



VALLEY FORGE
PUBLIC SERVICE ACADEMY
CHARTER SCHOOL

EXHIBIT 37 – Student Handbook



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Valley Forge Public Service Academy
Charter School
Student Handbook

Prepared by the Office of the CEO
Academic Year 2025–2026

Letter from the CEO

Dear Students, Families, and Staff,

Welcome to Valley Forge Public Service Academy Charter School (VFPSACS). Our academy is more than a school it's a community built on service, integrity, and leadership. We are honored to partner with you as we guide students toward academic excellence, civic responsibility, and personal growth.

This handbook is a shared guide that reflects our mission and values. It outlines our academic expectations, behavioral norms, and the support systems designed to help every student thrive. Together, we cultivate an environment where learning is purposeful, relationships are strong, and every member is valued.

Thank you for choosing Valley Forge Public Service Academy Charter School. Let's make this year one of service, scholarship, and success.

Warm regards,

Stephen Flavell

CEO

Valley Forge Public Service Academy Charter School

1. School Overview

Core Value: Leadership through Service

Valley Forge Public Service Academy Charter School (VFPSACS) stands as a community dedicated to cultivating young leaders of character, scholarship, and service. Our goal is not only to educate minds but to inspire hearts, preparing students to serve their communities with integrity and purpose.

Mission Statement

VFPSACS is dedicated to cultivating academic excellence, servant leadership, and strong moral character in students. Our mission is to prepare students to lead with purpose, integrity, and resilience equipping them to thrive in higher education, professional careers, and their communities.

Core Values

- **Service:** We believe leadership begins with serving others.
- **Integrity:** We uphold honesty, responsibility, and respect in all actions.
- **Resilience:** We embrace challenges and persist through adversity.
- **Leadership:** We inspire, motivate, and model excellence in all we do.

Vision Statement

VFPSACS aims to be an education model that develops confident, disciplined, and service-minded leaders. Our graduates leave VFPSACS with the skills to become employable after graduation.

Educational Focus

Our rigorous, work ready curriculum integrates academic excellence with specialized career pathways in **law enforcement, fire safety, emergency response, and civic leadership.**

Students gain practical, hands-on experience through partnerships with local agencies and higher education institutions ensuring that learning is both relevant and purposeful.

Organizational Structure

VFPSACS functions as a collaborative community built on transparency, accountability, and shared leadership.

- **Board of Trustees** – Governing authority overseeing mission fidelity and policy.
- **CEO** – Oversees all school operations, ensuring alignment with the charter’s mission.
- **Principal** – Manages academics, instruction, and school culture.
- **Director of Pupil Services** – Supports student development, wellness, and compliance.
- **Business Manager** – Oversees finance, operations, and procurement.
- **Dean of Students** – Leads school discipline, culture, and student engagement.
- **School Counselor** – Provides academic and emotional guidance.
- **Teachers & Special Education Staff** – Deliver instruction and support individualized needs.
- **Paraeducators** – Assist classroom learning and student support.

Together, this structure ensures that every student receives holistic support from academics to personal growth.

2. Academic Program

Core Value: Excellence in Action

At VFPSACS, academic rigor is combined with real-world purpose. Our curriculum is designed to prepare students not just for college but for meaningful service in their communities and beyond.

Middle School (Grades 6–8)

Middle school students build foundational knowledge through engaging and inquiry-based learning. Core programs include:

- **Amplify ELA:** Building strong communication and literacy skills.
- **Illustrative Math:** Fostering problem-solving and logical reasoning.
- **Amplify Science:** Encouraging hands-on experimentation and critical thinking.
- **TCI Social Studies:** Developing civic awareness through historical inquiry.

Leadership Electives reinforce the school's mission through courses like *Service Start*, *Citizen Investigators*, and *Leadership Pathways*, where students practice collaboration, ethics, and goal setting.

High School (Grades 9–12)

High school students pursue one of three specialized pathways that blend academics, leadership, and career preparation:

1. **College Readiness Academy** – Focused on dual enrollment, advanced coursework, and university preparation.
2. **First Responder Academy** – Offers training and certification in public safety, emergency management, and fire service.
3. **Civil Service Academy** – Prepares students for careers in law, government, and public administration.

Each pathway includes opportunities for **technical certifications, internships, dual enrollment**, and a **senior capstone project**, where students demonstrate mastery and leadership.

Instructional Approach

VFPSACS uses data-driven instruction and evidence-based practices to ensure that every student grows academically and socially:

- **Formative Assessments** to inform real-time instruction.
- **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)** to provide targeted intervention.
- **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)** for teacher collaboration.
- **Student Leadership Academy** for experiential leadership training.

Our approach ensures that all learners regardless of background or ability are challenged, supported, and celebrated.

3. Code of Conduct

Core Value: Integrity in Every Action

VFPSACS expects every student to embody respect, responsibility, and self-discipline. The Code of Conduct is not a list of rules it's a shared commitment to living out our values of Service, Integrity, Resilience, and Leadership.

Normative Culture Five Foundational Norms

1. Education and the classroom are sacred.
2. No one has the right to hurt or threaten another person.
3. We will never behave in any way that discredits our school or ourselves.
4. A Valley Forge student is always a lady or a gentleman.
5. We take pride in Valley Forge Public Service Academy Charter School.

These norms guide our daily interactions, fostering a safe, respectful, and mission-centered environment.

Daily Assemblies and Advisory

Each morning begins with a **Daily Assembly**, where students focus on community, gratitude, and motivation. The **Advisory Program** provides time for social-emotional learning and leadership reflection.

Students learn essential social skills from the *Boys Town Social Skills Curriculum* such as *Following Instructions*, *Accepting Criticism*, and *Disagreeing Appropriately* building habits that prepare them for leadership and life.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

VFPSACS implements a three-tier PBIS framework:

- **Tier 1 (Universal):** Schoolwide lessons, positive recognition, and consistent expectations.
- **Tier 2 (Targeted):** Peer mentorship, check-ins, and personalized action plans.
- **Tier 3 (Intensive):** Behavior Support Plans and collaboration with counselors and families.

Student Rating System

Students earn progressive leadership levels through behavior, attendance, and academics:

Below Basic → Basic → Proficient → Pledge → Sentinel → Student Ambassador

Advancement brings privileges such as leadership roles, special activities, and honors recognition.

Disciplinary Framework

VFPSACS prioritizes **restorative practices** and education over punishment. When consequences are needed, they are applied fairly, progressively, and in accordance with **Pennsylvania School Code, IDEA, Section 504, and Chapter 711**.

Possible interventions include:

- Restorative conferences and mediation
- Detention or loss of privileges
- In-school or out-of-school suspension (ISS/OSS)
- Long-term suspension or expulsion (LTS)

Due process and student rights are always respected. Discipline decisions consider both accountability and growth.

4. Parent and Family Partnership

Core Value: Service through Community

At Valley Forge Public Service Academy Charter School (VFPSACS), we believe that families are essential partners in our mission to educate, nurture, and inspire. When parents, guardians, and educators work together, students thrive both academically and personally.

Shared Commitment

Parents and guardians are not just supporters; they are collaborators. Through communication, volunteerism, and participation, families help create a positive, inclusive learning environment that reflects our shared values of service, integrity, and leadership.

The **Parent and Family Compact** is our mutual pledge of partnership. It outlines our shared responsibility to uphold the mission of the school and ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Expectations for Families

- **Attendance & Punctuality:** Ensure students arrive on time and attend daily.
- **Support for Learning:** Provide a quiet, consistent space for study and homework.
- **Behavioral Reinforcement:** Encourage students to uphold school norms and values.
- **Engagement:** Attend school events, conferences, and volunteer when possible.
- **Communication:** Stay informed through the parent portal, newsletters, and direct outreach.

Family Engagement Opportunities

VFPSACS hosts regular **Parent Workshops, Family Service Days, and Community Forums** that foster collaboration and transparency. The **Parent-Student Council** meets quarterly to share feedback, plan events, and strengthen family-school connections.

5. Student Evaluation and Data Use

Core Value: Excellence through Accountability

VFPSACS embraces a data-driven approach to teaching and learning. Assessment is not a test of worth it's a tool for growth. Every evaluation helps us understand how to better support student success.

Assessment Framework

Our school uses a combination of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to measure academic progress and guide instruction:

- **IXL Universal Reading Screener** – Measures literacy and comprehension growth.
- **i-Ready Math Diagnostic** – Evaluates numeracy and problem-solving skills.
- **Formative Assessments** – Frequent, low-stakes checks that guide classroom instruction.
- **Summative Assessments** – End-of-unit or quarterly evaluations of learning mastery.

Teachers use these results to design lessons, group students strategically, and provide targeted interventions. Parents receive regular updates through progress reports and conferences.

Data-Driven Interventions

VFPSACS implements **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)** to respond to student needs:

- **Tier 1:** Universal classroom instruction and monitoring for all students.
- **Tier 2:** Small-group interventions for those needing additional help.
- **Tier 3:** Intensive, individualized support coordinated with specialists and families.

The school also holds **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)** where educators analyze data, share best practices, and plan next steps for student growth.

Performance Goals

Each academic year, VFPSACS commits to clear, measurable goals:

- 95% annual promotion rate

- 95% credential or certification attainment
- 90% average daily attendance
- 85% or higher family satisfaction rate

These goals reflect our shared belief that excellence is the product of collaboration and continuous improvement.

6. Extracurricular Programs

Core Value: Leadership Beyond the Classroom

At VFPSACS, learning extends far beyond academics. Our extracurricular programs are designed to strengthen leadership, teamwork, and civic responsibility. Every club, team, and service project aligns with our mission of developing leaders of character and service.

Mission-Aligned Clubs

Students can choose from a range of extracurricular activities that nurture academic curiosity, community engagement, and professional skills.

Public Safety & Emergency Services

- Junior Firefighters
- EMS / First Responder Club
- Police Explorers
- Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Management
- Cybersecurity & Digital Safety Club

These programs provide hands-on experience and foundational training for students interested in careers in public safety and emergency response.

Civic Leadership & Service

- Student Government & Public Service Council
- Community Service Corps
- Mock Trial / Youth Court
- Public Speaking & Debate Team
- Model UN / Model Congress

These activities help students practice diplomacy, ethics, and civic engagement skills critical to effective leadership.

Health, Wellness & Human Services

- Red Cross / Public Health Club
- Peer Support & Mental Health Ambassadors
- Veteran & Military Service Club
- Environmental Safety & Conservation

Each promotes personal responsibility, wellness, and service to others.

Athletics Participation

While VFPSACS offers limited sports programs, students are encouraged to join their **home district athletic teams** when a desired sport is unavailable consistent with *24 P.S. § 17-1719-A(14)* and **PIAA** regulations. Participation requires good academic standing, regular attendance, and adherence to the Code of Conduct.

Extracurricular Eligibility

Students must demonstrate:

- **Academic Achievement:** Minimum GPA of 2.0
- **Attendance:** No more than 10 unexcused absences
- **Behavior:** Consistent demonstration of leadership and respect

Eligibility is reviewed quarterly. Students placed on academic or behavioral probation receive targeted support to regain standing.

Community Service & Leadership Development

Service-learning is at the heart of our extracurricular philosophy. Every student contributes through projects that benefit the community whether assisting local veterans, organizing food drives, or mentoring younger peers.

Through these experiences, VFPSACS students grow not only as scholars but as citizens of character and compassion.

7. Chain of Command for Grievances

Core Value: Integrity through Communication

At VFPSACS, we believe that concerns are best resolved through open, respectful dialogue. Clear communication strengthens trust between students, families, and staff, ensuring that problems are addressed fairly and promptly.

Steps for Resolution

If a student or family has a concern, the following **chain of command** should be followed:

1. **Teacher:** Address the issue directly with the classroom teacher first.
2. **Dean of Students:** If unresolved, contact the Dean for further review or mediation.
3. **Principal:** The Principal will review the concern, investigate if necessary, and propose a resolution.
4. **CEO:** Matters requiring executive oversight are elevated to the CEO.
5. **Board of Trustees:** Unresolved issues may be presented at a public board meeting for final consideration.

This process promotes fairness and professionalism, ensuring every voice is heard while maintaining order and respect within the school community.

8. Attendance

Core Value: Responsibility Builds Resilience

Attendance is more than a requirement—it's a commitment to personal growth. Regular participation in school life reflects discipline, integrity, and leadership.

Compulsory Attendance

In compliance with *24 P.S. §13-1326–§13-1354* and *Section 1748-A*, all students ages 6–18 are required to attend school daily unless excused for lawful reasons. Attendance may include on-site instruction, independent study, or approved educational alternatives.

Excused Absences

Written excuses must be submitted within three days. Acceptable reasons include:

- Illness or medical dismissal
- Professional health or therapy appointments
- Court attendance
- Family emergencies or death in the family
- Religious observances or instruction (≤36 hours annually)
- School-sponsored events or field trips
- Pre-approved college visits

Parents may excuse up to **10 cumulative days per year**; beyond that, medical documentation is required.

Unexcused or Unlawful Absences

After:

- 3 unexcused absences: Written notice to parents explaining consequences.
- 6 unexcused absences: A School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) and creation of a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP).

Habitual truancy (≥ 6 unexcused absences) may result in referrals to county agencies or truancy programs under **Act 138 (2016)**. VFPSACS emphasizes support not punishment to re-engage students and families.

Tardiness and Early Dismissal

Frequent tardiness disrupts learning. Every **five unexcused tardies or early dismissals** equal one unexcused absence.

Students arriving after 10:00 a.m. are ineligible for extracurricular participation that day.

Recordkeeping and Compliance

Attendance is tracked in real-time via the **Student Information System (SIS)** and reported to the **PDE** in accordance with *24 P.S. §13-1332*.

When attendance concerns indicate potential disabilities, the **Director of Pupil Services** convenes a support team to address needs through **IDEA** or **Section 504** procedures.

9. Student Leadership & Service

Core Value: Leadership through Action

Leadership is not a title it's a way of life at Valley Forge Public Service Academy Charter School. Students are expected to model responsibility, initiative, and empathy both inside and outside the classroom.

Student Leadership Academy

Through the Student Leadership Academy, students learn to lead by serving others. The program includes:

- Peer mentorship and ambassador training

- Community service coordination
- Team-building and communication workshops
- Capstone leadership projects

These experiences help students discover their strengths and develop confidence as ethical leaders.

Service-Learning Projects

Every grade level participates in service-learning projects that address real community needs.

Examples include:

- Organizing emergency preparedness drives
- Supporting local first responders
- Partnering with environmental conservation groups

Students reflect on these experiences through journals, presentations, and group discussions, connecting civic action to personal growth.

10. School Compact Summary

Core Value: Unity through Shared Purpose

The **School and Parent Compact** serves as a living agreement between families, students, and staff. It affirms our shared dedication to learning, respect, and character.

By signing the Compact, each member of the school community agrees to:

- Uphold the school's core values of Service, Integrity, Resilience, and Leadership.
- Maintain open, respectful communication.
- Support academic excellence through consistent attendance and engagement.
- Promote a safe and inclusive school culture.

Together, we ensure that every student achieves success academically, socially, and morally.

Appendices

Food Services & Nutrition

VFPSACS participates in the **National School Lunch Program (NSLP)**, ensuring all students have access to nutritious meals in compliance with *24 P.S. §13-1337* and all federal and state regulations.

- **Meal Access:** Free or reduced-price meals are available to qualifying students. Others may purchase meals or bring food from home.
- **Facilities:** The on-site kitchen includes storage, refrigeration, and warming equipment for safe meal preparation.
- **Dietary Accommodations:** Students with allergies or medical conditions are supported through physician documentation.
- **Monitoring:** Regular inspections and vendor compliance reviews ensure safety and quality.

Through this program, VFPSACS ensures every student can learn with energy, focus, and wellness.

School Health Services

Health services at VFPSACS comply with *Article XIV of the Pennsylvania Public School Code (24 P.S. §14-1401 et seq.)* and are delivered in partnership with **Bayada Nursing and Home Care**.

Certified School Nurse (CSN)

The CSN manages all medical services, including:

- Health screenings (vision, hearing, BMI, scoliosis)
- Medication administration per physician's order
- Emergency response and first aid
- Coordination of medical and dental exams
- Management of health plans and chronic conditions

All health data is confidential and reported annually via **SHARRS**.

Immunizations

Compliance with *28 Pa. Code §23.81–§23.87* is mandatory for enrollment, unless exempt for medical or religious reasons. Required vaccines include DTP, Polio, MMR, and others as outlined by state law.

Medication Policy

- All medications must be delivered by an adult in the original labeled container.

- A **Permission to Administer Medication Form** signed by a physician and parent is required.
- Only the school nurse or trained personnel may administer medication.
- Over-the-counter medications like acetaminophen or ibuprofen may be given with parent consent.

Technology & Acceptable Use Policy

Technology is a privilege, not a right. Students are expected to use school devices responsibly and ethically.

Acceptable Use

- Use technology for educational purposes only.
- Protect privacy and respect intellectual property.
- Do not share offensive, illegal, or harmful content.
- Report any cyberbullying or inappropriate activity to staff immediately.

Violations may result in disciplinary action, including loss of access or suspension.

Safety & Emergency Procedures

Student safety is our top priority. VFPSACS maintains comprehensive emergency response plans consistent with state and local regulations.

Emergency Preparedness

- **Fire Drills:** Monthly
- **Lockdown/Intruder Drills:** Quarterly
- **Severe Weather Drills:** Twice yearly

Every classroom displays evacuation routes and procedures. In an actual emergency, families are notified through official communication channels.

Transportation & Dismissal Procedures

- **Arrival:** 7:30–7:50 a.m. for breakfast and preparation.
- **Dismissal:** 3:15 p.m., unless in after-school programs.
- **Bus Rules:** Remain seated, use respectful language, and follow driver instructions.

Violations of bus safety expectations may result in temporary suspension of transportation privileges.

Bullying, Harassment & Discrimination Policy

VFPSACS enforces a **zero-tolerance policy** for bullying, harassment, or discrimination. All complaints are investigated confidentially and promptly. Retaliation is prohibited.

Consequences follow the **Progressive Discipline Matrix**, ranging from mediation to expulsion for severe offenses.

Academic Integrity Policy

Honesty is the foundation of scholarship. Students must complete their work truthfully and independently.

Violations (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, forgery) are met with progressive consequences:

1. Teacher conference and redo opportunity
2. Grade penalty and documentation
3. Administrative review and possible suspension

Integrity defines leadership, both in and beyond the classroom.

FERPA Compliance

Under the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**, parents and eligible students have the right to:

- Inspect and review education records
- Request corrections to inaccurate information
- Consent to disclosures (with exceptions as permitted by law)

All record requests should be made in writing to the **CEO or designee**.

Title IX Compliance

VFPSACS prohibits sex-based discrimination in accordance with **Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972**.

The **Director of Pupil Services** serves as the Title IX Coordinator and oversees compliance, investigations, and training.

Complaints may be submitted in writing to the Coordinator or CEO. All reports are handled promptly and confidentially.

School Motto

“Developing Leaders of Character, Scholarship, and Service.”

