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VERITAS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Parent Handbook

2019 - 2020

6 Loker Street, Wayland, MA 01778

www.veritasma.org

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ATTENDANCE -TARDIES, ABSENCES AND EARLY DISMISSALS

We understand that doctor's visits, and family events such as weddings or funerals may occasionally require that students miss some hours in the school day. However, it is Veritas policy that all students in 1st to 8th grades must attend school from 8:30 am to 3:05 pm (JK-2), or 3:15 pm (3rd-8th grade).

Therefore, please be aware that every *Absence*, *Tardy* and *Early Dismissal* will be considered *Unexcused*. An excused absence, tardy or early dismissal will be given with a doctor's note. Please bring the note to Reception Desk or email with a PDF attachment to Amber Thomas (athomas@veritasma.org). Children who were absent due to illness will have as many days to make up homework as they were absent.

Please note that students may not be dismissed early on a recurring basis, unless they are leaving to receive therapy or special needs support which has been communicated and pre-approved by the Veritas administration.

If you know your child is going to be *Absent*, *Tardy* or require an *Early Dismissal*:

- Please email (athomas@veritasma.org) or call the school phone at 508-653-1188 by 8:00 am with the following information:
 - The date; child's name; child's grade; reason for absence; telephone number where caller can be reached.
 - If a child is absent without notice, Veritas will contact you by phone at the number you have supplied.
 - Please notify Veritas every additional day that your child is home sick.
- Amber Thomas will forward this information to the staff by 9:00 am.

If a child arrives after 8:30 am (8:31 am and later), s/he is considered *Tardy* and will need to:

- Sign in on the ledger by the reception desk
- Receive a *Tardy* slip to bring into class
- Check in with a teacher or classmate about work and notes from any missed class time

If you are requesting an *Early Dismissal*, please:

- Email ahead to Amber Thomas (athomas@veritasma.org), cc'd to Michelle Dean (mdean@veritasma.org), with the reason for the early release
- Sign your child out on the ledger at reception

- Ensure your child contacts the teacher or a fellow student about any missed work

In case of Missed School Days due to Family Vacation

- Please email Amber Thomas, who will forward the information to Veritas staff.
- These absences are considered unexcused absences.
- Your child’s teachers will forward the homework over the course of the child’s absence.
- Homework due during the vacation will be due one day after the date of your return. We strongly encourage completing it ahead of time or during the vacation.

Excessive Tardies and Absences

- *More than 8 unexcused Tardies per Term* will require a meeting with the Principal.
- *More than 5 unexcused Absences per Term* will require a meeting with the Principal.
- Please note that *Tardies*, and *Absences* are reported on student report cards and transcripts and sent to any private high school your child applies to in the future. We have had inquiries about excessive tardiness and absences in the past.
- *Early Dismissals* adding up to 14 half days or 7 full days will result in a letter to the family which will become part of the student’s file.
- The administration reserves the right to exclude students from class activities if they show persistent, excessive tardiness and/or unexcused absences.

STARTING & ENDING YOUR DAY – ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Before Care 7:30 – 8:15 am

Please Drop off your child no earlier than 7:30 am at Veritas entrance.

BOKS, Band and other Early Morning Activities 7:30- 8:15 am

Please drop off your child at the location specified by the teacher leading the morning activity.

Drop-Off Process – 8:15-8:30 am

Please drop off your child on the East side of the building (Loker Street) in the Fire Lane, between 8:15 and 8:30 am. Please do NOT drop your child off at the front door (Route 30, South Side), as we have a contract with Little Lamb which prohibits this. Any students dropped off before 8:15 am must remain outside the Veritas front door. If they enter the building or join Before-Care, they will be charged the Before-Care fee.

Pick-Up Process

- 3:05 pm: JK-2 students
- 3:15 pm: 3-8 Grade students
- 3:15 pm: if you have children of both ages

The Pick-Up Line is at the top of the Loker Street entrance (playground side of the building). Please display a sign with your last name on it in your front window so that the teachers who handle dismissal will see your name and dismiss your child to your car. Pick-up ends at 3:25 pm. If you have not arrived by 3:25 pm, your child will be sent to After-Care.

Children will only be released to individuals listed on their Pick-Up Authorization Form.

EXTENDED CARE / AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

After-Care 3:15-5:30 pm

Please contact Deirdre Lewis (dlewis@veritasma.org) or Michele Adams (madams@veritasma.org) if you have questions about After-Care. After-Care begins at the Upper School dismissal time and lasts until 5:30 pm. Please be prompt to pick up your children as we will assess a \$50 fee for late pick-up beyond 5:30 pm. Repeated late pick-ups will result in a formal warning and could result in a loss of After-Care privileges.

After-School Activities - 3:30-4:15 PM

Please contact Bethany Carnes for more information about After-School Activities. There are 3 sessions of After-School Activities, Fall, Winter and Spring. Sign-ups occur a few weeks prior to the beginning of each session. Information about each activity and its location will be provided so that you can enroll your child. Pick-up will take place at the normal Veritas pick-up location.

PRESENCE OF STUDENTS IN BUILDING OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS

ALL Students remaining at Veritas after pick-up must either be in After-Care, in an After-School activity, or released to the care of a staff member (with the staff member's pre-approval) at all times.

SCHOOL CANCELLATION/DELAYED START/ EARLY DISMISSAL

While we use the town of Wayland as a guideline, Veritas makes school closing or delay decisions independently.

We also make every effort to let families know as early as possible if there will be a weather-related cancellation, delayed start or early dismissal, but occasionally uncertain weather makes an early decision impossible. At the LATEST, Veritas will announce school closings or delayed starts due to inclement weather via email no later than 6:00 am. We will also post them on the Veritas web site and provide notice to Channel 5 news (WCVB), Fox25 and NECN.com. We will make every attempt to give prompt notice of any early dismissals.

As our school year is shorter than public schools and we do not add days to the end of the school year, if there are excessive weather closures in a given year, we may require students to complete work during a given closure to ensure that we do not miss covering key portions of the curriculum. Communication about taking work home will be made by the end of the school day prior to the expected closure.

We respectfully request that parents not call, text or email teachers and administrators to check the status of a snow cancellation or inform them of town closures.

EMERGENCY PLAN – FIRE, SHELTER IN PLACE, STAY SAFE DRILL (LOCKDOWN)

We are committed to keeping our staff and students safe. Our emergency management plan includes three scenarios to allow for appropriate response and flexibility. Our goal is always to assess the situation and mobilize everyone to follow protocol for evacuation, shelter-in-place, or lock-down plans to maintain the safest environment.

We rehearse the protocol for each of these three plans, known among students as the fire drill, shelter-in-place, and stay safe drills, at least one time annually.

Our school benefits from this practice and the opportunity it provides to further evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our emergency plans.

SICKNESS, DISPENSING MEDICATION, INJURIES, ALLERGIES WITHIN THE SCHOOL DAY, CONCUSSIONS POLICY

When to Keep My Child Home

If your child is sick, it is vitally important that s/he remain at home for the health of others and for your child to have time to rest and recover more quickly.

Any child with the following symptoms needs to be kept home and will be sent home if at school:

1. A morning temperature of 100 °F, with no Advil or Tylenol within the last 6-8 hours. A child needs to be fever free for at least 24 hours to return to school.
2. A contagious rash
3. Vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours
4. A severe cough

A Parent may be Called to Pick -up a Child if:

1. A child develops a fever during the school day.
2. A child vomits during the course of the school day or complains of nausea.
3. A child is hurt on the playground and it is determined he should get checked by a doctor.
4. A child is found to have symptoms of an infection such as pink-eye.
5. A child shows symptoms of an allergic reaction, even if treated.
6. A child shows any other symptoms which, in the sole judgment of the administration, indicate that a parent should be called.

DISPENSING MEDICATION OR FIRST AID DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Since Veritas does not have a school nurse on staff, the school cannot legally provide anything more than band-aids or ice packs during the school day. If a child is found to have a tick or splinter during the course of the school day, a parent will be contacted to come to the school to remove it. Veritas is also prohibited from dispensing medication to our students without explicit consent of a healthcare provider and the child's family.

- **Medication orders must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.**
- **All medications require**
 1. **a written order** from the health care provider and
 2. **a written parent/guardian consent form.** This includes all daily medications, both prescription and over the counter (OTC) medications. Must Include: Medication Name, Dosage, Time to Dispense, and possible side effects to be aware of.
 3. **All medication must be supplied in the correctly labeled original pharmacy container** and have the child's name and physician's names on it, if appropriate.
- **All medication must be stored in the front office,** along with a copy of the prescription.

- **Ibuprofen/Acetaminophen administration:** may be administered to an individual child with a written order from the health care provider and written consent from the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian must supply the acetaminophen or ibuprofen in the original pharmacy container.
- **For medication delivery,** the parent/guardian must provide chewable or liquid medication, if their child is unable to swallow tablets. Parents must also supply the spoon or dispensing cup where appropriate.
- **Prescribed ointments should also contain the pharmacy or manufacturer's label,** and be applied with disposable gloves and cotton balls or gauze by the child.
- **For safety reasons, students should never transport medication to and from school or keep medicine in their possession during the school day.** The parent/guardian or an authorized adult are requested to deliver medication to the school office. Exception to this policy is the "self-administration" consent, which allows students to carry their personal inhaler and/or EpiPen and self-administer as directed. Consent from their health care provider and parent/guardian are required for the self-administration order.
- **Epinephrine (Epi-Pen) by auto-injector** to students with identified severe allergic reactions must have an allergy-action plan on file and a signed written consent from the parent and health care provider.
- **Inhaler/Asthma Related Treatment:** must have an asthma action plan on file and a signed consent from the parent and health care provider.
- **Biometric Testing:** (i.e. Peak flow or blood sugar determinations) parents will be responsible for supervising this process in person (or by telephone for older students).
- **At the end of the year, all medications must be picked up by a parent/guardian.** Any medications not picked up will be discarded.

CONCUSSION POLICY

A concussion is a brain injury and ALL concussions are serious. A concussion may be defined as the immediate and transient impairment of neurological function. It may be a consequence of an individual's head striking an object (floor, another head, etc.), an object striking the head (ball, another head, bat, ball, stick etc.) or as a result of a sudden change of the direction of the head and neck (whiplash type of injury).

Veritas Christian Academy strongly encourages medical assessment for all symptomatic head injuries, regardless of where they may have occurred. If a concussion is diagnosed by the student's physician, the student may need some or all of the following interventions during his/her recovery post-concussion

1. Excused Absences from Class and/or a shortened school day
2. Rest periods during the school day
3. Extra time to complete assignments, extensions on deadlines
4. Postponement or staggering of tests

5. May need to be excused from specific tests/assignments
6. May need extended time to complete tests
7. Accommodation for oversensitivity to Light and/or Noise
 - a. May be allowed to wear a visor/hat or sunglasses
 - b. May eat lunch in a quieter area than the cafeteria or in a quiet classroom
 - c. May wear sunglasses
 - d. Turn down/off fluorescent lights in classroom
 - e. The student may NOT go to recess or sports practices until they have a doctor's note authorizing them to do so; during those times, the student should rest.
 - f. If the student requires, the option of providing a "reader" or book on tape will be explored by the guidance counselor and academic staff.
 - g. The student may need a "note taker", the "note taker" will be a peer in that student's class assigned by the teacher.
 - h. If the student is able to partake in exams, he/she should be given a quiet area to take the exam, similar to students who have testing accommodations for ADHD.
 - i. The teacher should have student sit in the front of the classroom setting.
 - j. Student may need some peer or staff support to assist with organizational skills and academic support.

Veritas will comply with guidance provided by the student's personal physician in managing interventions (if any), and progress toward the student's clearance to return to a normal workload and participation.

INJURIES DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Any injury sustained by a child during school hours will be attended to immediately by Veritas staff, and any injury requiring treatment beyond the permitted level of first aid will require Veritas to contact a parent to attend to their child. Any teacher who witnesses an injury will complete and sign an Injury Report. The Injury report will be reviewed and approved by an administrator, and a copy of it given to the parent.

ALLERGY POLICY

Veritas is strengthening its nut policy to a **school-wide nut aware policy**. New statistics released by the Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) organization show that the number of anaphylactic events at school are increasing. Specifically, anaphylactic events at school occur **46.6% in the classroom**, 19.9% in the cafeteria, and 9.7% on the playground. Our school community recognizes the risks and is working toward policies that keep our students safe.

This policy requires that all lunches and snacks, during field trips or school wide events, in grades TK-8, whether supplied by Veritas or by parents, be nut-free in its ingredients. Snacks that were made in a factory which also processed other nut-containing foods are allowable.

- Products that contain nuts are NOT allowed. This means the product itself is made with a nut or nut product/butter.
- Products that do not contain nuts but have cross-contamination warning labels about shared processing areas ARE allowed. Some of the cross-contamination warning labels you typically see on food labels can include:
 - “manufactured/processed on shared equipment with nuts”
 - “manufactured/processed in a facility that processes nuts”
 - “may contain nuts”
- All grades and all lunches have nut free tables in the cafeteria.
- Students should eat only at designated snack times in middle school classrooms: 9:35, 1:35.
- There is no eating at all in common areas especially during recess or dismissal.

Please remember that ALL Veritas community-wide events MUST BE NUT-FREE!

STUDENT RECORDS/CONFIDENTIALITY

Veritas retains and continually updates student records including report cards, health reports, standardized testing and Individualized Education Programs . All records are strictly confidential and remain in a locked filing cabinet in the office. Records may be released to another party if the family provides Veritas a “Release of Student Records” form. Please allow two weeks for processing.

WHO TO GO TO FOR WHAT:

Absences & Tardies:	Amber Thomas
Student Records	Michelle Dean
Uniforms:	Bethany Carnes
Lunches:	Michelle Dean
Field Trips:	Jocelyn Rosa
SMART Payments:	Jocelyn Rosa
High School Advising:	Lisa Cerci
Class or in-school fundraising:	Cindy Wellman
Academic Concerns:	Your Child’s teacher/Lisa Gerdes
Behavior Concerns:	Your Child’s teacher/Cindy Wellman

VCA SCHOOL FINANCIAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

TUITION PAYMENTS & DEPOSITS

Annual Tuition:

VCA offers different tuition costs for our Elementary (JK-4) and Junior High (5th-8th) grades. Additionally, VCA offers a part-time JK options for families looking for a Kindergarten program for their children who are 4 years 9 months (by Sept. 1st) or who are Kindergarten age but who developmentally need to be in a classroom which allows for more movement and hands-on activities. Please note that each family is contractually obligated to pay full tuition upon enrollment or re-enrollment.

Payment Plans:

VCA uses Smart Tuition to bill and process payments for all tuition and fees. Smart Tuition allows us to offer three payment options to our families: annual, bi-annual, and ten month. Tuition rates for each school year are set in January by the Board of Trustees and announced during Re-enrollment Night. ***Annual tuition costs must be paid in full before enrollment for the following fiscal year. Please also note that, as stated on the enrollment form, families are contractually obligated to pay full tuition, even if they choose to withdraw their child from Veritas.*** The payment options are a courtesy but the re-enrollment form is a contractual obligation stating that full tuition will be paid, either as a lump sum or through a payment plan.

Smart Tuition:

Smart Tuition is a billing and payment processing system VCA uses to easily manage tuition and fees throughout the school year. All families are required to set up a Smart Tuition account upon enrollment by going to **www.enrollwithsmart.com** and using **our school code 11041**. Smart Tuition provides parents with online access to view and pay balances at any time. There is an annual \$50/administration fee per school year, which is collected with your first tuition payment.

Enrollment Deposits For New Students:

In addition to submitting an enrollment contract, a deposit of \$1,000 per student, applicable toward tuition, is required to reserve a place for the next academic year. Deposits are due immediately upon acceptance via a check payable to Veritas Christian Academy.

Enrollment Deposits For Returning Students:

In addition to submitting a re-enrollment contract, a deposit of \$500 per student, applicable toward tuition, is required to reserve a place for the next academic year. Deposits will be deducted via Smart Tuition on March 15th.

FINANCIAL AID

Need-Based Financial Aid:

Each year, VCA offers need-based tuition assistance to qualifying families as set forth by the FACTS Aid Assessment guidelines. All families desiring to be considered for financial aid MUST complete the annual application by visiting online.factsmgt.com/aid and uploading the necessary paperwork by the designated deadlines. Financial aid is provided solely to subsidize tuition costs and therefore does not reduce other costs associated with attending VCA. Aid is distributed on a rolling basis, however awards are subject to available funding.

FEES

Required Annual Fees:

Veritas charges various fees as outlined below on September 15 unless otherwise noted.

The Supply Fee is charged to students in grades JK-8 and covers all textbooks, workbooks, binders, and notebooks for core curriculum classes, as well as supplies used for specials, such as one gym t-shirt.

The Tech Fee is charged to students in grades 5-8 and covers all technology maintenance and software licensing expenses associated with the Junior High curricula.

The Academic Field Trip Fee is charged to students in grades JK-8 and covers ALL of the field trips students will attend during a given school year. The fee will vary by grade and paid over nine monthly installments beginning September 15th and ending June 15th.

The Veritas Parent Association Fee supports all VPA activities throughout the school year.

The Student Services Fee (as needed): Families with students who receive on-site support from Veritas staff for IEP-specified or other special needs will receive a form detailing services and the associated costs which are added to the tuition.

Optional Fees:

Your family may choose to participate in additional activities or purchase other items throughout the school year which result in additional fees. Such activities and items include but are not limited to Extended Care, Enrichment Activities, hot lunches, spirit wear, school pictures, parent-volunteer opt-out fee, chaperone fees and yearbooks. Such fees will be billed to your Smart Tuition account as incurred. ***Please note that this list is not entirely inclusive and is meant to provide families with a sense of the type and variety of fees they may incur as a result*

of their child's participation. Any additional costs will be communicated to you when the activity or item option is communicated.

Who to Contact With Additional Questions:

Should you have additional questions regarding financial issues, please contact Mrs. Jocelyn Rosa, Finance Manager at Veritas Christian Academy by phone at (508) 653-1188 or via email at Jrosa@veritasma.org.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY

Every staff member of Veritas Christian Academy is a mandated reporter of child abuse and must report any suspicion to an administrator. Veritas will investigate any and all instances of suspected abuse and/or neglect, and if found credible, reported to DSS.

LUNCH ORDERS

If you wish to order a meal for your child, Veritas sends a form describing the lunch offerings to all families approximately two weeks before the beginning of each new term. Each order lasts for the whole term. Once orders are placed with our vendors, they cannot be changed. The cost of all lunch orders will be charged to each family's SMART account.

SNACKS

We hope all students come to Veritas having eaten a healthy breakfast, but we recognize that many have eaten early and can get very hungry during the middle of the morning. Therefore, we leave time for a mid-morning snack. We strongly encourage families to pack healthy snacks for their children. Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Please remember ALL snacks must be Nut-Free.
- Please do not send candy.
- In the 5th-8th grades, snacks are allowable during the second morning and afternoon periods at the discretion of each teacher. Please do not send overly messy or noisy snacks (such as chips), since snacks are eaten during instruction time and not during a break.

BIRTHDAYS

Veritas loves to celebrate student birthdays! We find it is a wonderful way to celebrate each child on their special day. If you would like to bring something in for your child's birthday, please be mindful of each teacher's guidelines for their classroom, remembering that anything you send **MUST** be nut-free. Please also check for other allergies with your child's teacher, as there may be allergies to eggs, gluten, etc. and make sure to provide an alternative which is safe for all students in that classroom. Non-food items such as small prizes are also great, instead of sweets! Please check in with your child's teacher in grades JK-4. In grade 5, please email Jodi Shippey and Melissa Wyatt, and in grade 6, Marah Snoeyink. In grades 7th/8th, please email Natasha Shumila and Nancy Reid.

TOYS

We discourage bringing toys to school as they tend to create more problems than benefits for a child. However, if you feel your child must bring a toy to school, for any reason other than show-and-tell, please check first with your child's teacher.

TECHNOLOGY USE ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

We believe that technology is a positive tool that can enhance the educational experience. However, when misused, it can get in the way of education and relationships.

All students need to use self-control with assigned laptops and use them only for school assignments or as directed by their teachers. Upper School students will bring home and sign, along with their parents, a form which clearly states acceptable use parameters for School Computers. If misused, students may lose their laptops for at least one week and be required to handwrite all assignments during that time.

The technology fee charged to families is applied to annual computer maintenance. Any student who damages a computer beyond repair will be charged a \$200 replacement fee. If the computer can be repaired, a fee not exceeding \$200 will be charged to restore it to its original working state.

ELECTRONICS (CELL PHONES, IPADS, IPODS, KINDLES)

From experience, we have learned that allowing electronics during school hours opens the door to too many behaviors that impair the school experience, both academically and socially. Consequently, the Veritas policy is that no electronic devices including cell phones, ipads, ipods, kindles(even paper white) and the like are allowed during school hours. Any student who

willfully ignores this policy will have their electronic device confiscated and brought to the office and may be put on probation.

FIELD TRIP POLICY

Field trips are an extension of the curriculum and Veritas thrives on finding field trips that will provide enjoyment and be a genuine education, sparking excitement for an area of study. Parents who would like to be eligible to chaperone at least one of their child's field trips must do the following:

1. Sign up at the beginning of the year as a volunteer chaperone and driver.
2. Agree to undergo a CORI check.
3. Submit a copy of their car insurance to ensure sufficient coverage.

Once a classroom has several approved chaperones, the classroom teacher will schedule a short training session to explain the responsibilities required of chaperones on a field trip.

CHAPERONE POLICY & REQUIREMENTS

Veritas carefully chooses a handful of field trips in keeping with our curriculum, and they are often a highlight of a child's year and a very memorable experience. Choosing to chaperone is a huge responsibility, as chaperone will be serving in the place of a child's guardian in an unfamiliar environment and will be responsible for the safe transportation of children to and from the field trip, and during the field trip, making sure they eat a snack or meal, behave appropriately and remain happily engaged with their classmates. As such, we need all parents to consistently follow the Veritas policy set below:

1. Field trip chaperones are expected to be in professional and appropriate dress. The chaperone is acting in the role of an additional teacher and should be dressed accordingly.
2. Please plan to be a participant in the whole trip, door to door, with your assigned children.
3. Please arrive promptly to the classroom at the designated time so that the teacher can give you your assigned "group" and can give you information about the particulars of your responsibilities on the trip.
4. If driving, ensure students use safety belts properly (over the shoulder, not under the armpit) and are respectful passengers that allow you to focus on driving.
5. Your car insurance must be approved by Michelle Dean in the Main Office to drive students.
6. Once there, help students participate in the field trip program by making sure they are on task, listening attentively, following directions, and completing the activities assigned. Please also ensure the students are being socially inclusive of each other.

7. Chaperones are responsible for the behavior of the students in their group. This means that the students are a polite audience, respect property, clean up after themselves, follow the “rules” of the place they are visiting, and never act in an unruly way.
8. Stay with your students at all times. If it is a trip where students need to walk from place to place, stay with your group – do not allow students to go from one place to another unsupervised.
9. If a student needs to use a restroom, please send the student with a buddy or use the facilities as a group.
10. It is important to have a cell phone on you at all times in the event of an emergency, but please do not use it to engage in business or personal matters while supervising children.
11. Meet promptly at the area designated by the teacher for lunch or departure.
12. All chaperones must return promptly to school. They cannot take extra time at the field trip destination or make stops on the way.

STUDENT CONDUCT

The Veritas Student Conduct Policy focuses on teaching students there are three reasons for good behavior:

1. RESPECT for administrators, teachers, and fellow students
2. SELF-CONTROL over words, actions, and thoughts
3. KINDNESS as the guiding principle for behavior choices

We are highly aware that good conduct begins with the heart, and is at the core, voluntary. Therefore, Veritas discipline will seek to influence the will and desire of a child to obey for the right reasons - out of a sense of relationship to staff, God, and friends. We recognize that this takes time and so while working on the heart, students will be required to maintain a class and hallway atmosphere that meets our expectations of respect and self-control.

Discipline will be conducted keeping in mind the spirit of Veritas policies and the innate ability of each child to control their speech and body and their stage of development. Discipline will require compliance, but it will also emphasize the “why’s” and investigate the thinking and circumstances keeping a child from compliance.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

Your teacher will communicate with you several times throughout the year through regular newsletters. They will see you at Curriculum Night and will meet with you twice for Parent/Teacher Conferences, once in the Fall after Term 1 and once in the Spring after Term 3. Your child's teacher will also notify you if they see praiseworthy behavior they would like to share with you and, at times, behavior or academic concerns which they would like to bring to your attention.

We like to stay in close touch with our families. If you have any concerns or questions, please email your child's teacher and they will respond, usually within 24 hours.

ANTI BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING POLICY

Veritas will promptly investigate all reports of bullying.

We believe in being preventative, catching early behaviors that can communicate disapproval or rejection to other students. We also believe in teaching inclusion from an early age to help prevent bullying behaviors. However, we are not surprised when we see students overstepping the line since it is often developmentally appropriate for children at certain stages to tend toward some aggressive activity. Some do this intentionally but others do not have the maturity to realize the impact of their actions on their peers or perhaps the extent of the hurt they can cause. When such situations occur, we use these moments as a teaching opportunity to enlighten students as to the effect of their actions.

It is also important to remember that some students are extremely sensitive and can perceive slights where others would not. We are very careful not to ignore that sensitivity but if, after intensive investigation, the Administration is satisfied that a behavior unintentionally communicated aggression, it will communicate to the hurt child that this was not intentional and also communicate to the person who caused it that they need to respect that student's sensitivity without seeing it as a weakness, and alter their behavior out of kindness to that student.

Any behavior that actively threatens another child's physical or emotional safety, and which does not change with reasonable discipline, will not be tolerated and will have serious consequences.

Definition of Bullying and distinction from Aggressive Behavior.

Bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;

- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process.

For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyberbullying.

It is important for all members of the school community to understand that conflict and/or aggressive behavior are not automatically synonymous with bullying. Aggressive behavior, which can include arguing, teasing, bantering back-and-forth, ignoring, roughhousing and fighting, while potentially serious forms of conflict, are not necessarily instances of bullying.

Bullying is characterized by intention, repetition and power imbalance. Not every conflict meets these criteria.

“Cyber-bullying” - is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, cell phone text messaging, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include

- the creation of an electronic presence such as a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or
- the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated above, as part of the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to one or more persons or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated above as part of the definition of bullying. Bullying and Aggressive behavior can be physical or verbal, and can include *malicious* exclusion from a social group.

Some healthy conflict and disagreement is a normal part of everyday life, but **Veritas DOES NOT tolerate either bullying or aggression which makes a child feel hurt or unsafe, and in either instance:**

1. An Administrator meets with all children involved, first separately and then together to discuss what has occurred.
2. If it is Veritas' judgment that bullying or aggression has not occurred, a record of the discussion will be communicated to the family and the administrator will be available for follow-up if the family would like to have further discussion about the event.
3. If it is determined that Bullying or aggression has occurred, a subsequent meeting/contact with each family will be scheduled to discuss as applicable how to

support and protect the individual who was hurt and how to discipline the child or children who engaged in the bullying or aggression.

4. A child who has put another student at risk of physical or emotional safety may be disciplined depending on the severity of the event and/or its repetition as follows:
 - Period of detention or in-school suspension with discussion about what they have done and why it is serious, and requiring an attempt at restoration with the student who was injured.
 - Behavior probation - removal from recess, and before and after-school activity for a period of up to two weeks
 - If such a behavior is repeated, Veritas will consider both an out-of-school suspension and in serious cases, expulsion.

GENERAL ACADEMIC INFORMATION -

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND POLICIES

Grading Scale Used by Veritas Christian Academy

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Equivalent GPA</u>
A+	97%	4.3
A	93%	4.0
A-	90%	3.7
B+	87%	3.3
B	83%	3.0
B-	80%	2.7
C+	77%	2.3
C	73%	2.0
C-	70%	1.7
D+	67%	1.3
D	63%	1.0
D-	60%	0.7
F	< 60%	0

Class Designations – Standard vs. Honors Classes

Standard Classes

Veritas classes are designated as “Standard” level, unless specifically designated as “Honors”, as listed below.

Honors Classes

Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II are, by default, considered Honors level classes because of the extent and depth of the curriculum. If the number of students is too high in Pre-Algebra and Algebra I, two levels will be offered, a “Standard” and an “Honors” level. The Standard level will cover a little less material to allow more time to cover the most critical

concepts and may not offer the hardest problems for homework. However, both classes are still considered rigorous.

Honors Latin 8 with the Wheelock curriculum is considered an Honors level class.

It should be noted, however, that any student who maintains an “A” in a given subject at Veritas should easily be eligible for an Honors level class in that subject in High School.

Eligibility for advanced classes - Accelerating in Math and in Languages

Veritas offers students the opportunity to accelerate in Math, Latin and in some cases, Spanish, if the student demonstrates (1) an interest in the subject and (2) the ability to do the work required without undue stress on their schedule or family life.

Accelerating in Math

Veritas scheduling allows for the whole school to take Math at the same time, leaving room for students to take Math at their natural level, wherever it may fall. The baseline Veritas curriculum is accelerated over the public school timetable by one year, and follows the trajectory below:

Math K (in JK) -> Math 1-> Math 2> Math 3-Math 4- >Math 65
> Math 76 -> Math 87 (*may be skipped – see note below*) -> Pre-Algebra ->Algebra I
->Geometry* -> Algebra II*

**Considered advanced if completed by 8th Grade*

Since the baseline math level for each grade level at Veritas is accelerated already, it is rare for JK-4 students to test into a higher level, or to be accelerated. When it occurs, it is usually because their teacher reports a student to be unusually far ahead, and their aptitude includes both ease of concepts, and high accuracy, as reflected in their assessments. When students move up at this age, they do not skip a curriculum, but they may do the next level in parallel with their current curriculum, taking the required assessments at school to demonstrate mastery of the material.

After a student has completed Saxon Math 76, most often given in 5th grade, *there is an option to skip Math 87 and go directly into Pre-Algebra. In order to do so, the student must demonstrate a strong “A” (93% or above) on assessments.*

98% of our students will complete Algebra I by completion of 8th grade. About 20-25% also complete Geometry. Only 1-2% will have completed Algebra II.

Accelerating in Spanish

Veritas offers enrichment in Spanish for those students who are bilingual and need more of a challenge in reading and writing. If the staffing is available, Veritas provides an additional class for native speakers. Where it is not available, the teacher works on an individual plan for those students. Parents of bilingual students should reach out to their child's teacher for more information.

Accelerating in Latin

Students who would like to accelerate in Latin may have the option to skip 7th grade Latin after an excellent performance in 6th grade Latin (strong and consistent average of 95% or more. This allows them to progress to Wheelock Latin by 8th grade, a course equivalent to Latin II in High School. It is important to note that making this jump requires that the student love the language, as the difficulty and volume of work involved means that the student be highly self-motivated.

Homework Policy

There are many contradictory views about homework being promoted in the media, many addressing valid concerns. Too much homework can create unhealthy stress on a child and on a family. Too little makes it difficult for students to achieve mastery in key skill areas. We strive for a moderate quantity of homework, which focuses on skill development rather than busy work.

Homework's inherent value is that it is the time when a student makes what they learned in class their own. It is therefore very important that homework be viewed to be more about effort and less about perfection, so that students develop the courage to try hard things. We ask our families to help ensure students finish their homework, and of course, to help if the child asks for help, but not to push their children to do perfect homework.

We aim for the following average daily homework, recognizing that it will vary depending on the student. In grades 3 and higher, these homework times are mitigated by daily study halls and time given in class to start work. Please also note that students in accelerated classes will often have homework on the higher end of this range.

Kindergarten	5-10 minutes per day
1 st /2 nd grade	15-25 minutes per day
3 rd /4 th grade	35-50 minutes per day
5 th /6 th grade	55-70 minutes per day
7 th /8 th grade	75-95 minutes per day

Incompletes, Makeup work

Occasionally, a student will end the term with an Incomplete, usually due to an unusual circumstance such as an extended illness or injury. When this occurs, the student can work with their teacher to make up the work in order to end the term in good standing.

RENWEB Database

Student information including address, phone number, health and academic information is stored on the Veritas Database or Renweb. It may be accessed by families through an application called Parentsweb. A login to Parentsweb is provided to each family at the beginning of each academic year. Please update your contact information frequently so that you can stay current about school events.

Through Parentsweb, Renweb also provides access to information about your child's schedule and academics. You can log in and find information about:

- **Teacher lesson plans** – some, but not all of our teachers upload their lesson plans to Renweb
- **Your child's schedule**
- **Your child's updated grade** – we ask our teachers to upload grades no longer than two weeks after the assignment is turned in.
- **Missing assignments** – you will see if your child has not turned in an assignment as a teacher can designate it missing if it is not turned in.
- **Your child's report card**

Report Cards and Progress reports

Report cards are issued once per term and will reflect student progress. A progress report may also be provided by a teacher, either out of concern for a student, or in response to a parent request, so that the parent may see the student's current progress.

- **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Veritas requests two Parent/Teacher Conferences, once in November and once in March. During their first year at Veritas, new students will have an earlier conference, scheduled by their teacher, during the middle of the first term.

- **Students with Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

Veritas evaluates carefully our ability to meet the needs of students with IEP requirements and will only accept those whom we judge to be within our capability to serve without placing undue burden on staff. These students will be given accommodations tailored to meet their needs during their tenure at Veritas. Some of these

students may be given on-site tutoring or specialized study halls as part of their individualized plan.

Occasionally, during a student's time at Veritas, a teacher may convey to the Veritas Administration their concern that a student, not previously on an IEP, may need additional support in the classroom in order to be successful academically. In this situation, Veritas may request that a student undergo formal testing in a student's hometown, to determine eligibility for services. If the student does qualify for an IEP, Veritas will meet with representatives from the local school to determine if Veritas can meet those needs, whether services need to be sought outside of Veritas or a combination of both.

Honor Roll, and High Honor Roll

In order to be on the Honor Roll, a student must average a B+ overall and have no lower than a C+ in any given class.

In order to qualify for the High Honor Roll, a student must average an A- overall and have no lower than a B in any given class.

Academic Probation & Dismissal

If a student's average is 2.0 or below (C-) or a student has more than 2 D's on his or her report card, the Administration will meet with him or her to discuss the reasons for struggling and to determine if some reasonable steps can be taken to support the student and help to get on better academic footing. If, however, in the sole judgment of the Administration, either persistent late homework or lack of effort is the primary reason for the lower grades, the student will be put on Academic Probation for a minimum of two weeks.

A student on Academic Probation will not be allowed to participate in in-school activities including non-academic field trips, athletics and clubs, and will work during recess until grades are improved. If, even after Academic Probation, a student still continues to put insufficient effort into their work, the Administration may consider Dismissal from Veritas.

Promotion/Graduation Requirements

For promotion to the next grade or graduation from Veritas, a student must receive at least a C- in all core subjects (Science, Math, History, Literature and Writer's Workshop) and no more than one D in non-core subjects.

Standardized testing

Every Spring, Veritas allows a week to administer the Iowa Test to ensure that Veritas is in line with National Standards. The Iowa Basic Skills Test is a top-rated, nationally standardized test designed to evaluate thinking skills. The associated Cogat Primary Test of Cognitive Skills test is also taken at that time, and allows parents and teachers to identify at risk children needing intervention, as well as gifted children needing enrichment.

Academic Competitions

Veritas participates in some annual academic competitions every year, so that students who love a given subject can work towards a higher level of proficiency and see how they compare with other children in the region or country with similar interests. These competitions include but are not limited to:

- Creative Writing Festival (ACSI) - Submissions made in early January
- Math Olympics (ACSI) – March
- National Latin Exam – March
- National Spanish Exam – April

ACSI : Association for Christian Schools International

Depending on the availability of interested staff and volunteers, Veritas may provide access to after-school programs including Lego Robotics or Destination Imagination.

Academic Honesty Policy

At Veritas, we believe that good character and genuine learning occur only as students understand what it means to be honest about academic matters. Learning can only become their own when they do their own thinking. Skills can only become their own when they do their own assignments. Veritas works hard to reward student effort as well as student achievement, though they are obviously closely related. We want our students to be brave and curious explorers and to boldly try new things, and trying new things means bravely trying things on their own. While we promote collaborative learning and studying for tests and project work is done in groups, assignments intended to be done individually must be done individually. Therefore, copying a friend's homework, glancing at a neighbor's answers on a test, looking online for answers to a math question, and plagiarizing written work are all considered cheating.

We have observed that cheating often results from being overly concerned about having the "right answer" or the desire to be done quickly. Therefore, we ask that parents work closely with us to encourage students to persevere in their work and offer them encouragement.

Veritas has a strict policy about cheating from 4th grade on, though we hold our 6th-8th grade students more accountable for these infractions. For these students, the following disciplinary policy is followed:

- A first offense results in a conversation with the Principal, a “0” grade on the assignment and a note to the family. A writing assignment may also be required for the student to show understanding of their own motives in this situation. (In 4th or 5th grade, a first offense may not result in a “0” grade but will result in a conversation to raise awareness of the issue.)
- A second offense may result in a half-day or full-day in-school suspension, spending time with the Head of School and Principal and a face-to-face meeting with parents to discuss how to avoid this in the future.
- A third offense may result in additional discipline up to and including out-of-school suspension
- More than three offenses may result in expulsion.

Plagiarism

Student work is put through a plagiarism-checker to determine authenticity.

Guidance/High School Preparation

Beginning in late September, Veritas will begin to work with 8th grade families to establish the steps that need to be taken for entry into high school.

For entry into a private school, SSAT and ISEE timetables need to be considered and practice tests taken, as well as application deadlines, to give our teachers and administrators adequate time to fill in the requisite paperwork and recommendations.

For both entry into a private or a public school, meeting with a guidance counselor at the new school ? and a discussion about course levels and any required testing, are important steps to prepare for a successful entry into high school.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES INFORMATION

A student may participate in a student activity or school-related event as long as they are not on academic or behavioral probation.

Student activities include but are not limited to Student Council, Service Projects, the School Musical, Athletics (Veritas soccer or basketball teams), Field Trips or special class events.

PARENT OPPORTUNITIES/EXPECTATIONS

Parents are expected to fulfill at least 15 volunteer hours per year, which may be waived through a \$500 fee, or fulfilled through the following:

- Volunteering for classroom activities and parties
- Volunteering for recess (training required) or library
- Volunteering to help with school events - musicals, choral performances, awards night, graduation, etc.
- Fundraising Campaigns
- Veritas Parents Association (VPA)
- Substituting – with appropriate background
- Office help

Please note that anyone who works with Veritas students is required to have CORI and sometimes, SORI CHECKS are REQUIRED

DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY

Depending on their grade, Veritas students receive access to furniture – desks and chairs, textbooks, laptops, lockers, lab equipment and many other items designed to provide them with the best possible education.

We expect Veritas students to treat the property in their care with respect. Any student who causes damage to the building, furnishings, textbooks or equipment and the like will be subject to discipline and his or her family will be charged a fee commensurate to the value of repairing or replacing the damage.

VCA DRESS CODE

Uniforms

At Veritas we recognize wearing uniforms enhances school pride, unity and community spirit, all while creating a level playing field among students, reducing peer pressure and bullying. We expect that all students, with the support of their family, will adhere to the dress code. Many stores now provide school uniform clothing, and it is the responsibility of the parent/ guardian to ensure all clothing worn to school meets the dress code.

We recognize that God designed each child uniquely and clothing fits each student differently. Through our dress code policy, we strive to promote modesty, not legalism. Your support is most needed and appreciated as students will be held firmly to dress code standards. We would

be happy to answer any further questions about our dress code. Please contact the office as needed.

For detailed information about Dress Code requirements for the daily uniform, Chapel Day uniform or Gym uniform, please check the veritasma.org web site and/or the Constant Contact newsletter sent this Fall.

Footwear

Students must wear shoes that are appropriate for daily recess. Flip flops and crocs are not to be worn. If the weather requires rain/ snow boots to be worn, it is expected that students will change into appropriate shoes during class.

Dress-Down-Days

Occasionally, students will be rewarded with “dress-down days.” It is expected that students will still adhere to the basic principles of the dress code, ie. the length of shorts, no leggings without coverage of an appropriate length.

Snow Gear

It is our goal to provide daily outdoor time year round, weather permitting. During the winter months, please make sure your student/s have: ○ Snow pants, Jacket, Snow boots, Hats, Gloves/ Mittens You may choose to leave a set of winter gear in your students cubby/ locker to make it easier.

Field Trips

In general, students are required to wear their red Veritas t-shirt while on field trips. Students may wear jeans that adhere to the principles of the dress code. Teachers will specify any dress code requirements on permission slips.

Spiritwear

On Chapel days students are expected to wear a sweater during the day if they are cold. Veritas sweatshirts or fleeces may be worn on regular and gym days. Sweatshirts will be allowed at recess.

Information on how to purchase Veritas sweatshirts and other Veritas Spirit Wear will be provided via newsletters. Please contact Michelle Dean (mdean@veritasma.org) or Bethany Carnes (bcarnes@veritasma.org) for further information.

SEXUAL EDUCATION POLICY

We believe that Sexual Education is a very important part of student education, but that it is something best communicated by a parent to their children at home.

In 8th grade, as part of our Apologetics curriculum, we address sexuality in a general sense to prepare our students for high school. When this occurs, the teacher will contact families and notify you ahead of time of the content of what is presented.

LOST AND FOUND

Veritas maintains a “Lost and Found” on site. If you have lost something, please contact Michele Adams (madams@veritasma.org) and she will help you look in the “Lost and Found” to locate it.

VERITAS STAFF LIST 2019-2020

ADMINISTRATION	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
Cindy Wellman	Head of School Leadership Class, Public Speaking Elective
Lisa Gerdes	Principal Algebra I, Wheelock Latin
Michele Adams	Director Of Operations, Music Department Head, Choir Director
Lisa Cerci	Director, Advising and Partnership Development Faith in Action
Jocelyn Rosa	Financial Operations Manager/Bookkeeper/Human Resources
Michelle Dean	Operations Manager/Registrar
Amber Thomas	Coordinator of Student Services/Administrative Assistant
Bethany Carnes	Director of Communications OT Specialist, Technology class support
Sara Zastoupil	Marketing/Fundraising Specialist/Grant Writing, TK-4 Music teacher
Homer Allen	Development Advisor
LEADERSHIP TEAM	
Amber Thomas	Coordinator of Student Services/Administrative Assistant
Marah Snoeyink	Junior High Coordinator (6-8)
Lillian Fischer	Upper Elementary Coordinator (3-5)
Colleen Lalone	Lower Elementary Coordinator (TK-2)
Nancy Reid	Curriculum Advisor/Science Dept. Head

TEACHING STAFF	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
<i>Lower Elementary</i>	<i>Colleen Lalone</i>
Meredith Schoeffler	Transitional Kindergarten classroom teacher
Andrea Garcia	Kindergarten Classroom teacher, TK Art teacher
Jessica Vaclavik	1 st Grade Classroom teacher
Colleen Lalone	2 nd Grade Classroom teacher

<i>Upper Elementary</i>	<i>Lillian Fischer</i>
Allison Smith	3 rd Grade Classroom teacher
Lillian Fischer	4 th Grade Classroom teacher
Jodi Shippey	5 th Grade Humanities
Melissa Wyatt	5 th Grade Science
<i>Junior High</i>	<i>Marah Snoeyink</i>
Victoria Kopacz	7 th /8 th Grade Humanities
Nancy Reid	6 th -8 th Science
Marah Snoeyink	6 th Grade Humanities
<i>Math Department</i>	<i>Lisa Gerdes</i>
Melissa Wyatt	Geometry
Lisa Gerdes	Algebra I
Asher Gray	Pre-Algebra
Kara Miller (temp)	Math 87
Laurie Landry	Math 76
<i>Spanish Department</i>	<i>Cait Shelton</i>
Asher Gray	K, 2 nd , 4 th , 6 th , 8 th Grade Spanish
Cait Shelton	1 st , 3 rd , 5 th , 7 th Grade Spanish
<i>Latin Department</i>	<i>Lisa Gerdes</i>
Lillian Fischer	Latin 3
Marah Snoeyink	Latin 4, Latin 5, Latin 7
Meredith Schoeffler	Latin 6, Latin 8
<i>Bible/Apologetics/Faith in Action</i>	
Jay Ridenour	Bible 5, Bible 6
Kara Miller	Apologetics 7, Apologetics 8
Lisa Cerci	Faith in Action 5 th -8 th Grades
Bryan Shippey	Faith Elective
Edgardo Shippey	Faith Elective
<i>Music Department</i>	<i>Michele Adams</i>

Sara Zastoupil	TK-4 Music classes
TBD	5-8 Music Classes
Michele Adams	TK/K Choir, 1 st /2 nd Choir, 3 rd /4 th Choir, After School 5-8 Choir
Art Department	Noelle Pierce
Noelle Pierce	K-8 Art, 4 th -6 th Grade Maker Space and Art/STEM Electives, Set Design
Andrea Garcia	TK Art
Gym	Matt Shively
Matt Shively	TK-8 Gym classes
Logic/Debate	
Laurie Landry	5 th /6 th Logic
Edgardo Rosa	7 th /8 th Logic
Technology	Luke Bessey Curriculum
Classroom teachers	Tk, K, 1 st , 3 rd Grade Coding/Tech
Asher Gray	2 nd Grade Coding
Bethany Carnes	4 th Grade Technology
Melissa Wyatt	5 th /6 th Technology Facilitator
Matt Shively	7 th /8 th Technology Facilitator
Before and After Care & Facilities	
Deirdre Lewis	Before or After Care Supervisor, TK Teacher, In-House Substitute
Matt Shelton	IT Support and Technology Consultant
Eric Wyatt	Facilities Director and Outdoor Classroom/STEM Teacher