

Vineyard Christian School Handbook 2009-2010

It has been said that private education cannot exist without sacrifice and partnership. Since the year 2000, when the first students entered the Vineyard Christian School we have been blessed to explore that reality together. The Revolutionary futures and hopes toward which VCS students are headed are made possible by the sacrifice and partnership of the students, parents, members of the Vineyard Lewiston and the volunteers and staffs of the Vineyard Lewiston and the Vineyard Christian School.

Although policies and procedures cannot produce partnership, the following pages contain the expectations for codes of conduct and information that positively contribute to the environment of learning and growth that we're all partnering for. Students are responsible for understanding the content of the Student Handbook. The Student Handbook should be referenced and followed in the attitude of partnership in which it was created.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord. “Plans to prosper you and not to bring you harm; plans to give you a hope and a future.”

Proverbs 29:11

The Vineyard Christian School is committed to providing an affordable, quality education. It is our policy to use the best in educational curriculum and deliver it from a Christian worldview. This is rooted in our belief that it is people who shape the lives of students, not books. It is our desire to instruct students how to think critically, not what to think while sharing with them the Gospel that has changed our lives.



Handbook Contents

Academics

Report Cards/Progress Reports	p.3
Grade Promotion	p.3
Tutoring	p.3
“No Zero” Policy	p.3
Homework Expectations.	p.4
Grade Reporting	p.4
Parent/Teacher Conferences	p.4
Diploma Requirements	p.4

Attendance

School Hours	p.5
Excused Absences	p.5
Unexcused Absences	p.5
Planned Absences	p.5
Excessive Absences	p.5
Early Dismissal	p.6
Snow Days	p.6
Tardies	p.6
Senior Privileges	p.6

Code of Conduct

Disciplinary Model	p.7
Drug Policy	p.8
Cell Phones & Media Devices	p.8
Dress Code	p.9

Safety

Medical.	p.10
Transportation.	p.10
Recess	p.10
Lunches	p.10
Visitors.	p.10

Academics

Report Card/Progress Reports

Pre-school and Kindergarten grading scales and performance evaluations are at the discretion of the teacher. Teachers are required to report observations and progress in a written form each quarter. 1st - 12th grade teachers use the following VCS grading scale:

A	(93-100)
B	(84-92)
C	(76-83)
D	(68-75)
F	(below 68)

Grade promotion/retention

Students will be promoted to the next grade when a grade point average in all subjects for the year is a 68 GPA or better. In all possible retention cases, several factors are taken into account: past performance, SAT scores, individual needs, maturity, homework completion, parental input. The final decision lies with the faculty team including, but not limited to, the current teacher, future teacher and School Director.

Tutoring

The Vineyard Christian School staff strives to differentiate instruction in the classroom. However, some students lack foundational skills that are hampering their ability to achieve. In addition to better cooperation with the Lewiston Public School (LPS) special ed. department to identify students with special ed needs. I want VCS to be a place where we make resources available to students that struggle but that fall short of qualifying for special ed services.

A key distinctive for VCS is to be an academic environment that truly leaves no child behind. The VCS tutoring program is designed to connect VCS approved tutors with parents of students willing to hire them as a resource in addition to the normal instructional programs and remediations offered through VCS academics.

Students struggling with academic expectations may be identified for participation in the Tutoring Program by parents or VCS staff. Participation is on a voluntary basis. Parents accept the responsibility of paying for the tutoring services. Tutor information and tutoring contracts will be made available through the VCS office.

“No Zero” Policy (grades 7 and up)

Homework is an integral part of mastering concepts and identifying areas where help is needed. Some students have a difficult time with organization and/or concepts which result in assignments being handed in late. Giving students detentions and a second chance to complete the missed assignment has resulted in some students choosing to receive a zero instead of completing the assignment. This is a lose-lose situation. The student's grades suffer and the student cannot master the content. There is no such thing as an uncompleted assignment at VCS.

If a student doesn't complete their assignment when due, they will be required to work on it while eating their lunch in the classroom. If the assignment isn't completed by the end of the day, they will be required to complete it after school. If the assignment is not complete by 4:30 that day, they will be required to repeat the process the next day until the assignment is complete.

Parents will be notified by e-mail (or called if we don't have an e-mail address for you) if your student is required to stay for a mandatory study session.

Academics

Homework Expectations

Homework loads will vary throughout the year and vary by teacher style. Primary grade students often receive short homework assignments that should be completed in 15 minutes to half an hour.

Secondary school students (7-12) may expect to have between 1 to 2.5 hours of homework per night. Students are provided with sheets on which to record their daily assignments. Parents should be sure to check that students have written down their daily assignments and that students have their necessary materials to complete their assignments. Students are expected to manage longer term assignments to ensure that they don't leave them until the last minute. Students have a study hall on most days and many secondary school classes provide time at the end of the instruction period to work on assignments.

Grade Reporting

Grade reporting will happen on a regular schedule. Report cards will be mailed to parents at the conclusion of each semester and progress reports will be issued mid quarter.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences are normally scheduled for the week after progress reports. However, should a question or concern about your child's education arise between those scheduled meetings, contact the teacher in an attitude of partnership to find solutions. E-mail is usually the best way to contact a teacher, as they have varied instruction schedules. Teachers will respond in a timely manner to discuss options with you.

Diploma Requirements

VCS High School graduation requirements are intended to meet and exceed the prerequisites of state sanctioned secondary schools in Maine as we continue to graduate seniors who go on to attend state and private universities around the country.

English.....	4 credits
Mathematics.....	4 credits
Science.....	4 credits
Social Studies.....	2 credits
United States History.....	1 credit
Physical Education.....	1 credit
Fine Arts.....	1 credit
Foreign Language (same language both years).....	2 credits
Electives.....	4 credits

Students must be enrolled in a Bible course each semester.

Students 7-11 grade must be enrolled in 6 classes each year.

Juniors and Seniors may attend University classes and count them as credits toward graduation with prior approval from the director.

Attendance

School Hours

Consistent attendance is important at our school. Students are expected to be present in and appropriately prepared for classes at designated times.

School begins at 8:00 a.m. and concludes at 2:30 p.m. Morning Pre-K begins at 8:00 a.m. and concludes at 11:00 a.m. Full Day Pre-K begins at 8:00 a.m. and concludes at 2:30 p.m. After Care begins at 2:30 p.m. and concludes at 5:00 p.m.

Excused Absences

Absences are excused with a written note from a Parent/Guardian explaining the nature of the absence. Notes are due upon the student's return to school. Please call the school in the event of all excused absences as a safety measure to ensure whereabouts of your child. Excused absences are as follows:

1. Illness of the student
2. Critical illness in immediate family
3. Death in the family
4. Dental and medical appointments related to the student

Unexcused Absences

Students who are not in attendance at school or in their class and are unaccounted for by their parents/guardian may receive a one day in-school suspension upon the first incident. Consequences for repeated incidences may include dismissal from VCS.

Planned Absences

Planned absences can be very disruptive to a student's academic performance and should be avoided if possible. However, families who are planning an absence should notify the school office and their child(ren)'s classroom teacher(s) 2 weeks prior to ensure that their child has all necessary assignments and books. The timeline of completion for missed assignments is left up to the discretion of the teacher(s). The completion and timely submission of missed assignments is the responsibility of the family and student(s).

Excessive Absences

In compliance with the Maine state law, the following procedure concerning attendance will be adhered to:

Failure to attend 8 or more classes in a given semester may result in the loss of credit for that class in that specific semester. For example, if a student misses 8 math classes in one semester, they may lose credit for that class in that specific semester. If they only lose credit for that class for one semester, they may get $\frac{1}{2}$ a credit for the remaining semester as long as they obtain a passing grade.

After 5 absences, a meeting may be called with the teacher(s) and school director. Fifteen absences in the course of a single school year, whether excused or unexcused, may result in grade retention and loss of credit for courses taken. Extenuating circumstances will be examined by the director and staff.

When a student attends school for a $\frac{1}{2}$ day, the above rule still applies concerning credit loss for the classes missed. Once a student has reached 8 absences in one specific class in a semester, the credit for that class may be lost and it is recognized as a withdrawal due to attendance (WA).

Attendance (cont.)

Early Dismissal

If a child needs to be dismissed early, the office must be notified as soon as possible. Reasons for early dismissal are as follows:

1. Illness of the Student
2. Critical illness in immediate family
3. Death in the family
4. Dental and medical appointments related to the student

During the school year, school may be unexpectedly released early due to inclement weather, loss of power or water or other emergencies. In the event of an early dismissal, the VCS staff will contact parents by e-mail, phone and post an announcement on the school website www.vineyardschool.net. Parents should pick up their student or make other arrangements to have their student picked up within 2 hours of being notified of early dismissal.

Snow Days

School cancellations or delays due to snow days will be announced on all local news channels and posted on our website www.vineyardschool.net no later than 6:00 a.m. Many local news station websites also provide the ability to sign up for text messaging notification.

Tardies

A student will be considered tardy if he or she is not in homeroom by 8:00 a.m. Students are expected to be in and prepared for their classes on time. At one minute after the beginning of class, the student will be considered excessively tardy and will require a tardy slip from the office to return to class. Any unexcused tardies will result in a disciplinary point. Five unexcused tardies in a quarter will result in a detention. Continued tardies may result in a meeting with the parents, teacher, and director.

Senior Privileges

Vineyard Christian School seniors are eligible to leave campus after the first Progress Report of the year under the following conditions:

1. Parent Consent Form has been signed and is on file at the VCS office.
2. Student has a senior GPA of 90.0 or above.
3. The student may not leave campus during a scheduled class.
4. If a student with senior privileges leaves campus for lunch, they must return to campus and report to class on time. Failure to be in class on time will result in loss of senior privileges for the remainder of the quarter.
5. Student has not received more than 1 detention in the quarter or 3 detentions for the year.
6. Students may not leave with other students without written permission from both parents.
7. Male and female students may not leave campus together.
8. Students that exceed the behavior standard will lose senior privileges for the remainder of that quarter.
9. Students that fall below the GPA standard will have senior privileges suspended until their GPA meets or exceeds the standard.
10. Academic suspension of senior privileges will be a minimum of 2 weeks.

Code of Conduct

Disciplinary Model

Discipline at the Vineyard Christian School is designed to help students understand their behavior, how it affects the VCS environment, repair any damage done to relationships and develop habits that lead to different outcomes in the future. Discipline is done in partnership with, not instead of, parents.

Primary Grades

The emphasis in the primary grades (Pre-K through 6th grade) is helping students navigate social responsibility in a respectful way. Bullying, taunting, degrading or intimidating behaviors are dealt with by working with students to recognize, repair and re-orient to make better decisions. The VCS staff values honesty from students in dealing with disciplinary situations. As part of our partnership parents will be notified if patterns of behavior are identified by the VCS staff or if a student becomes physically violent with staff or other students.

Secondary Grades

The emphasis for the secondary grades (7th-12th grade) is on personal responsibility and good decision making. Students receive disciplinary points for minor infractions which may include, but are not limited to:

- Morning tardies
- Class tardies
- Classroom disruption
- Being unprepared for class
- Dress Code Violation

When a student receives a disciplinary point, parents are notified by e-mail so that they may partner with the VCS staff and student to recognize poor decision making and make the small course corrections necessary. Every 5 disciplinary points in a quarter will result in a detention on the following available detention day. At the beginning of each quarter, the disciplinary points are reset to 0. If a student is receiving an excessive amount of disciplinary points, the VCS staff and/or director may request an intervention meeting with parents to resolve the continued infractions.

The VCS staff may elevate consequences depending on the severity of the behavior. These consequences may include dismissal from the class (office visit), detention, or a meeting with the director. The most serious infractions which include, but are not limited to, physical violence or threats of violence, theft, destruction or VCS property, cheating, plagiarism, drug use/possession, may result in suspension or dismissal from VCS.

Code of Conduct (cont.)

Drug Policy

Students are not to be in possession of drugs, under the influence of drugs, or in possession of drug or tobacco paraphernalia. This policy is applicable to all students enrolled or visiting VCS. Students are responsible for abiding by the policy when attending any school sponsored activity or event on or off the Vineyard campus. All prescription medication should be stored in the office and under the administration of the secretary. We do not have a nurse on campus. It is up to the parents to administer medications. Teachers are not to dispense medication to students. In extreme circumstances, the school secretary will administer medication to children only if it is in the original bottle from the pharmacy and if the parent has signed the written medication permission slip and provided explicit written directions. Students are not to have any unaccounted medication in the school building during school hours.

Definitions

The term “drug” shall include alcohol, all tobacco products, illegal drugs, misused over-the-counter drugs, misused prescription drugs.

Consequences

Upon the first offense, the student may be suspended for at least 5, and up to , 10 school days. During this period, no credit will be given for any schoolwork missed. The student will not be allowed to participate in, or view, any extracurricular activities. The student will be re-admitted only when the following two conditions are met:

1. The parents consent to have two random drug tests (if appropriate to the policy violation) administered to their child and are willing to accept the financial responsibility for them. A positive test would be grounds for dismissal from VCS.
2. The parents will arrange for their child to receive appropriate professional counseling and give proof thereof.

Upon the second offense and/or selling, dealing or giving away drugs the student will be immediately dismissed from VCS and the police will be notified immediately.

Cell Phone/Media Devices

Cell phones and/or media devices are not permitted to be on during school hours for any reason. Students who bring cell phones and/or media devices must store them in their lockers during school hours. Violation of the cell phone and/or media device policy may result in immediate suspension of the student. In addition, the student will not be allowed to have a cell phone and/or media device in their possession for the rest of the school year. VCS bears no responsibility for the loss or damage of student’s cell phones and/or media devices.

Code of Conduct (cont.)

Dress Code

The Vineyard Christian School we value individual expression while maintaining the philosophy of “for the good of the whole.” Therefore, we do not have a private school uniform. Our dress code is based on the fact that most jobs require a standard of dress appropriate for work.

TOPS:

Tops must be one of 2 styles: Collared Polo or button-down Oxford. They may be any solid color with the exception of neons. Stripes and patterns are not considered compliant. Any visible logo or wording must take up less than 1 square inches total on the shirt.



Logos
No more than
< 1” square >

Girls must ensure tops are loose fitting and buttoned appropriately so as to show no cleavage. Boys must wear appropriate sizes and will be asked to tuck in shirts that hang too low.

LAYERS: Students may layer both under and on top of dress code tops. Layers other than the dress code top must be **solid white, dark blue, tan or black** in color with logos and lettering not to exceed **1 square inches**. Layers may not include any lace. Any official VCS apparel is considered dress code.

BOTTOMS: Dress code bottoms include skirts, capris, shorts and pants in **solid black, tan or dark blue** which should not exceed 2 inches above the knee. Bottoms should be loose-fitting without being baggy to prevent seeing any undergarments at any time. Cargo pants or jeans are not permitted. Midriffs and back are to be covered at all times. Non-lace leggings of solid black, white, tan or dark blue may be worn with dress code bottoms.

SHOES: Slippers and flip-flops are not permitted as part of VCS dress code. Students must wear closed-toed footwear.

ACCESSORIES: Jewelry and accessories are permitted as long as they do not become a distraction to the students or staff. Students are **not** permitted to wear face piercings during school hours or at extra-curricular events.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE: If a student comes to school in violation of the dress code, the student will be dismissed from class until parents arrive. The student must be taken home and return in proper dress-code for the remainder of the day. Classes missed during this time will be considered unexcused. Upon a second-dress code violation, the student will be dismissed for the remainder of the day with an unexcused absence. Further violations of VCS dress-code **may** result in suspensions or permanent dismissal.

Safety

Medical

If an incident should arise where a student requires medical attention, the secretary will first attempt to call the parent. If the parent can not be reached, the secretary will call the family doctor listed on the emergency numbers sheet. In the event that the parent cannot be reached, or if the medical emergency does not permit time to contact parents, an appropriate VCS staff person will seek emergency medical care for the student.

Students are not to carry over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medications at VCS. All OTC or prescription medication should be stored in the office and under the administration of the secretary. Teachers are not to dispense medication to students. In extreme circumstances, the school secretary will administer OTC or prescription medication to children only if it is in the original bottle from the pharmacy and if the parent has verbally authorized and/or signed the written medication permission slip and provided explicit written directions.

Transportation

Each family is responsible for the prompt drop off and pick up of their child daily. We do realize that transportation can be an issue for families. If you would like to participate in a carpool, we would be happy to assist you in making carpool arrangements. Students that drive themselves should be responsible at all times or face the loss of the privilege to drive on campus. Student pick-up is between 2:30 and 2:45. Students not picked up by 2:45 will be placed in our After-School Care services which are made available to families until 5:00 p.m. for a small hourly fee.

Recess

Students in grades PreK-6th will participate in recess daily. Students should come to school in and with appropriate outdoor attire for the existing weather. Students will not go outside if the temperature with wind-chill is below 10 degrees. Students may not bring ice skate, skateboards or snowboards to VCS.

Lunches

Students should bring cold lunches daily. Microwaves are available for use by students. The Vineyard Christian School does not provide utensils on days where hot lunch is not served. The hot lunch program will be offered on a regular schedule, pending the consistent support of 5 or more volunteers. Hot lunch tokens can be purchased in advance for \$3 per meal.

Visitors

We encourage and welcome parents to visit at school. Please be sensitive to the teacher and make arrangements prior to your desired visit date. Always register at the office before heading to your child's classroom. Secondary school students (high school) may not have students from other schools visit at VCS between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. without written permission from parents and approval of the director.