

Mount Vernon Community School

2025-2026 Family Back-to-School Guide



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IMPORTANT DATES

Saturday, Aug. 9 Chirilagua/Del Ray Back-to-School Day (10:00 am - 1:00 pm) at Casa Chirilagua (4109 Mount Vernon Ave.)

- Uniform and clothing exchange
- Free backpack and school supply distribution
- Help with ParentSquare and other ACPS applications
- Access to community resources
- Bilingual read-alouds, arts and crafts, kids' games, DJ, snacks and more!

Friday, Aug. 15 MVCS Step-up to Kindergarten (8:00 am - 12:00 pm)

- Families are invited to walk their children to their classroom and drop off any school supplies for the year. A separate, detailed message for kindergarten families will be sent closer to the day of the event.

MVCS Open House K-5 (1:00 - 2:30 pm)

- Students and families are welcome to attend together and drop off any school supplies for the year. Additional details will be sent closer to the event.

Monday, Aug. 18 First Day of School!

NEW PROCEDURE FOR TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS & WELCOME PACKETS

This year, we are changing the way we share back-to-school welcome packets. The change will help us make the best use of our school resources and align to division-wide procedures. **On Wednesday, August 13 all families who have registered before August 12 will receive a ParentSquare message with their child's homeroom teacher assignment and any bus assignment between 9:00 am and 12:00 pm.** PowerSchool Parent Access Information emails will also be sent to parents through Digital Document Delivery at this time. **Any families who registered after August 12 will receive a separate communication from our registrar via the email address they provided during registration.** Other annual forms and fliers will be sent home with students on the first day of school to be completed by families and returned to MVCS during the first week of school. If you have any difficulty accessing this information or need assistance with creating your ParentSquare or PowerSchool account, please call the main office (703-706-4460) and we will support you.

When developing class groupings, several important elements have been considered, including: class sizes, students' instructional needs and services (i.e., Special Education, English learner, and Advanced Academic Services), students' social-emotional needs, achieving a heterogeneous balance of students, and group social dynamics. Moving students after this process can cause imbalances and inequities, and for this reason, we are unable to grant specific teacher requests. MVCS is very fortunate to have a talented and diverse teaching staff who provide a high-quality dual language instructional program across all of our classrooms.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Arrival

The cafeteria will open at 7:30 am for students who wish to eat breakfast. Bus riders will arrive at Door 15 (Mount Vernon Ave.) beginning around 7:30 am. Students who do not wish to eat breakfast will go to their assigned playground from 7:30 - 7:47 am:

- Students in Grades K-2: Primary Playground (Uhler Ave.)
 - Inclement Weather Location: Auditorium
- Students in Grades 3-5: Intermediate Playground (Basketball Court)
 - Inclement Weather Location: Gym

The main entrance of the school (Commonwealth Ave.) will open at 7:47 am. For students arriving on the playgrounds, cones are arranged by grade level with teachers' names. Students will line up behind their teachers' cones, and for the first week, teachers will greet them on the playground to escort them to their classrooms at 7:47 am. After the first week, assigned staff will supervise student arrival and assist students in finding their classrooms. Door 15 (Mount Vernon Ave.) will close at approximately 7:57 am. The main entrance will close at 8:00 am. Class begins at 8:00 am. **Students arriving after 8:00 am will be tardy.**

Families dropping students off by car will enter the car line from Uhler Ave. Staff will be available to open car doors so that students can exit. Please wait for a staff member to open your car door, and do not exit your car, as this can cause delays in the car line. Please do not

park in library parking spots during drop-off, and remain in the car line. Staff will be directing the flow of students and traffic at the main entrance during arrival; please follow staff instructions to ensure the safety of students, families, and staff.

On the first day of school, families will say goodbye to their children from the front of the school or playgrounds. We will have many staff members on hand to help students find their classrooms.

Dismissal

Dismissal will occur at 2:35 pm. Bus riders will be dismissed by school staff through the main entrance. Students enrolled in Campagna, the Mount Vernon Rec Center or Creative Play for aftercare will be escorted and monitored by school staff until they are received by aftercare program staff.

Students being picked up or walking home will exit the building to their assigned location, rain or shine, where caregivers will meet them:

- Students in Grades K-2: Primary Playground (Uhler Ave.)
- Students in Grades 3-5: Intermediate Playground (Basketball Courts)

To ensure a smooth dismissal, please communicate your dismissal plan to your child(ren)'s teachers prior to the first day of school. During Open House, teachers will have a log where you can note your child's dismissal plan- please be sure to do so. If you need to make changes to your family's dismissal plan, please communicate those changes to the school by contacting the main office as soon as possible, preferably by noon on the day the change will take place.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is one of the greatest predictors of students' academic success. Students who miss more than 10% of school (18 or more days) are considered chronically absent in the state of Virginia, regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. Chronic absenteeism affects a student's ability to learn, develop socio-emotionally, and connect with their teachers and peers. Attendance matters, and we look forward to seeing our students in school every day at MVCS. Please review the ACPS attendance policy at the following links: [ENGLISH](#) and [ESPAÑOL](#). If your child will be absent for the day, please call the main office (703-706-4460) or email our registrar, Ms. Ingrid Franco-Callejas (ingrid.franco-callejas@acps.k12.va.us) to let us know.

CALENDAR

We invite you to save a copy of the ACPS calendar by clicking on the link of your preferred language:

[Calendar- English](#)

[Calendario- Español](#)

[Calendar- Amharic](#) (አማርኛ)

Thank you for scheduling family travel around student holidays to support strong school attendance.

MEAL ACCOUNTS & FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH APPLICATIONS

Our cafeteria serves breakfast and lunch daily. Students may bring lunch or purchase lunch. ACPS uses SchoolCafe to manage meal accounts. Please visit the following site to set up or access your child's account: <https://www.schoolcafe.com/ALEXANDRIACPS>

Students will use an ID number to purchase meals. Teachers and cafeteria staff will have access to these numbers and help students practice entering them on the keypad.

Some families may qualify for free or reduced-cost meals. You are able to complete the online form to apply for free or reduced-cost meals through your child's SchoolCafe account:

<https://www.schoolcafe.com/ALEXANDRIACPS>

We will also send a hard copy of the application home in our Welcome Packets. If you need assistance with completing the form, please contact the main office (703-706-4460), and we will help you.

MVCS DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

MVCS proudly implements the only full-school dual language program in Alexandria City Public Schools. We align our instructional program, initiatives, and decision-making with the three pillars of dual language education, which include:

1. High levels of grade-level academic achievement
2. Bilingualism and biliteracy
3. Sociocultural competence

MVCS transitioned to a 70/30 dual language program model in 2024 for grades K-1. Grades 2 through 5 will continue to follow a 50/50 model. In the 70/30 model, 70% of core content is instructed in Spanish and 30% is instructed in English. In practice, this means that students will study Spanish language arts, math, science and social studies in Spanish, and English language arts in English. Encore classes (i.e., music, art, PE, library) will be delivered in a mix of English and Spanish, depending upon the content area and teacher. Research demonstrates that all dual language students, regardless of home language, benefit from more intensive Spanish instruction early on, particularly with regard to long-term biliteracy and language proficiency outcomes. These language skills then help students successfully access rigorous content standards in the upper elementary grades and beyond.

The Dual Language Family Handbook offers a wealth of information about the ACPS Dual Language Program, and is available at the following links:

[DL Family Handbook \(English\)](#)

[Manual para las familias \(Español\)](#)

[DL Family Handbook \(Amharic አማርኛ\)](#)

MVCS PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

MVCS has a truly phenomenal PTA that supports our students and staff in various ways. Joining the PTA creates an avenue for engaging with the school to support your child's education, as well as the larger Mount Vernon school community. For more information about joining our PTA, please visit their website: <https://mvcspata.org/>

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Suggested school supply lists are available [HERE](#). If you ordered school supplies through the PTA, the materials will be distributed to your child(ren)'s classroom and you do not need to purchase additional supplies with the exception of headphones (see the supply list for an example of preferred headphones). Students use headphones for certain learning applications and assessments, which require a built-in microphone.

School supplies can be brought to school at Step-up to Kindergarten, Open House, or during the first week of school. We will be distributing free school supplies at Chirilagua/Del Ray Back-to-School Day on Saturday, August 9 (see more information above) for families who need them. Families may also contact our school social worker, Ms. Lesley Barajas (lesley.barajas@acps.k12.va.us) or our family liaison, Ms. Rosa Landeros (rlandero@acps.k12.va.us) for support with school supplies.

STUDENT CELL PHONE & SMART WATCH POLICY

MVCS follows the [ACPS School Board Policy for Student Use of Personal Mobile Devices](#) for elementary school students. Personal mobile devices are defined to include cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, headphones, and any device capable of connecting to a cellular or Wi-Fi network, transmitting messages, or directly communicating with other devices:

- Personal mobile devices must be silenced or turned off and stored in a secure location, such as a backpack, for the entire school day, including smartwatches.
- Students are prohibited from using cell phones, tablets, and mobile devices, including ACPS issued devices, in restrooms in an effort to protect the privacy rights of others.

Families needing to contact their children during the school day should please call the main office (703-706-4460). Our staff will ensure that students receive any urgent messages and that you are able to communicate directly with your child if necessary.

Students who fail to comply with the policy may have their device confiscated and stored in a secure location until it can be picked up by a parent or caregiver. Repeated violations may result in additional consequences. Thank you for your collaboration in discussing these expectations with your children.

UNIFORMS

The MVCS Uniform Guidelines create a standard dress code for students that helps foster an environment in which students are “SERRious about success!” (Safety-Effort-Respect-Responsibility). We use positive reinforcement measures to encourage full compliance with the uniform guidelines. You can access the guidelines by clicking [HERE](#).

We will hold our annual clothing and uniform exchange at Chirilagua/Del Ray Back-to-School Day on Saturday, August 9 (see more information above). Families may also contact our school social worker, Ms. Lesley Barajas (lesley.barajas@acps.k12.va.us) or our family liaison, Ms. Rosa Landeros (rlandero@acps.k12.va.us) for support with uniforms and clothing.

IMPORTANT SCHOOL CONTACTS

Below you will find contact information for key staff members at MVCS. Please note that administrators and main office staff have returned to work for the school year. All other school staff will return on August 7.

Main Office: 703-706-4460

Principal: Ms. Jennifer Hamilton
jennifer.hamilton@acps.k12.va.us

Assistant Principal for Grades K-2: Ms. Linda Ricks
linda.ricks@acps.k12.va.us

Assistant Principal for Grades 3-5: Ms. Ericea Davis-Buchanan
ericea.davis-buchanan@acps.k12.va.us

Assistant Principal for Special Education Services: Ms. Julianne Keil
julanne.keil@acps.k12.va.us

Registrar: Ms. Ingrid Franco-Callejas
ingrid.franco-callejas@acps.k12.va.us

Nurse: Ms. Jennifer Malone
jennifer.malone@acps.k12.va.us

Family Liaison: Ms. Rosa Landeros
rlandero@acps.k12.va.us

School Psychologist: Ms. Giselle Mignott
giselle.mignott@acps.k12.va.us

Counselor Grades K-2: Ms. Olga Anderson
olga.anderson@acps.k12.va.us

Counselor Grades 3-5: Ms. Leslie Keller
leslie.keller@acps.k12.va.us

Social Worker: Ms. Lesley Barajas
lesley.barajas@acps.k12.va.us