

Vail Christian Academy Family Handbook



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Dear VCA Families,

It is truly an honor and a privilege to partner with you in educating your child and strengthening his or her faith in Jesus Christ. We are a school body that first and foremost puts Christ at the center of our daily life and desires to build a school community rich in love, academic excellence and service. Our ultimate mission at VCA is to teach each student as they were created to be exceptional. I am so thankful that you have chosen Vail Christian Academy and entrusted us with your children. We know that this is one of the hardest decisions to make as a parent and we look forward to coming alongside you to make it a successful journey. Inside the Family Handbook you will find the mission and vision of Vail Christian Academy, as well as, school policies and procedures.

Thank you again for choosing Vail Christian Academy.

MISSION STATEMENT

Loving Christ, equipping kids for life and being a light in the valley

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Our Philosophy of Education reflects our commitment to educating the whole-child (heart, mind, body and soul), within a Christian worldview. The educational experience is enriched by the unique amenities available in the Vail Valley.

Heart

We want our students to fall deeper in love with Christ and foster a climate where He can sharpen their minds, transform their hearts, and empower their hands, in order that they can serve Him and make Him known.

"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." Proverbs 4:23

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."
Matthew 22:37-39

Mind

We embrace the classical approach to education because it emulates the most proven form of education ever developed. Core subjects like literature, history, language arts, math, and science are integrated. Students read the great works of Western literature and philosophy. The Trivium (grammar, logic, rhetoric) helps students understand and think, with greater depth, about the world around them. Formal logic and initial rhetoric help students become great leaders and communicators. Classical teaching methods range from class lectures, to debates, to Socratic (discussion-oriented) teaching. Independent learning skills are sharpened at all grade levels.

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples." John 8:31

"My son, pay attention to my wisdom, listen well to my words of insight, that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge." Proverbs 5:1-2

Body

We champion physical education, being mindful that we are created in the image of God in body and spirit. We emphasize that true competition is a means to learn and practice virtue through victory, defeat and teamwork. We help our students develop physical potential through setting



and accomplishing challenging goals. Students will learn to respect their bodies as sacred instruments and to develop a healthy self-image and self-confidence.

“And endurance develops strength of character in us.” Romans 5:4

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27

Soul

We seek to identify and encourage the unique characteristics of each child by fostering their spiritual development by hands on mentoring from our teachers and staff in a safe and nurturing environment.

“In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares, but he who guards his soul stays far from them.” Proverbs 22:5

“There are different ways God works in our lives, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.” 1 Corinthians 12:5

Vail Christian Academy was founded with the following learning expectations for students. VCA students will be:

- Active learners who show initiative by setting priorities and achievable goals, taking responsibility for pursuing their goals, monitoring and evaluating their progress with their teacher’s guidance, exploring their options and assuming responsibility for their actions.
- Effective communicators who listen, express their thoughts, feelings and needs through verbal, non-verbal, written and artistic forms of communication that facilitate their interacting appropriately with others.
- Resourceful thinkers who seek, identify, apply and evaluate information through reasoning, decision-making and complex problem solving.
- Innovative producers who demonstrate a positive work ethic and personal pride in creating intellectual, artistic and practical products and services that reflect originality, high quality and use of resources.
- Caring friends who use effective interpersonal skills to establish and sustain mutually supportive relationships that demonstrate acceptance, appreciation, admiration with peers, family members and others.
- Responsible citizens who take the initiative to devote time and talents to improve the welfare and quality of life for themselves and others within the diverse communities of the world.
- Men and women of God whose desire is to seek the will of God and to serve Him through prayer, devotion, words and behavior.



VAIL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

CORE VALUES

Christ

We believe in Christ-centered education. We address spiritual growth, emotional development, physical nurturing and academic training in a manner that brings glory to God. We desire to serve students and families from diverse backgrounds with a passion to learn, grow, and discover their God-given skills and talents, and with a heart open to the love of Jesus.

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

Curriculum

We are committed to:

- A classical emphasis and Christian worldview
- Academic excellence
- Educating the whole-child (heart, mind, body and soul)
- An educational partnership with parents
- Annual evaluation of our academic program

"For the Lord gives wisdom, and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding."
Proverbs 2:6 Character

We are committed to:

- Training our students in Christ-like behavior
- Modeling Christ-like behavior to our students
- Institutional integrity and fiscal accountability

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things." Philipians 4:8

Community

We are committed to:

- Fostering a family atmosphere
- Welcoming people of diverse backgrounds

Being a blessing in our community

"...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:12-13

GOVERNING BODY

Vail Christian Academy is an independent, non-profit corporation. The Board of Directors is made up of parents and interested members of the community. Their primary function is to set the policies under which the school will operate. Each board member is a committed Christian who has signed a leadership statement that commits them to the principles of being a Christian role model in the school, church and local community. The board rules by consensus and strives to find unity through the Spirit of God as they discuss and then establish school policies. They serve for a three-year term and are elected by a nominating committee of the board.

- School parents are welcome to make a presentation to the board on specific issues by first contacting the Head of School who will schedule a time for the presentation as part of a regular meeting.
- The school maintains a separate 501 (c) (3) non-profit status. Contributions are tax deductible, however tuition and fees are not.
- Vail Christian Academy is designed to be financially self-supporting with revenues generated from tuition, fees, fundraising events and donations.

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

God

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Matthew 28:19, Deuteronomy 6:4

The Bible

We believe the Bible to be the verbally inspired and only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21

Jesus Christ

We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His substitutionary atonement for sin by death on a cross, His resurrection, His ascension to the right of the Father, and His personal return in power and glory. (John 10:30, Isaiah 7:14, Hebrews 4:15, John 2:11, 1 Corinthians 15:3, John 11:25, Hebrews 1:3, Acts 1:11)

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the continuing ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a Godly life. (Romans 8:13-14, Ephesians 4:30)

Creation

We believe that the Genesis account of creation was a literal and direct act of God. (Genesis 1:1-3, John 1:3)



Man

We believe that man is sinful by nature through the sin of Adam and that all are in need of salvation through Christ. (John 3:16-21, Romans 3:23)

Salvation

We believe that man is saved by Grace through faith, and nothing of man enters into his salvation; it is a free gift received by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 5:8-9)

Vail Christian Academy recognizes the responsibility of the home and the local church in the teaching of doctrinal beliefs. The school does not want to infringe upon this responsibility and will encourage students to seek specific information from their parents and local church pastor in areas that may be different or not covered in the above Doctrinal Statement.

SECTION II: SCHOOL POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance at school is vital to ensure your child will succeed academically. It is the parent's responsibility to see that the child attends consistently. Excessive absences for reasons other than illnesses and/or family emergencies disrupt the flow of curriculum and makes it difficult for the student to attain the required skills.

The only recognized reasons for excused absences are illness, medical/dental appointments, or death in the family. All other reasons, including family trips or outings, will be considered unexcused unless previous arrangements are made in advance and approved by the Head of School. Parents should notify the school by 9:00am on the day of the absence by calling the office at 970-306-0076 or emailing the office at mdenissen@vailchristianacademy.org.

Tardies

Tardiness is considered serious. Students who arrive late to class not only miss instruction time but also disrupt the flow of a classroom that has already begun. Teaching responsibility, punctuality and respect for others is part of the character training at Vail Christian Academy. Parents must reinforce and be an example of these values for our partnership in education to be most effective. Students who are late (not at their desk and ready to work) to any class are tardy. The school day at VCA runs from 8:15am to 3:00pm. Morning tardy is at 8:16am. Parental responsibility is crucial to students arriving at school on time. Tardies will be counted as excused in the case of inclement weather, car accidents, or other uncontrollable situations.

Early Dismissals

Students will be granted an early dismissal for emergencies and for medical/dental appointments when those appointments cannot be scheduled outside of school hours. Requests for early dismissal should be made in advance of your child's appointment by e-mailing the date,



time and reason for dismissal to mdenissen@vailchristianacademy.org. Students who leave at any time during the day must be signed out at the office. If at all possible, appointments should be scheduled for afternoons or after school. Students may not be dismissed from school to run personal errands. Excessive early dismissals may be subject to administrative and academic consequences.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures -Safety First!

Drive slowly and with caution! Never leave your car while the motor is running! Colorado Law!
Drive slowly and with caution! Do not drop off children without a school representative present!
Drive slowly and with caution!

School representatives will be present at the entrance of the building from 8:00am to 8:15am to monitor traffic and student safety. Parents arriving before 8:00am must wait with their children until a staff member on duty arrives. Parents arriving after 8:15am must walk the child to the office to be signed in and receive a tardy slip for entrance to class.

Students may be picked up no earlier than 3:00pm and no later than 3:15pm. Parents who cannot pick their children up on time due to traffic issues or other last minute delays are responsible for arranging alternate transportation and notifying the school office.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Procedure for late pick up:

Teachers will stop walking students to their cars at 3:15pm. If you arrive after 3:15pm, please park your car and pick up your student at the office. You will be required to pay the late pick up fee at the time you pick up your student.

Fee Schedule:

\$25 for every 15 minute increment

3:16pm-3:30pm \$25.00

3:31pm-3:45pm \$50.00

3:46pm-4:00pm \$75.00

Carpooling

Parents who wish to join together for carpooling may obtain a list of student names and addresses in the office or through RenWeb. We encourage parents to contact other parents in their vicinity to arrange carpooling. Please do not overcrowd cars or vans and be certain to provide each child with a seatbelt. Double buckling is against the law. All staff members are required by law to report seat belt violations to the local Sheriff's Department.

Ski Days

It is our special privilege to live in the Vail Valley surrounded by the Rocky Mountains. We want to take advantage of this amazing place through our school ski days. Students Kindergarten through eighth grade will either ski or snowboard (whichever is their "strongest" sport) on scheduled ski days. Please keep in mind that we are not trained to teach snowboard and ski



lessons. This is a time to get outside the classroom for fellowship and adventure. Parents will provide the opportunity to chaperone small groups of their children and their peers.

Learn to Ski: Learn to Ski days are available through Vail Resorts. We highly recommend VCA students take advantage of this amazing opportunity.

Teachers may schedule extra ski days at their discretion and due to the age and level of the class a half-day schedule may be required specifically to ski days.

Teachers will communicate Ski Day expectations which will vary depending on grade level and ability level.

Ski Days are student contact days; we expect students to attend. If your child will not be participating on the scheduled Friday ski days, please contact the school informing us ahead of time. A half-day schedule may be required specifically to ski days.

In Upper Academy, we will provide an alternative group when possible for those students who do not wish to ski or snowboard on scheduled days. This group will ice skate, sled or snowshoe for a half-day.

Chapel

Chapel will be held on a weekly basis. The purpose of chapel is to instruct students in worship, participate in a Bible lesson, have a time of prayer, and communicate important student body information. Hats and coats are not allowed in the chapel. Teachers will rotate the duty of planning the Chapel each week. Upper Academy and Lower Academy will have their own chapel times to allow for age appropriate topics. Once a month we will have a Praise Chapel and worship together as a whole school. Parents are encouraged to attend this chapel

Inclement Weather

Vail Christian Academy, consistent with other schools in the Vail Valley will not close school during inclement weather. The only exception may be during the most extreme conditions particularly during the winter and when Eagle County Emergency Alert warns of treacherous road conditions. Therefore, you may expect Vail Christian Academy to be open on school calendar days.

During questionable weather conditions, even though Vail Christian Academy is open, parents will make the final decision as to their child/ren's attendance. If parents decide to keep their child/ren home they must call Vail Christian Academy at 970-306-0076 before 9:00am to report their decision. Their child/ren will be given an excused absence and all school work can be made up at full credit. Failure for parents to report absence on a timely basis may be recorded as an unexcused absence.

Custody

Parents must notify the school of any special custody considerations and provide court documentation when appropriate.

Lost And Found

Personal responsibility includes taking care of one's own property and being respectful of the property of others. All student items are to be kept in the classroom, backpack or lockers and should not be left elsewhere in the building. Unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity once a month. Parents are welcome to check the Lost and Found at any time but are asked to remind their children to check regularly to reinforce training in responsibility. Please make sure your child's personal items are labeled.

Visiting Classrooms

If you wish to observe in any classroom, please schedule a time with the teacher. Parents should sign in at the school office before proceeding to their child's classroom. All visitors are expected to wear visitor badges.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices must be stored in the student's backpack or locker and may not be turned on during school hours unless given permission by their teacher. In Upper Academy phones will be collected by a teacher at 8:15am each morning, and returned to the student at the end of the day. Devices will be confiscated if students fail to adhere to this policy. Please help us enforce this policy by not texting or calling your child during the schoolday.

Please read attached Technology Policy

Illness Policy

If your child displays the following symptoms, they MUST be kept at home. NO EXCEPTIONS (State of Colorado standards).

Fever

Diarrhea

Nasal secretions that are thick, yellow or green and accompanied by a fever Sore throat with fever or spots on the throat

Cough accompanied by a fever

Chills

Coughing up of green or yellow mucus

Eye drainage of any type

Unusual rashes

We cannot allow a child to attend school with any of the above symptoms UNLESS they have been seen by a physician to rule out infection and we have received WRITTEN PERMISSION from

the physician for the child to return to school. Please notify the school office if your child has a communicable disease such as chicken pox, hepatitis, measles or a strep infection.

Your child may return to school after illness when:

- Fever has been broken for 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing agents
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea has subsided for 24 hours
- At least 3 doses of antibiotic have been given over a 24-hour period for bacterial infections, i.e. strep throat



- Your child has had a good night rest after being sick.
- In addition, if your child does come to school with a cough but does not have a fever, PLEASE discuss with them the importance of hand washing and coughing into a tissue, NOT into their hand and NOT into the air. Most viruses are airborne but can also be spread by touch. Thank you for your cooperation and support on this matter. By working together on this we can greatly reduce the amount of illness in our school.

Textbooks

Textbooks/Novels are loaned to students (unless it is a consumable workbook) and we ask that students take proper care of them. Students will be responsible for any books that are lost or excessively damaged. A student must pay for a lost textbook before receiving a replacement. If a book is damaged but usable, the student will be charged an appropriate fee to cover the damage.

Telephone (Student)

Students are allowed to make appropriate personal calls from the office, classroom phone and personal cell phone if given permission by a staff member. When a phone call is necessary, the student may request permission from the supervising teacher and present it to the office or use the classroom phone.

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When a student forgets a book, assignment or other materials, he or she may not use the telephone except by permission of the teacher. The phone should not be used to arrange stay-overs or other social events.

Birthday Party Invitations

Birthday Party invitations may be passed out in the classroom ONLY IF all children in the classroom (or all boys or girls in the classroom) are being invited to the party. Vail Christian Academy provides a school roster to assist in this process. School rosters are updated as new students arrive and can be accessed on RenWeb. Party invitations that do not include all classmates must be sent through the mail and students should be advised not to discuss this party at school to avoid hurting the feelings of those not invited. On-campus Birthday celebrations must be cleared with the child's teacher. They should occur at the end of the day whenever possible. Please keep health and nutrition in mind when choosing food and beverages to serve to our students.

Halloween Policy

Due to the controversial nature of Halloween, Vail Christian Academy does not celebrate this day. Therefore, costumes and other references to Halloween are disallowed.

See Peanut/Tree Nut Free Policy

SECTION III: CITIZENSHIP AND CONDUCT STANDARDS

Citizenship

Citizenship is seen as a major part of a student's overall performance at Vail Christian Academy. Citizenship is an area in which all students have the ability to achieve. It is very closely tied to behavior and attitude and will be evaluated as part of the student's regular report card. Some of the areas considered under the heading of citizenship are courtesy, obedience, self-control, responsibility, involvement, enthusiasm, punctuality, respect for others, and adherence to school policies (such as the dress code).

Citizenship Evaluation

Students are evaluated in citizenship through the use of the following grades: U = Unsatisfactory
D = Developing M = Meets grade level expectations E = Exceeds grade level expectations

Property Standards

Students are expected to respect all school property including desks, textbooks and workbooks, lockers, and the grounds/facility. Disciplinary action and/or fines will result when property is damaged or lost. It is our desire that all faculty, students and parents remain good stewards of the beautiful facility God has provided. Thank you in advance for your help reinforcing this with your child.

Dress Standards

The purpose of the dress code at Vail Christian Academy is to instill in students a respect for their environment, themselves, and others. With limited outward distinctions, students form a corporate identity and sense of community, while also learning to respect one another as individuals, uniquely designed by their Creator. "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Romans 12: 4-5.

We believe a biblical approach to this issue is one which will be neither burdensome nor legalistic; for, as Jesus teaches in Matt. 11:30, "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." A reasonable dress code should not frustrate the students who must abide by it, nor the faculty and administrators who must enforce it and should allow for the various developmental stages of the student body. Parents have the first line of responsibility in ensuring that their child is appropriately dressed when sent to school.

The Wednesday chapel uniform items must be purchased from Land's End for all students. (These items are also often available through the VCA Uniform Swap, please inquire at the office.) Dress Code attire for the rest of the week may be purchased from any vendor.

We ask our parents to model for their children submission to authority, honoring standards set for the benefit of others as well as themselves, and participating fully in the building up of the VCA community by following these standards.

Universal Dress Code

- Collared polo style shirts or button-down shirts in the following colors: White, Light Blue, Navy Blue, Gray or Black.
- Pants, shorts and skirts in the following colors: Navy, Black or Khaki.
- Sweatshirts with VCA logo only in following colors: Gray, Navy and White. No logo other than VCA with the exception of the 8th grade class sweatshirt.
- Sweaters or vests are allowed in the following colors: Gray, Navy and White.
- Solid socks in the following colors: Black, White, Navy, Gray and Khaki.
- Chapel shirt in French blue button-down oxford/blouse with VCA logo required for chapel days.

Chapel Dress Code

In addition to the Universal Dress Code, Chapel dress code is limited to:

- All Students grades K- 8th = French Blue button down Oxford blouse/shirt with VCA logo from Land's End with the shirt tucked in for Chapel.
- All Male Students grades K-8th = Khaki pants or shorts (in season) with belt loops, wearing a brown or black belt for Chapel.
- All Female Students grades K-8th = Khaki pants, skirt or shorts (in season) with belt loops wearing a brown or black belt.

How to Wear Dress Code

- Students should dress and groom themselves in a manner that is neat, modest, and respectful to themselves and the school.
- Students should not wear any clothing that display messages inconsistent with the Christian lifestyle.
- Hats are not to be worn during classes. Hoods and hats should not be worn during school hours.
- All shoes must have a closed toe and closed heel (no flip-flops, Birkenstocks, etc.). Athletic style shoes are allowed. Shoes are to be worn at all times and should be properly tied or fastened.
- Pants are to be worn so that tops could be tucked in (though students are not required to do so except for to attend Chapel), or so that tops cover the beltline at all times sitting and standing. Pants are to be worn at the waist at all times, this means the belt line will be above the hip-bone.
- There should be reasonable attempt to cover pre-existing tattoos and piercings other than girls stud earrings should be removed during the school day.
- Solid Navy, black, khaki, gray or white socks only. Girls can only wear "flats or ballet slipper-style shoes" without socks
- Dresses and skirts are to be no more than 2 inches above upper part of the knee when the student is standing (dress/skirt must meet same standard from behind).
- Young ladies may wear earrings and have their ears pierced. No other stud, or jewelry

of any kind may be worn in piercings during the school day

- Shorts in the colors of Khaki, Navy or Black can only be worn before October 5th and after April 15th
- Legginns and spandex may only be worn under pants, shorts, or with skirts/dresses (that meet the dress code) and must be solid gray, navy, black or white.

How Not to Wear Dress Code:

- Male students are not allowed to have facial hair.
- Earrings, other visible body piercing, and visible tattoos are not allowed. Exception: Girl's stud earrings are allowed.
- Unnatural or extreme hair color is not permitted
- No makeup is permitted
- Shortshorts or shortskirts are not permitted
- Leggings (unless paired under a skirt) and ripped jeans are not permitted
- No fleece pants, pajama pants, yoga pants, spandex or leggings
- Tank tops, spaghetti straps are not permitted

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS AND THE DISCIPLINE PROCESS

At Vail Christian Academy our basic concept of discipline is best expressed in the principle of Christian self-government. God instructs the individual to "keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Pr. 4:23). The responsibility is upon the individual student to voluntarily yield to the Lordship of Christ and allow Him to govern (control and direct) every area of life by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This results in internal self-government, and the student will then require very little, if any, external government.

All Vail Christian Academy members have authority to discipline students. When discipline is necessary, Vail Christian Academy is committed to disciplining the children in love. This means serving as Christ-like role models, loving them enough to expect good behavior and to correct bad behavior. A growing awareness for spiritual growth in the light of these principles has led Vail Christian Academy to adopt the following standards which are believed to be conducive to an environment which will best promote the spiritual and academic welfare of the student.

EXPECTATIONS OF VAIL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY FAMILIES AND STUDENTS

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

Our family programs, off-campus learning experiences and fundraising events depend upon 100% participation of every family to ensure success and viability of our future. Building community is a cornerstone of our culture. Our school is unique partly because of the "family atmosphere" that is felt amongst our students, teachers and parents. A thriving community is inevitable when we create opportunities to foster personal relationships beyond just the classroom. Please anticipate participating in and attending all programs and functions hosted by Vail Christian Academy in order to continue our legacy.

STUDENT EXPECTATION



Attending Vail Christian Academy is a privilege that comes with certain responsibilities. Some of those responsibilities are outlined below.

- To treat all staff members with kindness and respect
- To treat all fellow students with kindness and respect
- To freely forgive when wronged
- To foster a “gratitude attitude”
- To come to class prepared to learn
- To be punctual
- To complete work neatly, accurately and on time
- To walk quietly in and around the building
- To remain in school unless permission to leave is granted by the office or Head of School
- To follow all school policies
- To pray for our students, families and school
- To address all adults as Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss, Pastor, or Dr. followed by their last name during school hours. Parents and staff members should also use these forms of respect when speaking to each other in front of students
- To raise their hand in class if they wish to speak, waiting patiently and silently until the teacher calls on them
- To stand by desk when answering a question
- To stand and greet any adult visitor when entering the classroom
- To address and greet adults in the hallway
- To not question teachers regarding assigned discipline while in class. Students are expected to accept the consequence assigned to them and then speak to the teacher after class if necessary.

DISCIPLINE: CONSEQUENCES & IMPLEMENTATION

Discipline

VCA uses a system of student management, which encourages a positive learning environment by rewarding and reinforcing behavior and academic achievement. Every student has a right to an education, and no student should deprive a classmate of that right. Students are expected to behave appropriately in the classroom, in chapel, at lunch, on the playground, and on field trips. The disciplinary rules of Vail Christian Academy have been established in order to provide a spiritual and intellectual atmosphere in which all students can work efficiently and can grow in knowledge and self-discipline. Each student is expected to behave in a mature and responsible manner that reflects favorably upon himself, his parents, his school, and his community. VCA has high standards of behavior, and each student is expected to do his best to maintain these standards. The student is expected to respect all pastors, teachers, and others in authority, as well as friends. Full cooperation is expected from the parents in any disciplinary action. VCA and the home must work together in the development of character and good citizenship. VCA follows the assertive discipline philosophy, which involves the student knowing the rules, knowing the consequences for breaking the rules, and receiving proper warning for inappropriate behavior.

Students at VCA should be developing a sense of responsibility for their own academic and personal lives, and an awareness of how their actions affect others, both students and teachers, in their community. The goal of any system of conduct is the development of self-discipline. However, it is necessary to create other systems and structures as self-discipline is developed.

CONSEQUENCES FOR MISBEHAVIOR

Following are general guidelines for misbehavior. The Head of School has the authority to override the suggested system at any time if deemed necessary. A teacher/administration/family meeting may be called at any time. Vail Christian Academy chooses not to administer corporal punishment as a means of disciplining students.

Kindergarten through 5th grade will have classroom guidelines for behavior, but they may choose to use the following strategies if necessary.

Minor infractions to the discipline policy are listed below and will be dealt with primarily within the classroom. These include but are not limited to:

- Repeatedly tardy to any class
- Repeatedly out of seat
- Repeatedly unprepared for any class
- Repeatedly not following directions Interfering with others who are working
- Loud or annoying behavior
- Not cleaning up after lunch
- Dress code violations
- Chewing gum
- Throwing food
- Public display of affection
- Other (as determined by the staff)

The teacher will notify parents of these types of behavior issues on or before parent teacher conferences. Serious or repeated offenses will be referred to the Headmaster who will contact the parents.

Examples of major infractions include but are not limited to:

- Truancy or cutting class
- Leaving class without permission Insubordination
- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Stealing
- Falsifying parental signatures
- Lying
- Back talk or rudeness
- Inappropriate language
- Inappropriate gestures
- Name Calling
- Racial Insults
- Harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Vandalism
- Defacing property
- Fighting, punching, kicking, choking
- Pushing, pulling, shoving, wrestling
- Bullying
- Threatening

- Pretending drug or alcohol use
- Other (as determined by staff)

Consequences will be determined by the Head of School and the instructional staff. Consequences may include (but not limited to) time out, lunch detention, forfeiting rights, social conference, parent notification, suspension, and others.

Upper Academy Accountability Plan

The Upper Academy team of teachers and staff want to encourage and guide our students to be the best they can be. We hold them to the highest of standards and celebrate all victories of growth and maturity in their lives. Our goal is to establish responsible habits through day to day choices that help them become successful students and young adults. Each teacher has an accountability binder that stays in the classroom. There is a list of responsibilities that we require of our UA students each day. If for some reason they choose to be irresponsible (i.e. forget their homework, come unprepared to class etc.) they sign the binder. After 5 signatures the individual student has a consequence. This puts the responsibility on the student and not the teacher. The binder is checked weekly and starts new each month.

Behavior Infractions vs. Academic Concerns

Consequences for Academic Concerns should not involve the loss of recess or isolation during lunch. Academic concerns may include (but not limited to) not finishing class work or tests, cheating, not turning in assignments, habitual absences, habitual tardiness affecting classroom performance. Academic concerns should be discussed with the Head of School to determine the best course of action.

Suspension

The Head of School has the authority to suspend a student at any time for unacceptable behavior. Suspension may be, at the Head of School's discretion, in school or out of school. Examples of this behavior include but are not limited to:

- Theft or Vandalism
- Bodily Harm
- Sexual Harassment
- Possession of tobacco or paraphernalia
- Possession of alcohol or drugs or paraphernalia
- Sale, use or distribution of tobacco, drugs or alcohol or paraphernalia
- Possession of any weapon
- Possession of pornographic material
- Possession of explicit music
- Repeated Major infraction violations
- Other (as determined by the staff)

During a suspension, the student is not allowed on campus or at any school sponsored events. Schoolwork and tests during this time may not be made up and a zero will be recorded.

Expelling A Student



When the Head of School, after confirming with board members, determine that the student situation has become so severe it becomes a hindrance to the educational focus of the school body, the student will be dismissed from the academy. A parent conference will be called to discuss the violation(s) and the consequences.

EXPRESSING CONCERNS

When a parent has a concern regarding a classroom situation or academic progress, it is best to first discuss that concern with your child's teacher. Parents may want to share at one of the regularly scheduled conferences during the school year or request a special conference. Please refrain from impromptu conferences with your child's teacher in the hall or carpool line. If further assistance is needed, you may then request an appointment with the Head of School.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Scriptural Basis Matthew 18:15-17 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

General Application

We have used this scripture as a basis for handling problems not only when someone sins against someone else, but whenever an issue or problem arises between two people.

If a person has a problem or an issue with someone else, they should go directly to the person with whom they have a problem. If unresolved in step 1, they should take another person with them and go back to the person with whom they have a problem. If still unresolved, the problem should be appealed to a higher level. Gossip about unresolved issues is damaging to all involved.

Academics

Academic Integrity

School is a prime time for students to learn the importance of being honest and direct in all their academic efforts. It is, therefore, crucial that students and parents develop a clear understanding of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism.

Cheating

Most students have a well-defined sense of what constitutes cheating by the time they arrive in school. As well, teachers will explain what is and is not acceptable in their particular classes. In general, cheating is the act of engaging in unauthorized behavior on a test or assignment.



The following are some of the more common examples of cheating:

- Using unauthorized notes or materials on a test or graded assignment.
- Seeking, accepting, or giving unauthorized assistance on a test or assignment (including homework).

The consequences for cheating are necessarily severe:

- All students and parents should be acutely aware that any act of cheating would put the student at risk.
- The student must meet with the Head of School. The student may receive a zero for the assignment or other appropriate consequence, depending upon the situation. At the school's discretion, the work may be completed again. In such cases, a lower grade shall be attained.

Academic Markings and Reports

VCA will provide comprehensive and specific feedback to parents and students concerning areas in which skills have been mastered and areas that need improvement. As well, competition is not a major motivational factor and comparison of children is de-emphasized as a means of evaluation.

The Head of School delegates to teachers no more important responsibility than that of evaluating the student's academic achievement.

Grading

The major goal is to have a sufficient number of grades and a balance of tone and type of grades to determine a report card. At the same time a teacher should avoid an excess of grades that is overly burdensome and impacts the student's average very little.

Academic Policy

It is expected that students will maintain acceptable grades in all subjects. To aid in the accomplishment of this goal, the following guidelines have been set:

1. If a student's average in a subject falls below 72% parents are sent a notice of concern either electronically (RenWeb) or written, and copy to the Head of School.
2. The teacher may choose to have a parent-teacher conference to discuss the grade and possible plan of action. This should be reviewed briefly in a PARENT CONFERENCE (RenWeb) form and sent to the Head of School.
3. Study skills: Learning how to study, how to be organized, and how to prepare for class effectively are key facets of our education program. Each classroom teacher addresses specific areas of study skills relevant to that class. Every effort is made to help students build a solid foundation in skills beneficial to their future learning.
4. A student with an average below 70 or an overall average below 70 at the end of any grading period will be placed on academic probation. This means that the student will be barred from

participating in any school-sponsored extracurricular activity. The parents are formally notified through a letter from the Teacher and/or Head of School. If the student brings the grade up to a 70 or better the academic probation will be lifted.

5. Teachers will check grades the Monday before an O2 event to warn students of any grade concerns. Teachers will also inform parents two days before an O2 event if their student is unable to participate in the event due to poor grades or missing major assignments.

6. Students must pass all required subjects with an end-of-year average of at least 70. A student and parent will be recommended for tutorial assistance or other action deemed appropriate by the School.

7. It is VCA's intention to assign frequent quizzes, tests, papers, and projects to all Upper Academy students, as well as 4th/5th grade students. Quizzes may be given at any time, announced or unannounced. Major assignments such as tests, papers, and projects must be announced a **minimum of one week in advance**. Upper Academy teachers will meet weekly to discuss test and project schedules and due dates for the year. Whenever possible they will spread out test and project due dates, so students are not overloaded on individual days.

End of Semester Finals

Upper Academy will schedule Finals and Tests at the end of every semester. Finals week will be communicated to parents at the beginning of the quarter.

Project Philosophy

The purpose of a project is to allow students an opportunity outside of regular classroom work to deepen their understanding of a specific content introduced in the classroom and allow the student to shine through the expression of a talent or learning style unique to the student (artistic expression, spatial organization, etc.). With respect to this goal, a project should therefore directly address the subject and content of the specific curriculum taught in the respective classroom at the time that the project is assigned.

A project must be student – not parent – generated. Instructors are encouraged to work together to develop projects which are cross curricular and through which objectives of more than one academic class subject can be met.

Projects may be defined as an assignment that is outside of the materials or media norms for the class in which it is assigned. For instance, since language arts classes regularly engage in writing exercises the assignment of an essay in this class would simply be homework, but the assignment of a book report which includes artistic expressions or constructions would be construed as a project. Likewise, maps are an integral part of social studies classes, but the assignment of videos, art activities, or power point presentations to be created outside of the classroom in these classes would be construed as projects.

- **Number of Projects**

Students should be assigned no more than one project per academic subject each quarter.

Rights to assign projects are not transferable between subjects. If one instructor chooses not to

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assign a project in any given semester, an instructor in another subject area may not therefore assign two projects for the same semester.

- Timing

The assignment and rubrics of a project must be given to students at least two weeks before the due date of the project. Projects should not be due the week following a major school holiday (Thanksgiving, Christmas, spring break, or Easter). Projects should be expected to take between 2 – 4 hours outside of class over the course of the two weeks of the assignment. Time on-task in the classroom should be provided for any project expected to take any longer; research projects for instance should allow teacher guided time in advisory, computer lab, and/or classroom.

- Expense

In order to protect VCA's families from unnecessary financial burdens and to insure that the projects are the work of the student – not the parents –, instructors should set and publish rubrics limiting the scope of materials to be purchased for the completion of projects. Whenever possible, rubrics should encourage students in the creative use of materials readily available at home.

- Use of Other School Facilities

Teachers are encouraged whenever possible to take advantage of the technology resources available at Vail Christian Academy and to allow for the completion of research

and writing aspects of any project during normal class periods in order to lessen the time students spend on projects outside of school and in order to provide additional guidance to students. Coordination with the computer technology classes, for instance, in the design of rubrics for research paper headings or font or graphics insertions may assure a deeper foundation of student skills and a more even presentation of materials by students in any given class.

Independent Reading/ Book Report Policy

Book Reports are meant to establish a love for reading and to expose the student to different genres of books. They are viewed as independent reading assignments and not an extension of VCA's curriculum. Students should be able to choose a book from the class library, public library, home etc. The teacher may want to approve the book to assure it is level appropriate and acceptable for a Christian school. Third grade through eighth grade are required to complete an independent reading assignment each quarter. The type of assignment is at the discretion of the teacher. Keep in mind the Project Policy when choosing an independent reading assignment each quarter.

Battle of the Books is a District wide competitive reading program to motivate students to read a variety of books during the second semester. Our 3rd-5th grade classes participate in this program and represent VCA.

Summer Reading List is a list of books that students must read during the summer months to be ready for the new school year. They may be required to read one to three books over the summer and complete a simple summary or book report. This will be turned in the first week of school.

Late Work Policy

All students' work in grades 6-8 is due at the BEGINNING of the class period. Students in grades 6-8 who fail to turn in an assignment on time (day and period due) will receive an 80% if turned in any other time during the assigned instructional day and specific teaching block; only 70% credit will be given if work is turned in the next day of that instructional time, and only 60% credit will be honored on the second day. All work turned in after that point, will receive a maximum of 50 % of the grade. All work must be turned in to be assessed or an incomplete will be given. All assignments are due within the grading period assigned. Any student submitting late work must **HAND DELIVER** the assignment to the assigning teacher. Homework, projects, essays, etc., that are placed on teachers' desks, left with office staff, etc., may incur late penalties.

Students in grades K-5 have a structure that is based upon appropriate classroom systems and uses punctuality as a teaching lesson. Procedures are consistent at each grade level and provided to the parent at the beginning of the year. All procedures are worked in coordination with the Headmaster.

Make-up Work

Parents may call or email the office to request assignments for absences of more than one day. Please call the office before 9:00am to request assignments from teachers for the next day. This allows teachers to complete an assignment sheet during a prep period. Assignments for single day absences may be made up the next school day.

If an absence qualifies as excused, the student has the number of days plus one to complete all missed work and testes for full credit.

If the absence is deemed unexcused, all missed work must be turned in upon their return for full credit. Any tests missed will be given the day of their return.

It is the student's responsibility to see each teacher to find out what assignments must be completed, and by what date. Failure to do so could have the same results as simply not turning homework in on time.

Students are responsible for visiting with teachers and checking RenWeb to determine what assignments need to be made up.

Homework

Students regularly receive assignments, which normally must be finished outside the classroom. The purpose of this homework is to prepare the student for activities, which will happen in class, and to strengthen or enrich those which already have begun. Students should be encouraged to plan and use their time productively and to become self-directed in meeting these responsibilities. In keeping with the VCA philosophy that each student becomes a responsible citizen, it is stressed that the student becomes organized so no homework or books are left at home.

Homework is considered an integral part of the VCA instructional program. Its purpose is to provide:

- An opportunity for extra practice or extension of a lesson
- For the growth of independent work skills
- Awareness of the child's program and progress to parents

Responsibility and perseverance are important and valuable by-products of home assignments. Students carry learning outside the classroom and reinforce what has been taught. However, there is always an instructional purpose for homework.

The instructional purposes include:

- Practice – reinforcing skills already learned in class (reading and regular math practice are part of the nightly routine).
- Preparation- preparing students for upcoming units by helping them gain important background information that will scaffold them for the lessons that follow.
- Lower Academy (K-5) students will be assigned homework Monday through Thursday. Upper Academy student (6-8) may have homework over the weekend and may have approved projects, research reports (usually needing days of preparation) to be completed over the weekend (after a time line has been discussed with the students and notice being sent home through RenWeb). Only selected Students must have the responsibility to get homework turned in when it is due. If a student does not have his/her homework done at the beginning of a class period, but turns it in later that day, the student receives 80%. All work must be turned in.

Homework is assigned to assist students in developing responsibility and organizational skills and to practice and review concepts taught at school. Assignments are made to support the curriculum and are not designed as “busy” work. It is educationally sound for students to engage in recreational reading and mathematics practice in addition to assigned written work.

The amount of homework that is required is gradually increased as the student moves through the grades. The end goal is to have the student prepared to complete an average of one to two hours per night in eighth grade. Students may not call home to request parents to bring forgotten homework.

While homework is seen on an ascending scale as the student progresses, the role of the parents is seen as a descending one. Parents should play a lesser role and give the student more responsibility, as the student grows older.

The following is a list of the amount of time it can be expected to take on an “average” night when done by an “average” student:

Kindergarten through First: 30 minutes (including reading w/parents)

Second: 30-45 minutes

Third through Fourth: 45 minutes to one hour

Fifth: One to one and one half hours

Sixth: One to one and a half hours

Seventh and Eighth: One and one half to two hours
tests will be given on Mondays.

Classes that meet other than on a daily basis will use the following homework structure:

- Class meets once a week: homework does not exceed 30 minutes weekly.
- Class meets twice a week: homework does not exceed 45 minutes weekly.
- Class meets three times a week: homework does not exceed 60 minutes weekly.

Special projects, such as research papers and science projects may require additional time and attention in order for quality work to be presented. See “Project” guidelines.

EXTENDED VACATIONS AND SPECIAL REQUESTS: At times, parents request that children begin school vacation early or return late for reasons of family convenience. These are very difficult requests for VCA because of the negative implications to the child about the importance of school and personal responsibility. Such requests are troublesome because of the problems created for children and families who comply with school schedules.

Sometimes parents will request that children be excused from school for a special opportunity or unusual family event. On those very rare occasions VCA can readily and happily grant such requests. Special requests must be made directly to the Head of School.

*Teachers will only prepare what is absolutely necessary for the student to complete while away. It is up to the parent and student to “catch up” when they return. See Make Up Work policy.

Report Cards

Grades will be reported to parents on a quarterly basis. The following procedure should be followed for recording grades and producing grade reports.

- Teacher’s should record grades at least weekly in RenWeb and always have justification for grades and the process used.
 - Consistency in grading is imperative.
 - Final grade reports will be distributed on the last day of school and must be recorded in RenWeb.
- Teachers must assess the progress of their students during each quarter and a progress report must be prepared if the student is working below capacity or if there are behavior problems. Parents will be advised in writing when it is time to schedule parent teacher conferences, however, parents may request a conference at any time with the Teacher. The progress report must either be handed directly to the parent by the teacher or picked up by the parent.
- Parents should never be surprised by poor grades. It is the teacher’s responsibility to inform parents whenever a student is deficient (D) or failing (F) a class with the specific reasons. Suggestions for how the parent can help as well as what the teacher is doing to remedy the situation must also be conveyed.

Grading Scale

In Kindergarten through Second Grade, students are evaluated each quarter on the basis of: D = Developing M = Meets grade level expectations E = Exceeds grade level expectations



Third grade is a transition year for grading and will receive the above marks as well as letter grades as outlined below.

In Third through Eighth grade, students receive letter grades each quarter on the following basis:

A+	99-100%
A	92-98%
A-	90-91%
B+	88-89%
B	82-87%
B-	80-81%
C+	78-79%
C	72-77%
C-	70-71%
D+	68-69%
D	62-67%
D-	60-61%
F	below 60%

Standardized Tests

Vail Christian Academy uses NWEA Map assessments for our standardized testing, for screening and for growth assessment. The assessments in the MAP Suite give teachers a thorough picture of student learning: how much they've grown, what they're ready to learn, and the specific skill gaps they need to master.

The MAP Suite measures exactly what's needed to give you valuable data with maximum efficiency: no more and no less testing than required.

With a host of key student data points at your fingertips, teacher can utilize Map results to:

- setting growth goals
- determining instructional areas and skills to focus on for continued growth
- assigning MAP Skills missions
- projecting proficiency on state summative tests
- tracking longitudinal growth
- seeing the skills each student has mastered and needs to learn next

Map testing should be done three times a year or two times per school year at the very least.

Standards for Written Work

- All papers, grades 3-8 should be clearly labeled with the student's name and any other information required by the teacher. Only accept a student's best!
- Sheets should be attached together by using a paper clip, a staple in the left corner, or a thin, soft binder. Sheets should not have any frayed or torn spiral edges.
- Ink, typing, or computer must be used for all final drafts of themes and book reports in



grades 6-8. Students in lower grades (K-5) may choose to use the same. Pencil should be used for math papers in all grades. Some assignments will be required to be completed in cursive handwriting.

- Papers must be turned in as flat sheets, not folded. Writing or typing of compositions or formal papers should be on one side of standard size paper (8 1/2" x 11").
- All subjects will be graded for errors in these areas. Any assignment that contains too many grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors may be returned as unacceptable and required to be re-done.
- Policies relating to late assignments vary by age appropriate standards and will be communicated by grade level.
- Value points may be taken off student assignments for non-compliance with the above standards.

Academic Probation

Any student who receives a failing grade during any grading period will automatically be placed on "Academic Probation." These students may not represent the school in extra-curricular activities, including outdoor education and field trips until grade improves, at which time they must have a passing grade in each class.

Students failing two or more subjects at the end of an academic year will not be advanced to the next grade level.

Reporting Student Progress

Good communication between school and home is a major goal of Vail Christian Academy. Parents will be advised in writing when it is time to schedule parent teacher conferences, however, parents may request a conference with the teacher at any time during the year. Parents are asked not to expect conferences during drop off, pick-up or classroom times.

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Curriculum Review Procedures

The Curriculum Committee has the final recommendation on curriculum decisions for Vail Christian Academy, and meets at least once annually to analyze the effectiveness of the curriculum. The chairman of the Curriculum Committee is a member of the Board of Directors. The Head of School will be an ex-officio member of the committee. VCA teachers volunteer or are assigned by the Head of School to serve on this committee. The responsibilities of the committee include:

- Ensuring periodic reviews of the total educational program and overseeing major textbook changes in order that the school's philosophy and program are matched.
- Making recommendations to the Board with regard to educational policy, programs, and services of the school.
- Planning and facilitating in-service workshops and seminars on campus for teachers in order to enhance the quality of education at Vail Christian Academy.
- Assisting in locating national educational seminars and encouraging the attendance



of Vail Christian Academy teachers.

- Striving to achieve and maintain accreditation standards.

Classroom teachers meet in the spring to review curriculum materials, scope and sequence, and academic benchmarks. If a major curriculum shift is deemed necessary, the Curriculum Committee takes the recommendations into consideration, evaluates them against our philosophy, and proposes a final recommendation. The board member takes the recommendation to the board for its formal action. Minor curriculum changes are proposed by individual teachers and approved by the Head of School who reports such revisions to the board. The Head of School directs appropriate staff member to update the curriculum guides as needed.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy Agreement for Students

To provide teachers and students with the best possible educational environment, VCA is pleased to provide Internet access for our school community. We believe that the Internet is a valuable educational tool that can enhance any school program. On the Internet a student can:

- Do research in virtually any field of human intellectual endeavor by accessing public and university libraries throughout the world.
- Download graphics, text, video clips, and other valuable multimedia sources of information for use in writing papers or making class presentations.
- Virtually tour the great museums of the world.
- Travel to distant lands to learn about their cultures, languages, geography, history, and political systems.
- Link to any one of millions of computers online and access files that will assist them in their own projects.
- Send and receive electronic mail or publish documents globally.
- Practice responsive obedience and Christian discernment.

The Internet is a global computer network that offers a wealth of resources for all to explore. Students, however, might encounter information that is inaccurate, controversial, and

potentially harmful. Internet access at VCA is filtered to prevent most objectionable material from reaching our students. To ensure that students will benefit from the school's Internet

resources, all users are expected to adhere to the following guidelines. Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in disciplinary action

Acceptable uses shall include:

- Activities consistent with Christian ethical and moral principles and precepts.
- Only using the Internet under the supervision of a teacher or staff member.
- Asking for help in using the computers and conducting on-line research.
- Returning all used CD's, books, and external drives to appropriate place.
- Treating the equipment with care.
- Reporting any suspected misuse of hardware/software to the school's

Technology Department.

- Conducting class-related research.
- Retrieving education-related files from another computer.
- Access libraries or museums.
- Personal enrichment. Students are encouraged to pursue personal hobbies, seek avenues of intellectual or spiritual growth, and explore the riches of God's creation.
- Sending or receiving email with supervisor's permission.

Unacceptable uses shall include:

- Anything which disrupts access to the system by others. Any damage to computers or vandalism including the creation or uploading of computer viruses will result in the loss of computer privileges, and the student will be

charged for any materials and labor costs to make repairs. This policy includes pranks such as unplugging network cables, removing "roller ball" from the mouse, etc. -- no exceptions to this policy will be made.

- Entrance into chat groups or instant messaging-- unless set up by a teacher in the course linked with other schools.
- Surfing questionable sites-- those not in keeping with moral Christian standards.
- Sending or receiving e-mail or text messages without permission.
- Playing non-educational Internet games.
- Making illegal copies of software. Anyone found making illegal software copies may be subject to disciplinary action including expulsion from the school.
- The use of inappropriate language.
- Access to and/or transmission of obscene, pornographic, or sexually explicit material.
- Accessing material that advocates violence or discrimination.
- Unauthorized attempts to enter restricted areas of information.
- The sending of threatening, defamatory or fraudulent messages.
- Use for commercial activities.
- Deliberate violation of copyright, or other use of another person's intellectual property without his prior written approval and/or giving proper acknowledgement (plagiarism).
- Giving out personal information. Addresses, phone numbers, gender, age, social security number, and unauthorized images are not to be posted in the public domain.
- Downloading or installing any computer programs, including games, without supervisor's permission.
- Deleting programs, renaming any computer files, or moving program or document files.
- Accessing anyone else's files without permission.
- Changing the computer color scheme, desktop arrangement, screen saver, or any system configurations without supervisor's permission.
- Removing CD's, books, or computer disks from the classroom without permission.
- Giving out your password to anyone or accessing anyone else's account.

- Use of computer or network to commit or participate in any form of fraud or fraudulent activities or other illegal activity.

VCA's Peanut/Tree Nut-Free School Policy

Food allergies, unfortunately, are on the rise. Peanut and tree nut (pecans, walnuts, almonds, pine nuts, and therefore pesto, etc.) allergy is a serious condition that affects approximately three million Americans.

Peanut allergy is the most common cause of deaths from food allergy. Severe sufferers may experience potentially life-threatening anaphylactic shock in response to contact with or the ingestion of peanuts. Anaphylactic shock is an allergic reaction in which the release of histamine causes swelling, difficulty in breathing heart failure, circulatory collapse, and sometimes death. The reactions can begin and proceed rapidly.

Common Symptoms

Mild to moderate allergic reaction

- Tingling of the mouth
- Hives, welts or body redness
- Swelling of the face, lips, eyes
- Vomiting, abdominal pain

Severe allergic reaction- ANAPHYLAXIS

- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness in the throat
- Difficulty talking or hoarse voice
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children) CPR instruction site >> [The Red Cross](#)

Strict avoidance of peanut and peanut-ingredient (tree nuts as well) is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction. There is no cure for peanut allergy and no therapies that eliminate or reduce the severity of peanut allergy. Current treatments only address the symptoms of an allergic reaction once it has taken place.

However, because accidental exposure is a reality, children and caregivers need to be able to recognize symptoms of an anaphylaxis and be prepared to administer adrenaline according to the individual's Anaphylaxis Action Plan. Research shows that fatalities more often occur away from home and are associated with either not using or a delay in the use of adrenaline. (EpiPen)

In order to ensure that Vail Christian Academy provides a fun and safe environment for the increasing number of students who suffer from peanut/tree nut allergy, [we have become a peanut and tree nut-free school.](#)

Two very important factors were taken into consideration for making this decision: 1) Medical literature has documented that peanut/tree nut allergy poses a dangerous health risk;

2) A child could have a peanut/tree nut allergy but not be aware of it. He/she may not have been previously exposed to these products, or exhibited any prior signs or symptoms of an allergic reaction.

In view of the danger and risks associated with peanut allergy—VCA will adhere to the following:

Hygiene

- Clean/wash hands and mouth of your children prior to their entering school. For the child who suffers from nut allergy—touching or inhaling even the slightest trace of peanut residue may cause an allergic response.
- If you are volunteering, please wash your hands promptly upon arrival.
- All teachers must wash hands entering school as well.

Lunches (Please review and keep the attached page for your convenience when shopping for school foods.)

- Send snack and lunch items that contain no peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, or nut butter.

Shared Items

- Please review package labels to ensure that shared items, such as snacks, do not contain peanuts or tree nuts; nor that they are manufactured in a facility or near equipment that processes peanuts or tree nuts.
- Please provide shared food items in their original, unopened packaging.
- Please be mindful that cross contamination can also occur from in-home utensils and surfaces,

Birthdays/Special Celebrations

- Consider sending non-food birthday or celebratory treats, such as a new or used book, game or activity to be shared in class. You may then consider donating that item to the classroom or giving an equivocal monetary gift to be used for classroom enhancement. This gift or contribution to the classroom could be given in honor of or in your child's name.

Sources: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Mayo Clinic.com.
peanutallergy.com

