


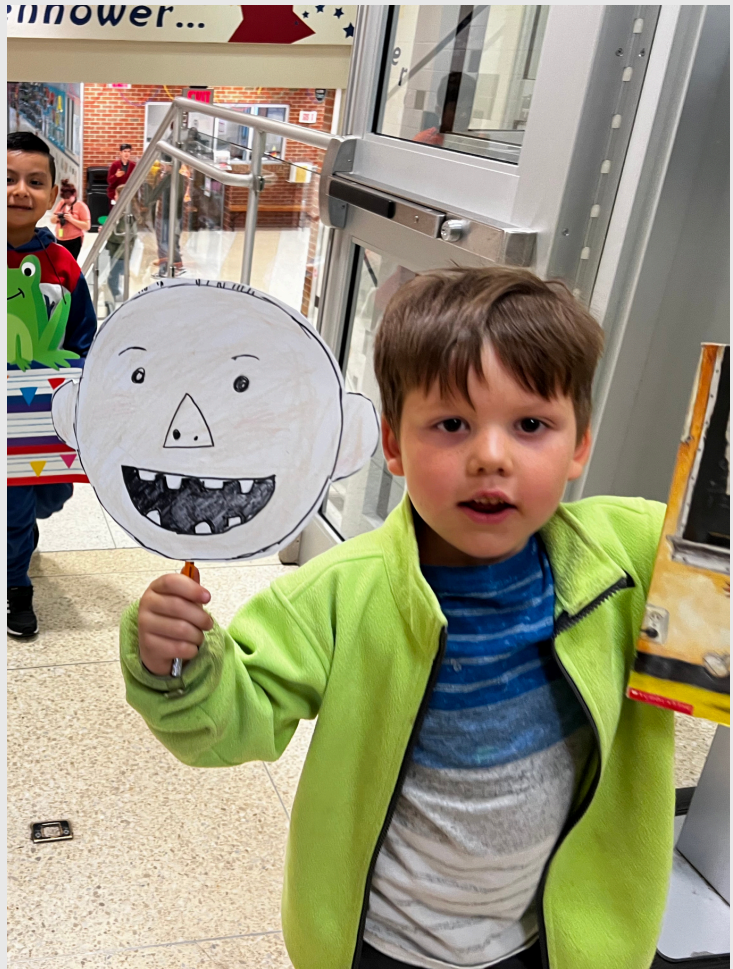
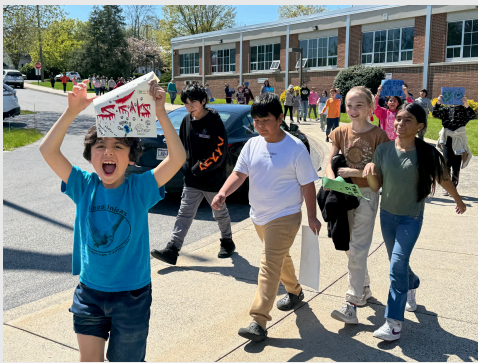
**2024-2025**

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**FAMILY AND STUDENT  
HANDBOOK**

Updated July 2024







## INTRODUCTION TO THE HANDBOOK

**Vida Charter School's purpose is to educate students in Spanish and English, while promoting academic excellence, sociocultural competency, and intellectual curiosity. We serve children and families who value global citizenship and healthy lifestyles.**



One of Vida Charter School's greatest commitments is family engagement. We hope this Handbook will serve as a guide for families and students as they partner with us. This Handbook will be updated throughout the year, and available in revised form at [www.vidacs.org](http://www.vidacs.org).

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# ABOUT VIDA CHARTER SCHOOL

## Our History

Vida Charter School opened its doors to students in January 2010 to make a dual language educational model available to children in the local communities. We are a public charter school governed by a Board of Trustees and led by an Administrative Team. Our authorizing districts are Gettysburg Area School District and Hanover Public School District.

## Our Mission

Vida Charter School believes in preparing children for life by nourishing the students' minds and bodies in English and Spanish. Vida fosters success in a diverse world through holistic education encompassing literacy and numeracy, sociocultural competence, and wellness. Vida Charter School is committed to ongoing investment in diverse teachers and staff who meet the challenges of serving in a Dual Language program.

## Our Families

Vida Charter School must communicate with parents and guardians concerning:

- Their student's eligibility for special programs, including intervention and learning support
- Their student's educational progress
- Volunteer and visitation opportunities
- Their right to know the professional qualifications of teachers and paraprofessionals serving their student
- Their right to inspect and review their student's education records maintained by the school
- Their right to request corrections to records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading

## Our Values



## Our Vision

Our vision is that Vida Charter School students will be:

- At or above grade level in all subject areas
- Bilingual and bi-literate in English and Spanish
- Compassionate as global citizens
- Real world problem solvers
- Of healthy body and mind



*In compliance with FERPA, Vida Charter School must have prior written permission from the parent or guardian in order to release any "personally identifiable" information from a student's education record to a third party.*

## ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION TO VIDA CHARTER SCHOOL

Vida Charter School is a tuition-free public charter school which serves K-6th grade students who reside in and around Adams County, Pennsylvania. For a complete explanation of the enrollment process, please review our policies and download an enrollment packet from our school website: [www.vidacs.org](http://www.vidacs.org).

When initially registering a child at Vida, parents or guardians are required to provide the following documentation:

- Birth Certificate
- Proof of residency
- Physician-signed dental and health certificates
- Proof of immunization

Families of current Vida Charter School students must complete the re-enrollment process for the forthcoming year, beginning on January 1st and ending on February 25th of the same year. The submission of this form guarantees continued enrollment for current students in the subsequent school year.

### Process and Timeline

<b>January 1-February 25</b>	Returning students submit their "Intent to Enroll" forms
<b>January 1 - March 15</b>	Open enrollment period for new students
<b>March 15</b>	Open enrollment application deadline
<b>March 15-30</b>	Lottery takes place



## SCHOOL SCHEDULE

The 2024-2025 school year will begin for all students on Monday, **August 19, 2024** and end on Friday, **May 30, 2025**. Make-up days will be added if the school is closed due to extreme weather or other unforeseen circumstances. Vida does not offer remote or virtual instruction, as we believe that in-person live instruction is the most effective for our students based on age-appropriate practices and due to our Dual Immersion model.

For all students, the academic school day begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:05 p.m. **Students will be considered present if they are in their classrooms by 8:30 a.m.** Students may enter the school building at 8:00 a.m. to eat breakfast or to enjoy morning recess.

### Attendance and Truancy

The Board of Trustees of Vida Charter School requires that a student enrolled at Vida Charter School attend school daily and on time in accordance with the compulsory attendance laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Parents/guardians are required to notify the school in writing on all days when students will be absent. Notification can be made by email ([excuses@vidacs.org](mailto:excuses@vidacs.org)), through the survey available through the QR code on the right, or written note ([template](#)). Families may call 717-334-3643 if they have any questions. Please note that if your child is absent due to illness, they are not permitted to attend Vida-sponsored activities in the evening.

Some absences will be excused if you communicate with the school. These include:

- The child's illness or injury;
- Death in the immediate family;
- **Medical** or **dental** appointments for the student that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours. Notice of such an absence must be provided prior to the day of the appointment, except in the case of an emergency;
- Observance of religious holiday;
- School sponsored conferences or trips;
- Pre-approved educational trips. In accordance with Vida Charter School policy, **educational field trips must be limited to 10 days or fewer per school year**. Please submit an "[Educational Trip Approval Form](#)" request at least seven days before the planned trip. This document is available on the Vida website and in the front office. Days will not be approved during PSSA State Testing.



Attendance Concern	Vida's Response
1 and 2 unexcused absence	- Phone call home - Letter home
3 unexcused absences	- As above - Creation of a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) with family and school support
6 unexcused absences	- Referral to additional services, such as Children and Youth Services (CYS) or for a citation with Magistrate District Judge
<b>Clarifications:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 unexcused <b>tardies</b> result in 1 unexcused absence and a conference with the principal</li> <li>- Up to 10 absences may be excused <u>by the family</u> due to illness. A medical note is required thereafter</li> <li>- Families may request up to 10 days of excused leave per school year for an <a href="#">Educational Field Trip</a> (must be pre-approved)</li> </ul>	

Vida Charter School will enforce the compulsory attendance laws as required by Charter School Law in the Pennsylvania School Code.

### Arrival and Tardiness

On regular school days, students may enter the school beginning at **8:00 a.m.** For the safety of our students, please do not bring students to school before the 8:00 a.m. start time, as we do not have staff available to supervise them. **Students must arrive in their classroom by 8:30 a.m.** when instruction begins.

When students are dropped off or picked up by a personal vehicle, we ask that **adults remain in the vehicle unless buckling/unbuckling children.** This is the most safe, and most efficient way for our drop off/pick up routine to flow in the morning and afternoon

**Any student arriving after 8:30 a.m. will be considered tardy.** We believe that our students' learning experience depends upon on-time arrival to school daily. All students' instructional days begin with Morning Meeting, an essential time for relationship-building, goal-setting, and launching the day's work. Students arriving late to school must be escorted into the building by an adult, who will provide the reason for their late arrival. Habitual tardiness will lead to a conference with the Principal to improve students' access to learning.



### Dismissal and Early Pick-up

Dismissal on regular school days begins at **3:05 p.m.** If you intend to pick up your child from school on a regular basis, please notify the Building and Operations Manager, [Melissa Turner](mailto:melissaturner@vidacs.org) (melissaturner@vidacs.org), as soon as possible.

#### **Changes in Transportation:**

*Changes to dismissal on any given regular school day must be received by the office **by noon.** For half-days, **by 10 a.m.** To make a change, please call 717-334-3643.*

### Early Pick-up

Picking your child up prior to the end of the school day is discouraged as it can negatively impact their educational progress. Whenever possible, we ask that all appointments and activities be scheduled *after* school hours. Students who leave school early for any reason will be required to make up any missed work. **Families must pick-up early dismissals prior to 2:45 p.m, or they must wait until regular dismissal for their child to be released.**

When requesting an early dismissal, the parent/guardian must:

- Send a note with the student
- Report to the front office to sign the student out of the school
- Report to the office to sign the student back in if they are able to return
- Submit a doctor's excuse, if applicable





### Two-Hour Delay

If Vida Charter School has a 2-hour delay, the school will contact families via phone call, a post on the [Vida Charter School Facebook page](#), a posting to [www.vidacs.org](http://www.vidacs.org), and TalkingPoints (text or App). The doors will open at 10:00 a.m. and students will be considered on-time for academic instruction if they are in their classrooms at 10:30 a.m. Students will not be supervised prior to 10:00 a.m. and should not be left on campus. Please note that the school does not serve breakfast on days that we have a two-hour delay.

### School Cancellation

If Vida Charter School is closed or delayed, the school will contact families via phone call, TalkingPoints (text or App), a post on the [Vida Charter School Facebook page](#), and a posting to the [www.vidacs.org](http://www.vidacs.org). Please note that the closing or cancellation of your home school district may be on a different operating schedule from ours in cases of inclement weather.

### Emergency Procedures

To keep students safe, students will participate in monthly emergency drills throughout the school year. The purpose of drills is to prepare students and staff for any emergency that may ensue, requiring the building to be evacuated. Further information about our emergency procedures can be found on the Vida website in the [Lockdown and Shelter-in-Place policy](#).

These include:

<b>Lock Down</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A signal notifying staff of a "Lock Down" will be given.</li> <li>2. The students will be held in their classroom, or other place with secured doors and windows.</li> <li>3. An all-clear signal will be given when the building has been cleared.</li> </ol>
<b>Shelter-in-place</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A signal notifying staff of a "Shelter-In-Place" will be given.</li> <li>2. All students and staff will be brought indoors and will remain indoors.</li> <li>3. An "all clear signal" will be given when the outdoor area is secured.</li> </ol>
<b>Evacuation and Fire Drill</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A signal notifying all staff and students will be given to evacuate the building.</li> <li>2. The staff and students will exit the building and go to designated areas.</li> <li>3. If necessary: Parent/Guardian will be notified via our telephone emergency alert system regarding pick-up location.</li> </ol>

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Vida Charter School recognizes that wellness and proper nutrition are related to all students' physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. The school is committed to providing an environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience.



### ***Be peanut-conscious, please!***

*In recent years, there has been a dramatic rise in peanut and tree nut allergies. These range from mild to life threatening. Please keep our community safe by avoiding peanut butter in your child's school snack and lunch.*



## Food Services

For the 2024-2025 school year, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has not announced any new information about continuing the Free Breakfast Program for students. Vida will notify families if current proposals in the state legislature to continue free breakfasts for students are passed. Families are asked to deposit funds into their child's meal account by sending a check to the main office. Checks may be made payable to **Vida Charter School**. Please do not allow charges of more than \$45.00 to accrue on your child's account. Balances in your child's meal account from last year will carry over to the current school year. Students with negative balances on their meal accounts cannot purchase a la carte items, such as milk or water, until the negative balance has been resolved in full. Students with negative account balances are never denied a regular school meal. Vida does not impose alternate meals for students with negative balances.

The cost of meals for the 2024-2025 school year are as follows, pending GASD Board Approval (Aug. 2024):

Breakfast - FREE  
Lunch - \$2.50  
Reduced Lunch - \$0.40  
Milk - \$0.60

Families are encouraged to complete an Application for Free and Reduced Cost Meals, which can be submitted online at [www.paschoolmeals.com](http://www.paschoolmeals.com). By September 2024, a hard copy form can also be provided by Melissa Turner ([melissaturner@vidacs.org](mailto:melissaturner@vidacs.org)) and can be found on the school website. Completion of the Application supports Vida's Title I funding and leads to additional family assistance for qualifying families, such as [P-EBT Cards](#).

## Healthy Snacks

We believe in supporting lifelong healthy eating habits, which in turn help to prevent illness, such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity.

For this reason, we encourage the consumption of the following healthy snacks. This list also reflects the foods that Vida Charter School may provide its students during the day. Please work with us to promote nutritious eating in our children in order to support their overall health.

Type and Rationale	Examples
<p><b>Fruits and Vegetables</b></p> <p><b>Health:</b> Eating fruits and vegetables lowers the risk of heart disease, cancer, and high blood pressure. Fruits and vegetables also contain important nutrients like vitamins A and C and fiber.</p> <p><b>Cost:</b> According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the average cost of a serving of fruit or vegetable (all types – fresh, frozen, and canned) is 25 cents per serving.</p> <p><b>Flavor:</b> Fruit is naturally sweet, so most kids love it. Fruit can be served whole, sliced, cut in half, cubed, or in wedges. Canned, frozen, and dried fruits often need little preparation.</p>	<p><b>Fruit:</b> Apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, cantaloupe, cherries, grapefruit, grapes (red, green, or purple), honeydew melon, kiwis, mangoes, nectarines, pears, pineapple.</p> <p><b>Vegetables:</b> Broccoli, carrot sticks, cauliflower, cucumbers, peppers, snap peas, string beans, tomatoes, zucchini slices.</p> <p><b>Snack:</b> Applesauce, dried fruit, frozen fruit, smoothies, fruit salad, guacamole, hummus, salsa, salad.</p>
<p><b>Healthy Grains</b></p> <p><b>Health:</b> Try to serve mostly whole grains, which provide more fiber, vitamins, and minerals than refined grains. In addition, try to keep the added sugars to less than 35% by weight.</p>	<p><b>Bread:</b> Whole grain. English Muffins, pita, tortillas, crackers.</p> <p><b>Breakfast Cereal:</b> Either dry or with milk, <i>whole</i> grain cereals. Look for cereals with no more than 35% added sugars by weight (or roughly 8 grams of sugar per serving).</p> <p><b>Snacks:</b> Rice cakes, popcorn, tortilla chips.</p>
<p><b>Beverages</b></p> <p><b>Health:</b> Water satisfies thirst and does not have sugar or calories. If kids are used to getting sweetened beverages at snack times, it may take a little time for them to get used to drinking water.</p> <p><b>Cost:</b> Inexpensive.</p>	<p><b>Water</b> should be the main drink served to kids at snack times.</p> <p><b>Water bottle</b> to drink from throughout the day.</p>
<p><b>Other Healthy Snacks</b></p>	<p><b>Nuts:</b> Cashew, soy nuts, walnuts.</p>

## CELEBRATIONS WITH FOOD CELEBRACIONES CON COMIDA



### Birthday and Classroom Celebrations

In accordance with our [“School Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition,”](#) found on the Vida website, and in an effort to limit visitors to the classroom and disruptions to instruction, families must make arrangements with classroom teachers for **birthday celebrations** at least one week in advance.

Families are encouraged to drop off or provide [healthy snacks](#) for classroom celebrations. **We will not accept** sweet desserts, chips, candy, soda, or sugary drinks. Family visits during school hours should be finalized with the front office two days in advance. Talk to your student’s teachers for ideas and approval.

### What Do We Celebrate at Vida?

At Vida Charter School, we offer students opportunities to express their own cultures and to learn from other members of our school community and beyond.

Celebrations, including holidays, are explored within the context of our Biliteracy Maps utilizing the state standards of reading and writing, as well as the national College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies.

At Vida Charter School...

Students read, write, study, and share about celebrations all over the world.

Educators respect students’ personal boundaries when they share that they are not comfortable in their exploration of celebrations and offer students alternatives so that they can access instruction.

We are reflective and innovative, constantly shifting our strategies to ensure that all students and families are included.

We **do not** decorate for a single holiday, but strive to offer mirrors and windows to learners. For example, we explore celebrations and traditions during the winter, not only Christmas.

We **do not** require that students create religious artifacts or participate in religious celebrations.

### Recess and Movement Opportunities

We strive to give students daily opportunities for physical activity both inside and outside of the school building. Please refer to the chart below for additional information about developmentally appropriate movement opportunities built into the in-person student schedule.

Grade	Morning Recess	Afternoon Movement	Other
k-6th	8:00-8:25 a.m.	30 minute recess	Health and Physical Education class 2 times every 6 days for 40 minutes

Students are expected to participate in afternoon movement opportunities unless they have a medical note which exempts them from participation. Recess time is protected; if a student loses the privilege of recess, it will only be due to unsafe or inappropriate behaviors that occur during recess, never as a result of behaviors in the classroom or academic performance. Recess will always be outdoors, except in cases of inclement weather, including sleet, and snow, and if the "[RealFeel](#)," as determined by the AccuWeather, is below 25 degrees. Please ensure that your student is dressed appropriately for inclement weather, including light rain.

### Medical Concerns

All medical concerns should be brought to the attention of the school nurse, who can be contacted by phone at 717-334-3643 ex. 1003

Occasionally a student may suffer from a condition that demands medication or requires physical limitations (temporary or permanent). A written physician's order is required with any condition. It is the policy of Vida Charter School to allow only prescribed medications to be taken during school hours when necessary. By this policy, students may not bring any over-the-counter medicine to school, including cough drops.

Under **medication circumstances**, the parent/guardian should:

- Request from the school nurse the "[Dispensing of Prescribed Medication](#)" form, available in the front office or on the Vida website;
- The medication must be hand delivered by the parent to the school nurse in the original container,
- A physician's written order is required,
- The school nurse shall take charge of the medication, keep it safely stored, and dispense as per the physician's order.

Under **physical limitation circumstances**, the parent/guardian should:

- Deliver a physician's written order to the school nurse;
- The school nurse will share information with appropriate staff to ensure student safety, and ensure appropriate mobilization is met.

### Required Medical Documents

As required by the state of Pennsylvania:

- All **3rd grade students** need [dental exams](#) on file.
- All **6th grade students** need [physical examinations](#) on file.

Documents can be obtained through the "For Families" section of the Vida Charter School website, by going to the "[Forms and Documents](#)" subsection, or by request to the Front Office. Vida's Medical Policies can be found at [www.vidacs.org](http://www.vidacs.org) under the Board of Trustees section in the Board-Approved Policies.



## ACADEMICS AND LEARNING

At Vida Charter School, students are provided with a rigorous course of study in both Spanish and in English. The curriculum is designed to prepare them to be healthy, productive citizens, and to develop critical thinking skills that will serve them well beyond their elementary years. In turn, we expect the families of our students to take an active role in ensuring that their child will receive the most benefits possible from their schooling.

This is achieved through frequent, consistent communication between home and school. Together we can create an environment that will allow our students to acquire the necessary skills for academic and social success.

### Curriculum

Effective Dual Language programming requires the division of the Pennsylvania State Standards, [Next Generation Science Standards](#), and the [C3 Social Studies Framework](#) between the languages of instruction, across a student's Vida education.

#### Language and Content Allocation Plan

GRADE	Spanish				English			
Kindergarten	Spanish Language Arts	Science	Math	Music	English Language Arts	Social Studies	Art, PE	
1st Grade	SLA	Social Studies		Music	ELA	Science	Math	Art, PE
2nd Grade	SLA	Science	Math	Music	ELA	Social Studies		Art, PE
3rd Grade	SLA	Social Studies		Music	ELA	Science	Math	Art, PE
4th Grade	SLA	Science	Math	Music	ELA	Social Studies		Art, PE
5th Grade	SLA	Social Studies		Music	ELA	Science	Math	Art, PE
6th Grade	SLA	Social Studies		Music	ELA	Science	Math	Art, PE

The plans above reflect the division of content into our two program languages, and will be implemented in kindergarten through 5th grade in the 2024–2025 school year. Vida Charter School aspires to maintain as close to a 50:50 division within a student's day as is possible.

Guided by the scholarship of Doctors Karen Beeman and Cheryl Urow, writers of *Teaching for Biliteracy: Strengthening Bridges Between Languages*, and in collaboration with Vida teachers and the Academic Excellence Committee, Vida Charter School has refined and concretized its Language and Content Allocation Plan in order to allow students adequate opportunities to learn content-specific language in both languages.

According to Beeman and Urow, the “bridge” is “the instructional moment when teachers purposefully bring the two languages together, strategically guiding bilingual learners to:

- transfer the academic content they have learned in one language to the other,
- engage in contrastive analysis of the two languages, ... and
- develop ‘metalinguistic awareness’”

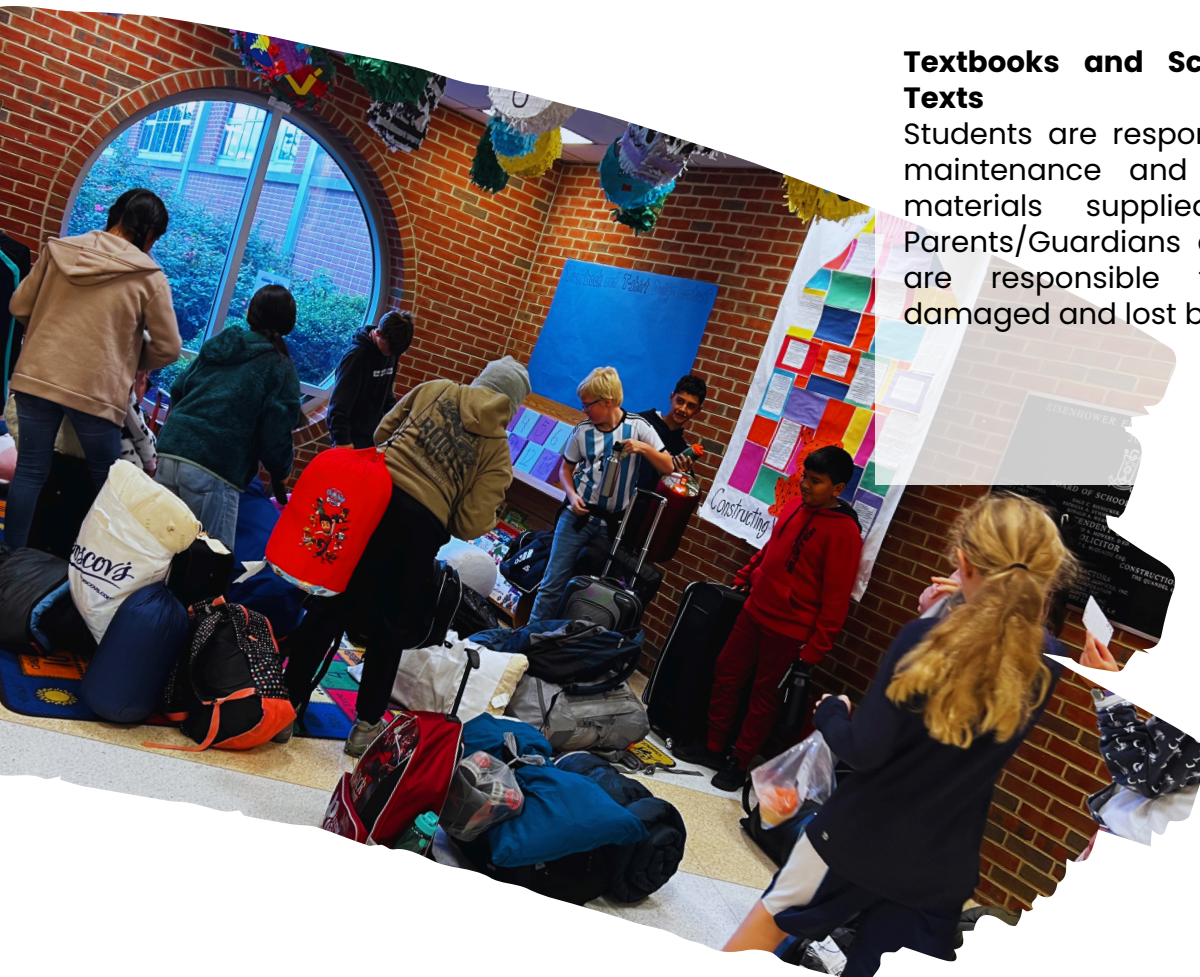
Grades kindergarten through 5th grade will follow a scope and sequence designed in collaboration with the Center for Biliteracy which integrates language arts standards with science and social studies, in accordance with our Language and Content Allocation Plan. Grade-level Biliteracy Curriculum Guides can be found on our website [here](#).

Vida Charter School anchors instruction in the Pennsylvania Core Standards, and maintains its rigor by seeking authentic resources in both program languages. We draw upon the following resources and supplements for instruction: Foundations (English), Reading A-Z (both program languages), Great Minds Eureka Math<sup>2</sup> (Mathematics).

On top of core academic subjects, all Vida Charter School students attend music, art, and healthy lifestyles classes twice per cycle on a 6 day rotation and participate in a Service Learning Project. Upper grade students may participate in the school choir, and 4-6th grade students may join the Vida Charter School band, which includes instrument-specific sectionals, as well as the guitar program. 6th grade students experience an outdoor learning/camping trip, scheduled for October 2024.















































































### **Textbooks and School Library Texts**

Students are responsible for the maintenance and care of all materials supplied by VCS. Parents/Guardians and students are responsible to pay for damaged and lost books.



## Specials Rotation Schedule

In order to guarantee that students experience all specials and content bridging, regardless of inclement weather or school breaks, Vida Charter School will continue the 6 day specials rotation for the 2024-2025 school year.

Class	1	2	3	4	5	6
Zebras						
Giraffes						
Wolves						
Buffaloes						
Pandas						
Tiger						
Alpacas						
Jaguars						
Koalas						
Hedgehogs						
Sea Turtles						
Sea Lions						
Bald Eagles						

## Assessment

Assessment	Skills Tested	Grades Tested	Time of Year
<b>Federal and State Testing</b>			
Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)	English Language Arts Mathematics Science*	3-6th Grade  *4th Grade Only	April 23-25th ELA April 29-30th Math May 1-2nd Science*
Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State (ACCESS)	English Language Proficiency	K-6th (identified English Learners only)	February, 2025
<b>Benchmarks</b>			
Acadience	English Literacy and Mathematics	K-2nd	Fall, Winter, Spring
Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDTs)	English Literacy and Mathematics	3rd-6th	Fall, Winter, Spring
Evaluación del desarrollo de la lectura	Spanish Literacy	K-6th	Fall, Winter Spring

In addition to benchmark and state/federally mandated assessments, teachers use formative (short progress reports) and summative (culminating) assessments to track student progress within each subject, and to provide appropriate support to students. Vida teachers and staff use all of these types of data to make decisions about instructional groupings and support to improve instruction for all students. At Vida Charter School, we understand that the academic development of students within a dual language model may follow a different trajectory compared to a student in a monolingual (English-only) model; thus, we consider each student's relative language proficiency into all discussions of students' strengths.



## Homework

Students are assigned daily homework, which includes mathematical concept reinforcement, as well as reading in Spanish and English.

### The Role of the Student

- Remain organized by writing assignments in planner (3-6th)
- Be responsible for having a copy of the assignments and making sure assignments are clearly understood, or use Google Classrooms to identify assignments, **if** applicable;
- Take home necessary texts and materials;
- Complete assignments neatly and on time;
- Note any questions about homework to be asked in the next class;
- Return assignments and books to school when due.

### The Role of the Parent or Guardian

- Provide a quiet place for the student to complete assignments;
- Encourage the student to study at a regular time in the afternoon and/or evening;
- Check planner (3-6th) and communication folder each **every Wednesday**;
- Communicate questions and concerns to educators via TalkingPoints or Email
- Review and sign assessments, when applicable.

### Service Learning

In order to activate the “real world problem solvers” part of our vision, all Vida students participate in a Service Learning Project annually. This experience is aligned to the Biliteracy Map and can range from germinating and planting seeds in our school garden to tracking emissions and writing a Letter to the Editor.

### Report Cards, Grades, and Conferences

Report cards are issued quarterly, and are based on skill development. Report cards are aligned to the biliteracy map in grades k-5, as well as Vida’s Spanish Language Scope and Sequence.

Students will progress through the following measures of mastery:

1= Does not meet the standard

2= Partially meets the standard

3 = Meets the standard or exceeds standard

Please note that a 1 or 2, especially in the first quarters of grade-level instruction, are not necessarily cause for concern. Students develop proficiency over the course of the year.

Family-teacher conferences are scheduled for all students’ families on **November 8th, 9th and 10th**. In addition, if parents/guardians have questions throughout the year regarding their child’s progress, they may:

- Call Vida Charter School or contact a teacher directly via TalkingPoints or email to request a conference in person, via video conferencing, or by phone

### Child Find

#### *Policy and Procedures for Students with Disabilities*

Vida Charter School will ensure that all students with disabilities who are eligible to enroll in the school will have available to them free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The rights of children with disabilities and their parents will be protected in accordance with federal laws (IDEA, Section 504, and ADA).

As part of this Child Find responsibility, VCS seeks to ensure that all students with disabilities who are eligible to enroll in the school are identified, located, and evaluated. This Child Find responsibility shall be accomplished through a process which, while not a definitive or final judgment of a student's capabilities or disability, is a possible indicator of special education needs.

The Child Find process shall include obtaining data on each student, through direct assessment or by indirect means of the student's academic performance, gross and fine motor skills, receptive and expressive language skills, vision, hearing and cognitive skills.

School staff, parents and guardians, or agency representatives may refer students to a content-specific expert for support if they believe that a student, because of a disability, may be in need of special education and supportive services in order to benefit from regular education. VCS shall ensure that an appropriately certified school psychologist participates in the initial evaluation and all subsequent re-evaluations of the student.

Final identification of students with disabilities and programming for such students occurs only after an appropriate evaluation and determination by the student's teachers, members of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Team, and the administration. If it is determined that the child requires learning support and services in order to benefit from regular education, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) shall be developed for the student, in accordance with federal law.

If you believe your child to be in need of learning support and related services, you can initiate a referral through the school by contacting our Learning Support teacher, or your student's teacher.

### **Student Support Services**

Special services are provided for children with atypical needs. Support for English Learners, adapted physical education, programs for the hearing, speaking, and visually impaired, and instructional support for students in need of challenge and/or remediation are provided. Parents/Guardians believing their child needs any of these special services should contact the Learning Support teacher or their student's academic teachers.

### **Targeted Title I**

Vida Charter School receives federal funds to establish supplemental interventions for students in need of academic support or enrichment. These interventions are focused around math to help our students be more successful in the classroom in all subjects. Students are chosen based on multiple criteria throughout the school year. This is a fluid process, with students moving in and out of support, as needed. In addition, we invite all Vida families to attend two annual Title I family events (Fall and Spring) to engage families in learning about supplemental learning services and to seek community feedback. Please contact Louisa Marks, Title I Math Specialist, if you have questions (louisamarks@vidacs.org).

### **Communication between the Teacher and the Family**

We encourage regular communication between families and teachers. There are several ways for you to reach us:

- TalkingPoints App - This school-wide resource allows families and educators to communicate easily by text message. Educators will send classroom notices and individual updates using the TalkingPoints App. TalkingPoints supports multilingual communication - families and educators will write in their preferred language, and the messages will be translated to the language selected by the receiver.
- Email - Every educator at Vida Charter School has an email address that they check regularly. Our policy is that educators respond to emails within 48 hours, within the work week. Families may also email the grade level of their child to

communicate with the team, such as k@vidacharterschool.com, l@vidacharterschool.com...)

- Communication Folder/Planner – Student assignments and school communications are sent home in the communication folder **every Wednesday**.
- Grade level newsletter – Please review your student’s grade-level newsletter the **last Wednesday** of the month for upcoming events, ideas for learning at home, and units of study. Copies of the newsletter are available in the front office and on the [Vida website](#).
- Appointment – You can set up an appointment with your student’s teacher through email, or with the support of the Front Office (717-334-3643).
- Quarterly Report Cards and November Fall Conferences

### Communication between the School and the Family

The Vida administration is committed to keeping families abreast of their child’s experience at Vida through:

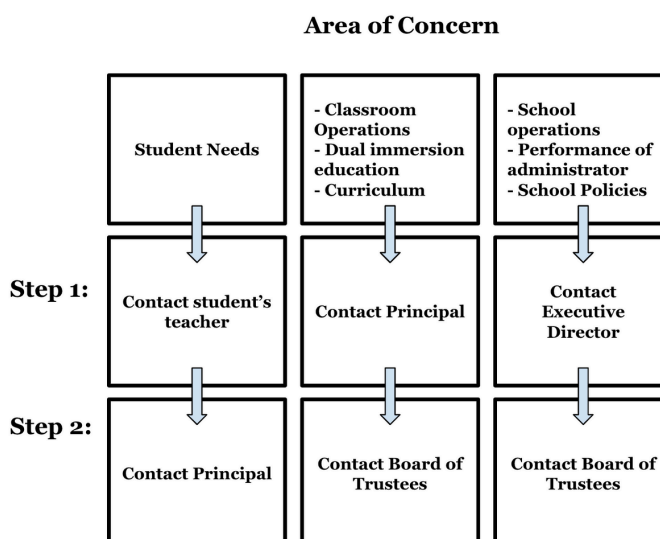
- Monthly newsletter – Please review our newsletter the **last Wednesday** of each month for the dates of important school-wide and opportunities, and information from the administration and school-wide staff. The monthly newsletter is posted in the front office and in the “News” section of the website.
- Vida Charter School website – The school website is updated regularly. It contains an up-to-date calendar, school policies, school forms, and contact information for all staff members.
- Robocall – Vida Charter School reminds families of upcoming events and changes to the school schedule through Robocall
- [Vida Charter School Facebook](#)
- Connect to Vida’s Family-Faculty Partnership (FFP) by email [pto@vidacharterschool.com](mailto:pto@vidacharterschool.com) and through their presence on [Facebook](#) (“Vida Charter School PTO”)

### Problem Solving Guide

Vida Charter School strives to foster a positive working relationship with our families and our students. The safe and orderly operation and environment of Vida Charter School is the primary consideration in addressing all concerns. Communication is the key to resolution.

### If you have a question or concern, please follow these procedures

The Board of Trustees shall not consider any complaint raised by a parent or other party in open meeting unless that issue has first been presented to the School Leadership and a satisfactory resolution has not been reached. Any complaint relating to any employee, student, or group of students will only be addressed by the Board of Trustees in executive session.



## Staff Directory

All emails are @vidacs.org

Title	Name
<b>Administration</b>	
Executive Director	ED
Principal	Principal
Business and Operations Manager	BOM
<b>Front Office</b>	
School Secretary	Secretary
Office Assistant	Receptionist
Operations Assistant	OA
Nurse	Nurse
<b>Interventionists</b>	
School Counselor; 504 Services	SC
Learning Support Teacher	LS
Reading Specialist and Title I	MS
Spanish Specialist	SS
English Learner Teacher	EL
Speech and Language Pathologist	Speech
<b>Teachers</b>	
Kindergarten Team	K
1st Grade Team	1
2nd Grade Team	2
3rd Grade Team	3
4th Grade Team	4
5th Grade Team	5
6th Grade Team	6
Art Teacher	Art
Music Teacher	Music
Physical Education Teacher	PE
Instructional Coach	Coach

## STUDENT RIGHTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Vida students work towards **our vision** every day by bringing enthusiasm, curiosity, and knowledge to the classroom. The life experiences of students and their Vida community, together with class materials, are resources for learning **at or above grade level in all subject areas**.

Vida students speak, read, write, and listen in English and in Spanish every day, and find connections between their languages (metalanguage). They are **bilingual and biliterate**.

Vida students are **compassionate as global citizens**. They are proud of their heritage, and see differences as opportunities to connect. Vida students care about fairness and justice.

Vida students **solve real world problems** in the classroom and outside of it through inquiries assigned by teachers, and identified by students themselves.

Vida students work towards a **healthy body and mind** by moving every day, eating nutritious food, and using self-regulation and conflict resolutions tools.

### Preparation

Educational experiences are most meaningful when students come prepared. At Vida Charter School, preparation is physical, emotional, material, and academic. As such, we ask students and families to partner with us to ensure that students are:

- **Physically** healthy, well-rested, and have adequate healthy food and water.
- **Emotionally** stable, and receiving the support they need to recalibrate at times of distress through the support of concerned adults, the school counselor, and community partners, where necessary.
- **Materially** prepared with a **replenished** supply of pencils, and lined paper throughout the year. If this provision causes financial strain, families should communicate this to teachers.
- **Academically** prepared through the regular completion of homework and projects.

### Dress Code

In our community, we dress appropriately for the weather and the learning activities. We discourage clothing with negative messages or that is revealing. Hats are discouraged, except in cases of religious beliefs or medical conditions. We encourage students to wear sturdy shoes that are suitable for outdoor play and physical education.

If clothing is disruptive to learning or in violation of the Code of Conduct, the administration reserves the right to communicate a need for a change of clothes. If necessary, parent/guardian will be contacted in order to have acceptable clothing brought to school or to have students change into more appropriate clothing.

### Toys, Cosmetics, and Electronics

Children **may not** bring toys, cosmetics, or electronics of any kind to school at any time, unless they are part of a classroom or school-sanctioned activity. If these items are found at school, they will be confiscated and held in the Front Office for the parents/guardians to pick up.

**Students are allowed to bring cell phones, however they must be turned off and placed in their backpacks while in school. If a student uses a cell phone or tablet during school hours, it will be confiscated and a parent/guardian will have to pick it up from the office.** Vida Charter School will not assume responsibility for the loss or theft of personal electronic devices.

### Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Vida Charter School recognizes the power and utility of technology as a supplement and extension of instruction. We strive to give students developmentally appropriate opportunities for exploration.

These include, but are not limited to:

1. Audiovisual entry points
2. Chromebooks with internet access
3. A personal @vidacs.org email
4. Immersion in the [Google for Education](#) platform
5. Educational games, robotics, and coding lessons



#### School Spirit!

*End each week with  
pride in your community!  
Wear Vida Charter  
School clothing on  
Fridays.*



### Acceptable Use

1. Students will use the computers/technology as instructed to do so by the teacher.
2. Students will treat the computers/technology with respect.
3. Students will move calmly in the room to keep computers/technology physically safe.
4. Students will only go the site(s) that they are instructed to access
5. Communications between students, via chat, email, and all other platforms, will be appropriate, related to the relevant academic tasks, and following the [Code of Conduct](#).
6. Researching topics related to a school project is the only appropriate use of internet search engines.
7. The Anti-Bullying Policy (804), and [Code of Conduct](#) Discipline Section apply to the usage of technology.
8. A student who gains access to inappropriate material on the Internet is expected to discontinue the access as quickly as possible and to report the incident to their teacher.

### Security

1. Students shall **keep passwords secure** and will keep passwords private. Authorized users are responsible for the security of their passwords and accounts.
2. Students shall log into **only** their own account.

### Prohibited Use

1. Social media websites, the download/install/access of games, utilities plug-ins or other programs or files from the Internet or any other outside source, to the network or individual systems.
2. Hacking (attempting, without authorization, to access or alter Internet, network or local hard drive functionality, configuration, data or software) is forbidden.
3. Translation of large chunks of text, as through Google Translate or ChatGPT, for academic assignments that evaluate writing.
4. Using school technology to find or participate in the following:
  - Sexually explicit material
  - Criminal Skills
  - Drugs, Alcohol & Tobacco
  - Gambling
  - Glamour & Intimate Apparel
  - [Hate speech](#)
  - Personals and Dating
  - Violence/Offensive Language or Action
  - Remote Proxies
  - Weapons

By signing the “Technology Guidelines Acknowledgement of Agreement” Form, students and parents/guardians agree to abide by these Technology Acceptable Use Guidelines. If the guidelines and/or policies are violated, teachers and administrators will determine consequences based on the severity of the incident. As “[Digital Citizens](#),” students have additional rights and responsibilities which require the practice of safe, responsible, and legal use of technology. **If a student does not heed these guidelines, their access to school technology will be reduced or prohibited.**

### Notice of Nondiscrimination and FERPA

As an equal rights and opportunities school, Vida Charter School will not discriminate against individuals or groups in its admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs, activities, hiring, compensations, benefits, promotions, transfers, wellness programs, terminations, layoffs, returns from layoffs, training, education, and tuition reimbursement because of sex, color, age, race, handicap/disability, religion, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other legally protected classification under the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), FERPA and any other applicable state or federal laws.

Consistent with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (43 P. S. § 951–963), no student shall be denied access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) by Vida on account of race, religion, sex, national origin, or handicaps.

### Pledge of Allegiance at School

At Vida, the Pledge is said daily, either in English or in Spanish.

The Pennsylvania Code provides that it is the responsibility of every citizen to show proper respect for the United States and the flag.

1. Students may decline to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and may refrain from saluting the Flag on the basis of personal belief or religious convictions.
2. Students who choose to refrain from such participation shall respect the rights and interests of classmates who do wish to participate.

### Notice of a Smoke and Vaping-Free School:

To promote a healthier environment, Vida Charter School is a smoke and vaping-free school. As a matter of policy, smoking is NOT permitted in the school building or on school

grounds at any time. Please cooperate by extinguishing and disposing of smoking materials prior to entering upon school grounds.

## FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law, affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records.

Their rights are briefly summarized below and are explained more fully in the Board’s Policy and Procedure for Records Management, Acquisition, and Confidentiality, which is on file at the school and is available upon request:

1. **The right to inspect and review** the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents/guardians should submit a written request to the Executive Director that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Executive Director will make arrangements for access and notify the requestor of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. **The right to request the amendment** of the student’s education records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents/guardian or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the Executive Director, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing process will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. **The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information** contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official may include a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law unit personnel); a person serving on the Board of Directors; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist); or parent or student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest, if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Upon request, Vida Charter School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. **The right to file a complaint** with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. Please use the following name and address to file:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605





## CODE OF CONDUCT

The goal of the Discipline Policy is to preserve the dignity of each student and the integrity of the learning environment. Restorative discipline, which seeks to understand inappropriate behaviors and to strengthen relationships, ensures that classrooms will be conducive to learning, because students will feel

valued and encouraged to behave in a respectful manner. We invite parents/guardians to partner with us in our efforts to promote safe, kind, and productive behaviors.



### Introduction to the Code of Conduct

This Code applies to any conduct that occurs:

- On School Grounds at anytime;
- Off School Grounds at any school activity, function or event;
- Off School Grounds when the conduct may reasonably be expected to:
  - a. Undermine the proper disciplinary authority of the school
  - b. Endanger the safety of members of the School Community
  - c. Disrupt learning at the school
- While traveling to and from school, including but not limited to actions on any school bus, van or public transportation

At Vida Charter School, as in the community at large, certain rules and procedures are established to guide the students through constructive growth and into mature adulthood. The rules and procedures are basically the same from kindergarten through grade six. Parents/guardians, teachers, and others responsible for the welfare and education of the students will cooperate to interpret and enforce these rules. Vida Charter School will use positive behavioral supports and Responsive Classroom™ strategies to encourage positive behavior in the students. Children's strengths will be celebrated and improvements in behavior will be acknowledged. However, in the case of behavioral incidents, logical consequences and restorative practices will be used to address student behavior.

### Creating a Positive Learning Environment

In order to foster a positive school culture and to build student social-emotional capacity, we use the Responsive Classroom™ program. School-wide expectations for student and adult behavior will be clear, and actions taken will be consistent, respectful and developmentally appropriate. Setting and maintaining high standards for behavior starts in the classroom. Responsive Classroom™ provides a structure and common language for everyone at Vida.

Integration of the Responsive Classroom™ strategies will include, but not be limited to:

- Morning Meeting and Closing Circle
- Hopes and Dreams
- Developing classroom norms with students
- Modeling of expectations
- Logical consequences for minor behavioral errors

# CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS




**V** **Value learning** 

- Use specified voice level
- Actively listen to who is speaking

**I** **Inclusive** 

- Respect the opinions and ideas of everyone
- Help everyone learn
- When in groups, make sure everyone is participating

**D** **Do your best** 

- Complete your work to the best of your ability and persevere
- Ask for help when you need it
- Come to class ready to learn

**A** **Act Safely** 

- Keep your hands and your feet to yourself
- Respect everyone's personal space
- Always use walking feet
- Use materials and furniture as expected
- Ask for help if something feels unsafe
- Only be in a classroom when an adult is present

In addition, we make our expectations across the building explicit and consistent. Bilingual posters help students understand what is expected of them and how their actions align with our Vida Values.

## Consequences and Interventions for Behavioral Errors

The following list of conduct categories represents a continuum of misbehavior based on the seriousness of the act and the frequency of occurrence. The intervention list is used at the discretion of teachers to support a culture of respect, responsibility, safety, positivity, and listening. Consequences should be logical, and linked to a student's unsafe behavior; thus, for example, recess should only be taken away or abbreviated if a student is unsafe during recess.

The infractions classified at **minor** are teacher-managed, and involve acts which only minimally interfere with the orderly conduct of the educational process. The frequency of occurrence and the age of the child plays a significant role in determining the most appropriate disciplinary response.

Examples of MINOR behavioral errors	Examples of Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate Language (disruptive, demeaning tone)</li> <li>• Verbal aggression - ex. "Move!"</li> <li>• Physical Contact - ex. <i>playfight, shoving in line</i></li> <li>• Technology or Property Misuse/Damage, ex. <i>Video games</i></li> <li>• Dishonesty - ex. <i>Ignoring rules</i></li> <li>• Disruption (disrespect and defiance) ex. "I'm not doing this assignment"; ex. "No, I am not leaving the room."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference with Student</li> <li>• Reteach Expectations</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Verbal Redirection</li> <li>• Time Apart</li> <li>• Logical consequence (loss of privilege)</li> <li>• Buddy Classroom and Reflection</li> <li>• Restorative Conversation</li> <li>• Seating Change</li> <li>• Call Home</li> <li>• Family Conference</li> </ul>

**Major behavioral errors** are always processed by the Administration. They usually involve a serious action that shows disregard for the student's classmate(s), educators, and the school. These include misconduct that involves extremely serious behavior and/or criminal acts that represent a direct and immediate threat to the welfare of individuals. Major behavioral errors may require interventions by law enforcement authorities.

Examples of MAJOR behavioral errors	Examples of Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment, bullying, and/or sexual harassment, including physical, verbal, or cyber threats</li> <li>• Fighting and/or physical aggression towards students and/or staff</li> <li>• Disruption (disrespect and defiance), ex. <i>Throwing materials across room</i> ex. <i>Refusal to go with cohort or go to buddy room</i></li> <li>• Use of racist or other derogatory terms, regardless of intent</li> <li>• Major Property Damage/Vandalism</li> <li>• Technology Violation, ex. <i>Making YouTube videos in class and posting online</i></li> <li>• Exiting the building without permission</li> <li>• Forgery/Theft/Plagiarism</li> <li>• Arson/Bomb Threat/False Alarm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher will issue an administrative referral</li> <li>• Loss of privileges ("logical consequence")</li> <li>• Restorative Conversation between individuals involved</li> <li>• Meeting/conference between student, counselor, and parent/guardian</li> <li>• Meeting/conference between student, teacher, Executive Director or Principal, and parent/guardian</li> <li>• Suspension from school</li> <li>• Referral to the Board of Trustees</li> <li>• Expulsion from school</li> </ul>

**A minor misconduct appropriately can become major if the act persists after several interventions had been attempted at a lower level.** Although the seriousness of the infraction remains the same, the frequency of the occurrence requires it to be classified at a high level where a different set of disciplinary responses could be applied.

**\*\*Note:** The Pennsylvania Public School Code requires the school to refer for expulsion for not less than one year "any student who is determined to have brought onto or is in possession of a weapon on any school property, any school-sponsored activity or any public conveyance providing transportation to school or school-sponsored activity." Accordingly, Vida administration shall do the following:

- The student shall be detained.
- Any Safe Schools violation shall be reported to the police immediately.
- The parents/guardians shall be reasonably notified.
- The student shall be suspended.
- A report to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and/or Gettysburg School District will be filed to the extent required by applicable laws/regulations.
- The student will be recommended to the Board of Trustees for expulsion.
- Expulsion from school as determined after a hearing held in accordance with the due process procedures below.

## Suspension and Expulsion Procedures

### In-School Suspension

**Suspension** is exclusion from school for a period of from 1 to 10 consecutive school days.

- A student may not receive an in-school suspension unless the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and has been given an opportunity to respond before the suspension becomes effective.
- Communication to the parents or guardian shall follow the suspension action taken by the school.
- When the in-school suspension exceeds 10 consecutive school days, an informal hearing with the Executive Director shall be offered to the student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the 11th school day in accordance with the procedures in the Pennsylvania Code.
- The student's school entity has the responsibility to make provision for the student's education during the period of the in-school suspension.

### Out of School Suspension and Expulsion

**Suspension** is exclusion from school for a period of from 1 to 10 consecutive school days.

- Suspensions may be given by the Principal.
- A student may not be suspended until the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond. Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when it is clear that the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened.
- The parents or guardians shall be notified immediately in writing when the student is suspended.
- When the suspension exceeds 3 school days, the student and parent shall be given the opportunity for an informal hearing consistent with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Code.
- Suspensions may not be made to run consecutively beyond the 10 school day period.
- Students shall have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension and shall be permitted to complete these assignments within guidelines established by the governing board.

**Expulsion** is exclusion from school by the governing board for a period exceeding 10 school days and may be permanent expulsion from the school rolls. Expulsions require a prior formal hearing pursuant to the Pennsylvania Code.

- During the period prior to the hearing and decision of the board in an expulsion case, the student shall be placed in his normal class except as set forth in subsection (D).
- If it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in his normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety or welfare of others and it is not possible to hold a formal hearing within the period of a suspension, the student may be excluded from school for more than 10 school days. A student may not be excluded from school for longer than 15 school days without a formal hearing unless mutually agreed upon by both parties. Any student so excluded shall be provided with alternative education, which may include home study.
- Students who are under 17 years of age are still subject to the compulsory school attendance law even though expelled and shall be provided an education.

- The initial responsibility for providing the required education rests with the student's parents or guardian, through placement in another school, tutorial or correspondence study, or another educational program approved by the district's superintendent.
- Within 30 days of action by the board, the parents or guardians shall submit to the school written evidence that the required education is being provided as described in paragraph A or that they are unable to do so. If the parents or guardians are unable to provide the required education, the school entity shall, within 10 days of receipt of the notification, make provision for the student's education. A student with a disability shall be provided educational services as required by the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act 2004.
- If the approved educational program is not complied with, the school entity may take action in accordance with 42 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63 (relating to the Juvenile Act) to ensure that the child will receive a proper education. See 22 Pa. Code § 12.1 (relating to free education and attendance).

## Hearings

**General.** Education is a statutory right, and students shall be afforded due process if they are to be excluded from school. In a case involving a possible expulsion, the student is entitled to a formal hearing.

**Formal Hearings.** A formal hearing is required in all expulsion actions. This hearing may be held before the board or an authorized committee of the board, or a qualified hearing examiner appointed by the board. When a committee of the board or a hearing examiner conducts the hearing, a majority vote of the entire board is required to expel a student. The following due process requirements shall be observed with regard to the formal hearing:

- Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student's parents or guardians by certified mail.
- At least 3 days' notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given. A copy of the expulsion policy, notice that legal counsel may represent the student and hearing procedures shall be included with the hearing notice. A student may request the rescheduling of the hearing when the student demonstrates good cause for an extension.
- The hearing shall be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.
- The student may be represented by counsel, at the expense of the parents or guardians, and may have a parent or guardian attend the hearing.
- The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses.
- The student has the right to request that the witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
- The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his own behalf.
- A written or audio record shall be kept of the hearing. The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy. A copy shall be provided at no cost to a student who is indigent.

The proceeding shall be held within 15 school days of the notification of charges, unless mutually agreed to by both parties. A hearing may be delayed for any of the following reasons, in which case the hearing shall be held as soon as reasonably possible:

- Laboratory reports are needed from law enforcement agencies.
- Evaluations or other court or administrative proceedings are pending due to a student invoking his rights under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act 2004 (20 U.S.C.A. §§ 1400–1482).

In cases in juvenile or criminal court involving sexual assault or serious bodily injury, delay is necessary due to the condition or best interests of the victim.

Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student with the expulsion decision.

**Informal Hearings.** The purpose of the informal hearing is to enable the student to meet with the appropriate school official to explain the circumstances surrounding the event for which the student is being suspended or to show why the student should not be suspended.

The informal hearing is held to bring forth all relevant information regarding the event for which the student may be suspended and for students, their parents or guardians and school officials to discuss ways by which future offenses might be avoided.

The following due process requirements shall be observed in regard to the informal hearing:

- Notification of the reasons for the suspension shall be given in writing to the parents or guardians and to the student.
- Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing shall be given.
- A student has the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing.
- A student has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his own behalf.
- The school entity shall offer to hold the informal hearing within the first 5 days of the suspension.

All hearings will take place before a qualified hearing examiner or authorized committee of the Board who will consider the evidence presented by Administration and the student in connection with a formal hearing and will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

Students who have been suspended must be reinstated by a parent or guardian. At that time, a reentry plan will be discussed to prevent the undesirable behavior from being repeated. The design and implementation of individualized supports will include comprehensive and collaborative planning, including the child and people who know them best. They will work to make a plan that allows the child to:

- Increase participation and presence in the school and community,
- Gain and maintain significant relationships,
- Express and make choices,
- Experience respect and live a dignified life,
- Develop personal skills and areas of expertise

### **Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities**

Vida Charter School shall comply with the provisions of the IDEA when disciplining students with disabilities. Their rights are explained fully in the Board's Policy 709, "Discipline of Special Education Students Policy." This policy is available on the Vida Charter School website and is available upon request.

### **Appeal Procedures**

Should a parent disagree with administrative disciplinary action of the school, other than out-of-school suspensions or expulsions, the parent/guardian may appeal as follows:

1. Appeals should be made to the Executive Director by arranging an appointment or by writing to the Executive Director.
2. If the appellant is dissatisfied with the result of the appeal to the Executive Director, they may appeal to the Board of Trustees. Appeals must be filed in writing, within five school days of receipt by the parent of the Executive Director's notice of disciplinary action.

In cases of immediate appeal, if the Executive Director determines that the student's presence at the school does not create a continuing danger to persons or property, or an ongoing threat of disruption, the student may

be allowed to continue in school on a regular basis until the appeal is considered. A favorable decision will allow the student to continue in school, whereas a decision supporting the Executive Director will require the student to serve the full suspension beginning the next school day after receiving notice of the decision. In situations where the student is excluded during the appeal process and the appeal is ultimately favorable to the student, opportunity will be provided for the completion of make-up assignments.

### School Bus Code of Conduct

Vida Charter School considers a student's school bus ride to be a part of their school day. The general [Code of Conduct](#) applies to the time students spend on buses. There are also a few bus-specific expectations that must be followed by all students who ride the bus, whether for transport to school or for a class field trip. Please review each of these rules with your student.

The following is a code of conduct and consequences/corrective action for any student that rides a school bus or van. This includes to and from school as well as school trips or school sponsored activities.

#### Bus Referrals and Consequences

**The first (1st) Bus Behavior Referral** will be issued and sent home. The form needs to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned the next school day

**The second (2nd) Bus Behavior Referral** will necessitate a meeting between the parent(s)/guardian(s), student, bus driver (if available), and the Executive Director and/or Principal. At this time, a warning letter will be placed in the student's file.

**The third (3rd) Bus Behavior Referral** will require a minimum one (1) day suspension from the bus.

## BUS EXPECTATIONS



### V

#### Value learning

- Use voice level 2
- Actively listen to who is speaking



### I

#### Inclusive

- Be kind and courteous to those you share a seat with



### D

#### Do your best

- Respect everyone on the bus
- Be good example to those around you as you represent Vida



### A

#### Act Safely

- Stay seated and forward facing until you arrive
- Keep your hands and your feet to yourself
- Keep food, drinks, and materials in your backpack
- Respect everyone's personal space



**The Fourth (4th) Bus Behavior Referral** will require a minimum three (3) day suspension from the bus.

**Any Bus Behavior Referrals Beyond the Fourth (4th)** one will warrant long term consequences which can include an indefinite suspension or expulsion from the school bus.

Please remember that in most cases, the school district of residence is responsible for transportation and, as a result, can and will impose their own procedures and consequences for violations of school bus rules.

**School District Transportation Coordinators,-2024-2025, are:**

District	Director	Contact Information
Bermudian Springs	Jennifer Heller	717-528-4113 ext. 1716
Chambersburg (Jacoby Transportation)	Claudia Jacoby	717-677-7733
Conewago Valley	Bonnie Little	717-624-2157 ext. 1010
Fairfield	Jennifer Wivell	717-642-2028
Gettysburg	Bill Bowling	717-334-6254 ext. 1263
Hanover	Janet Etzler	717-630-9000 ext. 6017
Littlestown	Lora Mace	717-359-4146 ext. 1272
South Western (Jacoby Transportation)	Claudia Jacoby	717-677-7733
Spring Grove (Jacoby Transportation)	Claudia Jacoby	717-677-7733
Upper Adams	Vanessa Wagner	717-677-7191 ext. 2711

**Anti-Bullying Policy and Non-Discrimination and Anti-Bias Policy**

The Anti-Bullying Policy and Non-Discrimination, ~~Title IX Policy~~, Anti-Bias Policy of Vida Charter School's Board of Trustees apply to all acts of harassment, bullying, discrimination, and bias that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions, or on a school bus.

The Board of Trustees of the Vida Charter School affirms that every student and staff member has the right to a safe and secure school environment, free of humiliation, intimidation, fear, harassment, bias, or any form of bullying behavior. Furthermore, the Board believes that a healthy, positive psychosocial school environment enhances and increases academic achievement and pro-social development.

**Bias:** Prejudice for or against something or someone, usually in a way that's considered to be unfair.

**Discrimination:** The different treatment of an individual based on a protected characteristic in the context of an educational program, work or activity without a legitimate, nondiscriminatory reason, that interferes with or limits the individual's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.

**Harassment:** Conduct that is unwelcome, including that which is verbal, written, graphic or physical, relating to an individual's gender, age, race, color, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), national origin, religion, disability, English language proficiency, socioeconomic status,



and/or political beliefs. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. A single incident of harassment may implicate more than one protected class; for example, a student may be targeted because of his race and sexual orientation.

**Bullying:** An intentional electronic, written, verbal, nonverbal, psychological, or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occur in and/or outside of school setting, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantially interfering with a student's education;
2. Creating a threatening school environment; or
3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying is characterized by the following three criteria:

1. It is aggressive behavior or intentional harm doing.
2. It is carried out repeatedly over time.
3. It occurs within an interpersonal relationship where this is an imbalance of power.

Bullying behaviors may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Verbal: Racial slurs, name-calling, teasing, taunting, harassment, gossiping;
2. Nonverbal: Threatening, obscene gestures, isolation, exclusion, stalking;
3. Physical: Hitting, kicking, pushing, punching, getting another person to hurt someone;
4. Emotional (Psychological): Rejecting, humiliating, socially isolating, using peer pressure;
5. Cyberbullying: Any form of bullying that occurs by the use of electronic communication devices or through means of social networking, email, instant messaging, text messaging, photo and video sharing, and apps.
6. Hazing: Any action or situation which reckless or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person or of property for the purpose of initiation or rite of passage. .

Vida Charter School expects students to conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, school staff, volunteers, and contractors.

Vida Charter School believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents and guardians, staff, and community members of the school, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members.

Vida Charter School believes that the best discipline is self-imposed, and that it is the responsibility of staff to use disciplinary situations as opportunities for helping students learn to assume responsibility and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with students shall apply best practices designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage students' abilities to develop self-discipline.

Since bystanders can either support or help prevent these behaviors, the school prohibits both active and passive support for acts of harassment, discrimination, bias, or bullying. Students are expected to discourage these behaviors, defend the victim, redirect the situation away from bullying or harassment, report witnessed incidents, and/or get help from an adult in these situations.

## Reporting Procedures

The “complainant,” any student, their parent/guardian, or a staff member who believes that a student has been subjected to bullying, harassment, bias, or discrimination, is encouraged to immediately report the incident in one of the following ways:

1. Using the online reporting process available on the Charter School website ([www.vidacs.org](http://www.vidacs.org)) or through the QR code.
2. Orally reporting the incident to the Executive Director or designee, or to any other trusted member of the school staff.



All school employees who see any incidents of bullying or harassment or bias must immediately report the incident(s) to the administration via the online reporting system. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action *may not* be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

It shall be the responsibility of the administration to investigate promptly and thoroughly any and all bullying, harassment, discrimination, and/or bias complaints received or referred by other individuals and to make recommendations based upon investigation. The investigation is to be commenced within three (3) school days after a report is received.

Upon receipt of a report of an alleged act in violation of this policy, the Executive Director or designee shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the perpetrator of the bullying, harassment, discrimination, and/or bias and the parent or guardian of the victim of the alleged incident(s).

## Consequences

Vida Charter School requires its school administrators to develop and implement procedures that ensure both the appropriate consequences and remedial responses to a student who commits one or more acts of harassment, bullying, discrimination, or bias. Please refer to Vida Charter School’s Code of Conduct and Discipline as stated in this handbook.

## Retaliation Prohibited

Vida Charter School will not tolerate reprisal or retaliation against any person who files a report. Retaliation includes, but it is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment used against a person who reports, in good faith, incident(s) of bullying, harassment, discrimination, and/or bias. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the administration after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

## False Accusations

Vida Charter School prohibits any person from falsely accusing another of bullying, harassment, discrimination and/or bias. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

### **Students with Disabilities**

For those students who meet the disability definitions of IDEA and/or Section 504, both Section 504 and Title II protect students with disabilities from bullying or hazing by teachers, other school employees, and third parties. The Office of Civil Rights would find a disability-based harassment under Section 504 and Title II when:

- a student is bullied or hazed based on a disability;
- the bullying or hazing is sufficiently serious to create a hostile environment;
- school officials know or should know about the bullying or hazing; and
- the school does not respond appropriately.

### **Annual Distribution of Information**

Vida Charter School requires school officials to annually disseminate the policy to all school staff, students, volunteers, independent contractors, and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all applicable acts of bullying and cyberbullying and hazing that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions, using Charter School equipment and/or technology, or on a school bus. The chief school administrator shall develop an annual process for discussing the school district policy on harassment, discrimination, and bullying with students and staff, as well as the mitigation of bias.

The Charter School shall be required to post this policy on its website and make the policy available in every classroom. This policy shall also be posted at a prominent location within the Charter School building. The Charter School shall ensure that this policy and its procedures for reporting bullying, cyberbullying, and hazing incidents are reviewed annually with students and staff.

### **Compliance**

As required by the Federal Broadband Data Improvement Act of 2008, the Charter School shall educate elementary aged students with computer access to the Internet about appropriate online behaviors, including online interaction with other individuals on social networking websites.

Vida Charter School will comply with applicable federal and state laws relating to bullying and cyberbullying and hazing, including, but not limited to, those requirements delineated in the Charter School Law, 24 P.S. § 1701-A, et seq. the Federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), 47 U.S.C. § 254(h) and (i), and the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act (N-CIPA) and any applicable implementing regulations and the PA Anti-Hazing Law (P.L. 1595, No.175).

Vida Charter School will comply with applicable federal and state laws, including Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code, the applicable House bill 1067 Public School Code amendments relating to safe schools and bullying, and applicable provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) and its applicable implementing regulations regarding the discipline of special education students and thought-to-be eligible students who engage in an act of bullying.

***To report an act of bullying, harassment, discrimination, and/or bias, complete the Reporting Form on the Vida Charter School website, or contact the [Executive Director](#) or [Principal](#) of Vida Charter School at: 120 East Broadway, Gettysburg, PA 17325. Telephone: 717-334-3643.***





## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

### Visit Vida Charter School

At Vida Charter School, we strive to make our guests feel welcome on campus. Guests may request a visit us 2 days prior to the intended date of visitation. School Leadership reserves the right to approve or deny a visitor's access.

### Volunteer Opportunities for Families

Families are an important part of our school community. The participation and commitment of our families help make Vida Charter School a rich and wonderful learning environment for our students. There are numerous opportunities for family involvement which are designed to help adults support their student's education and development. A guide for volunteers can be found on the Vida website under Family Resources, [here](#).

Volunteer opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- The Family Faculty Partnership (FFP@vidacs.org)
- Board membership, or participation in the Finance, Academic Excellence, or Governance Committee
- Fundraising campaigns
- Enrichment activities, service learning activities, or assistance to a Vida educator
- Field trip chaperones
- Gardening
- Library Support

The three mandatory clearances for ALL volunteers are:

- Act 151 Child Abuse Clearance (<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>)
- Act 34 Pennsylvania State Police Clearance (<https://epatch.state.pa.us/>).
- Act 114 FBI Clearance <https://uenroll.identogo.com/>, Service Code: **1KG6Q9**

When you apply, please mark "Volunteer," and there will be no charge for Acts 34 and 115.

If you have been a resident of Pennsylvania for the last ten consecutive years, you are eligible to fill out the Volunteer Verification for Exemption from FBI Federal Criminal History Clearance form. This form is located at the main office to be completed in person. If you have not been a resident of Pennsylvania for the last ten consecutive years, you must apply for an FBI clearance using the above link for Act 114.

For the 2024–2025 school year, clearances will be required by October 1, 2024 to attend field trips in the first semester, and by February 1, 2025 to attend field trips in the second semester. We will run clearance workshop in September and in January to assist families to get their clearances.

All grade levels have at least one field trip. Our tentative field trip plan for the 2024–2025 school year is below.

Semester 1 (Clearance deadline Oct. 1)		Semester 2 (Clearance deadline Feb. 1)	
Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
3rd, 6th	1st, 4th	2nd, 5th	Kindergarten

Volunteers are encouraged to contact the Front Office (717–334–3643) for more information, or to email [volunteer@vidacs.com](mailto:volunteer@vidacs.com).

### McKinney–Vento

Your McKinney–Vento rights:

If your family lives in any of the following situations:

- In a shelter
- In a motel or campground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodation
- In a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station
- Doubled-up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship

Then your school-age children may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney–Vento Act.

If your children are eligible, they/you have the right to:

- Receive a free, appropriate public education.
- Enroll immediately and full participation in all school activities, even if lacking paperwork normally required.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
- To attend the school of school of origin (if requested by parent and is feasible) or in the school in the attendance area where the family or youth is currently residing.

\*\*If the school district believes that the school you select is not in the best interest of your children, then the district must provide you with a written explanation of its position and inform you of your right to appeal its decision.\*\*

- Receive transportation to/from school of origin, if this is requested by the parent.
- Receive supplemental educational services received by housed schoolmates, including special education, free school meals, Title I services, ELL services, preschool services, gifted and talented services
- To dispute an enrollment decision and for a child or youth to be admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought.
- A local homeless education liaison in every school district or LEA
- To attend school along with children not experiencing homelessness. Segregation bases on a students status as homeless is strictly prohibited



If you believe your children may be eligible, please contact Vida Charter School's Local Liaison, the School Counselor 717–334–3643. More information can be found [here](#).

## Board of Trustee and Meeting Schedule

	Ac. Excellence 2nd Thursday 4:00pm	Finance 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday 3:30pm	Governance 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday 4:00pm	Full Board 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday 6:30pm
July	9	11	15	22
August	13	8	19	26
September	10	12	16	23
October	8	10	21	28
November	12	14	18	25
December	9	12	16	16*
January	13	9	21*	27
February	11	13	18*	24
March	11	13	17	24
April	8	10	22*	28
May	13	8	19	19*
June	10	12	16	23

\* Moved due to holiday break

Committee meetings (Academic Excellence, Finance, and Governance) and Full Board meetings will take place at Vida Charter School in person at Vida Charter School, 120 East Broadway, Gettysburg, PA 17325.





# VIDA CHARTER SCHOOL

Phone call  
**(717) 334-3643**



Email Address  
**[info@vidacs.org](mailto:info@vidacs.org)**



Website  
**[www.vidacs.org](http://www.vidacs.org)**



School Address  
**120 East Broadway  
Gettysburg, PA 17325**

