista Academy will provide a learning environment that is inclusive and non-stigmatizing for all children.

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Student Support Services- Mandatory Report



Every staff member of Val Vista Academy and Arizona Ball Charter Schools, as well as third-party contractors of student services are all Mandatory Reporters under state law (A.R.S. 13-3620):

“A. Any person who reasonably believes that a minor is or has been the victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense or neglect that appears to have been inflicted on the minor by other than accidental means or that is not explained by the available medical history as being accidental in nature or who reasonably believes there has been a denial or deprivation of necessary medical treatment or surgical care or nourishment with the intent to cause or allow the death of an infant who is protected under section 36-2281 shall immediately report or cause reports to be made of this information to a peace officer, to the department of child safety or to a tribal law enforcement or social services agency...”

Reports made by school staff to D.C.S. (Department of Child Safety) or law enforcement will not be disclosed to the family nor be discussed, confirmed, or denied by school staff.



Student Support Services- Intent to Comply

Statement of Intent to Comply

Val Vista Academy affirms its intent to comply with all federal and state laws relating to the prevention of discrimination based upon race, color, sex, national origin, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation. This compliance is to include, but not be limited to:

- The regulations of the [Title IX act](#), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex or gender identity, educational programs or activities which receive Federal funds, extending to employment in and admission to such programs and activities
- Compliance with the [Education of all Handicapped Children Act \(IDEA\)](#), [Public Law 94 - 142](#), the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) and [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#).
- This compliance also includes, but is not limited to, the regulations of the [Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, or handicap.



Lunch Program

Val Vista Academy offers a catered lunch program that is guided by the National School Lunch Program. Students may bring their own lunches to school or purchase a school lunch. Funds can be added to a student's meal account via check, credit card, or through our [school website](#).

If you are delivering a lunch (do not bring soda), please ensure the lunch is labeled with your child's name. It can be left in the office. To prevent a disruption, you will not be permitted to deliver it to your child's classroom.

It is our intent to ensure that no child goes hungry. Further, if financial assistance for lunch is required, please contact school administration. However, if arrangements have not been made with the Lunch Coordinator or administration, it may be necessary to restrict families with delinquent lunch accounts from ordering additional lunches until the account is brought current. Students may be provided salad bar for lunch with the cost being charged to the account, but will not be provided the catered lunch. In extreme cases, students may be excluded from fee-based extra-curricular activities, athletics, events, or may have purchased items withheld (ex: yearbook) until the account is brought current.



Library- Use Agreement

All books and materials are property of Val Vista Academy. Use of the library is considered a privilege. Students are required to follow the Three B's (Be Safe, Be Respectful and Be Responsible) when visiting the library.

All materials borrowed must be returned on or before the due date. Students are responsible for all materials borrowed. Parents/guardians are responsible for the overdue, lost or damaged books borrowed by their dependent minor child.

Students in grades K-8 are allowed to check out a maximum of two (2) books at one time for either one or two weeks at a time per the homeroom teacher's discretion. One renewal is allowed provided there is no waiting list.

Overdue, missing, or damaged books are subject to fees and/or the student losing the privilege of checking out additional books. Students may be excluded from extra-curricular activities, athletics or promotion ceremonies, or may have purchased items withheld (ex: yearbook) until payment for late, lost or damaged books is received. If you will be leaving Val Vista Academy, please make sure all library materials are returned promptly. You will be required to pay for all books and materials not returned.



Library- Damage to Materials

Students are expected to take proper care of all library materials. Some amount of wear is to be expected. You will be required to pay for any damages incurred outside of normal wear and tear. If a book is misplaced you will be given 30 days to return the missing item. After 30 days you will be required to pay for the missing book (including applicable taxes or shipping) or provide a replacement of similar or better condition.

Damage Fees may be assessed, ranging from \$0.50 to \$2.00, for damage such as: Marked page, torn page, picture/page removed, barcode removed, plastic jacket removed, or torn cover.

Any other damages will be assessed in consultation with the librarian and administration.



Lost and Found

LABEL YOUR CHILD'S BELONGINGS.

Although Val Vista Academy is not responsible for lost items, we will make every effort to help locate and return the items reported missing. To help ensure the return of misplaced items, please put the student's name on property (lunchboxes, jackets, water bottles, etc.) The school has designated a collection area for lost items by the front office. Smaller or more valuable items may be held by the front office staff. Periodically, Val Vista Academy will donate unclaimed items to a charitable organization.

Many personal items, including electronics, are not permitted at school. Please see the Code of Conduct for "[Personal Items](#)" and "[Electronics](#)" for more information.



Student Activities and Extracurriculars

Interscholastic Athletics

Eligibility

Participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege that is extended to students who meet certain educational and citizenship standards (as determined by the CAA and school administration). Students must have completed and passed an athletic physical and other paperwork prior to tryouts.

All participants, families and students, in Val Vista Academy athletics agree to abide by the [VVA Code of Conduct](#) as well as the expectations set forth in the Val Vista Academy Student-Athlete Handbook.



Student Activities and Extracurriculars

Vipers Athletic Statement

Participation in athletics is a privilege, which carries varying degrees of honor, responsibility, and sacrifice. Since athletics is a privilege and not a right, those who choose to participate will be expected to follow the rules established by the Athletic Department and the specific coach's rules for each sport. Each student-athlete represents the school and the student body.

Student-athletes must conduct themselves in a manner becoming of the student-athlete, their family, Val Vista Academy, and the community. Students not carrying themselves in such a manner may be temporarily suspended from athletics or permanently removed.

The Athletic Department will enforce all the rules and regulations as described in the Athletic Handbook as well as the Val Vista Academy Family Handbook. Parents/guardians and athletes are asked to sign and acknowledge that they have read and understood the information included in the handbook and the disciplinary measures applicable to athletes who violate the rules and regulations set forth in the Athletic Handbook.

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Student Activities and Extracurriculars

Vipers Athletics Departmental Philosophy

Our athletic program is an extension of the school. You are students first, athletes second. We expect our student-athletes to earn the respect of their teachers, coaches, and administrators.

We will teach our student-athletes to set high standards and push them to live up to those standards. We will also strive to teach our student-athletes how to be successful in school and sports as well as in life. We want to grow them to be young men and women of integrity who will be leaders, be responsible, have tenacity, show courage, and carry a strong work ethic. We will do this while expecting the highest level of sportsmanship from each of them. We, as coaches, will hold ourselves to the same accountability.

It is the intention of every coach to treat all student-athletes equally. Treating student-athletes equally does not mean equal game playing time. Every eligible 5th-8th grade student at Val Vista Academy has the opportunity to tryout to participate in the “junior high” interscholastic athletic program, and eligible students in 4th – 6th grade may tryout to participate in the “elementary” program



Student Activities and Extracurriculars

School Dances and Student Activities

Events at Val Vista Academy are generally sponsored by the school (V.I.P) or student council. The principal and event coordinator will work with the organizations to develop guidelines. Admission may be charged. General rules are:

- Students must be in attendance at least half the school day to be eligible to participate.
- School rules and [VVA Code of Conduct](#) are in effect at all dances and activities.
- Students may not be left unattended at “family dances” or other family/community events. These are not “drop off” events; therefore, students should be under the direct supervision of a parent or other adult.
- Exception would be a middle school dance where staff supervision is provided. Students may not leave the dance without a parent/guardian or an authorized adult (i.e. carpool). Students who leave the dance cannot be readmitted.
- As with all school events, overt displays of affection are not allowed.



Student Activities and Extracurriculars

Student Council

The Val Vista Academy Student Council was founded to help develop public speaking and leadership qualities as well as encourage civic and community mindedness. The Student Council advisor is a faculty member designated by the school. Student Council members are expected to be role models for our student body and school community. Students not carrying themselves in such a manner may be temporarily suspended from Student Council or permanently removed.

Participation in Student Council is voluntary and is a privilege. Members are required to attend meetings and may be required to attend or coordinate events outside of the school day.



Family Engagement- Volunteers

Volunteers form an essential part of the school program. We encourage parents/guardians to visit classrooms, take part in school activities, and volunteer in the school because family engagement promotes student learning.

There are a number of ways you can volunteer:

- Work in your child's classroom or assist with small groups
- Assist in the office
- Supervise in the cafeteria or at recess
- Assist with planning and running of school-wide events
- Teach Art Masterpiece
- Be a guest speaker, teach a skill, or share a talent with our students
- ... and so much more!

For the safety of our students, Arizona Ball Charter Schools require all volunteers, including family members, to be screened with a [background check every two years](#). If you would like to volunteer at Val Vista Academy, please reach out to our Business Specialist, Barb Oda at: Boda@ballcharterschools.org



Family Engagement- Volunteer Expectations

Val Vista Academy believes that our students need direct and personal contact with adults each day, and volunteers can fill this need. Our volunteer coordinator directs volunteer recruiting, training, supervision and recognition. Arizona Ball Charter Schools requires all volunteers, including family members, to be screened with a background check every two years.

VVA reserves the right to deny anyone access to campus for any reason, namely for the health or safety of students and staff.

As a volunteer, you agree to work within the policies and procedures of Val Vista Academy. You understand and agree that in performance of your duties as a volunteer of the volunteer program, you must hold in strictest confidence any observation you may make or hear regarding students, students' families, or school staff. Any concerns about something you have observed or been made aware of should be reported immediately to the teacher or school administration. ([continued](#))



Family Engagement- Volunteer Expectations

([continued](#))

Avoid conferences with teachers and staff members while volunteering. They take staff away from their regular duties and affect all students adversely. If you would like to conference with a teacher or staff member, please make an appointment.

You acknowledge that the intentional or involuntary breach of confidentiality may result in the disciplinary action, including termination by the volunteer program coordinator or legal action by others. (I.E. students, families of students, Val Vista Academy, etc.)

For the protection of our children, you understand that you may not meet outside of school with students with whom you have worked with or had contact with while working as a volunteer. This does not include interactions that inherently require consent of the child's parents/guardians, such as church, sports teams, scouting, or friends of your own children, etc.

Additional information can be found on our [Parent Involvement](#) page.

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Family Engagement- Site Council

Site Council is made up of teachers, support staff, admin, and parents/guardians. The goal of the Site Council is to allow all groups of stakeholders to have a voice in the growth and improvement of our school. We encourage all parents/guardians to come to the meetings to gain information on how to be engaged in our school and your child's education.

Additional information can be found on our [Parent Involvement](#) page.



Family Engagement- Tax Credit & Donations

School Tax Credit Program

You have the opportunity to financially support Val Vista Academy while reducing your Arizona tax liability. Arizona law allows a tax credit of up to \$200 for individual taxpayers and up to \$400 for married filing jointly per calendar year. You will be issued a receipt for tax purposes. If you have any questions, please contact the school office. You can also visit the [Arizona Department of Revenue website](#).

Donations

Val Vista Academy is a 501(c)(3) organization. We are thankful to accept cash donations to support our programs as well as certain goods or items. Our business office will happily provide you with a donation letter.

THANK YOU for your support!



Family Engagement- Activities and Events

Family/Community Activities, Events and Dances

Events at Val Vista Academy are generally sponsored by the school (V.I.P) or student council. The principal and event coordinator will work with the organizations to develop guidelines. Admission may be charged.

General rules are:

- Students must be in attendance at least half the school day to be eligible to participate.
- School rules and VVA Code of Conduct are in effect at all dances and activities.
- Students may not be left unattended at “family dances” or other family/community events. These are not “drop off” events; therefore, students should be under the direct supervision of a parent or other adult.
- Some events are open to the community-at-large. We encourage you to bring your friends and extended family to our campus to enjoy these activities.
- Some events require an admission or participation fee.
- As with all school events, overt displays of affection are not allowed.



Miscellaneous

Permission Slips

Students must have a signed permission slip for special activities, especially when the school transports them on a field trip. The permission form will be furnished by the school and must be signed by the parent or legal guardian and returned to the school office. Students will be allowed to participate in these special activities only when written permission is given and returned to school with a signature.

Pets and Other Animals

For health and safety reasons, please refrain from bringing animals on campus without the expressed consent of administration.



Miscellaneous

Class Celebrations

At the request of the teacher, parents/guardians help plan class parties for students on scheduled holidays. Parties are held during times that are least disruptive to the learning environment. **Homemade foods are not allowed due to Arizona state health and safety recommendations.** Only pre-packaged, ready-to-eat foods are allowed. Certain culture activities may be exempt from this rule with the consent of administration.

Surprise parties and birthday parties are not permitted at school. Before you bring in any food to the classrooms, make sure that you first clear it with the teacher(s). Treats must be store-bought/pre-packaged.

Balloons, flowers, gifts, etc. can cause a distraction; therefore, they will only be delivered at the end of the school day. If students wish to pass out invitations to private parties while at school, they may do so only if the entire class receives invitations. Staff is prohibited from sharing the contact information of other families.

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