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HISTORY

In 1982, Pastor Harry Ross conceived a vision for a Christian day school as an alternate option to the public schools in Norwich and the surrounding towns in Chenango County.

On January 29, 1982 the Christian school was voted into existence. Six men were elected to form the school's first Board of Education with Mr. William Ellison serving as chairman. The school was officially named **V**alley **H**eights **C**hristian **A**cademy (**VHCA**) on February 14, 1982 during a special church meeting.

Valley Heights Christian Academy officially opened its doors to 68 students from 7 area school districts on August 30, 1982. Students were taught in grades Pre-Kindergarten (K-4) and continued through the 8th grade. VHCA's first year of instruction included 6 full-time teachers, 3 part-time aides, all the core subjects as well as music, art, athletics, chapel, and many other extracurricular activities. In 1983 grades 9 and 10 were added, the 11th grade was added in 1984, and the first class to graduate from VHCA held their commencement in June of 1986.

During the summer months of 1988, the adjacent Family Center was built. It currently houses all indoor P.E. classes, pep rallies, dinners and other special events. For a number of years, it held all our basketball games until we were able to utilize our local DCMO BOCES facility for all our home games. The soccer teams practice and play all their home games at Weiler Park.

Today, more than 3 decades after its inception, Valley Heights Christian Academy offers families a traditional education from Pre-school through 12th grade. VHCA seeks to serve families of Chenango County and surrounding counties by providing our students excellence in Christian education, athletics, and leadership.

Valley Heights Christian Academy is a ministry of **Calvary Baptist Church (www.cbcnorwich.com)**. VHCA partners with Calvary to passionately pursue its mission to *make more and better disciples*. The faculty and staff believe that we achieve this best by providing a quality, God-centered education to families as opposed to secular humanism education offered in the public schools.

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Here at Valley Heights Christian Academy, our mission is founded on old, but true principles. VHCA seeks to see our students **"Come to Learn, Learn to Love, and Leave to Serve."**

It is our desire that each child comes to us with an expectation to learn. As students from all different backgrounds and experiences come to Valley Heights, they need to find classrooms that are committed to their development. VHCA uses a traditional curriculum from a variety of resources to develop our students academically, as well as socially, emotionally, and of course, spiritually. Parents are "building a child," and it is essential that the child has a good foundation. Only education that addresses the whole child is adequate to prepare the child for life. Proverbs 1 states that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Valley Heights Christian Academy has a commitment to see students "come to learn."

Sound teaching from a Biblical world view is foundational at Valley Heights Christian Academy. One main truth that is taught from a young age is the idea that our students learn to love each other. We are called by God to live in unity with each other and in order to do that our students need to learn how this "unified" type of living is accomplished. In the Gospel of John, Jesus gives us a new commandment to "love one another." Love is not tolerating each other and is not merely withholding mean speech if we don't have anything nice to say. Jesus states that we should "love one another as He has loved us." The staff at VHCA teaches their students this kind of sacrificial love not only in their words but also by their deeds. Valley Heights Christian Academy has a commitment to see students "come to learn and learn to love."

The final piece of our mission is that we desire students to leave Valley Heights Christian Academy ready to serve God wherever He leads them. Whether it is higher education, the work force, the military or full-time ministry, our desire is that the students discover God's unique calling in their lives. A vital part of God's calling in all of our lives is a commitment to service. In Mark 10 we're reminded that Jesus did not come to earth to be served but to serve others. Service is a core ingredient of the instruction here at Valley Heights Christian Academy. Our students have a service requirement in order to graduate and our students are taught to serve each other sacrificially.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

- We believe in the verbal inspiration and authority of both the Old and the New Testaments.
- We believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the incarnation, virgin birth, deity, and bodily resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- We believe in seven literal (24 hour) day creation and the creation of man by the direct act of God.
- We believe that man fell into a state of total depravity through his sinful act of disobedience to the command of God.
- We believe that the shedding of Jesus Christ's blood on the cross is the vicarious atonement for the sins of every man.
- We believe that the gift of eternal life is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
- We believe that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross is effective in producing an eternal salvation that will be visibly evidenced through the fruit produced in the life of each believer.
- We believe that the chief end of man is to glorify God.

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, SEXUALITIY

- We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person biologically as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.
- We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.
- We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, LGBTQ+, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).
- We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Valley Heights Christian Academy as a ministry of the body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to the school's members and the community, it is imperative that all students who attend VHCA and all persons employed by Valley Heights Christian Academy in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Position Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).
- We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).
- We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28:31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior directed toward any individual is to be repudiated and is not in accord with Scripture nor the position of Valley Heights Christian Academy.

SCHOOL PURPOSE

The purpose of Valley Heights Christian Academy is to teach, train and prepare young people to walk with God by:

- Challenging them to exercise saving faith through trusting in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.
- Providing an environment for them to grow in their love for God and each other
- Providing them with a sound academic education integrated with a biblical worldview.
- Training them in the highest principles of godly leadership, discipline, individual responsibility and good citizenship.
- Planting in their hearts the seeds of Christian courtesy, character, and conduct.
- Promoting in their minds the concepts of Christian service and stewardship, their lives being the result of God's workmanship.

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth…And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Colossians 1:16-17.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Valley Heights Christian Academy enrolls students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, and affords them all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to all students at the Academy. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, athletics, and other school-administered programs.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

School Office: The office is open from 8:00 am until 3:15 pm on all regular school days. Any messages for students should go through the school office. Our contact information is as follows:

- Address 75 Calvary Drive, Norwich, NY 13815
- Telephone 607-336-VHCA (8422)
- Email office@vhcaonline.com
- Fax 607-336-9599
- Website www.vhcaonline.com
- Facebook www.facebook.com/vhcany/

School Closings/Delays: Any school closings due to bad weather will be broadcast on television station WBNG-TV (12), as well as www.vhcaonline.com, www.wbng.com, and www.evesun.com. When the Norwich City Schools are closed or delayed for bad weather, VHCA will be closed.

Home Memo Envelope: Throughout the school year, the school office will send home what we call a *Home Memo*. Inside the Home Memo Envelope will be important information that needs to be communicated to the family. The oldest child in the family is responsible for getting the envelope home as well as returned to school. The Home Memo is an informational bulletin sent to families periodically that provides details about various school activities including field trips, sports schedules, special programs, and other such important information. Often there are forms for you to fill out and return to the school office. These forms can be returned to the school in the envelope and all other information needs to remain at home. It is to your benefit that you keep all the Home Memos throughout the school year in a separate folder for easy access should you need to reference back to them. The envelope needs to be signed by the parent or guardian and returned to the school within two days.

Fundraising: The school board establishes policies in regard to any fundraising projects by classes or by the school. Any fundraising project must follow these policies and be approved by the school board. Fundraising by outside groups such as scouts, church youth groups, etc. will not be permitted. Each year, the Fundraiser Committee organizes specific fundraisers in which the entire school participates. The purpose of fundraising is two-fold. One is to raise the necessary funds to meet budget, and the other is to raise awareness in our community of our school. Any information about the school's fundraisers is communicated extensively from the school office to the families via the home memo and email.

ADMISSIONS

Admission to Valley Heights Christian Academy is by application. We welcome young people who are moral, who are interested in working hard, who desire a good education, and who are open to the teaching of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The registration process is as follows:

1. Call the school office
2. Make an appointment to meet with a representative of the school.
3. Tour the facilities.
4. Fill out all paper work and pay the registration fee and any other pre-tuition fees where applicable.
5. *A special note concerning Kindergarten registration* – children must be 4 years old to register for K-4 and 5 years old to register for K-5 on or before November 30th in order to register. Special permission may be granted by the administration on a case by case basis. Each child (K4 & K5) must pass a screening evaluation to be enrolled in their specific program. Children should be toilet trained.
6. Once the above steps have been completed, the student will be recommended to the School Board for a probationary admission to Valley Heights Christian Academy. During the 30-day probationary period, the School Board, teachers, and administrator will work with the parents and student to resolve any difficulties that may have surfaced during the transition period. If, at the conclusion of the 30-day probationary period, the student has made academic progress and their attitude and behavior are acceptable, the student will be granted full time student status.
7. All parents who wish to re-enroll their children will need to complete a re-enrollment form each school year. Re-enrollment forms should be completed and returned with their registration payment.

TRANSPORTATION

Arrival and dismissal procedures (including carline and bus line) will be sent out at the beginning of each school year.

Bus Transportation is available through your school district. The parent/guardian is responsible in notifying **both** their school district **and** the VHCA school office of any changes to their child's bus transportation on any given day.

Student Drivers: Students who drive to school must have a written request form signed by parents/guardians and approved by the school administrator. This request will be on file in the school office. Student riders must also have written permission from their parents/guardians in order to ride in a student driven vehicle during school hours. It is expected that all student drivers will protect their privilege to drive to school by driving defensively, carefully, courteously, and safely. Students may be assigned a parking area on the first day of school.

Changes to a student's transportation: The school office **MUST** be notified of any changes to the student's transportation by 1:45 pm that day. You may include the child's teacher in receiving the message, but it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the school office.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Tuition: Tuition is the primary funding source for Valley Heights Christian Academy and covers most of the school's expenses. Additional gifts are constantly needed; it is, therefore, imperative that tuition payments and other fees be paid on time. Tuition can be paid in full at the beginning of the year or in eleven equal monthly payments beginning August 1st – June 10th. Remaining tuition balance may be paid in-full at any time during the school year or as approved by the board. There is a 5% discount if tuition is paid in full before the school year starts. Payments can be made online at the school website; in cash *(exact amount)* or by check. Please make all checks payable to Valley Heights Christian Academy (VHCA).

A current Tuition and Fees Information Sheet is available in the school office. An updated sheet will be available to families at the annual Budget Presentation Meeting.

Registration: There is a student *registration* fee due each July. Along with this payment, a current registration and medical form will need to be completed. Registration fees are outlined on the Tuition and Fees Information Sheet which can be found on the school website or in the main office.

Late Payments: Tuition payments are considered late after the 10th of each month and accounts will be assessed a late fee of *$25.00* per month per late payment. Partial payment does not exempt the account from the late fee.

Additional Fees: Other fees may be required for participation in classes and activities such as home economics, athletics, and field trips. Parents will be given as much notice as possible for such activities.

What to do if you anticipate a financial difficulty: If a financial difficulty is anticipated or encountered, please call the school or send a note to explain the situation. Every effort will be made to assist you. The student will be allowed to continue to attend classes if a suitable financial arrangement can be agreed upon. In the event that the school is not informed of a financial problem and the student's account is not paid up-to-date on or before the last day of each month, that student may be suspended from all classes until the account is paid. This will be determined by the School Board, which will notify the parents/guardians prior to such action. All interim reports and report cards will be withheld until all tuition costs and fees are paid.

Withdrawal Information: In the event of withdrawal before the end of the school year, any refund on tuition paid in advance will be determined on a per-day basis (tuition divided by the number of school days multiplied by the number of school days up to that point in the school year). Date of withdrawal will be based on the last day of a student's attendance.

REMINDER FOR PARENTS

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 is where God gives the responsibility for the education of your children to you, the parent. We have no desire to usurp your position. At the same time, in order to provide a safe, wholesome, and uplifting atmosphere for learning, Valley Heights Christian Academy has established certain guidelines and standards that must be upheld. When parents support the school's stand on specific issues, children will be much more likely to be content and ready to learn. Cooperation in this area will accomplish much more than conflict!

SPIRITUAL REQUIREMENTS

Valley Heights Christian Academy students *and* their families are expected to attend church services weekly at their home church. If the student does not have a home church, they are encouraged to attend Calvary Baptist Church of Norwich – the supporting church of Valley Heights Christian Academy.

In the Christian school, the Bible is the most important text. Bible classes, memorization of Bible passages, and devotions are all extremely important aspects of our Christian school. Students in first through twelfth grades must have a Bible at school every day. Appropriate translations, approved for use by the VHCA School Board, are:

- New International Revised Version (NIrV)
- King James Version (KJV)
- New King James Version (NKJV)
- New International Version (NIV)
- New American Standard Version (NASB)
- English Standard Version (ESV)
- New Living Translation (NLT)

Weekly chapels are held featuring special speakers, college representatives, student speakers, class presentations, video chapels, and other such programs that are designed to challenge and deepen the student's spiritual life. Chapel is not optional and student participation is encouraged.

As representatives of Valley Heights Christian Academy, students are expected to act in an orderly and respectful manner, maintaining Christian standards of courtesy, kindness, language, morality, and honesty in their lives. This must be true both on and off the school campus.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

Medical Records: Parents of students entering VHCA must complete a medical form providing the school with an up-to-date shot record. Parents will be asked at the beginning of each year to update their children's medical records. All state mandated immunizations will have to be current at the beginning of the school year.

Medical Information Form: Parents are required to provide the school with a signed Medical Information Form. These are necessary in case a student should need medical attention while at school or school functions.

Medications: When a student needs emergency medical attention, the school will notify the parents as soon as possible. No staff member will be allowed to administer any medication, including Tylenol, without authorization from a parent or a doctor. The school should be alerted if any student is currently on any medications. Any medication that is brought to school must be brought to the office for safe-keeping. The medication must be correctly labeled with the student's name, type of medication, and directions for administering.

Physicals: Physicals are necessary for all students who are going to be involved in the athletic program, when the athletic program is available. VHCA student-athletes need to pass a physical in order to participate in our athletic program. The physical, signed by the doctor who administered the physical, needs to be on file in the school office. Physicals are good for 14 months. Scheduling your child's physical during late spring or early summer is the best time of year so they don't conflict with the fall and winter athletic seasons.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The purpose of a code of conduct in a Christian school is to guide the student in their pursuit of becoming a faithful disciple (follower) of Jesus Christ. We believe that if everyone would completely obey God's Word, there would be no need for any other code of conduct. We understand, however, that because of the sin nature each of us possesses, there is a tendency to stray from the path and plan God has set before us. Therefore, we have established a VHCA Code of Conduct to help the promotion of godliness, respect, courtesy, virtue, and kindness as a standard for our behavior as well as our relationship to one another.

Though maturity in Christ cannot be measured by adherence to an outward system of rules, it is important that Christians submit themselves to those who God has placed in authority over them (1 Peter 2:13). The administration of this institution realizes that there are specific Biblical principles that should be incorporated into our code of conduct. There are also other guidelines that, though not specifically Biblical, are seen as important to the efficient operation of this school and could be classified as our "institutional preferences."

Upon enrolling (or re-enrolling) at VHCA, students and parents are pledging their support and cooperation with the policies and procedures of VHCA. Likewise, VHCA is pledging their desire to cooperate and communicate with each family as situations may arise.

Significant public sin may result in disciplinary action even though the incident occurred off campus or after school hours, especially if it brings reproach upon the academy or may pose a threat to its purpose.

ALL STUDENTS MUST:

- Follow the behavior and actions set out on page 3 under the headings "Statement of Faith" and "Statement on Marriage, Gender, Sexuality".
- Accept the leadership and authority of their teachers, the administrator, and all other staff and faculty members.
- Respect the property of the school and the church, knowing that they are responsible for payment of any damages, whether they be deliberate, accidental, negligent, or careless in nature.
- Dress neatly, cleanly, and modestly in accordance with the dress code.
- Be punctual to all classes and extra-curricular activities.
- Prepare themselves to do their best in class.
- Respect and relate to other students as well as to the staff with courtesy and good manners.
- Practice good citizenship in their relationships within the school and the outside community.
- Assist in keeping the school and church facilities clean.
- Assist in keeping the school environment safe by avoiding inappropriate behavior.
- Avoid private and/or public displays of physical affection both on campus and at school sponsored events
- Represent Jesus Christ and VHCA at all times with consistency.
- Complete all assigned work.

ALL STUDENTS MUST NOT:

- Bring anything on campus that can be used or defined as a weapon such as a gun, knife, bow and arrow, darts, or other such items (unless special permission is granted by the school administrator or school board representative for things such as a project, report, or speech).
- Bring to school drugs or alcohol in any form except for those common over-the-counter pain, cold or allergy medications (and the such) or those prescribed by a doctor and used for medication. All medications must be kept in the possession of the school office.
- Bring to school large amounts of money or expensive items.
- Bring to school magazines, pictures, books, music, or other such materials that promote worldly thoughts, attitudes, or behavior *(see page 3 – Statement of Faith & statement on marriage, gender)*
- Discuss or promote drug or alcohol use, profanity, obscenity, unkind words, vulgar language and other inappropriate topics.

- Promote on any social media platform, nor to other students, information or materials that violates the school's Statement of Faith or the school's Statement on Marriage, Gender, Sexuality *(page 3).* Nor may the student post anything promoting drugs, alcohol or violence.
- Push, trip, kick, fight with, wrestle, pick up, hit or spit on any other student; and should not throw, launch, or shoot any object.

DISCIPLINE

Philosophy: Discipline is a necessary ingredient in the development of students' character and self-control. The obedience of children is a mandate from God's Word (Ephesians 6:1), and students who are Biblically obedient will be submissive to authority both at home and at school (Hebrews 13:17). Discipline is the necessary response of those in authority when a student transgresses the standard. Its purpose is to create a change in behavior and to restore broken relationships (Galatians 6:11).

Procedures: Procedures will vary according to grade level, offense, circumstances, and the seriousness of each particular situation. The consequences need always to fit the violation or infraction. Discipline will be administered through stern but loving action, avoiding unnecessary humiliation and anger. Privacy will be maintained during the disciplinary process unless a public infraction warrants a public rebuke. There are three (3) levels of discipline:

- Classroom Discipline: In addition to the general disciplinary code found in this handbook, each classroom has its own set of guidelines and procedures. Most disciplinary situations are the responsibility of the classroom teacher and will be handled within the classroom. Situations that are more serious and/or in which the student is not responding properly will be taken to the administrator or school board designee.
- Office Discipline: There are several actions that may be taken as the result of a student being brought to the administrator or school board designee. Among the most commonly used of these are counseling, notification of parents (students may be required to call home and explain their current situation to their parents), special assignments, and/or detention. Some situations may also require a parent/teacher and/or administrator conference. Suspension for up to five days is the ultimate consequence depending on the seriousness of the situation.
- Board Discipline: Only extreme serious disciplinary problems will be addressed by the School Board. The Board has the power to terminate a student's attendance through expulsion. *All* discipline will be carried out in a Biblical manner. Biblical counseling will accompany any disciplinary action. Corporal punishment is *NOT* practiced at Valley Heights Christian Academy.

DEFINITIONS OF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Warning: A verbal reprimand for a violation of a stated expectation intended to prevent future or more serious offenses. In the case of older students, a written warning may sometimes be effective.

Loss of Privilege: This can be anything from denying the student recess, to making the student sit out of a game/activity. Students will not normally be kept out of class or a spiritual opportunity.

Notification of Parents: If a student's behavior begins to become habitually or seriously disobedient, disrespectful, or irreverent, then the parents will be notified either by note or by phone call, so that they may be aware and can work at home to correct the problem. Parents will automatically be notified of detentions, probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Temporary Removal from Class: Used when the teacher recognizes the necessity for a student to be separated from the other students for a time of reflection and correction. The student may be sent to the main office and dealt with at the discretion of the teacher.

Special Assignment: Sometimes a student will benefit from a special assignment designed by the teacher to remind him that misbehavior could have unpleasant consequences. Assignments may be intended to be done either during detention or at home. Parents may be asked to sign the completed assignments.

Detention: A period of time at lunch or after school, during which a student is given a remedial assignment directly related to the offense for which the detention was assigned. Parents will be notified on the day that the detention is issued. All detentions must be served on the day the detention is scheduled. Other arrangements may be made, but they may necessitate serving additional detentions as well. A detention is a negative consequence. Inherent in a detention is inconvenience regarding after school practices, rehearsals, games, and jobs. Those who avoid activities and patterns that result in detentions will also avoid the inconveniences of detentions.

Probation: A period of time when the administrator or school board designee places a student under restrictions and requirements. This time of observation and remedial discipline may serve as a "grace period" during which a student with serious behavioral or attitude problems can correct the problem. Failure to do so may result in expulsion. A student on probation may not be permitted to participate in athletics, trips, etc.

DEFINITIONS OF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS CONTINUED …

Suspension: A period lasting from one to five days in which the student is not allowed to come to school or school activities. Suspension is designed as a time for the student to consider the seriousness of his actions and to work out the difficulties with his parents, teachers, and the administration of Valley Heights Christian Academy. All work assigned must be completed before the student returns to class, and any work not able to be made up will receive a zero. *The suspension period will be followed by a week of probation for each day of suspension.*

Expulsion: Revoking the privilege of attending valley Heights Christian Academy because of offenses, primarily, but not limited to, gross public sin or an unrepentant attitude of rebellion. Students who leave Valley Heights Christian Academy as the result of this disciplinary action will not be allowed to seek re-admission until they have been absent for one complete semester, after which the school board may review the student's status.

ATTENDANCE

There is a strong correlation between regular school attendance and academic achievement. Parents should make every effort to ensure that their children are in school every day and on time. Parents are discouraged from taking students out of school for family vacations, appointments, etc. VHCA encourages parents to schedule appointments with physicians, dentist etc. after school hours.

ABSENCES

Definitions:

Excused: An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, death in the family; impassable roads due to weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearance; attendance at health clinic; approved college visit; approved cooperative work programs; military obligations; medical, dental or counseling appointments; ministry responsibilities; approved alternate educational pursuits, or administrative approval/emergency situations that prevent a student from attendance. (adapted from NYSED)

Unexcused: An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories. Examples of unexcused include (but are not limited to) truancy, needed at home, missed the bus, family trips or vacations, shopping, hunting, fishing, work, babysitting, haircuts, convenience, or oversleeping.

ATTENDANCE RECORDING:

Daily attendance and lack thereof will be recorded in the office. Cumulative class attendance is reported on quarterly report cards and on permanent record cards annually.

Late arrivals: Students arriving late must sign in at the main office.

Early Departures: All students leaving early must have parent/guardian sign them out at the office

Assignments *may* be able to be made up following an absence, however the student misses valuable classroom instruction when absent. Therefore, VHCA strongly recommends that students are absent as little as possible. Absences will be recorded as follows:

- Up to 1 hour missed = Partial-day/tardy absence
- 1-3 hours missed = Half-day absence
- More than 3 hours missed = Full-day absence

- **Three late arrivals (tardies) will constitiute a half – dsy absence***

Absence Reporting: When any student is absent from school on a given day, the parent or guardian must call the office by 9:00 am on that day to verify the absence. When a child is absent, or tardy, or has to leave school for any reason, a written excuse must accompany him upon the first day he returns to school. The excuse should contain the following information:

- Date of absence or tardiness
- Reason for absence or tardiness
- Signature of parent or guardian

MISSED SCHOOL WORK:

Scheduled Absences: When a parent is aware of a scheduled absence (i.e. doctor appointment) advance notice needs to be given to the school **one week prior to the appointment**, this gives the teacher enough time to compile the student's assignments. It is the student's responsibility to obtain any work that will be missed prior to the absence.

Unscheduled Absences: Assignments and school work may be able to be made up following an unscheduled absence. It is the student's responsibility to request missed assignments and school work. The student must also be prepared to make up all tests and quizzes they missed in a reasonable amount of time.

ATTENDANCE SANCTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

- The status of any student who accumulates 15 or more absences for any reason in a given year will be taken under advisement the following year. Instances of extended absences due to illness, injury or other extenuating circumstances will be addressed on a case to case basis.
- For students in seventh through twelfth grades, class attendance will be a percentage of the quarterly grade at the discretion of the teacher.
- Six instances of tardiness will equal one absence. An after-school detention will occur after the sixth tardy in a quarter. An additional detention will occur for every tardy thereafter in a quarter.

ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

- Perfect Attendance Awards are presented during the End-of-Year Awards Ceremony. A student is considered to have attained perfect attendance when he/she is present for each and every day of school and has no instances of absences due to tardiness/unexcused departures from school.
- Students not in attendance due to involvement in school-sponsored, sanctioned or approved trips, activities, or competitions will be counted as present on those days.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Associations: Valley Heights Christian Academy is a member of the American Association of Christian Schools (AACS) and also the New York Association of Christian Schools (NYACS).

Kindergarten 4: "K-4" is our pre-school program and is held five days a week for a full day. The main focus of this program is to introduce four-year-old children to school. It is designed for early childhood education with an emphasis upon development of fine motor skills, attention span, social relationships, music and art interest, and spiritual awareness. A solid foundation is laid for reading, language, mathematics, Bible, oral skills, and handwriting. Science and History are also introduced in this program. Our "K-4" is *not* a day-care program.

Kindergarten 5: "K-5" is the traditional Kindergarten program at Valley Heights Christian Academy. Our "K-5" program builds upon our "K-4" program and continues to lay the foundation for education in our elementary grades. Instruction in "K-5" includes reading, handwriting (both manuscript and cursive), Bible memorization, language, grammar, arithmetic, science, history, and social skills. Both the "K-4" and "K-5" programs are also involved weekly in music, physical education, art activities, chrome books, and chapel.

Elementary (Grades 1-6): This is a complete program of study including Bible, reading, spelling, language, grammar, writing, arithmetic, history, science, music, physical education, art, and chapel. Valley Heights Christian Academy believes that children should be challenged to fully develop their academic potential. In our elementary grades, children are being furnished with the tools to accomplish this goal.

Junior High (7-8): This program consists of instruction in Bible, English, mathematics, history, science, physical education, health, introduction to computers, keyboarding, and chapel.

Senior High (9-12): This program has been established by Valley Heights Christian Academy based upon traditional college preparatory and general education models. Students are always encouraged to pursue the most challenging course of study that the Lord has enabled them to handle.

- All courses are offered based upon availability of instructor, materials, and scheduling.
- A course may not be dropped or added unless a student meets with the administrator or school board representative and has parental permission. Unless unusual circumstances exist, students will not be allowed to drop any course after the fifth week of school. Credit cannot be given unless the entire unit has been completed

We do realize, however, that even though we attempt to meet each student's individual needs, not all students are prepared to learn at the same rate. Because of the limited resources available to Valley Heights Christian Academy, there will be some students with special needs that we are not able to accommodate. We try to encourage the parents of these students to seek out other schools better equipped to educate their children.

Requirements for Graduation: A graduation fee is to be paid to the office at the beginning of the school year. Call the office for the amount. Twenty-four (24) units of credit are required for a *General Graduation Certificate* and twenty-six (26) units of credit are required for a *College Preparatory Graduation Certificate*. Requirements for classification of grade standards are as follows:

Freshman (Grade 9)	successfully completed Grade 8
Sophomore (Grade 10)	completed a minimum of **6** credits as a Freshman
Junior (Grade 11)	completed a minimum of **12** credits as a Sophomore
Senior (Grade 12)	completed a minimum of **18** credits as a Junior
Graduation	completed a minimum of **24** credits as a Senior

***All students in grades 7 – 12 must maintain a passing grade in **Bible** every semester.*
All students in grades 9 – 12 must successfully complete their respective **Christian Service Program

REQUIRED COURSES:	**GENERAL CERTIFICATE**	**COLLEGE PREP CERTIFICATE**
• English	4 units	4 units
• Bible	4 units	4 units
• Social Studies	4 units	4 units
• Math/Science	6 units	6 units
• P.E./Health	2 units	2 units
• Electives	2 unit	2 unit
• Christian Service	2 units	2 units
• Foreign Language	_____	2 units
	24 UNITS	**26 UNITS**

General Graduation Certificate: requires a minimum of **24 credits**.

College Preparatory Graduation Certificate: requires a minimum of **26 credits** that **must** include:

- Geometry
- Chemistry and/or Physics
- Two (2) units of foreign language.

Grading Procedures: There are four grading periods (quarters) during the school year. All students are required to complete all assignments. An interim report is sent out approximately midway through each grading period and a report card sent out at the end of each grading period. Parents are urged to contact teachers whenever questions arise. Report cards and interim reports need to be signed and returned within three (3) days to the homeroom teacher. An incomplete "I" is given when all work is not completed by the end of the quarter. An "I" will automatically become an "F" if any incomplete work is not made up within a reasonable amount of time set by the teacher.

Grade Scale:

- A – Superior Work 90 and above
- B – Above Average 80 - 89
- C – Average 70 - 79
- D – Below Average 65 - 69
- F – Failing 65 and below
- An "O" (outstanding), "S" (satisfactory), "N" (needs improvement), or "U" (unsatisfactory) is given for any subject not requiring a numerical grade. ***If a student receives 3 "U" (unsatisfactory) grades in a given school year, they will fail that subject.***

Textbooks: All textbooks (disposable and reusable) are VHCA property. Textbooks are assigned to each student with the assumption that they will be handled appropriately at all times. All textbooks must be returned at the conclusion of the school year. Any book *not* returned will be considered "lost" and parents will be responsible to pay for any "lost" books. Parents will also be responsible to pay for any book that is returned in a condition worse than when it was issued. Failure to return books, or pay for "lost" or damaged books will result in the withholding of report cards. Transfer to another school or district does *not* void responsibility for payment.

Homework: Completing homework is an essential part of each student's academic success. It is also an important tool in building Christian Character. Work that is considered "homework" is:

- Additional drill or practice that the teacher assigns to the student
- Any assignment or project, long or short term that will enhance a student's understanding of a given subject.

Late/Incomplete Homework: Homework needs to be completed satisfactorily and handed in on time. The teacher has the right to refuse late assignments or deduct points unless the work is late due to an illness or an injury.

When a student is absent from school due to illness, doctor's appointment, or illness/death in the immediate family, the student will be given one (1) day extra for every absent school day (up to 5 days) to make up missed assignments and/or exams. Students may not be able to make up work due to any absences other than the ones listed above, and will be evaluated on a case by case basis by the classroom teacher.

Copying/Cheating: Any student caught copying another student's assignment or work will automatically receive a zero for that assignment. This includes work done through Artificial Intelligence (AI). The student who permits another student to copy or in any other way cheat on an assignment will also receive a zero for that assignment. Other consequences for these students will be determined by the teacher or by a conference between the teacher and the parent.

Testing: Tests play a significant role in how our teachers evaluate their students' learning. Encourage your child to prepare well in advance for tests and do their very best.

VHCA is a non-registered, non-public school, and is not required to participate in the New York State Testing Program (NYSTP), nor the Common Core English-Language Arts and Mathematics Tests. VHCA administers the *IOWA Achievement Test,* a national standardized test which is administered in grades K-5 through 10th grade. These tests take place in the spring of each school year and are divided up over a two or three-day time period. The *IOWA Achievement Test* measures achievement in the areas of language arts, math, science, and the social sciences.

We require all our 10th and 11th graders to take the PSAT's. Students pursuing any level of higher education (college or university) are strongly encouraged to take either the ACT's and/or SAT's. The PSAT tests are usually administered on campus in the fall of the school year. We require all of our 12th graders to take the SAT's. Both the PSAT and SAT are given during the school day.

Retention: A student in 1st – 8th grade who fails reading, math, or *any two* of the other subjects may be recommended for retention. Careful discussions between the administrator and the teachers will take place before the recommendation is made to the parents. The teacher and the parents will meet to discuss the retention as well as other strategies to implement over the summer months. It is important that both the parents and the staff at VHCA work in unity to provide the students the best atmosphere for them to succeed.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are always encouraged and may be requested either by the teacher or the parent(s). It is of the utmost importance that parents honor the teacher's request for a conference.

- **Parent-Teacher Conference**: Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled as needed by the parent or teacher. Open communication between home and school will greatly benefit your student.

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

Student Recognition: The student recognition program is held annually at the conclusion of each school year to recognize academic achievement and other accomplishments the students made throughout the year.

Honor Roll: Two levels of honor roll achievement are recognized at the conclusion of each quarter of the year.

- The *High Honor Roll* is for those students with a cumulative average of 90 points or higher.
- The *Honor Roll* is for students with a cumulative average between 80 and 89.

Graduation Honors: The ultimate academic recognition a student can receive is to be selected as the valedictorian or the salutatorian of his or her graduating class. To qualify, a student must have attended Valley Heights Christian Academy for a minimum of 3 semesters, maintained an average of at least 90%, be in the College Prep course and must have accumulated a minimum of 26 credit hours. Selection of the valedictorian and salutatorian is subject to the School Board's approval.

STUDENT LIFE

Physical Education: Physical education is a required course as a part of our school's total curriculum. It is also recognized as an important part of school life. Students unable to participate in gym class need a note from their parents. If a student will miss more than two consecutive gym classes, the student will need a note from a physician.

Students in grades 3 through 12 are required to change for gym class. Appropriate shorts, t-shirts, sweat pants, sweat shirts and sneakers that the students provide for themselves are the clothing necessary for gym class. Students wearing any pictures or writing that would be considered inappropriate by VHCA will be marked as being unprepared for gym class. Cut-off and/or tank top shirts may not be worn for gym class. Shorts need to fit appropriately (not too tight, not too loose) and must reach below the student's longest fingertip when arms are straight down at their side.

Student Council: As enrollment permits, students in grades 9-12 will elect two students from each class to represent them in a Student Council. This group will then elect a Student Council President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Students in grades 7-8 will elect one non-voting representative from each class. The purpose of the Student Council is to encourage and promote school projects and spirit. The administration and faculty will approve the Student Council members. A faculty member or approved

volunteer will preside as advisor. In the event that there is no advisor, VHCA will not have a Student Council.

STUDENT LIFE CONTINUE …

Yearbook: Yearbook is an elective class for high schoolers as ~~a~~ part of our school's total curriculum. Students get to plan and develop the school's annual yearbook. The yearbook class will elect a senior

editor to lead the students in meeting their deadlines and staying on track. Other yearbook members will be in charge of general and specific photography as well as the development of specific pages. All yearbook members are required to do their part in securing an adequate amount of advertisements from local area businesses in order to keep the price of the book reasonable for VHCA families.

Lunch: Students will eat their lunches in the cafeteria unless approved by administration. Each student is required to bring their own lunch to school. There are microwaves available to students for warming food; however, the lunch period is quite short, so non-microwave lunches are encouraged. The microwaves are a privilege for students to use and any improper use of microwaves may result in that privilege being taken away. Milk is available to purchase at lunch time.

As circumstances allow, most Fridays the junior or senior class will offer a hot lunch at a nominal cost. Ice cream is available for purchase every day it is available. Students will not be permitted to use the kitchen or its equipment unless authorization is given. Valley Heights Christian Academy is a closed campus; therefore, students are not permitted to send out, or go off campus for food.

Field Trips: Throughout the school year, classes may go on fieldtrips to enhance their educational experience. Due to a limited budget, families usually pay all necessary expenses for all field trips. Chaperones for field trips are selected at the discretion of the homeroom teacher in charge of the field trip. Many field trips only require a small portion of chaperones. The teachers do their best to rotate who chaperones which trips to give opportunity for as many parents as possible to be involved. The teachers greatly appreciate your understanding.

For all field trips, VHCA requires that a permission slip be filled out and signed by the parent/guardian and the appropriate amount of money paid BEFORE the day of the field trip. Any exceptions to this must be worked out between the parent/guardian and the classroom teacher in charge of the field trip.

Lockers: Lockers are assigned to students in grades 1 through 12. These lockers are school property and students are expected to keep them clean and neat. Any locker with a lock must have the combination or a key on file in the school office. Nothing is to be placed on the outside of the lockers. Nothing is to be left on the top of the lockers at the end of the day. Lockers are not to be used during class time without permission from the classroom teacher. School officials (staff/faculty/administration) reserve the right to have full access to any locker, as well as the contents of any locker at any point.

Lost and Found: Items that are found unattended around campus may be brought to the school office. We highly recommend that parents label everything that his or her children bring or wear to school. Initials need to be on all clothing labels, sneakers, coats, lunchboxes, notebooks, boots, hats, scarves, mittens and other items.

STUDENT LIFE CONTINUE …

Library: All students are encouraged to make good use of our school library. Teachers in the elementary grades will decide library times. Students in the upper grades will use the library during specified study hall periods. Good care must be given to *all* resources in the library, and books and materials must be returned on time. Students must return all books according to their stamped date due and must be in the condition they were in when signed out. All library books need to be returned before the conclusion of the school year.

In the event that a book is lost or damaged, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to replace the book with a suitable replacement (topic, age-appropriate, condition, etc.) Failure to do so will result in the withholding of report cards. Transferring to another school or district does not void this responsibility.

Telephone Use: The use of the school telephone by students will be allowed only when those in authority deem it necessary. Students at school will be allowed to receive calls only if the call is from their parent/guardian and is an emergency-type situation. Students are only to use the telephone:

- In the school office.
- In the presence of the proper faculty/staff member
- For business approved by the faculty/staff member

Parents who need to contact their child during the school day for any reason must call the main school phone number (607-336-8422).

PERSONAL ELECTRONICS

The following policy applies to every student attending VHCA. Personal Electronics, as defined in this policy, include, but are not limited to, e-Readers, tablets, cell phones, handheld devices, chrome books, laptops and compatible watches.

The wide variety of capabilities available on personal electronics makes them challenging to monitor and control in a school environment in contrast with school-owned technology assets such as computers, chrome books, laptops, and tablets. **Therefore, no personal electronics will be allowed from the time of student drop off until the student is picked up, except at the specific request of the teacher. Any communication with a student MUST be done through the school office. *(see page 22 – Telephone use)*.**

If a personal device is requested by the teacher, then the student may only use it for appropriate educational purposes that are in accordance with the purpose and philosophy of VHCA and the student must abide by the Acceptable Use Policy. The permission to use a personal device will only be for the duration stated by the teacher.

Any and all personal electronics are to be turned in upon arrival at school to the staff member(s) on duty in the morning and will be returned by a staff member at the end of the school day when the student is released to a parent or guardian. No personal electronics or devices are allowed to be kept in lockers, backpacks or by the student. Any electronics or personal devices that are found in lockers, backpacks or on the student will result in the following consequences to that student:

1. Verbal Warning – Conversation with the teacher and parent/guardian will be contacted.
2. After School Detention - which will include a conversation with the student; a written formal notice of said detention that will need to be signed by both the parent/guardian and the student.
3. Administrative Suspension *(see page 13).* Would include a conversation with student and parent/guardian will be contacted.
4. Referral to the School Board who will determine the next disciplinary action up to and including expulsion *(see page 13).*

SCHOOL - LOANED ELECTRONICS

In striving to maintain technological relevance in education, Valley Heights Christian Academy may choose to issue school-owned electronic devices. These devices include, but are not limited to, e-Readers, tablets, chrome books and/or laptops. These devices, loaned to the students for a specific period of time, remain as property of VHCA before, during, and after the loan period. All school-loaned electronics assigned to students will *only* occur after a signed (parent and student signatures) Acceptable Use Agreement Form is on file with the school office or its designee with school. All downloads on school-owned electronics will be at the discretion of the teacher. All school-owned electronics that are loaned to students will be loaned for a specified period of time to be determined by the teacher or administrator.

SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

Students at VHCA are held in high regard and are seen as role models in the community. As such, we have a responsibility to portray our school, community, and ourselves in a positive manner at all times. It is also important to remember that being a student at VHCA is a privilege not a right. In recent years, social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter have increased in popularity and are used by many students at VHCA. Students may not be aware that third parties, including the media, faculty, parents, future schools, and future employers can easily access their profiles and view all personal information. This includes all pictures, videos, comments, and posts. Inappropriate material affects the perception of the student and VHCA. This can be detrimental to a student's future and to the school. Examples of inappropriate and offensive behavior concerning participation in online communities may include depictions or presentations of the following. These are examples and are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

- Posting photos, videos, comments, or posts showing the personal use of alcohol, tobacco, such as cans, shot glasses, bottle(s) of liquor, etc.
- Posting photos, videos, and comments that are of a sexual nature. This includes links to websites of a pornographic nature and other inappropriate material.
- Posting pictures, videos, comments or posters that condone drug related activity. This includes but is not limited to images that portray the personal use of marijuana and drug paraphernalia.

- Using inappropriate or offensive language in comments, videos and other postings. This includes threats of violence, racial slurs or derogatory comments against students, faculty, courses, or other programs, etc.

If a student profile and its content are found to be contrary to VHCA's Statement of Faith *(page 3)*; Statement on Marriage, Gender, Sexuality *(page 3);* to the code of conduct *(page 9-10)* or are found to be inappropriate in accordance with the above behaviors, the student will be subject to the appropriate consequences which may include expulsion (see page 23).

ATHLETICS

The athletics program is dependent on enrollment

Purpose: The purpose of our athletic program is to develop Christian character, sportsmanship, teamwork, and strong bodies for the Lord. Students unable to participate in gym class need a note from their parents. If a student will miss more than two consecutive gym classes, the student will need a note from a physician.

Qualifications: Students participating on any athletic team need to have a current physical on file in the school office. Students on teams need to manifest Christian character as a member of that team in order to remain on the team. Students on teams where an athletic fee is required must have the fee paid in full on or before the first home game played unless arrangements have been made with the administrator.

Academic Eligibility: All student-athletes must maintain at least a "C" average. Also, one (1) "F" or two (2) "D's" on any interim report or report card will cause the student-athlete to be ineligible.

Students who become ineligible during the season will be placed on probation for two (2) weeks. During this two-week probation period, the ineligible student-athlete will not be allowed to participate in *any* activity with his or her team. If, at the end of the two-week period, the student-athlete improved their grades in those courses where they were receiving the "D's" and/or the "F's", he may be reinstated.

Upon reinstatement, the student-athlete will remain on probation until the next interim report or report card is issued. The student-athlete must also maintain at least a "C" average during the probation period. During the probation period, the student-athlete must turn into the office a form signed by the teachers from the classes that caused the ineligibility stating their approval for the student-athlete's continued participation on the team.

If a student-athlete becomes ineligible a *second* time during any one season, the student-athlete will be excused from the team for the remainder of that sport's season. Student-athletes must be in attendance at school for at least a half of a day in order to participate in practice or a game that same day or evening.

Attendance Eligibility: In order for a student-athlete to participate in any school sponsored athletics, the student is required to attend school for a *minimum* of one-half day on the day of the game or activity.

Should a game or activity take place on a Saturday, the student is required to attend school for a *minimum* of one-half day the day before the game or activity (Friday).

Athletic Recognition: An awards program is held annually after the completion of each sport's season to highlight the season as well as recognize the accomplishments of our teams and the achievements of the players.

Transportation of Student-Athletes: No student-athlete, under any circumstances, will be permitted to drive a vehicle to a school sponsored off-site competition, practice, or other sports-related activity (i.e., All-Star Games, Scrimmages, etc.) All student-athletes must be transported to all school sponsored off-site competition, practice or other sports-related activities utilizing the regular mode of transportation provided by Valley Heights Christian Academy. The only exception will be upon returning from said events/activities. If a parent wishes to take their children directly home following a school sponsored event or activity, they may do so provided they had submitted the proper form (*Parent Release Permission Form for the Transportation of Student-Athletes)* to the school office prior to the students' departure for the event or activity. The Parent Release Permission Form is available in the school office during regular school office hours.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND INTIMIDATION POLICY

Purpose: At VHCA we intend to do everything in our power to provide a safe, socially healthy, and sound educational setting for all students, in an environment where students can learn and enjoy extra-curricular activities free from fear. Although we desire for our Christian school to be free from harassment, the fact that people are sinners (including children) requires us to have policies and procedures in place to handle this intimidating behavior should it arise. Simply stated, we will not tolerate bullying, harassment or intimidation in any form.

Definition: School employees will be required, and parents and students will be encouraged, to report incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation to the administrator or school board designee. If it is determined that a student has engaged in "bullying, harassing or intimidating behavior," the school discipline plan will be followed (see Disciplinary Action below). If the behavior is extreme, the student may be removed from class or suspended from school for a period of time without following the normal steps in the discipline plan.

- Note: Sometimes students, especially when very young, have not developed the interpersonal skills necessary to express themselves appropriately. Therefore, sometimes young students will

occasionally be mean or physically hurt each other. We do not consider this occasional misbehavior by young students to be "bullying". In these instances, the teachers and staff will attempt to work with offending students to help them express themselves with appropriate words, actions and choices when facing undesirable situations.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND INTIMIDATION POLICY CONTINUED …

Procedures: Bullying, harassment or intimidation is *any* conduct that disrupts a student's ability to learn and/or the school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. This behavior is defined by VHCA as any intentional written, verbal, physical, or electronic (cyber-bullying) act, when the act:

- Physically or emotionally harms a student, damages a student's property, or creates a fear of such harm.
- Substantially interferes with a student's education.
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment.
- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.
- Is "reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic" (i.e. race, gender, socioeconomic status, academic performance, physical appearance, mental or physiological disability, etc.)

Bullying Specifics: Bullying is any behavior, verbal or non-verbal that is intended to cause physical, emotional, psychological, or social harm. Bullying may be direct (face to face) or indirect. Bullying behaviors that are not addressed generally escalate into more aggressive behaviors over time. These are learned behaviors that can best be addressed by parents and teachers who demonstrate and teach pro-social behaviors. The following is a list of behaviors that demonstrate bullying:

- Physical actions involving intentionally endangering the welfare of others. Such behavior includes but is not limited to: hitting, shoving, kicking, spitting on, punching, poking, pushing, blocking, tripping, unwanted touching, rude gestures, taking or damaging another's property, extortion of money or other items, making someone do something they otherwise would not do, etc.
- Verbal behavior that includes but is not limited to: name calling, teasing, bossing, threatening, making fun of another's appearance, physical characteristics, cultural background, academic or behavior difficulties, etc.
- Indirect bullying includes but is not limited to: exclusion from activities or social groups; spreading rumors; telling lies intended to embarrass, humiliate or harm the reputation of another; circulating inappropriate notes or drawings; using other people to threaten, intimidate, or humiliate another; encouraging others to violate the anti-bullying policy.
- Cyber bullying (the use of electronic communication to engage in bullying) includes, but is not limited to: sending of inappropriate or threatening emails or text messages; creating or posting inappropriate or threatening information or video-graphic material on social websites.

Harassment Specifics: Harassment is defined as repeated, intrusive, or unwanted acts, words or gestures that are intended to adversely affect the safety, security, or privacy of another person.

- Harassment involves ongoing behavior that is intended to disturb or upset (torment, bother, trouble, annoy), with the intent to produce feelings of fear or intimidation.
- Harassment can also include intentionally exposing a person to materials which the harasser knows, or has reason to know, are offensive or intimidating.
- While most harassment is of a social nature, sexual harassment is of particular concern because of its moral and potential psychological consequences. Sexual Harassment within this policy is defined as inappropriate or unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature – physical, verbal, or mental – that interferes with a student's ability to learn, study, work or participate in school activities.

Intimidation Specifics: As used in this policy, intimidation is defined as threatening behavior that causes fear of a future act to harm or cause injury. Intimidation may be in the form of:

- Physical contacts (impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching or any physical interference with normal work or movement)
- Threatening looks
- Threatening retaliation (such as negative consequences or aggression in response to reporting a negative behavior)
- Actual physical assault (including threatening to do violence to another person)

Reporting Responsibility: All faculty and staff members are required to report all occurrences of any of the behaviors defined in this policy. Parents and students who have knowledge of such behaviors are encouraged to report this information and may do so without fear of consequences. Additionally, students who feel that they have been or are becoming the victims of such behaviors, should immediately notify a teacher, the administrator or another adult within the school staff or administration. Those parents or students who report such behaviors will not be the target of retaliation or reprisal in any way. Any individual who withholds information regarding bullying behavior or provides inaccurate or false information will be subject to disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Action: VHCA recognizes that not all behaviors that result in harm or are disruptive to a student's activity are intentional acts in the sense of this policy. However, when there is clear evidence that any of the prohibited behaviors described in this policy do fit the intent of this policy, such behavior will be promptly addressed according the procedures outlined below. Each offense will be referred to the school administrator for disciplinary response. The normal consequence for an act of bullying, harassment or intimidation shall be:

- Offense #1 – teacher counsels with student involved
- Offense #2 – the administrator or school board designee meets with student; parents contacted.
- Offense #3 – the administrator or school board designee-meets with parent & student; one (1) afterschool detention assigned.
- Offense #4 – the administrator or school board designee meets with parent & student; three (3) suspension days issued.
- Offense #5 – student may be recommended for expulsion.

VHCA may, at its discretion, depart from the above discipline schedule, up or down, including expulsion at any stage, depending upon the circumstances of any violation of this policy. Furthermore, any act or threatened act of retaliation or reprisal against a person who reports or gives testimony of a prohibited act of this policy shall be deemed severe.

VHCA DRESS CODE

Overall, a student's dress, grooming and appearance, including hair style/color, jewelry, make-up and nails, shall:

1. Be **CLEAN, NEAT, MODEST** and **FREE OF HOLES**
2. Be safe, appropriate and not disrupt or interfere with the educational process.
3. Ensure that under-garments are completely covered with outer clothing.
4. Hats, bandanas, and sunglasses must be placed in the lockers or backpacks upon entrance to school.

Pants, Leggings, Shorts & Capris

1. Pants must be waist high and loose fitting.
2. **NO** sweatpants.
3. Leggings *(to the ankle)* **MAY NOT** be worn as pants, and if worn, there shall be a shirt-dress, a dress or a skirt that is **fingertip length** – front and back, not see-through, etc. Form fitting, running pants are considered leggings for the purpose of this dress code.
4. Belts are required to be worn if pants do not stay above the waist.
5. Shorts are to be **LOOSE** fitting and are to be **no shorter than the tip of the longest finger** with the hand extended down. *No biker/skin tight shorts allowed.*
6. Shorts and capris may be worn through Oct. 15th in the Fall, and after April 15th in the Spring.

Skirts and Dresses

1. Skirts and dresses should be loose fitting.
2. Nothing shorter than 4" above the knee for skirts and dresses.

Tops, shirts and sweatshirts

1. Designs on shirts/sweatshirts are allowed, subject to the following:
    a. Designs cannot include items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous or denigrate others because of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex.

    b. Designs must not promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities.

    c. Designs may not reference or depict media, artists, characters, or franchises (including but not limited to bands, movies, television shows, video games, or online content) where the underlying material conflicts with the standards above, even if the specific image itself is not inherently vulgar. A character or logo is judged by what it represents, not just by how it appears on the shirt.

    d. The Administrator, or a staff member designated by the Administrator, makes the final determination on any design in question. If there is reasonable question about whether a design meets this standard, the student will be asked to change clothing or turn the shirt inside out for the remainder of the day, with no disciplinary consequence for a first-time judgment call.
2. Shoulders shall be covered. Halter tops, net tops, tops with spaghetti straps are not allowed. Sleeveless shirts with large arm openings are not permitted, though sleeveless apparel is acceptable.
3. **No skin** is to be showing between shirt and pants/skirt/shorts – attire that exposes cleavage may not be worn.
4. Hoodies can be worn, but hoods **must** be down.

Hair, Jewelry, Makeup and Perfumes

1. Hair must be clean, brushed, **OUT OF THE EYES** and not interfere with classroom activities. If bangs are long enough to cover the eyes *(partially or fully),* they need to be clipped back *(headband, clips or tied).*
2. Facial hair must be clean and trimmed.
3. A reasonable amount of jewelry is acceptable. Jewelry that is excessive or distracting to the student's learning is prohibited.
4. Please be cognizant of offensive designs on jewelry.
5. Makeup applied that enhances the natural look is acceptable.
6. Moderation of perfumes and body sprays to avoid any allergy issues.

Shoes

1. Dress/casual shoes, boots, sneakers and sandals may be worn.

2. Sandals **must** have a back strap.
3. **NO** flip flops.
4. Footwear that is a safety hazard is not allowed.

P.E. Clothes

1. Loose fitting shirts, sweatpants and shorts may be worn.
2. Shorts are to be **LOOSE** fitting and are to be **no shorter than the tip of the longest finger** with the hand extended down. *No biker/skin tight shorts allowed.*
3. Gym clothes are to be brought with students on the day they have P.E.

Elementary only *(K4 – Grade 6):*
Shorts *(any type)* or leggings **MUST** be worn under **ALL** dresses and skirts.
K4, K5, Gr. 1 & Gr. 2 must bring a COMPLETE extra set of clothing to leave at school.

VHCA DRESS CODE CONTINUED …

Field Trips: School Shirt *(current or previous years)* plus pants/jeans and sneakers with socks are to be worn on all field trips unless an exception is made by the school administration or school Board of Education. If the field trip occurs before September 30th or after May 1st, shorts may be worn in place of pants/jeans. The student's clothes should be **CLEAN, NEAT, MODEST** and **FREE OF HOLES.** The student's hair should be clean, brushed and pulled back out of their face.

School Functions:
Students are to ***adhere to the school dress code*** for **ALL** School Functions unless special permission is given by the school administration. This applies to **ANY** school related function that is either after school hours and/or is off the school premises.

If you are unsure of an item of clothing, please contact the office.

ENFORCEMENT OF THE DRESS CODE

It is our desire that the dress code be a non-issue in the life of our students. Compliance is more a matter of the heart than the written standard. All VHCA staff will be examples in the way they dress and will be committed to enforcing the dress code. The following actions will take place when an infraction occurs:

- **First Infraction:** Teacher meets and counsels the student involved. Parental notice sent home by teacher for a dress code violation, with acknowledgement of receiving it (signed and returned the next day).
- **Second & further Infractions:** For tops, the student will be provided with a new, plain colored t-shirt and the families account will be charge $5. For other infractions, the student will remain in the main office until a parent/guardian or family member/friend can bring the appropriate clothing for the student to wear.

Along with the discipline outlined above, the following shall occur:

- Male students will be counseled by male staff, and female students will be counseled by female staff.
- The School Board has the final authority on any other matters relating to the dress code.

We are called by God to view all life through the lens of Scripture. Therefore, we urge all parents and students to become familiar with the following passages as they relate to the decisions we make regarding our dress:

1. Glorify God in whatever we do (1 Corinthians 6: 19-20)
2. We all should be pursuing righteousness (2 Timothy 2: 22)
3. Consider how we are to build up the weaker person in Christ (Romans 14: 12-22)
4. Sacrifice our lives (our wants and desires) for God's glory (Romans 12: 1-2)
5. Outward appearance is a reflection of what we value (1 Peter 3: 3-4)
6. Our dress should be modest (1 Timothy 2: 9)
7. Do not seek the desires of the flesh (Romans 13: 14).

VISITORS

All Visitors: Safety of our students is a high priority. During school hours, all visitors, *including parents and/or other family members*, who wish to visit a student, a class, or a teacher are required to request a visit and receive permission ***prior*** to arriving at the school.

- All visitors must report to the main office to sign in and receive a visitor badge.
- Visitors are not allowed to go directly to a classroom.
- Items that need to be delivered to a student, teacher, or class are to be left in the school office for delivery.
- Parents are not to accompany their children into the classroom. The teachers need to begin class immediately and parents/visitors in the classroom create a distraction for both the students and the staff. *Please respect the teacher's instructional time and arrange for conferences following the dismissal of school.*

Student Visits: Students not registered at Valley Heights Christian Academy may visit with prior permission from the administrator or school board designee. The student's parent must contact the school prior to the non-VHCA student's visit. Only visits with a valid purpose will be approved. On the day of the visit, the visiting non-VHCA student will need to bring written permission from the student's parent and report to the office. Dress code regulations by the visitor need to be followed. (Often this is for students who visit when the parents are considering VHCA for their children.)

Classroom Visitors: Parents or guardians desiring to visit a certain class or classes may be granted permission to do so by the administrator or school board designee. A **written request needs to be submitted** to the school office stating the date, time, and length of visit as well as the nature of the visit.

We will attempt to accommodate such visits in a way that will create the least disturbance to the learning environment. All visitors to VHCA classrooms must, during the visit, conform to our school dress code.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

"If your brother or sister sins go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

- Matthew 18 principle

What do you do if you disagree with a policy, procedure, or person?

1. **PRAY** about the matter. Even if you are not in full agreement with some aspect of the dress code or any other school policy or section of the handbook, please support those who are charged with its enforcement.
2. **SPEAK WELL** of the school in front of your children. If the children hear a tone of bitterness, they will bring the same attitude to school.
3. **GO DIRECTLY** to the individual involved and discuss the situation. Should there be a resolution reached, there is no need for further discussion.
4. **CALL** the administrator or school board designee to share any concern *if* a resolution has not been reached by meeting with the individual involved. Please do this with the right spirit, and do not be guilty of gossip in the process. If the Matthew 18 principle has been circumvented, however, you will be encouraged in the proper direction. After the principle has been followed and there still isn't a resolution, you may request a meeting with the VHCA School Board.
5. **AVOID** a divisive attitude. Please help us to maintain a positive Christian testimony before the community in which we live by maintaining a positive attitude.