



VDS Student/Parent Handbook 2025-2026

Approved by the Valley Day School Board of Directors
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Introduction

This handbook was designed to help students understand their rights, responsibilities, and behavioral expectations so they can enjoy learning in an environment and a community that is both safe and conducive to learning.

It is important to note that Valley Day School also incorporates several forms of trauma informed care in its organizational and academic programming. The Valley Day School has created our own model by utilizing many of the latest approaches to trauma informed care.

The Valley Day School Model is the way Valley Day School organizes both our academic program and the way we run our organization to create a trauma informed approach to education

The Valley Day School Trauma Informed Care Handbook is created with staff and families in mind. Please use this link to access the Valley Day School Trauma Informed Care Handbook.

Definitions

“Parent(s)” - refers to legal custodian(s) of a student, which may include parents, legal guardians, group home representatives, Educational Decision Makers, etc.

“District” - refers to educational institution responsible for placement of student at Valley Day School, which may include public school district of residence, charter school, etc. May also be referred to as “home school”.

Student Responsibilities

Every student shares the responsibility with school staff for maintaining a safe school environment that is conducive to learning and to healthy living. It is the responsibility of every student to respect the rights of students, instructional personnel, administrators, and all others who are involved in the educational process. Students are expected to express their ideas and opinions in a manner that promotes growth. In addition, it is the responsibility of students to abide by such provisions of the law as apply to the conduct of juveniles and minors. We expect each Valley Day School student to learn to take responsibility for their own actions/behaviors. The Valley Day School Board of Directors recognizes the student as a citizen as defined by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, with rights and responsibilities in the exercise hereof.

Students are asked to be active partners in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). As active partners, students are taught and encouraged to use the tools taught within the Valley Day School program to navigate their academic, social, and emotional growth.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents are a major part of the IEP team. Parents are encouraged to participate in active communication between the school and home. Being an active partner is imperative to transfer skills from the school setting to the home setting. When parents work closely with the school, everyone wins- especially our students. Parent participation and support enriches the student’s educational program.

All parents are encouraged to assist their child with homework and learning activities.

Parents will be informed of special events through a variety of means, including the school calendar, the school’s automated messaging platform, email, school’s website www.valleyday.org and telephone reminders.

Valley Day School Personnel Responsibilities

All Valley Day School personnel share responsibility for teaching the tools to live a healthy life. Our whole school approach provides each student with an individualized treatment team to help successfully identify, assimilate, and apply those tools for social, emotional, and academic success and progress towards IEP goals.

All Valley Day School personnel share responsibility for supervising the behavior of Valley Day School students and for supporting and implementing Board policies. All Valley Day School personnel have the right to expect Valley Day School students to comply with school rules (once the student has been informed of the rules) and to maintain good order in the classroom, the school building, on the playgrounds or other common areas of the school, while riding on school transportation, on field trips, and at all community-based school-sponsored activities. Valley Day School employees will act in loco parentis while students are in their care and parents are not present.

Each homeroom teacher will contact parent(s) of each student in their homeroom by phone or email weekly to update families on their student's performance academically, socially, emotionally and behaviorally, as well as ways that school and home can partner to improve their child's performance, and discuss future planning.

Academic Program

Academic Curriculum

As a special education placement for students with emotional, behavioral, and learning disabilities, Valley Day School provides alternate approaches for achieving the curriculum standards contained in Chapter 4 of the Pennsylvania School Code. Our designation as a Licensed Private Academic School rests in part on our use of various teaching methodologies and strategies for promoting the acquisition of social and academic skills. The standards of academic success, however, remain the same as those established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for all students. Valley Day School personnel accomplish this by implementing students' IEPs that include specially designed instruction deemed necessary by the IEP team for allowing the student to progress in the curriculum.

Valley Day School believes that a rich and engaging academic curriculum helps best prepare students for success, whether that success is a return to their home school environments or in employment or further education after Valley Day School. Towards that end, Valley Day School personnel use research-based teaching practices in the classroom. Our education staff use ever-advancing educational technology to engage students in learning, to enhance individualization, to provide students with access to a comprehensive academic curriculum, to continually assess and confirm the correctness of each student's instructional placement, and to ensure that each student has the means to progress towards mastery at a pace that is not hindered by the pace of other students.

Because Valley Day School is a special education school, the general education curriculum is modified for Valley Day School students. Some of the common modifications to the curriculum that are made at Valley Day can include but are not limited to the following:

1. small group instruction
2. task-analysis of content
3. individual pacing through curriculum
4. altering the length of assignments
5. extended deadlines for completion
6. pre-correction strategies
7. clearly posted classroom agendas, rules, expectations for performance, and rituals
8. one-to-one assistance (where deemed necessary by the IEP team); peer tutoring; and cooperative learning.
9. Students are provided with frequent opportunities for practice until they reach mastery of their IEP goals.

Students who display severe frustration which causes disruption to student learning are taught socially acceptable and more productive procedures to cope with their frustration and to seek assistance in a manner that does not present an obstacle to their learning or to the learning of others. Student academic progress is tracked routinely using curriculum-based monitoring (including computer-based assessment). Students who fail to make the anticipated progress are provided with additional support and/or alternative strategies. Most instructional decisions are left to the professional judgment of the classroom teacher; however, when students have difficulty overcoming challenges, a meeting that consists of the student's treatment team may be convened to problem-solve solutions.

Field Trips

On occasion, field trips may be scheduled to supplement and enrich classroom activities. Field trips are an extension of the classroom education opportunities at Valley Day School. Field trips, however, are not a right, but a privilege. Students must be approved to attend field trips by both staff and parents. Fees may be charged for participation in field trips. Parents are notified at least two weeks in advance and asked to give permission for their child to attend the field trip. Valley Day School dress code will apply for all field trips unless parents are otherwise notified.

Grading and Report Cards

Grading Systems

Teachers will inform all students of the grading and evaluation procedures that are used in their classrooms. This will be accomplished through oral and/or written format. Grading systems may incorporate a combination of classroom assignments, active participation, tests/quizzes, homework, and other measures of student achievement.

Report Cards

Valley Day School uses report cards as one way to communicate to parents a student's progress towards academic success. Grades in a subject may be lowered for poor attendance. Therefore, for students to achieve success in school, we ask that they attend school daily, work hard to complete their daily assignments, and hand in their homework when it is due. Student report cards are issued four times each year at the conclusion of each marking period (approx. 45 days or 9 week quarters). Report cards may be held back if students owe fines.

Graduation

To monitor the progress of high school students, Valley Day School will track credits earned towards a high school diploma and/or certificate of high school completion. Since different districts may have different requirements, please contact your home school for specific details about their high school grading and credits requirements. Valley Day will communicate progress toward graduation requirements with your home school, so that an accurate transcript can be maintained.

When a Valley Day School student earns a high school diploma, by completion of one of Pennsylvania's Pathways to Graduation, the diploma is issued by the legally responsible district or charter school and not by Valley Day School. Valley Day School issues a Certificate of Program Completion to commemorate the student's work at Valley Day School. Students who complete their last year of high school at Valley Day School and successfully earn a high school diploma may be eligible to participate in the graduation ceremony conducted by the responsible district as well as the commencement ceremony conducted by Valley Day School.

Possible Impact of Serious Misconduct on Valley Day School Commencement

Valley Day School considers participation in commencement exercises and related activities to be a ceremonial privilege granted to students and not a right to which they are entitled. Therefore, any student who is withdrawn from school and placed on suspension for serious misconduct during the fourth quarter of the senior year may not be allowed to participate in Valley Day School commencement exercises. This consequence applies to exceptional misconduct on school property or at school-sponsored event(s). Students who are not permitted by Valley Day School administration to participate in the Valley Day School commencement

exercises may still receive their Certificate of School Completion from Valley Day School (via mail) and may still receive their H.S. Diploma from their district - provided the student has satisfied their graduation criteria and procedures (as confirmed by IEP, transcript, NOREP, etc.).

Specials and Related Services

Depending upon their needs as identified in their current IEP, Valley Day School students may access many specials and related services. Specials may include transition training, industrial technologies, art activities, computer instruction, library, health classes, physical education, or other instructional areas. Related services may include speech and language therapy, reading specialist services, occupational therapy, individual and group counseling sessions, social skills education, and drug and alcohol awareness programs.

Sports Participation

Valley Day School may offer intramural and/or team sports opportunities to students, such as softball, baseball, or basketball. All students must have a signed permission slip from a parent to participate in Valley Day School sports teams. All students and their parent(s) must sign a Code of Conduct Agreement before participating on a Valley Day School sports team, which will detail eligibility requirements and expectations for student conduct at school, practices, home and away games, and transportation to and from games. The Code of Conduct may also detail the consequences for violations of the agreement.

Student Classroom Assignment

Several factors are considered when students are assigned to a particular classroom. Factors include age, cognitive ability, severity of behavioral symptoms, social maturity, and need for structure, amongst other possible factors. Student movement to a new classroom may occur at any time throughout the school year based on a student's age, progress towards goals, and other factors. When such a movement occurs, Valley Day School personnel will work with parents to assist students in a smooth transition.

Student Records

Student records are maintained on all students in accordance with Pennsylvania law. Parents, guardians, and surrogate parents have the right to inspect their child's records. Students who have reached the age of 18 may inspect their own education records. Those wishing to review their child's education record should submit the request in writing to the administrative coordinator of Valley Day School. The Valley Day School administrator will set up an appointment for you to review the records and have an administrator available to help you interpret them, if needed. Copies of student records will be provided upon request at a reasonable charge for duplication and mailing.

Student Records Policy

Valley Day School complies with all provisions of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the federal law that provides the basis for dealing with student information. FERPA regulations ensure a minimum standard for access to, the use of, and the release of information from education records. When a student is no longer actively enrolled at Valley Day School, their records are stored on campus for one school year. Copies of all required documents are supplied to the district, who is responsible under the law for long-term student records retention. Valley Day School then stores the remaining inactive student records in a secure

facility. After six years of storage, Valley Day School notifies the district of its intent to shred and dispose of the remaining materials in the inactive student file.

Transitional Opportunities and Supported Employment

Valley Day School operates a Transition to Adult Life Program funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This program enables Valley Day School students (age 14 and older) to receive vocational training through vocational training placements (on campus or community-based), placement in vocational technical schools, introduction to supported employment opportunities, introduction to post-secondary training options, etc. For more information about this program, contact your child's homeroom teacher, Valley Day School Case Manager, Valley Day School Transition Program Coordinator, or the Valley Day School Education Director.

Building Operations

Closed Campus

For the safety of our students, Valley Day School has a closed campus policy. This means students must stay on school grounds from the time they arrive until school is dismissed. A student leaving campus without permission is truant and is subject to disciplinary action. Students are not to leave campus for any reason unless accompanied by their parents or by Valley Day School personnel. When parents need to take their own children off campus, they must first sign the student out at the front office.

When students leave school property without permission from school officials, parents are called as soon as safely possible. Valley Day School officials will also inform local law enforcement authorities. Students picked up off campus by Valley Day School staff or law enforcement officers during the school day will be taken to the main office and parents will be contacted.

Visitors

Visitors are welcome at Valley Day School. All visitors are encouraged to schedule an appointment prior to visiting the school as a means of minimizing disruptions to the educational program. Upon entering the front doors, visitors are required to immediately report to the receptionist's window and check in to inform the receptionist the purpose of the visit. The Valley Day School visitor registration system requires a state-issued photo ID. The receptionist will summon appropriate Valley Day School personnel to escort visitors to their destination(s) within the school building. All visitors must be accompanied by staff while on the premises. Visitors who arrive at the school without a scheduled appointment will be asked to remain outside of the building until the appropriate staff member can be located. If a visitor does not properly identify themselves, or their purpose, the person will be considered as trespassing, and the appropriate legal action will be taken. Any person whose actions or language threatens the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff will be barred from visiting the school or attending school-sponsored events. Visitors with authorized business within the building must sign in and obtain a visitor's badge. All visitors granted entry past the security doors must sign in and out for each visit to the school. To avoid the presence of drugs or weapons in this school, before entering the building, visitors may undergo security screening.

Student Visitors

Valley Day School does not allow school aged students from other schools to visit and attend classes at Valley Day School, except through the admissions process. Students who are suspended or expelled from Valley Day School are not permitted to visit Valley Day School without first securing permission from a Valley Day School administrator. Once a student has withdrawn from Valley Day School, visits are discouraged for at least one year from departure unless otherwise specified in a treatment plan. To avoid disrupting the educational process, former Valley Day School students who wish to see their past teachers and/or school personnel must contact the school in advance and seek an appointment to visit after normal student dismissal time. Former students under the age of 18 should be accompanied by parents or guardians during their visit. Valley Day School personnel will see and speak to former students who have such appointments at the school's front security doors.

Parent Visitors

Valley Day School is excited to have parents, guardians, and caregivers involved in their child's education, since a coordinated effort with parents helps all students reach their educational programming and developmental goals. Our students' parents are the true guardians of this school and the strongest advocates for our students. In the interest of serving all the students and recognizing the sensitivity of our students to changes in their environment, parents, guardians, or caregivers may be asked to do observations via our surveillance system while accompanied by appropriate administrative, clinical, and/or behavioral personnel.

Trespassers

Any person on campus and/or in the school building without written administrative permission will be considered a trespasser. In the event of disruptive behavior on school property by such individuals or groups, the procedure will be as follows:

- The individuals or groups will be asked to leave the premises immediately.
- If they refuse, legal authorities will be summoned, and the trespassers will be arrested for trespassing on school grounds.

Custody and/or Guardianship of Students

Parents are responsible for providing Valley Day School with updated copies of court orders pertaining to a child's custody. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent(s) or guardian to provide the school with a copy of a date-stamped court document indicating the custodial status of the child(ren). The custodial parent/guardian maintains this responsibility to formally inform the school of any changes in custody through date-stamped court documents throughout the time the student is enrolled at Valley Day School. If both parents/guardians maintain custody, it is the responsibility of both parents/guardians to present date-stamped court documents to this effect. For individuals other than the parents, it is the responsibility of the person who maintains custody to provide the school with current date-stamped documents indicating the custodial status of the child. Once a child reaches the age of majority (18 years old), custodial care is discontinued. If you are seeking guardianship of a student who is age 18 or older, you are responsible for providing date-stamped court documents to the school which indicate the guardianship status of the student. If Valley Day School does not receive up-to-date copies of court date-stamped documents, the school personnel will follow the most recent court documents available in the event of any student issues involving custody or guardianship.

Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE)

As defined in Pennsylvania law, all eligible students residing in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania between the ages of 6 and 21 years are entitled to a free and appropriate education in the Commonwealth's public schools. Parents of all children between the ages of 6 and 18 are required by the compulsory attendance law to ensure that their children attend an approved education institution, unless legally excused. A student may not be excluded from school or extracurricular activities because of being married or pregnant.

Discrimination (Freedom from Discrimination)

Consistent with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, no student shall be denied access to a free and appropriate education on account of race, religion, sex, or national origin. Valley Day School students

shall not be denied an equal opportunity or be discriminated against because of age, national origin, race, creed, color, religion, economic status, or a physical, mental, or sensory disability.

Due Process

At Valley Day School, Due Process policies and procedures are based on the final regulations implementing the most current amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, FERPA, and Pennsylvania School Code. Parental inquiries regarding imposition of discipline on a student should initially be routed to the student's assigned Valley Day School Case Manager. Similarly, parental complaints or grievances regarding imposition of discipline on a student should initially be routed to the student's assigned Valley Day School Case Manager.

Dispute Resolution

In most instances, parents and school staff are in agreement regarding the provision of special education services to a child or youth. Our goal at Valley Day School is to serve you and your child in the best manner available. We recognize that your child will make more progress by working collaboratively. We also know that conflict and disagreement sometimes occur and are to be expected. What is important, however, is how we work through those difficult situations. When dealt with correctly, conflict and concern can lead to positive and productive change and subsequent growth. As a parent, please feel free to contact your child's Case Manager to discuss your concerns. We will be happy to talk with you directly and attempt to resolve the situation. Education is a fundamental right, and students who are entitled to FAPE must be afforded all appropriate elements of due process when a change in educational placement is sought.

Electronic Communications and Information Access Policy

Valley Day School supports the use of computers, networks, and the internet to facilitate learning and teaching. It is the student's responsibility to use computers, network resources, and the Internet according to the direction of their teachers and in compliance with school guidelines. Valley Day School students are responsible for using school computers and communications technology in an ethical, responsible, and legal manner for school-related tasks only. The use of school computers and communications technology are a privilege, not a right. There are rules and regulations imposed not only by Valley Day School but by state and federal law which govern appropriate use and define misuse of the computer network. Valley Day School provides students and their parents with a written agreement that identifies required electronic communications and information access conduct. Privileges to access online services are withdrawn from users who do not respect the rights of others or who do not follow the rules and regulations established in Valley Day School's Electronic Communications and Information Access Policy.

Each student and parent are required to review and sign the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) policy prior to students being given access to the network. Students who violate the terms of this agreement are subject to discipline including, but not limited to, suspension of school computer access. Valley Day School is the owner and administrator of its electronic communications and information systems. There is no expectation of privacy extended to students when they use school computers and the school computer network. Valley Day School maintains its right to monitor network use and to discipline students, including referral to law enforcement agencies, for misuse, vandalism, violation of school

policies, and/or for conducting illegal activities on our computers and/or on our computer network. Valley Day School will not be responsible for any damage suffered by any user, including but not limited to loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or any other errors or omissions. Valley Day School will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations resulting from use of, or access to, the Valley Day School computer network or the Internet.

It is the policy of Valley Day School to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act. As required by this law, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors. Additional unacceptable uses of the computer/network include, but are not limited to, the following prohibited activities:

1. Using school computers for non-educational purposes
2. Attempting to modify, harm or destroy data of another user or to modify, harm or destroy computer hardware, software or configuration
3. Attempting to defeat or bypass virus protection or security software on any school computer or network
4. Accessing, disclosing, or posting confidential student or staff information
5. Cyberbullying - harassing others or infringing upon their rights by sending annoying, profane, offensive, inflammatory, threatening, or libelous messages
6. Violating intellectual property rights by illegal copying, retrieving, or sending of copyrighted material, or violating software licensing agreement and copyright laws
7. Using the network to access obscene or pornographic material
8. Loading or using unauthorized games, programs, or files
9. Participating in any e-commerce activity including selling or purchasing merchandise
10. Attempting to access a proxy server or bypass Internet content filters

System Security

System security is protected by using passwords. To protect the integrity of the system, the following guidelines will be followed:

1. Employees and students will not reveal their passwords to another individual.
2. Users are not to use a computer that has been logged in under another person's account.
3. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the network.
4. Valley Day School will use security software to monitor Internet usage.

Access to Inappropriate Material

To the extent practical at Valley Day School, technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be used to block or filter access to inappropriate information via the Internet or other forms of electronic communications. As required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors.

Fire Drills and Emergency Response Drills

Fire drills and other emergency response drills are conducted routinely at Valley Day School in compliance with Pennsylvania law. These drills are important and should be treated seriously by students. All students are to exit the building or report to a designated area with staff in a calm manner. Students are taught to respond quickly and in an orderly fashion. For their safety, students must exit the building during fire drills. They must not re-enter the building until signaled by their teacher to do so. Misuse of the fire alarm system and fire extinguishers are both dangerous and costly and are strictly prohibited. An offense will result in disciplinary action, including loss of privileges, out-of-school suspension, and notification of local authorities. Anyone caught pulling a false alarm as a hoax will be reported to local law enforcement. Setting off a false alarm constitutes a misdemeanor and is punishable by fines and possible jail time.

Award Assemblies/Ceremonies

Students at Valley Day School celebrate their classroom and school success through award assemblies and ceremonies. These assemblies are open to families and other invited guests. During the award ceremonies, students receive social recognition for academic growth, behavioral competence, improved social development, and/or other noteworthy achievements.

Meals/Lunch

Valley Day School recognizes that being well nourished is vital to student success at school. Students have the option of participating in the school lunch program or bringing lunch from home. Food available at school must comply with federal, state and local rules and regulations. Students are permitted to eat only during the scheduled meal periods. Students may not eat food during class or break times unless they have the teacher's permission to do so. Only disposable (plastic) utensils are permitted. Students are discouraged from bringing utensils to school; Valley Day School provides plastic utensils in classrooms.

If students choose to bring food from home, it will be stored in the school's refrigerators until it is time for students to eat. We encourage students to bring healthy beverages to school, such as water or single serving-size drinks such as low-fat milk, 100% fruit juice or sparkling water. Students are not permitted to consume drinks high in sugar or caffeine, such as sodas, energy drinks, coffees, or other similar beverages. Open containers of beverages are not allowed to come into the building and may be discarded by staff during entry. Students may bring in empty multi-use water bottles to refill in the school's water fountains.

To ensure the health and safety of our students, Valley Day School prohibits students or parents from having food delivered to the school by outside services. Any such deliveries will be refused by Valley Day School administrators or their designees at your expense.

School Calendar

An annual school calendar that shows the days when school is in session is distributed to parents at the beginning of the school year and when they enroll their child. Valley Day School operates on a 180-school day calendar for students. If school is closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies that would result in fewer than 180 days of instruction for students as mandated by state law, additional days will be added to the end of the school year.

School Closures and Delays

Extreme ice, snow, fog, or cold may cause difficulties with transportation to and from school. The Valley Day School Management Team carefully monitors the conditions of area roads to determine safe travel. In the event of dangerous weather conditions, Valley Day School will conduct classes virtually, following Department of Education Flexible Instructional Days guidelines. Please watch local news broadcasts for up-to-date information on school closings or delays. When Valley Day School must close or must close early or open late because of inclement weather or other conditions, Valley Day School administration will use our internet messaging system to notify students and their parents or caregivers. If the Pennsbury School District closes school because of dangerous weather and/or hazardous conditions, Valley Day School will close as well. If Valley Day School is open while your home district is closed due to severe weather, transportation will most likely also be cancelled. In such circumstances, your child's absence from school will be marked as excused. Late arrivals or early dismissals due to the home district will similarly be excused.

School Hours

Valley Day School normally opens its doors to welcome students at 8:05 AM on scheduled school days. On full instructional days, Valley Day School begins student dismissal at 2:35 PM. On early dismissal days, we will begin student dismissal at 11:45 AM. Students are provided with supervision by Valley Day School personnel while they are on Valley Day School campus or are engaged in Valley Day School-sponsored activities off campus. During school hours, students will be released only into the custody of parents, guardians, persons in parental authority, or other persons designated by the parents or guardians. In emergency situations, students may be released into the custody of medical personnel or, in the case of law-violating behavior, into the custody of local law enforcement agency personnel.

Teacher-Parent-Student Contacts

Valley Day School welcomes open communication between teachers and parents. Your first line of communication is the Valley Day School Case Manager. If the Case Manager is not available, please leave a voice message and they will get back to you promptly. Please do not call staff at their homes.

Student Right of Publicity/Opt-Out Policy

Use of Electronic Images During School-Sponsored Activities

To celebrate and promote school activities and events, Valley Day School administration may permit photographs, videos, and/or sound recording of students to be taken during school-sponsored activities and or learning experiences and to allow those media to appear in on-campus video displays, classroom display cases, school hallways, school publications, the school website, school video productions, and commercial news broadcast media as well as other media approved by school administration.

Publication of Students' Intellectual Property

Valley Day School shall publish students' intellectual property created during school-sponsored activities and/or learning experiences to appear in campus video displays, classroom display cases, school hallways, school publications, the school website, school video productions, and commercial news broadcast media, as well as other appropriate media approved by administration.

News Photography

Valley Day School students may be photographed, videotaped, and or audiotaped while participating in school-sponsored activities and learning experiences when those activities are of interest to the news media. School personnel will monitor all media activities in Valley Day School. School administrative staff will deny access to news media if their presence is deemed disruptive to the school day, or to students, or to the educational process, or if photographing, videotaping, and/or audiotaping students is not appropriate, given the nature of a particular news story.

Opting Out

Valley Day School respects the rights of our students and their families to privacy from publicity. If a parent or guardian does not want their child to participate in the use of telecommunications; does not want their child photographed, videotaped, and/or audiotaped during school-sponsored activities and/or learning experiences; or does not want their child's intellectual property published, produced, and/or displayed, they must opt out.

If a parent chooses to opt out, it means he/she does not want the student to use telecommunications and/or to have the student's intellectual property published, produced, and/or displayed anywhere. Parents must submit their opt-out requests in writing or complete an opt out form for telecommunications and intellectual property and send their request to Valley Day School's Executive Director by October 1 of the given school year or by 30 days of the student's enrollment in the school. Parents who do not opt out in writing are giving permission for their child to use telecommunications and are giving Valley Day School permission to publish, produce, and/or display their child's intellectual property.

Transportation/Bus Rules

Difficulties or problems with your child's transportation should be reported directly to your home school's transportation department. A listing of transportation contacts can be found on your home school district's website.

General Information

Transportation to and from Valley Day School is arranged and provided by the school district your child is enrolled in. To ensure safe travel to and from school, students are not allowed to walk, use public transportation, ride on another district's bus, or drive to school. Please contact your district's transportation department or the transportation carrier if you have questions regarding transportation. Difficulties or problems with your child's transportation should be reported directly to the district's transportation department.

It is the parent's responsibility to notify transportation if your child:

- Is not coming to school.
- Is returning to school after a period of absence; and/or
- Has been transported by you in the morning and will need transportation home.

Valley Day School instructs students to meet the following expectations while they are being transported to and from school:

- Be prompt and on time.

- Enter and exit the bus in a safe and orderly manner.
- Respect for property.
- Wear a seatbelt (if available) throughout the journey.
- Use your quiet voice and polite language while you are aboard the vehicle.
- Refrain from horseplay while you are aboard the vehicle.
- Keep your hands and your feet to your personal space; Don't invade the personal space of others.
- Keep your body parts and your possessions inside the vehicle; Don't put things out the vehicle windows.
- Sit in your assigned seat.
- Follow the driver and the aide's directions.

Communication regarding Bussing and Schedules

If your transportation does not arrive after waiting for 15 minutes, you should call your district's transportation department. Please refrain from contacting the driver directly. Additionally, many school districts suggest that students should report to their designated bus stop 5 minutes early to assist bus routes running on time.

When contacting transportation, you should give your child's name, the school's name, bus number, as well as the pick-up and drop-off time, and bus stop location. Sometimes your child may have different drivers for the morning and afternoon routes.

Districts do not always call when a bus is running late. Since school districts operate many buses and vehicles, it is very challenging to contact parents when the bus is running late. However, most districts have radio contact with their buses and school vehicles, and they can determine the expected time of arrival. Some of the situations that could cause a late bus include traffic, road closures, weather, vehicle breakdowns, student issues, or problems on a prior route.

You will be notified of your child's bussing schedule at the beginning of the school year. Typically, about a week before school starts, school districts will send home a letter with schedule information to their families. Please note that bus schedules and schedule changes may also occur during the school year. Most districts will send letters to families or call ahead of time if the change is greater than five minutes. For questions specific to your school district, please call their transportation department.

If you are picking your child up from school, it is best to inform both Valley Day School and your child's transportation department when your child is absent, or you are making other arrangements for the child's transportation to and from school. When calling Valley Day School, call the main office at 215-295-1155. Students are not able to ride on a friend's bus. If your child wishes to visit another child's home, parents are encouraged to pick up both students from the school. Valley Day School will need to have signed written permission from both parents.

Bus Safety

Students, while on the school bus or van, are under the jurisdiction of the driver and any other adult designated by the district to supervise students riding the vehicle. Parents and students must understand that the bus driver is in full charge of the discipline of students/passengers and operation of the bus. Students should obey the driver carefully and promptly. If a student

persists in violating any of the bus rules, it is the driver's duty to notify the district and Valley Day School administration. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken for misconduct while on transportation.

Although transportation is a district service, Valley Day School personnel are concerned about student safety coming to and from school as well as at school. Valley Day School personnel also take a role in attempting to resolve any major transportation problems regarding safety and discipline, and we encourage your assistance with these problems. If your child is too unsafe to be transported by the van/bus provided by the home school district, it is the responsibility of the parents or guardian to pick your child up within a reasonable time period.

School Bus Suspension and/or Alternate Scheduled Transport

Students, while on the school bus or van, are under the jurisdiction of the driver and any other adult designated by the district to supervise students riding the vehicle. Parents and students must understand that the bus driver is in full charge of the discipline of students/passengers and operation of the bus. Students should obey the driver promptly. If a student persists in violating any of the bus rules, it is the driver's duty to notify the district and Valley Day School administration. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken for misconduct on the bus/van. Suspension from the bus is the responsibility of the district in conjunction with Valley Day School. If a suspension should occur, parents are encouraged to provide alternative transportation so that the child may attend school.

Attendance

Attendance

Valley Day School personnel are committed to helping our students make as much progress as possible within the school year. To do so, it is necessary for the student to attend school. Pennsylvania law requires children ages 6 through age 18 to attend school. Regular school attendance contributes to a student's success at school. We expect our students to attend school every day and to remain in school during the specified hours. Punctual and regular attendance at school helps students develop habits of responsibility and promote their success in school. When a student is absent, they lose the opportunity to participate in the learning activities occurring in the classroom, as well as the therapeutic activities such as social skills instruction, individual and group counseling. Children learn better and achieve greater academic success if they attend school regularly.

Excused Absence

The school laws of Pennsylvania permit an excused absence for the following reasons:

1. A personal illness or injury to the degree the child is unable to attend school (an absence beyond three consecutive days due to illness requires a note from a physician. Without a physician's note, absences beyond the 3rd day will be considered unexcused).
2. A death in the family.
3. Observance of a religious holiday or receipt of religious training as permitted by law.
4. Family educational trip (with prior administrative approval).
5. Other urgent reasons beyond the control of the student, or such other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the safety or health of the student.
6. Other absences approved by the building administrator. Valley Day School administrators permit an excused absence for the following reasons:
 - a. A doctor, dentist, or legal appointment for the child (upon receipt of a signed excuse note from the student's parent/guardian/caregiver or receipt of a back-to-school note from the attending professional on their letterhead).
 - b. A loss of transportation to Valley Day School by the Local Educational Agencies (LEA) owing to weather and/or road conditions.
 - c. Failure of the assigned transportation to transport the student to Valley Day School.

Parental notification is required by email, telephone or note. Students are required to coordinate with their teachers to ensure that they make up any missed assignments while they are absent. If a student has excessive excused absences (more than 6 per marking period), the student may be required to provide additional verification. Any absences other than those listed above are recorded as unexcused absences.

Parent Approved/Pre-Arranged Absence

If students know in advance that they will be missing school, a note from their parents explaining why they will be out of school should be presented to the office. Homework will be required. Major tests must be made up. Work due during the absence will be accepted upon returning to school.

Educational Trip

Parents requesting permission to take their child(ren) out of school for educational trips of no more than 5 days must notify the Valley Day School administration in writing at least five days prior to the trip.

Parents may request permission to take their child(ren) on one educational trip. Days in excess will be considered unexcused and notices may be issued. Only one such educational trip may be approved each school year.

Unexcused Absence

An absence will be unexcused for the following reasons:

1. Failure to provide a written/electronic note signed by the parent/guardian identifying the valid reason for the child's absence.
2. A student's absence for any reason other than those identified as excused absences.

Valley Day School works closely with your home school district's representatives to ensure that state attendance laws and district attendance policies are followed. Case managers will communicate all absences to your child's home district and will follow appropriate steps to help promote school attendance. In the event of an excessive number of absences, a Student Attendance Improvement Meeting will be held. Students who have more than 15 unexcused absences during a semester course may receive a failing grade for the semester.

Notification – Procedure for Reporting Student Absence

When your child will be absent from school, please call the school at 215-295-1155 or email before 10 am to notify us that your child will be absent for the day and let us know why they will be absent. Parents must call each day their child is absent.

- If the illness or condition is expected to be long-term with the student missing substantial time, the parent is responsible for obtaining a doctor's note to indicate the estimated length of absence, and to send this note to the school.
- When your child returns to school, please send a signed, written note or doctor's note for extended absences, stating the dates of the absence(s) and the reason your child missed school. Until Valley Day School receives your note, your child's absence is unexcused.
- In the event a student does not arrive at school and we have not received any message from the parent, Valley Day School will attempt to contact the parent. The school keeps a record of phone messages and conversations to be included in the student's attendance file.
- If we have not received a note or a phone call about your child's absence, we must mark your child as unexcused, in accordance with Pennsylvania law.

Tardiness

Being on time is an important habit to learn for future success. All students are expected to arrive at school on time. Valley Day School's educational philosophy supports intensive, structured programming to allow for student's maximum potential. For this to be achieved and to keep the classrooms running efficiently and smoothly, all students must arrive on time, unless a specific alternative plan has been adopted through the student's Individual Education Plan. All student tardiness will be recorded on the attendance record and reported to the parents. We use consistency and ritual to maximize student learning and to help students establish good habits. When students arrive late at school, they must sign in at the main office. If it is necessary for your child to arrive late at school, please call the office to let us know.

Leaving School Early with Parental Permission

Please notify the school if you need to pick up your child prior to dismissal on a specific day. The communication should state the reason for leaving early, the time of departure, and the name and relationship of the person providing transportation. The note should include a telephone number where the parent can be reached. Students will only be released from school to their parent or to people specifically authorized by the parent. The individual picking up the student will be required to provide a valid photo ID to the office personnel prior to the student's release from school. When picking up the student before the end of the school day, the person supplying transportation must report to the main office and sign the student out. Please contact your district's transportation office and notify them that your child will not be riding the bus as usual that day.

College Visitations/Post-Secondary Training Days

In conjunction with their Individual Education Plan's transition planning, Valley Day School secondary school students are encouraged to visit post-secondary training institutions. Students are encouraged to work with their guidance counselor to explore all options for school visits and tours. Seniors may take up to 5 post-secondary training days after completing the following procedures:

1. Seniors must make a post-secondary training day request through the Valley Day School guidance counselor at least 3 days in advance.
2. Complete the requirements for a Parent-Approved/Pre-Arranged Absence.
3. Upon return to school, the student will be responsible for supplying the office with a signed statement on post-secondary training facility letterhead confirming said visit.

Behavior

In Loco Parentis

Valley Day School staff have a duty to maintain an orderly and effective learning environment through reasonable and prudent control of students. The Valley Day School building administration and Valley Day School instructional personnel have the authority to teach, to guide, and to discipline the child to accomplish the educational objectives. Under this doctrine, school personnel have a duty to see that school order is maintained by requiring students to obey reasonable rules and directions and to respect the rights of others. School personnel may use reasonable procedures as needed to maintain the safety of other students and may remove a student from the classroom for dangerous or disruptive behavior. In the event of this occurring, the student's behavior will be dealt with according to the seriousness of the offense.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

Valley Day School uses a positive and proactive approach to teaching students appropriate classroom and school behaviors. An emphasis is placed on teaching students' tools to lead a healthy life. For most students, Valley Day School uses a schoolwide behavior support system. Since Valley Day School serves a wide age-range of students, some variations exist in the way in which schoolwide procedures are implemented. For example, procedures may differ for elementary students compared with high school students. Despite any operational differences, the overall goal remains the same: to teach the social behaviors students require to become effective as self-managing individuals.

The schoolwide behavior support program is a three-tiered system comprising building-wide interventions, classroom interventions, and individual behavior plans. Our approach is based on the belief that our students can learn new, alternative ways of obtaining their goals; and that staff can teach students how to behave in school.

Valley Day School personnel are committed to managing behavior in a positive and helpful manner. Expectations for student conduct are clearly defined and communicated, and consequences for correcting rule-violating behavior are clearly defined and consistently applied. Valley Day School complies with applicable federal and Commonwealth legislation governing Positive Behavior Support for students enrolled at Valley Day School. As part of its commitment to the use of best-practices, Valley Day School uses PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) principles.

Physical Restraint

When, in the judgment of Valley Day School employees, a student is acting in such a manner as to be a clear and present danger to self, peers, employees, and/or property, and when less restrictive measures and/or interventions were either ineffective or were judged to be ineffective, Valley Day School employees who have been trained to safely and appropriately intervene are authorized, as a last resort, to use physical restraints as defined in applicable PA Education law and/or removal (including but not limited to emergency seclusion) of the unruly student(s) - in order to quell a disturbance, ensure safety, and protect persons and property.

Physical restraints used under the following circumstances shall not be considered as corporal punishment if the intervention is not extreme, excessive, or unreasonable in type or purpose:

- to quell a disturbance; ensure safety of self and others

- to obtain possession of dangerous and/or illegal objects (e.g., weapon(s) or drug(s))
- for the protection of people and property
- in self-defense

Suspension

When determining whether to use a long-term suspension or expulsion, Valley Day School will convene the student's IEP team and other qualified personnel to determine the relationship between the student's misbehavior and their disability. Long term suspension (more than 15 cumulative days in a school year) and expulsion qualify as a change in placement. Disciplinary procedures that effectively change a student's placement will be done in accordance with the procedural safeguards afforded to students with disabilities by all applicable federal and state laws. In situations where a student with disabilities brings a weapon to school or a school function, or where they use, possess, or sell/distribute drugs at school or a school function, or where a student seriously harms someone at school or a school function, Valley Day School administration reserves the right to unilaterally notify the responsible district to remove the student to an interim alternate educational setting for up to 45 school days. During this time, Valley Day School and the district will convene the student's IEP team to consider appropriate actions. In instances of short-term suspensions (10 days or less), in concert with the referring district, Valley Day School may discontinue educational services. In instances of long-term suspension (more than 10 days), Valley Day School will work in concert with the referring school district to ensure that educational services are not discontinued. In instances of expulsion, the referring district will be responsible for ensuring that educational services are not discontinued and providing FAPE.

Suspension Procedure(s)

Cause for suspension can include any conduct that is illegal, causes a disruption of, or interferes with the instructional process or school activity, places in danger any person(s) or property, or which causes a reasonable likelihood of such disruption, interference, or danger.

1. When suspension is under consideration, Valley Day School will notify the student's district and parents.
2. Before a Valley Day School student is suspended, appropriate Valley Day School staff will inform the student of their suspension and the specific misconduct.
3. When a Valley Day School student is suspended more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, Valley Day School will schedule an IEP team meeting to conduct a Manifestation Determination Review in order to determine if the behaviors are a result of the student's educational disability. If the student's negative behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, the student's educational program will be reviewed to reduce or eliminate the misconduct.
4. Valley Day School students may be suspended, even if the misconduct is the result of the student's handicapping condition, for school-related weapons offenses, drug offenses, assaultive behavior, and/or if the student's presence poses a danger to the student, other students, faculty, or school property, or disrupts the educational process.

Police Involvement

Valley Day School administration will investigate complaints where misconduct is alleged to have violated the law. Valley Day School administration may involve law enforcement personnel as an intervention and will involve appropriate law enforcement agencies if a law has been violated in instances where the school is a mandated reporter under applicable law(s). If an individual Valley Day School employee or a visitor believes that they have been the victim of a crime, they have the right to individually pursue police involvement.

Hall Passes

Students are not permitted in the halls during class periods unless they are accompanied by appropriate Valley Day School personnel or unless the student has a hall pass from an authorized staff member.

Restroom Privileges

Restrooms are to be used only for the intended purpose. Any other usage (e.g., smoking, loitering, and hiding from staff) will not be tolerated. Students are to utilize the facilities within their classroom or the hallway bathrooms during designated times. If an emergency necessitates the usage of the restroom during class, the student must get staff permission.

Safe to Say Something

Safe2Say Something is a youth violence prevention program run by the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General. The program teaches youth and adults how to recognize warning signs and signals, especially within social media, from individuals who may be a threat to themselves and/or others and to “say something” BEFORE it is too late. With Safe2Say Something, it’s easy and confidential to report safety concerns to help prevent violence and tragedies. Tips can be offered at [SafetoSayPA.org](https://www.safetosaypa.org) throughout the calendar year.

Behaviors of Concern:

Crisis Response Plan

Valley Day School’s Crisis Response Plan is coordinated with the plans and procedures of local first responders, Pennsbury School District, and with county and regional Crisis Response plans. The school uses drills to prepare students for the possibility of evacuation(s) (building or campus), building lockdown(s), shelter-in-place, etc.

Assigned Areas and Leaving School Property

Students will not be permitted to loiter in halls or outside of classrooms. At all times, students should follow their assigned schedule. Leaving school grounds during the school day without permission from Valley Day School personnel is prohibited. If a student leaves their assigned area without permission, staff will attempt to engage the student and help them problem-solve in order to successfully return to the program. When students are in the halls, staff will keep the student within their sight. Students who leave a building are subject to local laws and their consequences. If students leave the building, staff will follow and attempt to engage them. Once a student leaves the school grounds, Valley Day School personnel will attempt to keep the student in sight. If the student leaves the school grounds and refuses to return, both parents and the local police will be notified as a safety precaution. In these cases, school

personnel cannot be responsible for students who leave the premises. Falls Township has a daytime curfew in place. Students who leave from Valley Day School grounds and who are within the township may face consequences established by the Township.

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

Child abuse includes serious physical or mental injury that is not accidental, sexual abuse, or physical neglect of children under the age of 18 that is caused by acts or omissions of a perpetrator. As outlined in the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Act, all school personnel are mandated reporters. Therefore, any Valley Day School personnel who have reason to suspect, based on their professional judgment, that a student is being abused must report any suspicion of abuse or neglect immediately to CHILDLINE.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal Punishment is not administered in the Valley Day School and use of corporal punishment at Valley Day School is strictly prohibited. No student will be subject to the infliction of corporal punishment by any teacher, other student, administrator, or other school personnel and permission to administer corporal punishment will not be sought by or accepted from any parent, guardian, or school official.

Emergency Behavioral Procedures

Minimizing challenging and disruptive behaviors is one of the goals of Valley Day School in supporting our students' educational progress. Valley Day School strives to be a "hands off" facility, meaning that it relies on the use of positive methods for teaching students' appropriate behaviors for dealing with anxiety and frustration, and Valley Day School personnel make a conscious effort to avoid use of student seclusion and/or student restraint. By implementing positive behavior supports; providing students with the skills to make choices and communicate their needs; effective teaching strategies; high staff-to-student ratios; and high rates of student engagement, inappropriate behaviors are decreased. Individual behavior plans are incorporated in each student's Individual Educational Plans, as needed. If a situation arises that involves serious unsafe behaviors by a student, Valley Day School staff members will attempt to de-escalate the situation and to minimize the danger and/or disruption. Use of physical contact with a student (or students), including restraint, is a last resort when the student is a danger to themselves or to others. Consistent with best educational practices, Valley Day School personnel avoid violence and coercion where possible. However, Valley Day School employees are trained in crisis intervention protocols that provide a systematic approach for the prevention of serious misconduct and guide interventions by school personnel during incidents where, in the professional judgment of school personnel, a student's behavior places the student and/or others in imminent danger.

In the event that a student needs to be placed into a physical restraint or seclusion, the incident will be documented appropriately and staff will promptly communicate with both the parent and home school district. An Individual Educational Plan team meeting will be scheduled within 10 days to review the incident and develop a behavior improvement plan to prevent reoccurrence of the behavior of concern. Parents do retain the right to waive this meeting.

Endangering Acts

An endangering act is one which results in physical harm to another person, in the damage, loss, or destruction of property, or poses a threat to the safety of others, or poses a direct threat of damage,

loss, or destruction of property. Students are forbidden from committing endangering acts on Valley Day School property (building, campus, or vehicles) as well as forbidden from committing endangering acts during community-based school-sponsored activities. Students who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action by the school. Where a violation of this policy also violates the law, Valley Day School will notify the appropriate law enforcement authority. This policy forbids actions on Valley Day School property and Valley Day school-sponsored activities including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Physical or verbal attacks on Valley Day School employees or Valley Day School students
2. Fighting between students
3. Possession of a weapon, explosive, or flammable material
4. Terroristic Threats
5. False Fire Alarms, Bomb Scares, False 911 Calls
6. Theft or extortion
7. Willful destruction or defacing of school property (including graffiti and/or vandalism)
8. Gambling
9. Selling, giving, delivering, transferring, possessing, controlling, or distributing alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or vaping products on school property or at a school activity
10. The sale, control, distribution, delivery, or transfer of a drug or controlled substance, drug paraphernalia, or imitation/lookalike-controlled substance.
11. Commission of an act involving the use of force or the threatened use of force which, if committed by an adult, would be a felony or class A misdemeanor.

Fighting/Aggravated Assault

Aggravated assault can be defined as an attempt to cause, or intentionally or knowingly causing, bodily injury to another student, or to any school employee. It does not require that actual physical harm occurs. Fighting is not an effective way to resolve conflicts. Students are encouraged to use staff and/or administration to help resolve differences with other students and/or differences with Valley Day School personnel. Depending upon the nature of the altercation, one or more students may be suspended for participating in a fight. A parent, student, and administrator reentry conference may be required before a student can return to school following a fight or assault. Fighting and/or assaults will not be tolerated on Valley Day School campus or at community-based school-sponsored activities.

Gambling

Students are forbidden to play cards and/or games of chance for money at Valley Day School. All gambling materials will be confiscated.

Harassment Policy

Students deserve to learn in a school environment free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying is prohibited by both federal and state law and will not be tolerated at Valley Day School. "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means any intentional written, verbal, graphic, or physical act that a student or group of students exhibit toward another member of the Valley Day School community more than once which causes mental, emotional, or physical harm to the other community member; and is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other community member. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying also means acts done on electronic or social media.

- A person is bullied when they are exposed to intentional negative actions on the part of one or more students, and when their ability to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities is adversely affected. Bullying often occurs repeatedly over time.
- A person is harassed when they perceive or experience discomfort with identity issues regarding race, color, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or other identifying characteristics, and when their ability to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities is adversely affected.
- A person is intimidated when they are subjected to intentional action that seriously threatens and induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority, and when their ability to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities is adversely affected.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any kind will NOT be tolerated at Valley Day School. Students must feel confident to report alleged bullying, harassment, or intimidation without fear of harmful consequences. In evaluating whether conduct constitutes harassment, intimidation or bullying, special attention will be paid by Valley Day School personnel to the words chosen or the actions taken, whether such conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the perpetrator interacted with the victim, and the motivation-either admitted or appropriately inferred. It is the policy of Valley Day School to support fully the laws prohibiting harassment, bullying, intimidation, and discrimination because of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, familial status, disability, medical condition, and age, as well as sexual harassment, and to maintain a learning environment which is free of any such discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Any student who is being harassed, intimidated, bullied, or discriminated against by a Valley Day School employee or by another student, or who is aware of harassment or discrimination against another student, should report it immediately to Valley Day School staff. School staff who witness acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, or who receive student or parent reports of suspected harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall promptly notify the Valley Day School administration. The Valley Day School administration will investigate alleged incidents of harassment. Verified acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall result in an intervention by Valley Day School staff that is intended to ensure that the prohibition against harassment, intimidation, or bullying behavior is enforced, with the goal that any such prohibited behavior will cease. In addition, depending on the circumstances, the perpetrator(s) may face police investigation and any applicable criminal or civil penalties imposed by legal authorities.

Sexual Harassment

All students deserve to learn in a school environment free from all forms of discrimination, including ones that pertain to sexual harassment, sexual orientation, or preference, or any unwelcome sexual advances or comments. Sexual harassment is illegal and therefore will not be tolerated anywhere in the Valley Day School. The subjecting of another student or Valley Day School employee to sexual advances, sexually oriented comments, or harassment based on sexual orientation is strictly prohibited and will be considered misconduct. Any student who feels they have been a victim of sexual harassment should immediately report the alleged harassment to Valley Day School staff. All reports and investigations will be confidential. No

student will be subject to any form of retaliation or discipline for pursuing a sexual harassment complaint; unless such student knowingly and maliciously falsifies a charge of sexual harassment against another student or employee. Any action taken because of the investigation will depend upon the facts of each case. Since the disciplinary policy for Valley Day School employees is contained in the Staff Handbook, if parents or students have any questions regarding this policy, they should contact the Education Director.

Should your child be a victim of sexual harassment, you should immediately record the events described by your child and then promptly contact the Valley Day School administration and provide all available information about the incident.

The Valley Day School administration will speak with you about the procedures that will be followed to investigate the incident and will also discuss the incident with your child. A support person may be present to create a more comfortable atmosphere. You will be notified of the findings of the investigation as soon as possible following its completion.

Search and Seizure

Security Checks with Metal Detector

All Valley Day School students shall be free from unreasonable searches of their persons, clothing, and other personal property. However, a student and their possessions are subject to search in school or during a community-based school-sponsored activity by school officials if reasonable grounds exist to suspect that the search will yield evidence of a student's violation of the law or school rules governing student conduct.

To ensure a safe learning environment for all, Valley Day School uses metal detectors (walk-through and/or hand-held) to screen students (and visitors) daily when they enter the building to minimize the risk of weapons/contraband on school grounds. All students must comply with the search of their belongings and the use of the metal detector to check the student; students who do not comply will be isolated and detained until they comply with the search. Valley Day School reserves the right to initiate a student search in situations in which there is reasonable suspicion that the student has a weapon or other dangerous items. In some situations, law enforcement officers may be requested to perform a search.

Physical Search

In all circumstances, searches of persons shall be reasonable in scope, and the following guidelines shall apply: Prior to conducting a search, school personnel shall ask that the student consent to be searched by removing all items from pockets or other personal effects. If a student refuses to consent to search, and if school officials conclude that delay associated with contacting parents presents an unreasonable delay which may increase the risk of loss of contraband being sought or unreasonably affect the education process, school officials may proceed to search the student and the student's personal belongings. In all circumstances, the following considerations shall apply:

Any search of a student conducted by a Valley Day School employee must be reasonably related to the discovery of contraband or other evidence of a student's violation of the law or of school rules. A search must be justifiable at inception: Reasonable cause to search is required.

Reasonable cause is less than probable cause and more than mere suspicion. To the extent possible, reasonable cause should be individualized to the student or focus on a relatively small number of students. School officials need not get a search warrant prior to conducting a search based on reasonable suspicion. Staff shall conduct searches in a manner that is not excessively intrusive considering the age and gender of the student and the nature of the suspected infraction. For example, students should be searched away from other students; when possible, an adult witness of the same gender as the student being searched should be present, and beyond early elementary grades, the staff person conducting the search will be of the same gender as the student being searched. A degree of intrusiveness shall be given thoughtful consideration. For example, if the contraband being sought is a weapon or item potentially injurious to the health, safety, and welfare of members of the learning community, a search can generally be more insensitive than one being conducted for an item which is not potentially dangerous - such as another student's lost or stolen property. A reasonable effort shall be made to notify the parents of the search process, but when the item being searched for is thought to be a weapon or other item potentially injurious to student, health, safety, or welfare (including drugs), the search need not be delayed until parents are notified. As soon as reasonably possible, the student's parents will be notified if such a search is required and will be advised of the outcome of the search. "Pat down" searches will be conducted only by a person of the same gender as the student being searched, and in a private room - absent an immediate threat of harm to a student or staff. No student shall be subject to strip search or body cavity search by school employees. School officials may consult with local law enforcement officials regarding the advisability of searching on school premises by a law enforcement officer if evidence of criminal activity is likely to be seized. Absent an immediate threat of harm to a student or staff member, at least one person of the same gender as the student being searched shall witness but not participate in the search. A parent of any student searched shall be notified of the search as soon as reasonably possible.

Security Cameras

To help ensure the safety and security of Valley Day School's students, staff, and property, security cameras are installed in the hallways, in Valley Day School classrooms, and on the building perimeter. Security recordings are the property of Valley Day School. Recorded video images of events deemed significant by Valley Day School Board policy and or by school management team procedures and or by applicable laws are stored for long term retrieval. Security recordings may be viewed to ensure an accurate understanding of a behavioral incident where appropriate, Valley Day School personnel will view a recording with a student as a teaching tool. Security recordings may be viewed by school administration, school disciplinary personnel, or others who legally need access to the footage.

Substance Use/Abuse Policy

Valley Day School will not tolerate the presence of drugs or alcohol on campus. Under Pennsylvania law, Valley Day School buildings and grounds are a drug-free school zone. When school personnel suspect the presence, transfer, or sale of drugs or alcohol at Valley Day School or at school functions, they will report their concerns to school administration. School administration reserves the right to contact those local, state, and/or federal officials charged with enforcing state and federal drug laws. Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy on school-controlled or school-owned property or equipment, so

school staff may search without violating student rights to control and supervise student conduct and maintain a proper educational environment.

Drugs and Alcohol/Substance Abuse

The use, and/or possession, and/or sale, and/or distribution of alcohol and other drugs (including look-alike drugs and prescription drugs which were prescribed for another) and/or drug paraphernalia on school property and vehicles or within the school authority is in violation of Valley Day School policies and is a violation of the law. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action. The sale or distribution on school property or within school authority may be cause for interim alternate educational placement (IAEP) and/or disenrollment.

If school administration becomes aware of sale/distribution on campus of drugs, alcohol, and/or controlled substances and/or becomes aware of solicitation by a student or students with intent to sell or distribute drugs, alcohol, and/or controlled substance(s), administration is obligated to contact authorities and to cooperate with any investigation. Being under the influence of any drugs or alcohol as well as the possession, use, transfer, control of alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia, look-alike drugs, or drugs prescribed for another is prohibited in any school context including, but not limited to, the school grounds, the school program, on school transportation, at a school-sponsored activity (including activities that occur away from Valley Day School). This policy applies to transportation services to and from Valley Day School. If a student is suspected of being under the influence of a controlled substance while in our care and on our campus, Valley Day School will notify and consult with that student's parents. With parental authorization, trained Valley Day School medical services staff will do an informal assessment of the students' vitals. Any student found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, out of school suspension, and will be subject to the additional disciplinary actions described in this policy.

The school's response to student drug possession on campus (or at a school-sponsored function) will take one or more of the following forms:

- 1) referral to counseling and/or psychiatric/mental health services
- 2) internal disciplinary action
- 3) referral to law enforcement officials

The school's response to student drug use on campus (or at a school-sponsored function) will take one or more of the forms and may also prompt Valley Day School administration or the district to consider alternate placements for the student.

The school's response to student drug distribution and/or solicitation with intent to sell drugs and/or sale of drugs on campus (or at a school-sponsored function) will take one or more of the forms and may prompt Valley Day School administration to notify the district to immediately provide the student with an interim alternate educational placement. Students who violate Pennsylvania's laws or federal laws are also subject to prosecution in the local, state, and federal courts. The school will not serve as a haven for illegal activities of any sort.

Smoking, Tobacco Products, and Tobacco Related Items

Valley Day School intends to provide all employees and students with an environment that is free of the hazards of tobacco products. Students are forbidden to smoke and/or to use tobacco products in school buildings or on school grounds, according to state law. State law makes it unlawful to possess or use tobacco or tobacco products on school property or vehicles. Students who violate Pennsylvania or federal laws are also subject to prosecution in the local, state, and federal courts. Student possession and use of tobacco products and related items, such as lighters and matches, is prohibited on Valley Day School property. In addition, student possession of tobacco products and related items is prohibited at all Valley Day School-sponsored functions (including school functions before and/or after standard school hours, and school functions that are community-based). Under Pennsylvania law, it is unlawful for any pupil to use tobacco in school buildings, school vehicles, and on school property. Tobacco use includes smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco in any form. Students possessing or using tobacco products and related items on Valley Day School property will be directed to turn these materials over to school officials, and their parents will be notified. Possession and use of tobacco products and related items on school property will result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension from school. In addition, school officials will notify appropriate law enforcement agencies as prescribed by law. If the school becomes aware of the distribution on campus of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products, it is obligated to contact authorities and to cooperate with them in bringing to justice the person or persons involved. The school will not serve as a haven for illegal activities.

Searches

If there is reason to suspect that a student may have drugs or other evidence on or about their person, they will be asked by Valley Day School personnel to produce any contraband and if necessary, to empty their pockets, the contents of any bag or purse, and the like. To respect the student's privacy, the student shall be isolated to conduct the search, and the police may be called in to assist in the search.

Presence of Material Evidence

Valley Day School campus is a drug-free school zone. If suspected illegal drugs are found on campus by school personnel, the matter will be reported to the local police department. If any substance believed to be drugs or alcohol is discovered, school administration will be notified and any contraband will be turned over to police.

Weapons and Suspected Illegal Substances

To ensure that Valley Day School is a safe environment for our students and staff, weapons are prohibited on school property and vehicles, as well as at all school-sponsored activities. A weapon on school property is a crime and any weapon found on school property is evidence. The word "weapon" means any tool, instrument, or object capable of inflicting bodily injury which is used in a manner calculated or likely to produce bodily injury; or possessed under circumstances which are not clearly appropriate to the lawful uses which it may otherwise have, and can include firearms, knives, smoke bombs, metal knuckles, razor blades, mace, pepper spray, ammunition, explosives, noxious, irritating, or poisonous gases, poisons, or anything fashioned or used with the intent to do harm. Possession of, threat to use or use of a weapon on school grounds or during a school-sponsored event off school

grounds is a serious violation of the Valley Day School Code of Student Conduct. Any student found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action as well as possible legal action

Possession

Valley Day School employees cannot authorize students to bring a weapon to school (e.g., for show-and-tell, a special report or project, or for other purposes). If a student is found in possession of a weapon on school property or during a community-based and school-sponsored activity, they will be segregated from others; the student will be directed to turn their weapon(s) over to school officials; the weapon will be confiscated; parents and district will be notified; suspension procedures may be instituted; and the police will be notified.

Threat

If a student threatens to use any weapon(s) on school property or during a community-based and school-sponsored activity, they will be segregated from others; the student will be directed to turn their weapon(s) over to school officials; any weapon(s) found will be confiscated; parents and district will be notified; suspension procedures may be instituted; and the police will be notified.

Use of a weapon

If a student uses any weapon(s) on school property or during a community-based and school-sponsored activity, they will be segregated from others; the student will be directed to turn their weapon(s) over to school officials; any weapon(s) found will be confiscated; parents and district will be notified; the perpetrator will be suspended from school; and the police will be notified and summoned.

Vandalism

Vandalism is the willful destroying or damaging of property belonging to another. At Valley Day School, vandalism is identified as an endangering and destructive act and as such is prohibited. Students who commit an act of vandalism are subject to disciplinary action and must plan to pay for damages.

If no agreeable arrangements to pay for the damage are made, the school may take legal action. In such instances, where vandalism exceeds \$50.00 for replacement or repair, a school administrator may notify the police. If a student commits an act of school vandalism that, in the school administration's opinion, endangers the welfare or safety of other students and/or the greater community, the Education Director may request a due process hearing for the purposes of seeking a change in placement, including the possibility of expulsion from Valley Day School.

Health

Health Services and Illness or Injury at School

All students enrolled at Valley Day School must have current emergency contact information, to include names, phone numbers, and email addresses in case of a medical emergency. All students also must have a signed medical authorization on file.

Valley Day School has staff members who provide a variety of health-related services, including health screening as mandated by state law. When needed, these personnel will administer first aid, which is defined as immediate and temporary care given in case of accident or sudden illness. Further decisions and actions concerning the accident or illness are the responsibility of the parent. If your child becomes ill or injured at school, we will make every effort to contact you by telephone. If your child is too ill to remain in school, we will notify you to pick up your child as soon as possible. If we cannot contact an ill student's parent, we will notify the emergency contact.

Some of the conditions that may lead to us requesting that you pick up your child and take them home may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Fever
2. Infected skin lesions, including pink eye
3. Rashes on skin or scalp
4. Presence of lice or nits
5. Severe sore throat
6. Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

In case of serious, acute illness or injury, your child will be medically evaluated at a local hospital. Parents are notified of this situation as soon as possible. We attempt to contact parents to transport their child to the emergency room unless the seriousness of the emergency necessitates transportation by an ambulance.

Guidelines to Help Determine When to Keep a Student Home from School

- Fever (temperature) reaching 100.0 or higher - the student's temperature should be normal for 24 hours (un-medicated) before the student returns to school
- Vomiting **and/or** Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool in 24 hours)
- Skin rash; Untreated, infected patch of skin
- Evidence of lice infestation
- Severe and / or deep coughing – Yellow or green mucous secretions from the nose
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Conjunctivitis (pinkeye)
- A stiff neck, which causes pain for the child to touch his chin to his chest.
- Flu-like symptoms (sudden onset of chills, fever, headache, body-ache, sore throat and a dry hacky cough)
- Strep throat symptoms (usually sudden onset of fever, headache, difficulty swallowing and occasionally earache, abdominal pain and vomiting)

Children who contract a communicable disease will be excluded from school during the communicable phase of the illness to help minimize the spread of disease among the Valley Day School community.

They will only be readmitted to school upon the written advice of a family physician or pediatrician. Occasionally, a child returning to school after an illness may exhibit signs that clearly indicate that contagious conditions continue or have recurred, even after a visit to the doctor. In such instances, for the safety of other students and staff, we will contact you and ask that you pick up your child immediately and keep him or her home until the contagious condition has passed.

Mental Health/Crisis Evaluations

In the event of a mental health emergency, Valley Day School clinical staff members will partner with families and district resources to ensure that our students receive the support that they need. In the event of an acute mental health emergency, clinical staff members will contact parents to transport their child to receive care. If a student cannot be transported by a parent, Valley Day School will call local ambulance or police to assist in transportation to the local crisis center. Parents are required to meet their child and school personnel at the crisis center in a timely manner. Should a Valley Day School student be admitted to an inpatient placement, Valley Day School clinical staff will partner to the fullest extent possible with families and care-givers to support the student's treatment.

To help ensure that our students continue to receive the appropriate care that they need, Valley Day School asks parents to share any appropriate discharge or care plans to help support our students while at school. Psychiatric hospitalization often includes adjusting your child's medication, both in type and in dosage. Please be sure to inform Valley Day School's student health services personnel of any medication changes when your child returns to school.

First Aid and Emergency Treatment

In the event of accidents or sudden illnesses, appropriate first aid will be administered by trained staff members, and the child's parent will be notified immediately. In emergency situations beyond the scope of basic first aid, students will be taken to the Emergency Room at the nearest available local hospital and a Valley Day School staff member will go to the hospital as an escort to assist the student in gaining appropriate medical attention. The Valley Day School escort will remain at the hospital during standard Valley Day School working hours until the student's family or emergency contact arrives, the student is released by the hospital and is deemed well enough to return to school, or another assigned Valley Day School personnel relieves the original Valley Day School escort.

If the situation extends past normal school hours, a member of the Administration will supervise the student. If a family member or emergency contact does not arrive within a reasonable time, the appropriate county Children & Youth office will be contacted to take over supervision. In non-emergency situations when further medical attention is required, appropriate Valley Day School personnel will notify and summon the parent or designated emergency contact, and Valley Day School will ask the student's family or emergency contact to provide the student with transportation and care.

Immunizations

Pennsylvania law requires that children must be completely immunized prior to attending school. A copy of each child's immunization record must be on file prior to the child entering school. Upon registering their children, parents should supply a record of the exact dates of shots and booster for DT, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German measles), and Hepatitis B. Under state law, students who are not properly immunized are not permitted to attend school, and students cannot attend school before the school has received a record of their having received required immunizations. Under revised

Department of Health Immunization regulations, students not exempted from immunization for medical or religious reasons and who have not completed the full series of immunizations as required by law may not be admitted to school. However, school administrators may admit students who have received at least one dose of each of the required antigens. Students then have up to eight months to receive the remaining doses while they attend school. If these students provisionally enrolled still have not received all the required doses after eight months, then they may not continue to attend school.

Body Mass Screening and Index

Advanced notification of BMI screenings and the benefits of the screening will be communicated to all parents by reasonable means. Accurate measurement of height and weight and the calculation of BMI for students in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10 (or by a student's 7th, 10th, 13th and 16th birthday) will be done by trained individuals. Direct, confidential notification of parents of the child's screening results will be done, even those results within normal BMI range. Parents can waive their child's BMI screening at school by submitting a written request. Screening will be done in a space with respect for the student's privacy and confidentiality of results will be assured. The student's BMI in the health record is strictly confidential and will not be discussed with anyone other than the student, their parents, and their healthcare provider.

Chemical Dependency

Drug and alcohol abuse in schools and our community is a threat to the health and welfare of the general population, especially our children. Chemical dependency is a treatable health problem. While this treatment is primarily the responsibility of home and community, Valley Day School shares some of that responsibility since problems of chemical dependency often interfere with appropriate school behavior, student learning, and the development of each student.

For information about how Valley Day School responds to students who possess, use or distribute controlled substances on school grounds, please refer to the Behavior section of this document.

Food Allergies

Food allergies can present life-threatening situations. The risk of accidental exposure to foods can be reduced in the school setting when school staff work with students, parents, and physicians to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for food-allergic students.

Families' Responsibilities

Parents or caretakers must notify the school of the child's allergies upon enrollment or as soon as they become aware of a food allergy and work with the school team to develop a plan that accommodates the student's needs, including a Food Allergy Action Plan. Specific emergency contact information must be provided.

School's Responsibilities

In compliance with all federal and state laws, Valley Day School staff with a need to know will have access to student allergy records and will ensure that those students are not exposed to known allergens in the student's academic and behavioral programming. School staff are trained in first aid and are properly trained to administer medications to remedy allergic reactions.

Students' Responsibilities

- Students with food allergies should not trade foods with others.

- Students with food allergies should not eat anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen.
- Students with food allergies should be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions based on their developmental level.
- Students with food allergies should notify an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic.

Medical Excuses from Physical Education

A medical provider's written order is required for students to be excused from the required physical education curriculum required by the state. If a child has been excused from participation in physical education, the physician must also provide a note indicating when the child may resume participation. Medical excuses from physical education include the child being excused from participation in physical activities that might occur in addition to physical education classes such as recess and Interscholastic sporting events.

Medication Policy

The authorized Valley Day School staff may administer medications at school with permission from the child's parents. To protect the welfare of your child, the following procedure will be followed:

1. A medication form signed by a physician for the prescribed medication must be on file. This procedure is required for both prescription and over-the-counter medications.
2. Medications must be in individually labeled prescription containers and stored in a locked cabinet in the Valley Day School health services office.
3. A safe method for transporting the medication to Valley Day School must be determined.
4. Authorized Valley Day School staff are responsible for making sure a student has access to their medication at the prescribed times.
5. Authorized Valley Day School staff will dispense the medications and log the time and date when the medication was administered.
6. Authorized Valley Day School staff will record the number of pills or tablets the child received and note any deviation from the procedures (i.e., student refuses to take medication or discards or destroys the medication).

Self-Administration

Self-administration of medication is not permitted at Valley Day School. Authorized Valley Day School staff will administer all medication, including non-prescription medication.

School Student Accident Insurance

Valley Day School does not offer student accident insurance to cover the incidental injuries a student might experience at school. Parents are advised to use their medical insurance to cover such injuries. Additional insurance can often be purchased from private carriers through the student's home district. Contact your home district for further details.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Code of Conduct

Valley Day School students are both citizens and members of a learning community. Valley Day School provides a safe and civil learning environment for students. We recognize that students do best when expectations for conduct are clear. Valley Day School is committed to providing an environment that is physically, emotionally, and socially safe for all community members, both students and staff.

To that end, a Code of Conduct has been developed to emphasize the following core values:

1. Be Responsible
2. Be Respectful
3. Be Safe

These values are incorporated in all student procedures, posted throughout the building, directly taught, and reviewed daily with the students.

- I. Student actions that would be violating the “Be responsible” expectation could include:
 - A. Incomplete homework
 - B. Not having the required classroom materials
 - C. Academic dishonesty
 - D. Unsigned or unreturned required documents, such as point-sheets and permission slips
 - E. Inappropriate dress
 - F. Possession of unauthorized equipment or materials
 - G. Public displays of affection
 - H. Leaving a classroom or school building without permission
 - I. Theft, damage, destruction, or unauthorized use of school property or the property of others
 - J. Failure to follow policies outlined in the student handbook
- II. Student actions that would be violating the “Be Respectful” expectation could include:
 - A. Use of profanity
 - B. Use of ethnic slurs
 - C. Verbal abuse of a student or staff member
 - D. Failure to follow the directions of school personnel
 - E. Violations of technology use policy
 - F. Bullying or the physical, electronic, verbal, or otherwise communicated intimidation of others
 - G. Sexual Harassment
- III. Student actions that would be violating the “Be Safe” expectation could include:
 - A. Physical aggression toward students or staff
 - B. Threats of physical aggression towards staff or students
 - C. Destruction of individual or school property
 - D. Possession of weapon(s)
 - E. Use, sale, possession, or distribution of tobacco products, lighters, and/or vaping products
 - F. Use, sale, possession, or distribution of illegal, look-alike, or unauthorized prescription drugs and non-prescription drugs, and/or drug paraphernalia

G. Violations of state or federal law

Students violating the Student Code of Conduct may face disciplinary consequences including, but, not limited to:

- Counseling with a staff member to provide the student with insight into how their behavior has violated community expectations and has adversely impacted themselves and/or others, as well as planning on how to avoid such violations in the future
- Creation and/or modification of Individual Student Safety Plan
- Loss of points/tokens on the school-wide positive behavior support system
- Parental contact and notification
- Out of classroom time-outs
- Verbal and/or written apologies
- Non-participation in school events
- Restitution (financial or through alternate agreed-upon means)
- Community service
- In-school or out-of-school suspensions
- Removal from school (including but not limited to interim alternative education placement)

Valley Day School Staff will work with students to examine the student's inappropriate behavior to develop action plans to prevent further incidents. In addition to corrective measures identified above, violations of criminal law may result in referral to the appropriate law enforcement agency. If out-of-school suspension (OSS) is deemed necessary, a re-entry meeting of the students, their parent/guardian, and a school representative is expected before the student resumes attending classes at Valley Day School. Valley Day School holds students accountable for violations of the student code of conduct both on and off campus. Severe infractions of the Valley Day School code of conduct may be dealt with through administrative and/or through law enforcement channels.

To help students manage themselves in this setting, several approaches are taken:

- School policies are posted in every classroom and area of the school.
- Individual behavior improvement plans and support programs are developed for students who repeatedly demonstrate the need for more structure or support to make more appropriate choices.

Collaborative efforts with students, families, school personnel, and outside agencies are undertaken to incorporate social, emotional, educational, and psychological needs into positive behavioral planning and programming

Bookbags and Personal Property

Bookbags

To ensure the safety of the school community, Valley Day School requires that students who wish to use bookbags use only those that are made of clear material or made of mesh - so that the bag contents are clearly visible for inspection while the book bag is sealed. All book bags are checked by staff when students enter the school building.

Personal Property

Valley Day School discourages students from bringing personal items to school. Students and parents are advised that students are not to bring personal possessions of value to school. Valley Day School staff discourage students from lending and borrowing items, especially money, from other students and from bringing valuable items from home. Valley Day School is not responsible for the loss of any personal item. Valley Day School's insurance does not cover personal possessions. Students are not permitted to bring personal electronics, (e.g., iPods, Nintendo DS, PSP, cell phones), skateboards, and other personal items unless they first obtain permission from the Valley Day School administration. Items brought to school without permission or items deemed to be dangerous or distracting to others will be confiscated and turned over to the parents.

Students may be permitted, by bus personnel governed by their district, to use cellphones or music devices while in transit between home and school. Upon entering the building, all such devices must be checked into the main office before students pass through morning security procedures. Students pick up their devices at the office before they leave the building at dismissal time. Use of such items on school vehicles during field trips or on school premises during classes will result in the item being confiscated and turned over to the parents.

Care of Property

Students are expected to respect their personal possessions, the possessions of others and school property. Students will assume responsibility for their personal property and any school property assigned to them. As a reminder, Valley Day School is not responsible for lost or stolen articles. Students should not bring valuable objects to school. Students involved in the destruction of property or theft, including but not limited to educational materials, software, equipment, furniture, and buildings, will be disciplined. This can include denial of privileges, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or police involvement. Students who disfigure, break, or do other damage to school property will be required to pay for the damage done or to replace the item. A restitution plan may be developed under the supervision and guidance of the team and the parent(s).

Damage of Property

Students are expected to exercise care in the handling of school property. Students who destroy school property or the property of others are held accountable for their actions and will be required to compensate Valley Day School for the full cost of the item(s) they destroy, deface, or otherwise damage. School property refers to but is not limited to the school building, grounds, school furniture, books, paper, charts, apparatus, and electronic equipment. Parents are notified by letter of any damage caused by their child and the estimated cost of repairs or replacement. School officials reserve the right to file a formal complaint with local law enforcement officials when students damage, vandalize, or destroy school property, as allowed for by Pennsylvania Statute.

If students have damaged or failed to return school materials that were issued to them, they will be notified in writing of the price of the missing or damaged article and are required to pay the amount indicated. Under certain circumstances, students may make restitution through a mutually agreed upon community service activity. If obligations are not taken care of by the end

of the school year, a student will not receive their report card and/or transcript (as permitted by state law) until the obligation has been satisfied. Seniors will not receive their Valley Day School-issued certificate of school completion until all such obligations are met, and their district may determine not to issue their high school diploma until all obligations are met.

Computer, Video Game, Movie, TV and Video Usage

The showing of commercially produced and rated films, videos, and/or television content may have a legitimate purpose in a school program. Since the content of such media is designed for general audience viewing, certain precautions are taken to ensure that the showing of a particular film or video is consistent with the educational values espoused by Valley Day School. Prior approval from the Valley Day School Executive Director or designee must be obtained prior to showing any video or film that contains potentially objectionable and sensitive subject matter. As a rule, only films rated G or PG are permitted, although students in grades six and above may occasionally view movies rated as PG-13. Instructors preview films and videos before showing them to students. Students may use computer games and video games during reinforcement periods as outlined by classroom staff. Games must be rated "E" for everyone. When movies are shown to support academic instruction or as a reward, the movie must be rated G. If a movie is rated PG, staff members will get parental permission before showing the video. Games or movies that depict graphic violence, explicit language, and/or sexuality may not be used at Valley Day School.

Confidential Communication from Students

Confidential communications from students generally remain private. However, in accordance with Pennsylvania law, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents, a Valley Day School administrator, or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare, or safety of the student or others is clearly in jeopardy.

Driving Vehicles To and/or From School

Students are not permitted to drive vehicles to school unless such transportation arrangement has been identified as necessary accommodation in the transition plan of the student's current Individual Education Plan. Space for student vehicles is not available in the school parking lots. Students who drive to school as part of their transition plan must park their vehicle on the local street adjacent to Valley Day School.

Freedom of Expression

Students have the right to express their personal opinions verbally and in writing, provided such opinions do not interfere with the educational process, does not threaten immediate harm to the welfare of the school or community or community member(s), does not encourage unlawful activity, and does not interfere with another individual's rights (including the right of expression). Students have the responsibility to obey laws governing libel and obscenity, and to be aware of the full meaning of their expression. Libel, obscenity, personal attack, harassment, and advocacy of the violation of existing ordinances, established laws, official school rules, and/or regulations are not considered protected speech and are therefore prohibited. Students have the responsibility to be aware of the feelings and opinions of others and to give others a fair opportunity to express their views.

Dress Code

Dress Code

The purpose of the Dress Code is to ensure comfort and safety for all students. Keeping in mind that many of our students struggle with sensory and sexuality issues, perhaps more than the general population, this policy is intended to keep everyone safe and avoid unintended sensory or sexuality issues that are confusing for many of our students. Research has shown repeatedly that dress affects behavior. Students who practice personal hygiene and who dress in a reasonable fashion feel better about themselves and consequently achieve better in school. Therefore, students are expected to dress in a manner deemed appropriate by the administration. If a student's clothing is determined to be unacceptable, the student will be required to change their clothing. Valley Day School will maintain some dress code clothing for emergency situations. We appreciate your cooperation with helping all our students! Please be sure your child is dressed with the following issues in mind:

- Students should be clothed from shoulder to knee. Shorts or skirts must come to at least the knee (when standing).
- Coats, headwear, and backpacks are to be removed upon entry to the building and stored in the designated place.
- At no time is it permissible for a student to wear any apparel or jewelry that by words, signs, pictures, or any combination thereof appearing on said clothing or jewelry, advocates or promotes sexual activity or violence, the use of drugs or alcohol, or demeans or degrades another because of race, sex, religion, national origin, handicap, or disability. Extremes in clothing or accessories which may be disruptive to class or pose safety/health hazards will not be permitted. Valley Day School finds and declares that the students and the staff at Valley Day School have the right to be safe and secure at school. Gang-related apparel worn at school draws attention away from the school's learning environment and directs it toward thoughts or expressions of violence, bigotry, hate, and abuse. Therefore, students are prohibited from wearing, while on school property, any type of clothing, apparel, or accessory, which denotes such student's membership in or affiliation with any gang associated with criminal activities. The local law enforcement agency shall advise the school, upon request, of gangs that are associated with criminal activities.

Tops

Students must always wear Valley Day School uniform shirts and/or Valley Day School-produced crewneck sweatshirts. A short or long-sleeved, solid-colored, t-shirt may be worn under the Valley Day School uniform shirt.

Bottoms

Pants/slacks, skirts, and/or shorts worn at school and/or at school-sponsored activities must be of a solid khaki color and must be secured at the waist (with a belt where garment design allows) so that they do not ride below the wearer's waist and must be of sufficient length and design so as not to expose torso parts between the waist and the knee. Students are not permitted to wear shorts to school between the second Friday of October and the second Friday of April. Girls may wear "skorts". Students are not permitted to wear leggings, sweatpants, jeans, joggers, etc. during school; they are expected to wear uniform pants. Hip-huggers and/or other bottoms that are designed to be worn below the waist are not appropriate school apparel. Similarly, bottom garments that are form-fitting or overly tight are not appropriate school apparel.

Belts

Belts will be required for pants and skirts that fall below the waist to keep students' pants at an appropriate height as not to show undergarments or the lower midriff. Failure to wear pants at an appropriate level will result in a student discipline referral.

Footwear

Students must wear appropriate footwear that does not go above the mid-calf. Slippers, aqua-socks, golf shoes, heels, and skates are not appropriate school footwear. Sneakers are appropriate footwear at Valley Day School. Metal toed shoes or shoes with dangerous metal decorations are not appropriate. If the back of the shoe does not cover the entire back of the heel, it will be considered a "slipper" and therefore unacceptable. During inclement weather, students may bring a change of shoes to wear inside the building.

Pocketbooks/Purses/Handbags

Valley Day School discourages students from bringing pocketbooks, purses, or handbags to school. Students who bring a pocketbook, purse, and/or handbag to school are subject to search at Valley Day School and must secure the container for the school day in a designated location.

Headwear

Upon entering the building, students must remove their hats and coats and store them. No hats, caps, "hoodies", bandanas, scarves, handkerchiefs, headphones, or nylon/plastic hair coverings may be worn in the school building, except as provided under religious exceptions.

Outerwear

Students are not permitted to wear outerwear within the Valley Day School building. Sweatshirts, "hoodies", jackets, and coats are outerwear. Outerwear must be stored appropriately, rather than worn in the school building during the school day. Storage is provided at entry for all outerwear garments.

Jewelry

Students are not to wear dangling jewelry and/or body piercing ornamentation on campus. Valley Day School personnel will direct students to remove jewelry that dangles or is overly distracting to others, if the item is judged to be a potential safety hazard or if it is judged to be a distraction from the education process. Further, for safety during Physical Education classes, students are not permitted to wear jewelry, including watches and/or earrings.

Miscellaneous

On days when students earn the privilege to "free-dress," students should not wear midriffs, half-shirts, tank-tops, sleeveless shirts, and/or clothing with explicit tobacco, drug, alcohol, or sexual references. Pajamas, sleepwear, swimwear, and/or tight-fitting spandex are not appropriate school apparel. Students are not permitted to wear sunglasses or dark glasses in the building, unless the glasses are currently prescribed by a physician, and a copy of the prescription, on physician's letterhead, is filed with the Valley Day School health room staff.

Accommodating Religious Expression

Valley Day School respects religious expression on our campus where that expression does not disrupt the learning process or where that expression does not endanger people or property and so

long as such expressions do not contribute to disruption by substantially interfering with discipline or with the rights of others. Where a student seeks an exception to the school dress code as a matter of religious expression (e.g., where the student seeks permission to wear a yarmulke, headscarf, mufti, or other headwear as part of religious expression), the student must notify their Valley Day School Case Manager regarding the specifics of their request and must identify the religious basis for the accommodation they seek. The Valley Day School Case Manager will assist the student and/or the parent/legal guardian in submitting a written request to school administration for the accommodation that is sought. Before granting an exception to the dress code, Valley Day School administration requires receipt of written confirmation from the appropriate religious authority (on its letterhead) - confirming that the accommodation sought is a matter of religious expression, and confirming the specific conditions under which exception must be made to accommodate religious expression. In the absence of evidence to substantiate the religious basis for the accommodation sought, exceptions to the school dress code will not be made.

Students being considered for, or actively in the process of, changing their placement to the public school may be permitted to follow the dress code for the public school to which they are assigned. Similarly, students participating in the Valley Day School-sponsored World of Work or Cooperative Education program and who are required to report to work in uniform may be permitted to follow the employer's dress code. Such accommodation(s) will be documented as an IEP team decision in the student's IEP.

Infractions

If there is a question regarding the appropriateness of a student's attire, a Valley Day School Administrator will be the final judge. Instances of inappropriate attire are communicated to parents. Because it is important that all students cooperate with the Valley Day School Dress Code, the following consequences may be applied when students do not dress appropriately:

- The student will be provided the opportunity to change their clothing. If a student breaks the student dress code and refuses the offer of loaned garment(s) to comply with the dress code, Valley Day School will document the circumstances and will notify the parent and the district.
- If the violation continues, initial consequences focus on loss of classroom visiting privileges and hallway pass privileges, as well as loss of points in the schoolwide behavior-support program.
- The student's participation in activities may be limited.
- In extreme situations, parents will be notified that their child is not complying with the Valley Day School Dress Code and parents may be asked to bring a compliant change of clothing to school or to come to school to pick up their child. After repeated offenses, Valley Day School will convene a disciplinary meeting with the student, parent, and district.