



## Valley New School

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# WELCOME TO 2025-2026!

## ***Happy August, VNS Parents/Guardians and Students!***

*We are excited to welcome students to the new school year later this month. Please **read through this newsletter, mark your calendars, and get prepared** as there are several important items to consider. We look forward to learning and celebrating together throughout the year!*

## **Meet Our New Community Members!**

### **A big welcome to our incoming students:**

Lorelei Brisson, Stella Kruger, Brady Yang, Henrietta Huckins, Kurt Hornig, Finnegan Fourness, Declan Colley, Elsie Coenen, Elias Pavlinek, Xander Rochester, Weston Kain, Nora Schultz, Sebastian Williams, Adelyn Colley, Paige Blankenberg, Amelia Smith, Alexander Shantz, Hailey Barger, Piper Schweiger, Flynn Colley, Crue Pederson

## **Important Dates**

### **Keep up-to-date throughout the year with the [VNS Google Calendar!](#)**

Click the hyperlink above, and then click the “+ Google Calendar” button in the lower right corner of the calendar screen to add it to your own calendar app. It is also available on the [VNS webpage](#).

**Here are a few important dates as we start the new school year** (see below for details about each event):

- New Student Orientation/Boot Camp--August 20 and 21, 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
  - New students arrive at 9:00 a.m.
  - Mentors arrive at 8:40 a.m. on Aug 20 and 11:00 a.m. on Aug 21
  - Parents of new students attend August 21, 9:00-11:30 a.m.
- First Day of School--August 28, 7:55 a.m.-3:10 p.m.
- Picture Day--September 3, 11:00 a.m.
- All-school Field Trip--Friday, September 19
- Fall Student-led Conferences--September 29-October 3
- Event Night #1 & Parent Orientation--Tues, October 21, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

## Getting Started

**Hours of Operation:** School doors open at 7:30 a.m. each day. Students must report by 7:55 a.m. School dismisses at 3:10 p.m. in support of students who utilize city buses (plenty of time to catch the bus--do not plan to leave early). [Students should arrange to be out of VNS by 3:30 p.m.](#) Those getting late rides can wait outside or at the Appleton Public Library.

**Registration & Fees:** [AASD registration MUST be completed online through the AASD Parent Portal before the first day of school.](#) School fees (see below) will be assigned shortly, and Mrs. R. will send an email to let you know when they are ready. Payment options are available through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal (Visa, MC, debit card or direct withdrawal from your checking account; \$2.00 convenience fee will apply), or check/cash payment may be made in person at VNS. If assistance is needed, please contact Mrs. R. to schedule an appointment.

School Fee List	Who Pays	How Much	Check Payable to:
Regular School Fees	Everyone	\$40.00	VNS
VNS Clothing Orders	Optional	Varies	<a href="#">See our online store!</a>
PAC Performances	Optional	\$5 each show	VNS
Graduation Fee	Seniors Only	\$125.00	VNS
School Pictures	Optional	Varies	Harmann Studios website
Yearbook	Optional	\$14	Harmann Studios website
All-school Field Trip	Everyone	\$75.00	VNS

### **New Student Orientation (aka Boot Camp), is Wednesday & Thursday, August 20 & 21!**

**New students** should plan to arrive by 9:00 a.m. with project topic ideas (complete the [Project Topic Driving Questions form](#), and bring it with you) and a pen/pencil. Lunch will be provided on Day 1; please bring your own lunch on Day 2.

**Mentors**, please help us welcome new students with your experience and enthusiasm! Arrive at Boot Camp at 8:40 a.m. on Aug 20 and 11:00 a.m. on Aug 21. Lunch will be provided on Day 1; bring your lunch on Day 2.

**Parents of New Students:** You are warmly invited to join us on the second day of Boot Camp from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.! This is a great opportunity to connect with other new parents and students as well as ask questions of your child's Advisor and student mentors. (Please be advised that parking enforcement starts at 9:00 a.m. The East Ramp is an easy option).

**The first day of school is Thursday, August 28!**

All students must arrive by [7:55 a.m.](#) Bring school supplies, set up workstations, and convene as a community! [No hot lunch is available until September. Pizza will be provided on the first day, but please bring lunch after that.](#) Students are dismissed at [3:10 p.m.](#) [This is intentionally aligned with Valley Transit as most routes depart at 3:15 p.m.; students will not be permitted to leave earlier than 3:10 p.m. to catch the city bus.](#) Please see [VNS Google Calendar](#) for subsequent days of school as we gradually ramp up to full weeks in session.

## **Technology at VNS**

VNS students learn that practicing reflection, discernment, and critical thinking empowers us to become purposeful adults. These practices are also essential as we mindfully consider the current needs of our community in light of societal shifts and technological advances. As [emerging research](#) continues to reveal that constant digital media use is unhelpful and even detrimental to academic and social learning, mental health, personal growth, and our school culture, VNS remains committed to innovation and to learning how new technologies improve and/or decrease our effectiveness and quality of life.

Here's what to know for this year:

### **Personal Devices**

- Use of personal devices (smartphones, tablets, gaming consoles, laptops, smartwatches, etc.) will not be allowed during the school day. Devices other than mobile phones should be left at home.
- Students and Advisors will store their mobile phones in assigned slots in the phone lockers at Mrs. R.'s desk as they enter school each day. Mrs. R. will lock the case until 3:10 p.m. Students can retrieve their phones as they leave school for the day and when they leave the building alone (say, for an appointment).
- Students whose phone is not in the case when school starts will be subject to disciplinary action. Please see the [Valley New School Policy Handbook](#) (page 16) for details.
- Parents should notify Mrs. Rosenbaum if a student will not be bringing a phone.
- Exceptions: In rare cases where a student needs to utilize a cell phone for a specific reason (e.g., health-related issue), a written request must be submitted to and approved by the school/AASD administration in advance. Some exceptions for certain projects may apply; a written request form must be completed and approved as part of the project proposal process.
- If you need to speak with Advisors during the school day, please call the VNS main number.
- In case of emergency, Advisors will carry their smartphones on field trips.

### **AASD-issued Laptops**

- Students will continue to utilize AASD Chromebooks, learning academic content while growing our purposefulness of time and task.

- AASD desktops and numerous other tools and resources for school work are available at VNS.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

- VNS students and staff will continue examination of ethical and effective ways to utilize AI in the project process.
- VNS will lead the way as the AASD experiments with implementation of Magic School, an AI platform designed for schools.

**All-school Field Trip:** Get excited! Our culture-building field trip filled with learning and fun is in the works--more info coming soon! We need a few adult chaperones. Please reach out if you are able to join us!

**Parents as Partners:** All VNS parents are invited to join in learning more about how to support your child's personalized project-based education and actively create a positive, inspired culture at VNS. Opportunities to network with other parents, ask questions of Advisors, and build skills together will take place throughout the year. Based on 24-25 Parent Survey feedback, topics will include:

- Personal Learning Plans
- Understanding the Project Process
- How to Monitor Progress
- The College Search and Application Process
- How to Get Involved at VNS--*More info to come! Start thinking about being a Savings Paws driver, Community Lunch cook or crew, All-school Field Trip chaperone, serving on Governance Board or a committee, helping during Speech Unit, or sharing your perspective at a Public Information Session for prospective families!*

**Parents of 12th-grade students:** Senior year is exciting! Learn how to support your child by attending (in person or Google Meet) the introductory Senior Meeting on Wed., Sept. 10, 10:45-11:30 a.m. We will discuss Senior Project expectations, graduation requirements, and college application/post-high school planning processes.

**Blended Learning Days:** As a lab school, we can flex our learning environment. Blended Learning Days are held one or two days each month. On these Wednesdays, students will report to Advisory virtually at 8:15 a.m. and then implement learning opportunities in the field or at home from 9:00 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. These are school days, and students are expected to attend, work all day long (i.e., log at least 5 hours), and have their cameras ON while in Google meetings. See school calendar for exact Blended Learning dates.

**School Pictures:** Harmann Studios will be at VNS on September 3 at 11:00 AM to take school pictures. Picture retakes will be held on Monday, October 7. Information about packages and prices will be shared as soon as it becomes available.

**Medications:** If your student requires administration of prescription or over-the-counter medications at school, please review the requirements and fill out the correct forms found at this link: <https://www.aasd.k12.wi.us/families/family-resources/student-health/medication-forms>

**Immunization updates:** Please review AASD immunization updates to assure compliance with AASD requirements.

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/reqs.htm>

Medical forms can be found on the AASD website under Families.

All 7th graders must review immunization information using this link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/14EEoRdG37NaLTdj3oii607zvlqjsGinU/edit>

**PAC Performances:** The Fox Cities Performing Arts Center is again offering school-day Education Series performances. Tickets are \$5. Purchase tickets for interested students and family members on the Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

1. Fahrenheit 451, Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 12:30 p.m.
2. Soweto Gospel Choir: PEACE, Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 12:30 p.m.
3. Exploring Our Wild Nature: Wolves, Chimps and Gorillas, Tuesday, November 11, 2025, at 12:30 p.m.
4. Randy Otto as Winston Churchill, Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.
5. DRUM TAO, Friday, March 13, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.
6. Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana, Friday, May 1, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.

For more info on the shows, click the link: <https://foxcitiespac.com/education/performances/>

Please use the form below to select which shows your student will be interested in seeing. If you are interested in attending/ chaperoning any of these shows, please email Mrs. R and let her know.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdAOzeaW0uHZhLsQgw2GPsXyHboKis-91mgBBI2V8NDAWCaTg/viewform?usp=header>

## Pro-Tips for VNS Success

- 1) School IDs are necessities at VNS.** They allow students to access the printer and ride Valley Transit for free. IDs will be issued shortly after school photos are taken.
- 2) YMCA Passes:** Students will receive a YMCA pass through VNS. Personal fitness and/or classes can be a great part of an individual Wellness project. Passes will also be used when we visit the Y for Advisory or all-school activities. Even if you already have a Y membership through your family, it is still a good idea to have the VNS Y pass too. Lost cards can be replaced for a fee at the YMCA registration desk.
- 3) Appleton Public Library cards:** VNS students are required to have a public library card. Families should plan to apply for and/or renew students' accounts by the first day of school. Please remember to keep accounts in good standing by returning materials on time and paying off outstanding fines/returning overdue books.

- 4) **Please read All-school Meeting Minutes each week!** All parents (and students) receive meeting minutes/announcements via email from Mrs. R at the beginning of each week. These are designed to keep every VNS community member in the loop. It is the responsibility of parents and students to read and be aware of all district/VNS policy content.
- 5) **Connect via social media!** Please follow/like our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages to further stay up-to-date about VNS. Feel free to share often and connect others to our community! Parents, don't forget to connect with the [Parents of VNS Students](#) Facebook group, too!
- 6) **Access your student's VNS Academic Report.** Parents can follow their child's academic progress in real time by accessing their VNS Academic Report (a Google spreadsheet). Students will create and share their 2025-2026 reports with Advisors and parents during the first week of school. We request that all parents set up a Google Account (if they don't already have one) and accept the invitation to be a partner in their child's academic progress.
- 7) **Be proactive with lunch plans!** Students can either bring cold lunches or use the VNS kitchen facilities to prepare lunches (microwave popcorn is not allowed). Hot breakfast and lunch from Central High School continues to be available for the cost of **\$1.50** and **\$3.20**, respectively. Students must place their order with Mrs. R. immediately upon arrival at school at 7:55 a.m. Meal fees can be paid through the Parent Portal or by cash or check at Central (unfortunately, we are not able to accept payments for lunch at VNS). Students will be allowed to pick up lunch from local restaurants on our block: Brewed Awakening, Toppers, Bonafide, Bowl 91, Legendairy, and Josef's Gyros. Restaurant orders should also be placed at the beginning of the school day to ensure speedy pick-up and time to finish food at VNS before the lunch period ends.
- 8) **Attendance Reminders:** Please contact Mrs. R. (via phone or email) before 8:15 a.m. if your child will be absent from school that day. A pre-excused absence requires at least 24-hour notice and a completed [Excused Absence & Student Activity](#) form submitted to Mrs. R. Parents/guardians can also use the Absence Request found on [Campus Parent/Parent Portal](#) to submit a request that informs the office in advance when their student is not going to be in school. This new feature can be used as an alternative to the traditional phone calls to the school office. Please see the instructions, found [here](#), on how to submit an Absence Request via the Campus Portal.
- 9) **Tardies & Absences:** Practice good attendance habits by arriving on time every day. Per our Policy Handbook, "VNS students who are tardy three times in any six-week period will lose their off-site lunch privilege. Students with continued tardiness and/or excessive absences will be subject to a personalized plan for attendance which may include makeup time."
- 10) **Contact info:** As partners in your child's education, we believe in keeping open lines of communication. Google Meets will be used on Blended Learning Days and may sometimes be used for conferences. Staff do not have cell phone access during the school day. Contact them at the school number (920-852-5605) or leave a message at their extension.

Ms. Luedtke's Extension: 54020, [luedtkenicole@asds.k12.wi.us](mailto:luedtkenicole@asds.k12.wi.us)  
Mr. Busch's Extension: 54021, [buschwilliam@asds.k12.wi.us](mailto:buschwilliam@asds.k12.wi.us)  
Mrs. Fourness's Extension: 54022, [fournessandrea@asds.k12.wi.us](mailto:fournessandrea@asds.k12.wi.us)  
Ms. Kosloski's Extension: 54023, [kosloskijennif@asds.k12.wi.us](mailto:kosloskijennif@asds.k12.wi.us)  
Mrs. R./Main VNS Phone #: 920-852-5605  
Extension: 54000, [rosenbaumtanya@asds.k12.wi.us](mailto:rosenbaumtanya@asds.k12.wi.us)

**11) Donations for Community Use:** Please consider donating one or more of the following items to help keep VNS running smoothly. Thank you in advance!

- Disinfecting wipes
- Tissues
- Pencils
- Pens
- Dry Erase Markers
- Permanent Markers
- Lined Index Cards
- Post-it Notes (assorted sizes)
- Artist's paint brushes
- Dishwashing liquid
- Dish sponges
- Dish cloths and towels
- Disposable hot-beverage cups, plates, plastic flatware, and/or napkins (for school events)
- Amazon Gift Card
- Purchase something from our Amazon Wishlist:  
<https://a.co/eZKAaXv>

**12) School supplies:** VNS students design and implement their own education, so they must essentially build their own office space—a place where they can work efficiently, be creative, and stay organized! **Be prepared to work productively whether at school or at home on Blended Learning Days. Consider the supply list below as you plan your *home workspace* as well as your *VNS workstation*.**

Supply costs for new students might seem high, but veteran students know that reusing materials keeps costs down in later years! Start with the items on this list. As students reflect on their own learning styles and develop their productivity, they will find what works best for them.

#### **Books**

- [The Twin Thieves by Lucas Jadin](#)
- 1 book you'd like to read (personal or library book)

#### **Personal Equipment**

- Reusable water bottle
- Hand sanitizer
- Tissues

#### **Organizational Tools**

- Personal planner/calendar (can be digital, accessible on Chromebook)
- 3-ring binder for Math
- Post-it Notes (assorted sizes)
- Desk supply organizers/containers
- Notecard box/index

**Production Tools**

- Earbuds (corded/compatible with Chromebooks)
- Scientific calculator (capable of higher math)
- 2 notebooks and/or loose-leaf paper
- Graph paper
- 3" x 5" notecards (minimum 500)
- Pens
- Pencils (no. 2)
- Eraser
- Black Sharpie markers (fine and ultrafine)
- Highlighters
- Stapler with staples
- Glue sticks
- Tape (invisible, double-sided, & masking)
- Scissors
- Ruler
- White-out tape