AMSE Parent/Student Junior High & High School Guide
2026-27 School Year

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians:

Welcome to the Applied Math, Science, and Engineering (AMSE) Institute! AMSE programs offer VCS students an extraordinary opportunity to build on their classroom experiences, expand their horizons, and have fun.

This guide is designed to give students, parents, and guardians helpful insights into AMSE programs. It includes detailed information about program activities, procedures, and policies. Please read this Guide carefully and use it for reference during the school year.

The staff welcomes your suggestions and feedback that will help us make your student's time in AMSE beneficial and rewarding. We encourage you to share your thoughts and ideas directly with us by emailing us at amse@vcs.net.

AMSE Policies

These policies remain in effect regardless of program delivery – online, hybrid, or on-campus instruction.

Attendance and Punctuality

Students are expected to actively participate in AMSE program meetings and events and attend 90% of all program sessions. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of program meetings. Attendance includes fulfilling participation requirements, punctual arrival, and active contribution at sessions, practices, events, and other program activities. In order to maximize program participation, students are to schedule other activities and appointments to conflict minimally with program activities.

Students should notify the program manager in advance if they know they are going to be absent. *Please note that excessive absence is cause for removal from the program or loss of program credit towards the AMSE Honors or Honors Fellows requirements.*

Days of Operation

AMSE Programs follow the VCS master school calendar. There will be no after-school programs on school holidays, in-service days, or days when school is dismissed due to emergencies. During peak season of competition, some program managers may require extra practices or travel days that may include school breaks or the afternoon of an in-service day.

Dismissal of a Student

If a parent or teacher raises concerns that a student's participation in AMSE activities outside of school is adversely affecting their academic performance or behavior, the situation will be reviewed by AMSE staff in collaboration with the family. Based on that review, adjustments to the student's level of participation, including temporary suspension or removal from the program, may be considered if deemed to be in the student's best interest.

Dismissal of a student from a program may also occur for the following reasons:

- A student's behavior is determined to be detrimental to his/her own well-being or the well-being of others
- The student and/or parent/guardian willfully and/or persistently violates the policies set forth by VCS, AMSE and/or the program manager
- The student and/or the parent/s guardian/s exhibit inappropriate behavior toward the faculty, staff and/or administrators and/or or a student and/or another parent
- Excessive absences or failure to participate
- Failure to comply with VCS payment policies

Payment Policy

- Refund Policy: Program fees become non-refundable 24 hours after the first session has taken place, regardless of whether the student attends.
- Withdrawal Process: To withdraw from a program, a written request must be submitted to the AMSE office at amse@vcs.net within 24 hours of the conclusion of the first session.
- Processing Fee: A $100 processing fee will be deducted from any eligible refund for students who withdraw after registering. We recommend registering only if you are confident your student can participate.
- Absences: Program fees remain due and are non-refundable even if a student misses sessions due to illness, travel, or other personal reasons.
- Non-Payment: Failure to pay program fees on time may result in removal from the program and ineligibility for future AMSE programs or other VCS academic and extracurricular opportunities. All policies from the VCS Finance Department regarding non-payment apply.
- Fee Structure: Program fees vary based on the specific program and its duration.

Travel Policies

For all overnight trips, families will receive a Travel Commitment form with estimated student expenses. Submitting this form constitutes a formal commitment, and all fees are binding. Actual travel costs may vary and will be communicated once reservations are confirmed. Fees will be payable via the VCS FACTS billing system.

The AMSE Office coordinates all group travel arrangements for program participants. To ensure student safety, effective supervision, and efficient logistics, all students are required to travel to and from the program destination with the group. Individualized travel requests or modifications to the group's travel reservations are not permitted.

Exceptions to this policy may be considered only under exceptional circumstances. Requests for a travel exception must be submitted in writing to the Program Manager and the AMSE Program Administrator at amse@vcs.net for review.

If a travel exception is approved by the Director of Operations or Associate Director of Programs, the family will be responsible for:

- Paying the full published program travel fee, without any reduction or credit for unused group travel.
- Arranging and paying for all alternate flights, transportation, lodging, or other travel accommodations associated with the approved exception.
- Completing any additional permission forms or travel documentation required by AMSE.

Approval of a travel exception is at the discretion of the Director of Operations and the Associate Director of Programs and is not guaranteed.

Families who commit to student travel are responsible for travel fees regardless of the student’s attendance.

AMSE adheres to Valley Christian Junior High and High School’s discipline policies and behavioral expectations during student travel.

Positive Program Support

We are committed to a partnership with all students and parents. For students to have a positive experience, parents, students, and AMSE staff need to work together. All policies and procedures have been established to create a safe and engaging environment for students, and to maintain the standards set forth by Valley Christian Schools and legal guidelines. Questions and concerns about the program, and information about student behavior, are expected to be handled professionally and courteously and should be directed to the program manager, the director of programs for AMSE and/or the vice president of AMSE. Inappropriate conduct and/or negative conversation do not demonstrate positive

problem-solving strategies for students and may result in the student's removal from the program.

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

All program staff members are mandated reporters and as such, are required by California state law to report all suspected instances of abuse or neglect to the Department of Child Protective Services. All allegations of abuse/neglect shall be reported within the required time frames. If there is an allegation or indication of a physical injury, sexual assault or any situation where a student's health is in question, medical attention will immediately be sought in accordance with state law.

Student Behavior

AMSE Programs are an extension of the school day and therefore, all students will be expected to adhere to the same rules and dress code as during the school day, including all health and safety requirements as outlined in the Valley Christian Elementary, Junior High, and High Student Handbooks. AMSE follows the same discipline policies and procedures as Valley Christian Junior High and High Schools. All discipline matters will be conducted in compliance with the Code of Conduct as set forth in the Valley Christian Junior High and High School Student Handbooks.

Any violation, depending on its severity, can result in not only dismissal from an AMSE program, but also higher consequences, up to and including expulsion from Valley Christian School.

Student's Illness / Accident / Emergencies

A student must attend two or more periods on the day of a school activity or the student may not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activity. Students will follow all health and safety protocols and procedures. If a student becomes ill or is injured during the program or exhibits any of the following conditions, his/her parent/guardian or emergency contact person will be contacted and asked to pick up the student within one hour of notification:

- contagious disease
- fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- vomiting or diarrhea
- accident requiring medical attention
- head lice

If a student needs urgent medical attention, staff will call 911, the student may be transported to the hospital by ambulance, and the student's parent/guardian will be held responsible for all costs incurred.

Please report any changes in emergency contact information, employment, telephone numbers, or addresses in writing to amse@vcs.net as soon as they become available. Although this information will be kept confidential, it will be shared with appropriate staff members to facilitate communication with parents or guardians in emergencies.

Student Participation

AMSE programs require a significant time commitment from the students (estimated at an average of 1-10 hours per week, depending on the program). Students are encouraged to enroll in only one AMSE program per school year/trimester/semester.

If a student chooses to apply/enroll for more than one AMSE program, he/she may only hold a “Fellows” position in one of the two programs. Both junior high and high school students may not enroll in more than two AMSE programs in a single trimester/semester/year. (For high school students, participation on the Math Team is allowed as a third program.)

Students may only enroll in programs open to their campus or specific grade levels; ie: junior high students will not be allowed to register or attend high school programs unless their grade level is specifically included at the time of registration.

(Students may enroll in as many clubs as he/she wishes without impacting program enrollment.)

Supervision

While participating in VCS AMSE program activities, students are subject to VCS faculty, staff, and program leadership supervision. Students must inform VCS staff and/or adult mentors of departure when at a VCS AMSE program activity both on and off campus.

Visitor Policy

Visitors are welcome with prior approval (subject to campus restrictions). If a parent or guardian wishes to visit/observe a program session, prior notification must be obtained from the Program Manager. All visitors must first check in at the Security Kiosk to sign in and out of the visitor log and obtain a VCS visitor badge.

The consequence for violation of any of Valley Christian Schools and/or AMSE policies, including those specified above, may include any of the following: a verbal warning, a documented violation notice, suspension, or dismissal from the program, up to and including expulsion from Valley Christian Schools. Under such circumstances, no monies will be refunded. Serious violations may include further action from the VCS school administration.

We reserve the right to amend these policies at any time, without prior notice.
If you have any questions regarding the AMSE program, contact the AMSE Office at 408.513.2584 or by email at amse@vcs.net.