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# **Vandalia Christian Academy**

## **Parent and Student Handbook**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to Vandalia Christian Academy! We're glad you are here. This handbook contains policies and procedures in place at VCA. It sets forth the privileges and responsibilities of parents, teachers, staff and students. It does not include everything. In addition to the policies contained within this handbook, the school board, administrator and classroom teachers may establish rules and procedures consistent with those contained within this handbook.

Vandalia Christian Academy is a state-registered and state-recognized school. The school follows requirements regarding personnel by endeavoring to employ classroom teachers who hold state teaching certificates, the same as the State Board of Education requires for public schools. All K-12 teachers hired at VCA are required to have a bachelor's degree (not necessarily in education). Pre-K teachers are required to have at minimum an associate degree (not necessarily in early childhood).

VCA is a Christian school teaching a Christian curriculum. Christian Education calls for an educational process putting the Bible at the center and asking the student to evaluate all he sees in the world from a Biblical worldview –because God is Truth.

“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life....” John 14:6

There is an important difference between a Christian and a non-Christian viewpoint on a given subject. Even though knowledge is factually the same for both, no subject can be taught in totality of its truth if the Creator is ignored or denied. Knowledge is purified by the recognition of God's place in it.

“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you  
protect them from the evil one” John 17:15

VCA has met all required criteria to be a State-recognized school, this includes:

- A. VCA has at least 880 clock hours of instruction time per year.
- B. VCA complies with federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination
- C. VCA complies with prevailing state or local fire safety requirements
- D. VCA completes the Immunization Survey form as required.
- E. VCA instructs in the English language.
- F. VCA meets the requirements for Faith's Law
- G. VCA agrees to comply with any other applicable State or Federal law or regulatory requirement.

VCA is a state-recognized school, VCA is included in all IL State Board of Education mailings. VCA is eligible for services provided by the government Title programs. (Pending approval) VCA is a member of the Illinois Elementary School Association.

## **General Philosophy**

Vandalia Christian Academy believes that Christian education, with its biblical foundation, is the best education. All education is spiritual in nature, based on the understanding that God is the author of all truth (John 8:32-32); therefore VCA academics, extra-curricular activities, etc are based on a biblical worldview. That is that God is the creator of man and the universe and He is the author of order, reason, and reality that are reflected in the universe.

Parents have been given the responsibility for the spiritual as well as the intellectual training of their children. The school's role is to help them fulfill this responsibility.

VCA is committed to helping students mature into young adults who demonstrate excellence in academics and display the spiritual and social maturity to serve the Lord and glorify God.

## **Mission Statement**

**We are a Christ-centered school committed to developing God's best for each student spiritually, academically, morally and socially.**

The school is governed in accordance with our mission statement. Every program activity associated with our school flows from our mission.

## **Purpose**

Vandalia Christian Academy was developed out of a deep concern for families in the Vandalia area who wanted a quality Christian education for their children. Our purposes are:

- A. To raise up a generation of Christians who know their God and seek His plans for their life.
- B. To provide a quality education, holding to high academic standards, where faith and learning are integrated.
- C. To help strengthen the family.
- D. To provide activities that further opportunities for the students to glorify God.

## **Vandalia Christian Academy School Board**

VCA is governed by a board elected by the parents/guardians. A list of the current board members is available from the school and website. The VCA School Board is made up of at least 5 and up to 7 members, five being parents/guardians and two from the local community, one of which is a pastor. The VCA School board invites your participation, suggestions, and comments. Board meeting times, dates and locations will be posted on the school calendar. Parents and guardians are encouraged to attend board meetings, usually the last Tuesday of each month.

## **Vandalia Christian Academy Faculty and Staff**

Vandalia Christian Academy is run by a school board, an administrator, faculty and other staff. A list of current faculty and staff is available from the school and on our website.

## **Non-Discrimination Statement**

No person shall be denied enrollment, be denied employment, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefit of, or subject to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin or ethnic group, unless allowed by applicable law. If an individual feels that they are being discriminated against, they should contact the Principal and the Board President.

## **Unity Policy**

VCA holds a Unity Policy for our student body, parents, faculty, and staff. This is to stress the importance that the aforementioned groups not speak disparagingly (disapprovingly or judgmentally) or in a disrespectful manner about the leadership of the school. We strive to keep peace in this school. This is not only a school policy, but it is a biblical principle as well. Apostle Paul emphasized unity among the believers in the New Testament church as stated in Ephesians 4:3 "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"

## **Statement of Faith**

- A. We believe that all Scripture is inspired by God and that it has the supreme and final authority in faith and life.
- B. We believe God is the source of all life, creator and sustainer of all creation.
- C. We believe in one God existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- D. We believe in the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, in His vicarious and atoning death, His bodily resurrection, and His second coming.
- E. We believe that man was created in the image of God and that he sinned, and thereby incurred physical death and separation from God.
- F. We believe that the Christian is saved by grace through faith wholly apart from human merit and works and that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again.
- G. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all the dead, the saved to eternal life in heaven and the unsaved to eternal judgment.

- H. We believe that Christians are to be separated unto God, living holy lives pleasing to Him and witnessing to His glory.
- I. We believe that God directly created the heavens and the earth and all that lies therein in six days.
- J. We believe the only legitimate marriage, based on the creation ordinance in Genesis 1 and 2, sanctioned by God is the joining of one naturally born man and one naturally born woman in a single, exclusive union as delineated in Scripture.
- K. We believe gender and biological sex are equivalent and cannot be separated. A person's gender is determined at conception(fertilization), coded in the DNA, and cannot be changed by drugs, hormones, or surgery. Rejection of one's biological sex (gender) or identifying oneself by the opposite sex is a sinful rejection of the way God made a person.
- L. We believe the concepts of "social justice", "intersectionality", and "critical race theory" are anti-biblical and destructive to human flourishing.

## **Parent-Teacher Fellowship**

Your prayers and your strong parent involvement will help to insure that this school will be blessed and will reach a high level of spiritual and academic achievement. The cooperation between the school and the family is foundational to our heart. VCA is continually seeking better communication between parents and faculty. We believe that a school that prays together stays together- with the Lord receiving all the glory.

## **Accidents and Injuries**

Accidents and injuries will be reported to parents. Minor injuries such as scrapes, cuts, and bruises will be treated by the staff at VCA without immediate parental notification. If a student receives a more serious injury, including cuts appearing to require stitches or possible broken bones, the parents will be notified immediately. Any reported head injury will result in immediate parental notification regardless of apparent severity. All parents/guardians are required to sign a "Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment" statement in the Enrollment Application. Every attempt will be made to contact parents/guardians and/or their emergency contact person in the event of illness or injury.

## **Accreditation**

VCA is a state-registered and a state-recognized school by the Illinois State Board of Education. Go to [www.2.ed.gov](http://www.2.ed.gov) for complete information on Illinois State Regulations for Private Schools. VCA maintains the highest academic expectations of their students.

## **Admissions for Currently Enrolled Families**

VCA provides a God-centered learning environment and partners with families who want to enroll their children and desire an educational setting committed to honoring Christ. Students who are presently enrolled in VCA are given the first opportunity to re-enroll for the following school year. Re-enrollment must be done each year and is not complete until all applicable fees are paid and required forms and signatures are turned in. All re-enrollments are subject to the approval of the school board and a written notification will be given if rejected. Certain limitations or arrangements may be applied to students who have displayed previous difficulties in academics or conduct, or families who have demonstrated an inability to pay tuition and other fees required. Siblings of currently enrolled students may register for admission with their siblings. However, no sibling being enrolled for the first time will be given precedence over a currently enrolled student.

## **Admissions for New Families**

VCA provides a God-centered learning environment and partners with families who want to enroll their children and desire an educational setting committed to honoring Christ.

**Admission is non-discriminatory**, it is open to any family with school-age children regardless of race, gender, color, sexual orientation, national origin or ethnic origin who meets the entrance requirements. All students must conform to the standards set forth in this handbook.

**General Procedure:** In order to establish uniform guidelines for admission, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The Administrator is given authority to admit students.
2. Special approval of the School Board will be required for any exceptions to the stated policies and/or procedures.

### **Admission Policies:**

1. At least one parent/guardian must subscribe to the Vandalia Christian Academy's Statement of Faith and desire to cooperate with the school in pursuing our Mission Statement.
2. We are unable at this time to provide for a student who has:
  - a. Current IEP (exception within IEP guidelines)
  - b. Failed or is failing the current grade level;
  - c. Emotional, educational, or disciplinary problems; and/or court record. Exceptions to this policy must be taken into advisement with the School Board and/or the Administrator.
3. A student seeking to enroll in VCA who has an IEP within the previous two years must be released from the IEP by the special education system prior to being allowed to enroll in VCA. It is not sufficient that the student and/or parent refuse IEP services.
4. Students who have been "expelled" or otherwise removed from another school

*may* be considered for enrollment at VCA on a case-by-case basis. The application of said situation will be brought to the School Board for approval.

5. Students who have a negative discipline record or who have been suspended from the school they attended prior to applying to VCA, will be considered for enrollment only after verification of full correction of the problem(s) noted. Students' attendance records at the previous school will also be a major factor in considering enrollment to VCA. Any student who is deemed as a safety risk to the students, faculty/staff, or property at VCA will not be granted admission.

6. All new students are accepted on a probationary basis for the first full grading period (quarter) of the semester in which they are enrolled.

7. Tuition Assistance is available to VCA students based on need. Forms are available from the Administrator or the office.

8. Students with advanced health or educational needs may require services beyond the scope and qualifications of the school. The Administration and/or School Board may require medical or professional testing clearance in some circumstances if indicated for the welfare of the student and their learning.

#### **Admission Procedures:**

- 1) Before submitting the application, parents should read the materials provided by VCA (including this handbook) carefully to determine whether or not we offer the type of education you desire for your child(ren).
- 2) Parents must complete and return the application for admission. The registration fee must accompany each student application and is non-refundable. No processing can be done without this fee.
- 3) An interview may be scheduled with the Administrator and/or a Board member to discuss the application. If scheduled, this interview will be held with a parent and the prospective student(s). The following items should be brought to the interview:
  - a. Report cards and/or records from the last school attended;
  - b. Latest achievement test scores;
  - c. Dental, vision, health, and immunization documentation (same as required by public schools).
- 4) Re-admission requirements may differ from admission requirements.  
Re-admission is subject to School Board approval.
- 5) Placement testing may be used to determine admission. Testing may determine the grade level at which a student will be admitted to VCA. This grade level may differ from a student's current grade level at another school.
- 6) Kindergarten entrance for VCA corresponds with the Illinois State Board of Education requirement: The student must be five years old on or before September 1.
- 7) Students who are five years old after September 1 may be admitted to VCA with the approval of the School Board.
- 8) Once a class is filled to capacity, a waiting list will be started. This list will consist of two sections, one for siblings of enrolled students and one for the general public. If an

opening becomes available, families will be contacted in the order in which their name appears with first options given to siblings.

## **Allergies**

Parents please list all of your child(ren's) allergies in the space provided on the Application/Emergency form. Teachers and staff will be made aware of all children with allergies.

## **Arrival/Departure Procedures**

School office hours are from 7:45 am until 3:15 pm on full school days. When coming into the school for any reason, please come to the school office area and check in. During the school day doors are locked. You will need to call the school at 618-283-9901 for admittance. Lunches, homework, books, etc. may be left with office staff..

The doors open at 7:45 a.m. each morning. Parents arriving prior to 7:45 a.m. should wait in their vehicle with their child until doors open. After 7:45 a.m. students will be properly supervised.

### **Students being dropped off**

Students dropped off should enter through the designated front door. If you choose to walk your student to the building, please park your car in the appropriate parking area and walk them to the designated front door. If you arrive after 8:00 a.m. you *must* walk your student to the door and meet a staff member that will escort the student(s). If there is no staff at the entry please call the office for assistance.

Please do not remain in the child's classroom if you escort them. The unplanned presence of an adult may disrupt the attention of the students and teacher from their necessary tasks.

## **Attendance**

Vandalia Christian Academy requires students to attend daily. Prompt and daily attendance is an excellent habit to establish now and is essential to successful class work. Attendance records are required by law. Absences are either excused or unexcused.

1. Truancy: A child is considered to be a chronic truant if he/she is absent 10 or more of the school's attendance days. Chronic truants may be referred to juvenile authorities and his/her truancy record may affect promotion.
2. VCA operates on an academic calendar that covers *up to* 180 student contact days and up to 1080 hours. The school is in session from 8:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m. on those days unless an abbreviated schedule is planned due to inclement weather, teacher in-service or planned early dismissal.
3. Students with absences due to death in the family or other emergencies will be given special consideration.
4. Long-term health issues MAY lead to altered guidelines for tracking absences and will be communicated with affected families as the school year unfolds.

5. Tardiness: A child is considered tardy if he/she arrives at the school after 8:00 a.m. Students are expected to arrive, be in the classroom unpacked, and prepared to begin the school day at 8:30 a.m.
6. They are considered half day absent if they arrive after 9:45 a.m., leave before 1:15 p.m. or are absent more than two consecutive hours during the school day. Students and/or parents may be referred to the ROE's Regular Attendance Program if the student is tardy and/or absent ten or more days.

### **Planned and Unplanned Absences:**

1. *Unplanned Absences:* For security reasons, parents must call the school office by 8:00 a.m. to report that a child is absent. The student should return to the school with a written excuse for the absence, stating the reason for the absence, dated and signed by the parent. A phone call from the parent will be accepted in most cases.
2. *Planned Absences:* Parents who know in advance that their student(s) will miss school must inform the school stating the reason for the absence prior to the absence. Upon his/her return, the student must have a note stating the reason for the absence, dated and signed by the parent.
3. *Vacations:* Often family vacations are scheduled during the school year. Family times like this may be inconvenient for the school, but are excused absences at VCA IF policies are followed. Vacation days will be excused only if you notify the office at least one week prior to your departure and the student makes arrangements for homework to be turned in prior to or upon return.

### **Excused and Unexcused Absences:**

An absence will be EXCUSED if it is for one of the following reasons:

1. Illness or injury
2. Doctor/Dentist/Optomety appointment
3. Bereavement
4. Prearranged approved absence

An absence will be UNEXCUSED if it is due to reasons other than listed above.

### **Absentee Homework Make-Up Policy:**

When returning to school after a planned absence, it is the *student's* responsibility to turn in homework. Students get 2 days for each missed day to complete missing work. If the absence was unexcused, makeup work will be expected, but credit **may not** be given. As a school we will help students make up their work after an absence. Parents are asked to help at home as well. Please understand by choosing to miss school, you are putting your child(ren) at risk academically, not to mention the additional strain it puts on the classroom teacher. Excessive absenteeism due to prolonged illness may require homebound instruction by the family or other remedial help. The school will actively support the family dealing with a child's serious injury or illness, though it is ultimately the family responsibility to be sure their child's educational needs are met in such circumstances.

## **Birthday Parties**

Birthdays may be celebrated at school by sharing a special treat with the whole class. Make arrangements with the teacher at least two days in advance. Students with summer birthdays, “half-birthdays” may be celebrated. Bring treats/juice boxes that can be shared during class time as planned with the teacher. No lunchtime meals or treats are allowed.

## **Bible Translation**

The use of Scripture in the classroom is a fundamental, integral part of the education process. The translation used in our curriculum is the King James Version. For study and understanding, other translations may be used for reference.

## **Bullying Policy**

The Word of God is clear that we are to love others in the name of Jesus; the Word of God is also clear that we are to maintain biblical standards on issues of morality, even if they are in direct conflict with the views that are accepted in the culture around us. (As adopted from the Illinois State Board of Education):

1. Bullying, intimidation, and harassment of any kind are not acceptable in any form and will not be tolerated at Vandalia Christian Academy or any school related activity, on school property, transportation vehicles, or through school electronic equipment.
2. The school will protect students against retaliation for reporting incidents of bullying, intimidation, or harassment of any kind, and will take disciplinary action against any student who participates in such conduct. No person shall harass, intimidate or bully another based upon a perceived race, color, nationality, sexual orientation, ancestry, religion, faith, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status as homeless, or actual, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics or any other distinguished characteristics.
3. VCA will not tolerate harassing, intimidating conduct, or bullying whether verbal, physical, or visual, that affects the tangible benefits of education, that unreasonably interferes with a student’s educational performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.
4. Bullying means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act of conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of:
  - (1) placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or property; (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s physical or mental health; (3) substantially interferes with the student’s academic performance; or (4) substantially interferes with a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by VCA.

5. Examples of prohibited conduct include, without limitation, any use of violence, intimidation, force, noise, coercion, threats, stalking, harassment, sexual harassment, public humiliation, theft or destruction of property, retaliation, hazing, bullying, bullying through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment, or other comparable conduct.
6. Students and/or parents of students who believe they are the victim of bullying, intimidation or harassment, or have witnessed such activities are encouraged to discuss the matter with the student's teacher, administrator or any staff member of VCA.
7. Students may choose to report to a person of the student's same sex. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need to investigate. Students who make good faith complaints will not be disciplined.
8. Any student who is found to have violated the VCA bullying policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

## **Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, Smart Watches /Office Phone**

**Use of Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Smart Watches are prohibited during the time students are on campus (8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.), unless they have specific permission from a staff member.** If they are brought to school, they must be stored in the OFF position (Not to Vibrate). Students in grades K-4 should leave their phones and /or electronics in their backpacks until the end of the day. Students in grades 5-12 should store their phones and smart watches in the appropriate location in their classrooms as designated by the teacher.

If the student uses their cell phone, electronic device, or smartwatch during the day without permission, a parent must come and pick it up from the administrator. **THERE ARE NO WARNINGS!** If this infraction is repeated, further discipline will occur to ensure this doesn't happen again. **Parents must call or text a staff member if they need to get a message to their student during school hours.** Students are allowed to use the office telephone during non-class time with teacher permission. Faculty and staff telephone calls will be noted and passed on to them to return the call. A teacher may not be called out of class for a phone call except for an emergency.

## **Cheating**

Academic fraud or dishonesty is not tolerated at Vandalia Christian Academy. Students are expected to do their own work in an honest and forthright manner. Copying answers, plagiarizing and/or cheating on tests, homework, or other assignments will subject the student to discipline and result in zero credit for the assignment, test, or project in question. Plagiarism is defined as copying what someone else has written as if you wrote it yourself. Students cannot copy the works of others.

## **Closed Campus**

We operate under a “closed campus” policy. Once a student arrives on school property in the morning, they are not to leave until dismissed from school in the afternoon. If a student has a special need to leave school, such as a doctor or a dental appointment, a parent must notify the office and sign the child out.

## **Communication: Parent/Teacher**

Pre-K through eighth grade student folders are used to communicate from school to home or from home to school. Notes, calendars, notices, graded papers to be signed and returned, etc. are sent home in these folders. The teachers check student folders each day for communications to school from home. **PARENTS, PLEASE CHECK THIS FOLDER DAILY.**

## **Computer /Technology usage**

When using a computer, conduct yourself in a respectful and productive fashion. Due to the nature of equipment which is the property of VCA, follow these guidelines:

1. Only VCA devices should be used in the classroom. (Unless a personal device is approved by the supervising teacher and for classroom use only.
2. When not in use devices should be stored properly at the assigned charging stations.
3. NO software is to be used on the computers without the consent of a teacher.
4. Damage in a computer may result in a reimbursement for the extent of the damage payable to VCA.
5. Students in grades 5 and up will have the option to purchase chargers so they may transport their device from school to home. School chargers must remain at school.
6. Classroom teachers may establish additional and more specific guidelines that are to be followed.

## **Contacting Teachers or Board Members:**

Parents should contact their child’s teacher by sending a note with the student or through the school office. If there is a problem that needs to be addressed please follow the proper chain of command:

1. Teacher
2. Administrator
3. School Board

The meeting times, dates, and locations of VCA School Board meetings will be posted on the school calendar. School Board meetings are open to parents/guardians and faculty/staff. If parents wish to put an item on the Board agenda please advise the Administrator one week in advance if at all possible. Please note that after the Board handles general business, the meeting will be concluded for guests and the Board will enter into a closed executive session. Parents/guardians are encouraged to attend these meetings.

## **Conflict: The Matthew 18 Principle**

*“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. Matthew 18:15-16* The goal of VCA’s staff and parents, helping children realize their full God-given potential, can be more readily achieved when a friendly, open relationship exists between the home and the school. When issues of concern do arise, it is important that they be handled in a way that reflects biblical principles. How we, as adults, handle problems or conflict is just as important of a teaching tool as an academic curriculum is for the children. Children learn by the example we set. Therefore, special mention is made of the method for dealing with problems or complaints, which will be followed at VCA.

### ***When Addressing Problems or Concerns***

Please use the following guidelines in handling any problems that may arise :

1. When a problem or situation occurs between a parent and a teacher, the parent must first contact the teacher. If the problem is not resolved, the parent or teacher should request a conference with the administrator. Contact the administrator directly to set up such a conference, if needed.
2. If your concerns involve school policies and procedures, please feel free to go directly to the administrator.
3. In the event that following the above procedure does not bring satisfactory resolution of a problem, parents may contact the School Board President.
  - a. State, in writing (text or email is acceptable), the problem and steps taken to that point to resolve the problem.
  - b. Submit, through the administrator, your sealed letter to be submitted to the School Board (if typed or handwritten).
  - c. The School Board, in executive session, will meet with the parents to address the problem and attempt to bring satisfactory resolution.

### ***Support Students in the School When in Conflict***

Please use the following guidelines in handling any problems that may arise during the school year:

1. Do not discuss issues regarding your child and the school or the classroom with other parents. Always observe the Matthew 18 Principle and go directly to the person involved.
2. Do not address problems with the teacher before school or during the school day. Please arrange a conference or request that the teacher calls during free time.
- 3. Do not contact the administration or School Board member before you have contacted the teacher and followed the Matthew 18 Principle.** Communication with faculty and administration should occur via phone, or in-person during the school day, by

appointment only. Discussions regarding school procedures, personnel and policies should occur on campus in an orderly and safe environment for all involved.

4. Do not speak negatively about the staff or school in front of your child. 5. The school and parents should always be ready to discuss problems with a heart towards resolution of the problem.

6. As you listen to your child, please be open to hear the other side of the issue.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

### **Philosophy:**

1. Although our system of discipline allows for consistency and fairness, there is still the liberty on the part of the teacher to discern the needs of the individual student, to get to the root of the problem rather than treating just the symptoms and to employ creative methods of dealing with the problem.

2. In the area of discipline and conduct, it is expected that every parent will be willing to take an active, constructive part in the overall interaction of the home and school. 3. Praying about behavior will be an integral part of our overall discipline program.

### **Discipline Objective:**

The objective of discipline at VCA is to teach respect, self-control, obedience, honesty, orderliness and kindness.

*“Discipline your son, for in that there is hope.” Proverbs 19:18*

The purpose of discipline is to encourage students to develop biblical self-discipline in their lives (Prov. 25:28) and to aid young people in the development of Christian character. We want to help each student understand their responsibilities and to accept the consequences for his actions. Discipline of the student is the joint responsibility of parents, teachers, and the administration. We believe that parents and school personnel must cooperate fully with one another. Anything that tears down respect and confidence for either will harm the student.

### **Schools Jurisdiction:**

Students are considered under the school’s jurisdiction as follows:

1. When they arrive on the school grounds in the morning until they are dismissed; and
2. When they are in attendance at a school function.

The Bible gives several admonitions and principles regarding orderliness. Thus, at VCA firm and consistent discipline is maintained and tempered with love. Teachers maintain standards of behavior in the classroom through kindness, love, and a genuine concern for their students. Likewise, misbehavior is dealt with firmly and consistently.

The teacher handles most discipline problems in the classroom. If the teacher has to correct the student for multiple infractions, he/she may contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student to inform them of the recurring problem and to seek parental correction of the difficulty.

If parental involvement with the situation proves to be an ineffective remedy, the problem may be referred to the administration, who will counsel and perhaps impose some further form of discipline (Ps. 94:12; Heb. 12:10-11). It should be mentioned that student discipline can result from problems that occur away from school, i.e. negative posts on social media, text messages, etc.

If a parent has a concern or question regarding student discipline, or some discipline-related situation occurs that is not understood, the parent should discuss it with the teacher. If the situation remains unresolved, the parent may then consult the administration. ***These policies have been established in an effort to help protect your children.***

1. Teachers in each classroom use a management plan integrating Biblical principles and assertive discipline consisting of four things; 1) rules; 2) consequences; 3) positive reinforcement; and 4) parent/school communication. Each classroom teacher is responsible for posting and enforcing their plan.
2. Each teacher will establish, post, and distribute a list of classroom rules. These rules are consistent with discipline standards set for the school. They will be taught to the students and enforced during the day. School and classroom rules will focus on areas that include interaction with others, respect for persons and property, obedience, and safety.
3. The following outlines the general school guidelines for conduct expected of all students:
  - A. Students will be expected to dress appropriately and in compliance with the dress code while on campus or while attending school functions and special events on and off campus.
  - B. Once on campus, students may not leave before normal dismissal time without notification from a parent in the form of an email, text message to the office, note, or phone call to the school. Prior to the student leaving, a parent or approved adult must come to the school office to dismiss the student.
  - C. Students will always be expected to act and speak respectfully to adults and to each other.
  - D. Students will always be expected to respect the property of others. E. Students may not bring any type of weapon to school. This includes, but is not limited to: guns, knives (of any size, shape, or length), items used in martial arts, or any item containing gun powder or similar explosive type powder. Toys that simulate any of the above may not be brought on campus for any reason. Students who bring a weapon to school may face dismissal from VCA.
4. Students are expected to, at a minimum:
  - A. Respect teachers, staff, and other students;
  - B. Obey directions given by any adult;
  - C. Be trustworthy;

- D. Show courtesy and kindness at all times;
- E. Respect school/church property;
- F. Keep hands and feet to yourselves; and
- G. Leave toys at home unless your teacher requests that you bring them.

**Corporal punishment is not a discipline option at VCA.**

5. Behavior issues or concerns in the school/classroom/outside activities/school events will be communicated directly to the parent/guardian in a timely manner.

### ***Elementary Discipline Policy (Grades PreK-5)***

Each elementary child is expected to follow the directions and instructions of his/her teacher. To encourage proper behavior, teachers employ a variety of positive rewards (verbal praise, notes and phone calls home for good behavior, and class rewards). Likewise, teachers may also use a variety of methods to deter students from improper behavior. These methods will vary depending on the classroom, but their ultimate goal is to encourage students toward right and proper Christian behavior. These disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, walking around the perimeter of the playground during recess, loss of recess, loss of rewards, verbal rebuke, notes or phone calls to the parents, or discussion with the administrator.

A student's teacher will handle initial and minor discipline problems in each class. Persistent or more serious problems will be handled by issuing an "infraction notice." These are sent home with the student to be signed by the parent and returned the next day. The infraction system is a discipline program. Students are expected to develop and learn to rely on internal restraints rather than external. It is our belief that the parents are primarily responsible for instructing and training their children. Infraction reports are designed to bring parents into the discipline process. A record of all infractions will be kept on file.

- A. Infraction notices are to be signed by a parent and returned to the office the next school day.
- B. Two infractions will result in a phone call home.
- C. Three infractions will result in a parent/teacher conference.
- D. Continued infractions will result in a suspension or expulsion.

### ***Secondary Discipline Policy (Grades 6-and up)***

With increased independence for secondary students, some actions requiring disciplinary actions are character development issues while others are issues of the heart. Character development issues (Level 1) tend to be accidental and indicate the student's need for self-discipline. On the other hand, more severe disciplinary issues (Level 2) are those actions that are deliberate and reveal a heart issue. The resulting discipline policy shows VCA's efforts to encourage students toward self-discipline while

providing consequences for deliberate behaviors of insubordination.

### **Level 1**

Lunch detentions/ loss of recess are given to students who receive two of the following infractions for a class. These infractions may have occurred during a single class period or over a series of class periods within a short period of time to be determined by VCA staff. Examples of these infractions include, but are not limited to, the following (if warranted, a teacher may add to these infractions):

- Tardy (upon the 4th tardy per quarter)
- Unprepared for class
- Dress Code violation
- Disturbing class
- No parent signature
- Use of profane language
- The throwing: of rocks, sticks, snowballs, paper wads, etc.

**Repetitious offenses may indicate a heart issue and result in Level 2 consequences.**

### **Level 2**

After school detentions are given to students who choose to disregard the authorities placed in their lives. In the case of a bus infraction, a suspension from the bus for a period of time may be necessary. Examples of these infractions include, but are not limited to, the following (if warranted, a teacher may add to these infractions):

- Repetitive or serious misbehavior on the bus
- Disobedience
- Disrespect
- Deceitfulness (lying)
- Destruction of property \$100 or less (restitution may also be required)
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Continued tardiness

Depending on the circumstances of the infraction, additional consequences may be given. Repeated offenses in these areas (Level 2) may result in more severe consequences, such as suspensions for 1-10 days which will be either an In-School Suspension (ISS) or Out of School Suspension (OSS).

### **Level 3**

A student who receives five hours of detention within one semester will be suspended upon his next detention time received. Level 3 offenses may result in multiple hours of detention, suspensions, probations, or a

combination of consequences. Examples of these offenses include, but are not limited to, the Following:

- Stealing
- Cheating
- Forgery
- Fighting
- Vandalism
- Leaving campus without permission
- Cutting school
- Threats
- Harassment
- Violation of viewing or music standards (including, but limited to promotion of violence, abuse, sexual innuendos, explicit language, etc.) Possession of obscene or offensive material
- Smoking and/or possession of cigarettes or other tobacco substances (including vape/e-cigarettes) on campus
- Social profiles or comments posted that do not reflect the value system of VCA via social media ( Facebook, X, Instagram, etc.)
- Destruction of property \$101-\$250 (restitution may also be required)

#### **Level 4**

Some violations of the student code of conduct or other school policies are grave enough to merit immediate, serious discipline. The school reserves the right to discipline a student, up to and including suspension or expulsion, for a more serious offense, such as:

- Sexual misconduct
  - Repeated violation of viewing or music standards (including, but limited to promotion of violence, abuse, sexual innuendos, explicit language, etc.)
  - Repeated suspensions
- The use of any illegal substance (including, drugs alcohol or tobacco in any amount) (excluding prescription medications see medication administration policy)
- Promotion of any such conduct by word or deed
- Destruction of property \$251 or more (restitution may also be required)

Students who have been expelled from the school will not be allowed on campus (during school hours or for after-school events) without the specific permission of the school administration. They may lose all credit for all courses in that semester and will not be allowed to take final exams or turn in course work for credit.

### ***Suspension from School***

Suspension from school is a very serious matter. Suspension is at the discretion of the Administrator. A suspension may occur at any time for unacceptable behavior. The length of the suspension will be determined by the Administrator and will be based on the severity of the misbehavior. A record of any suspension will be kept on file.

Parents will be contacted before the suspension is to be served. When a student is suspended, they will be allowed to complete all missed work and take all tests and quizzes. Daily participation grades will not be allowed to be made up, thus there will be academic consequences for suspension.

Suspension may result in a revoking of privileges and positions of responsibility and trust. Suspensions will be served as either In-School Suspension (ISS) or Out of School Suspension (OSS). The decision between ISS and OSS will be at the discretion of the administration. All school work will need to be completed and turned in on the day of return. Suspension may lead to expulsion by the VCA School Board.

### **Behavioral Contract**

From time to time, it is necessary to put a student on a Behavioral Contract as the last resort before potential dismissal from school. The school administrator will review the terms periodically (possibly with Board oversight), and any students who violate the stipulations noted on the contract will be asked to withdraw from the school.

### **Additional Reasons for Dismissal**

- Parent(s) will not cooperate with the administration of the school • A student's negative influence makes it inadvisable for the student to remain at VCA
- Continual failure to achieve academically or continual lack of effort
- Threats to teacher or staff member
- Destruction of school property
- Forcible entry into any building after school hours (includes entering any unlocked window or bus)
- Obscene gestures and language directed at the faculty or staff

### ***Biblical Response to Questionable Situations for Students***

We understand that students are frequently faced with the dilemma of how to confront situations that are morally questionable, and of how to deal with friends who have broken or are breaking stated school rules. It is our desire that students learn to confront one another in the spirit and instruction of Matthew 18. Therefore, a student should confront other students who are involved in actions contrary to biblical principles and institutional standards. If repentance is not achieved, the Gospel of

Matthew instructs us to take another Christian with us to confront that person again. We suggest that students invite a teacher with whom they have a positive relationship to intercede with them. If repentance is still not achieved, the student, along with the one he/she has invited to intercede, should go to the administration. In this way, we seek to encourage students to stand for righteousness.

### ***Withdrawal from VCA within the school term***

If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child from VCA, the following must be done:

1. No later than two weeks prior to withdrawal a written notice defining the reason for withdrawal must be submitted to the School Board through the administrator.

**Note:** If the withdrawal is based on an academic or other student related problem it will be assumed that the family has taken the necessary steps to resolve the problem, with the support of the school.

2. If the Board does not approve the reason for withdrawal it should be noted that the policy requires the family to fulfill its contracted tuition agreement with the school.**Note:** Report cards, transcripts or other school records will not be sent until all financial obligations with the school are met.

### ***Expulsion from VCA***

In the event that a student is recommended by the administrator to the School Board for expulsion from VCA the following appeal process is available to parents:

1. Within one week from the date a student has been expelled from VCA a parent/guardian must submit a letter to the School Board through the administrator stating their reasons for appealing the decision.
  2. Parents may, in the letter, request an opportunity to meet in executive session with the full School Board and the administrator of VCA.
  3. Parents are reminded that we are committed to following biblical principles. Based on Romans 13:1-10 the decision of the School Board will be final after the appeal process has been carried out.

## **Dismissal Procedures**

School is dismissed promptly at 3:00 p.m. on regular full school days. Parents who pick their children up should wait for them in their car. Parents may come to the school door to escort their children if they feel the need to. Please park your car out of the lane of pick-up traffic. Please do not go to the classroom.

- Pick-up procedures will be sent to parents prior to the start of each school year. Please be sure that anyone who may be picking up your student is notified of the time and place of pick-up, as well as any special instructions. Students will be

released only to parents or people identified by the parents as having permission to transport their student. In an emergency, you may call the school to notify us of someone other than those identified, but the person must be known by the school staff, student, and/or have identification.

- Students must be picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal time unless arrangements have been made in advance. Students who are not picked up within that time will be taken to the office and/or a classroom to wait. After that fourth occurrence, you will be charged a late fee of \$15 per fifteen minute increment that your child remains at school past 3:15. This fee will be added to your next monthly tuition amount.
- Bus riders will gather in lines. When all the students are present and accounted for, they will be dismissed to their respective buses by a staff member. *Early dismissals (11:30 a.m.) will follow the same procedures as outlined above.*

## **Donations**

Vandalia Christian Academy is a 501C3 recognized institution. All donations to Vandalia Christian Academy are tax-deductible as allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. It is a privilege and an honor to give money back to God to be used in training students to know Him, to love Him, and to walk with Him. There is no better investment. Jesus said, “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.” (Matthew 10:42). It is a deep spiritual experience to support a Christian school financially.

The school cannot operate on tuition alone. Tuition monies account for only a part of the funds needed to maintain operations of the school. Since the school receives no state or federal funds, VCA relies on donations to fund a portion of its budget. Parents should prayerfully consider donations to VCA above and beyond tuition payments.

If you have any questions about how you can be a financial part of God’s ministry at our Christian school, please do not hesitate to contact the Administrator or any school board member.

## **Dress Code**

The goal of the dress code for VCA is to allow for a clean, neat environment without distraction or competition of appearance. For that reason, the following dress code has been adopted. Because our bodies are the “temple of the Holy Spirit,” We want to support parents as they help their children understand that we can honor God with our dress as well as with positive behavior.

1. Students shall wear plain navy or red polo shirts. Shirts must be long enough to be below the waist of the pants or skirt during normal activity. Undergarments under the uniform shirt must be solid white. Each student is required to possess one Navy Polo VCA dress logo shirt for field trips and programs. Each student should possess a VCA

Bubble shirt.

2. Dress code is required unless “special dress” days are scheduled. If a student is participating in such days, modesty must be adhered to. If a student is not in appropriate attire that meets dress code, a parent/guardian must bring a change of clothes that DO meet dress code so the student can dress appropriately.
3. Students should wear either denim pants that are free of holes or distressing, or khaki uniform style pants, shorts, skirts or jumpers. Shorts, skirts and jumpers shall be of modest length, preferably knee length, but no shorter than fingertip length.
4. Socks or tights are to be worn at all times. Tights/leggings or shorts must be worn under skirts or jumpers for modesty and must be plain white or dark blue. Socks that can be seen must be plain white or dark blue.
5. Navy blue or red pullover or cardigan sweaters, and sweatshirts or hoodies (with or without a zipper) may be worn over the uniform shirt. No lined jackets or coats may be worn in the classroom.
6. Athletic shoes are preferred. If students are wearing other footwear such as closed toed dress shoes/boots, they must have a pair of slip-on/velcro athletic shoes to change into for PE and recess. These may be kept at school. They shall have no lights, or other distracting characteristics. Weather boots may be worn to and from school in inclement weather, but appropriate shoes should be brought to change prior to the school day.
7. Winter coats are your choice as long as they are in good taste and weather appropriate.
8. Please dress appropriately for cold weather, students will be going outside if the temperature is above 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

Any question about inappropriate dress will be decided by VCA staff. Parents are to keep in mind the purpose of the dress code and not send the children to school in questionable attire.

The Administrator or VCA staff members may make exceptions to the dress code on certain days or for special occasions.

If deemed necessary, the following are the **violations** and subsequent punishments per semester.

- 1st Violation: The student will receive a verbal warning and need to change clothes if inappropriate
- 2nd Violation: A notification will be sent home and need to change clothes if inappropriate
- 3rd Violation: Parents will be called and asked to bring appropriate clothing for the student to change into. The student will remain in the office until the appropriate clothing is brought in; if no clothing can be brought in, the student will receive an In-School Suspension.
- 4th Violation: The student will receive an In-School Suspension and appropriate dress must be brought in again.

## **Electronics Policy:**

1. Any electronic devices brought to school with permission are the responsibility of the students. The school is not liable for damage or theft. Electronics brought to school without permission will be confiscated by teachers and taken to the school office to be picked up by a parent at the end of the day.
2. Students are not to play music from any device or sing inappropriate lyrics at school. In addition, because of the lyric content and lifestyles exhibited by some “secular” music groups, students should not decorate binders, notebooks, or any other item used at school with the names, logos, etc. of music groups.

## **Emergency Closing and Inclement Weather**

In the event that school is closed or canceled for an emergency or inclement weather announcements will be made over local radio stations as well as Praxischool by text message and on FACEBOOK. If school is in session and we have to close early, we will communicate in the same manner. A list of where the closings will be posted will be communicated in the fall. VCA *follows* Vandalia Public School (VCUS #203) closing for emergencies and class cancellations, *but* may close additional days as needed as we have students and staff from multiple townships and districts. VCA *does not follow* VCUSD #203 for their regularly scheduled early dismissal days or their scheduled closure days. Please follow the VCA calendar for VCA’s scheduled dismissal days and times.

## **Emergency Drills**

Students will be taught and the school will practice what to do in the event of a fire, tornado, or school emergency “lock down.” Drills will be done on a routine basis and documented in school records. Selected faculty and staff will also be trained in emergency procedures including the use of fire extinguishers, CPR, AED and emergency first aid.

## **Faith’s Law**

The ultimate goals of Public Act 102-0702 are to give parents/guardians notice regarding allegations of sexual misconduct that involve their student; equip schools across Illinois with better information regarding the employment history of an applicant or employee of a contractor; give schools the resources necessary to make well-informed decisions about who they are employing/contracting with; and protect students from acts of sexual misconduct by school employees, substitute employees, and employees of contractors. For more information go to [www.isbe.net/faithslaw](http://www.isbe.net/faithslaw)

1. The school has developed an employee code of professional conduct policy that addresses all required elements specified in 105 ILCS 5/22-85.5(d).
2. The school

has posted its employee code of professional conduct policy on its website, and included the policy in any staff and parent/student handbook provided by the school.

3. The school has notified the parents or guardians of enrolled students of the availability of the Sexual Abuse Response and Prevention Resource Guide at the beginning of each school year and has linked the resource guide on its website.

4. The school provides notice to the parents or guardians of an enrolled student with whom an employee, agent of the school, or a contractor of the school is alleged to have engaged in sexual misconduct as defined in Section 22-85.5 (c) of the School Code.

5. The school provides notice to the parents or guardians of a student when any formal action has been taken by the governing body relating to the employment of the alleged perpetrator following the investigation of sexual misconduct, including whether employment was terminated or whether the governing body accepted the resignation of the employee.

The Sexual Abuse Response and Prevention Resource Guide can be found at this website for you to review.

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Faiths-Law-Resource-Guide.pdf>

## **Family Service Hours**

See Parent Organization

## **Field Trips and Transportation**

Field trips will be taken during the school year. Signing the Parent Agreement form at the time of enrollment allows us to take field trips without additional written permission forms. You will always be informed of field trips requiring transportation or a chaperone. Parents and/or chaperones providing transportation will be required to provide a valid driver's license and proof of insurance. Parent volunteers may be requested for some trips to provide greater safety. Only those pre-approved by the teacher may accompany the classes on field trips. Transportation details will be explained to parents in advance and will meet all the safety standards pertinent to the transportation of children. A note will not necessarily precede walks around the neighborhood.

## **Fundraising Activities**

VCA students typically engage in fundraising activities throughout the year. Parents of students are encouraged to volunteer, donate to, or otherwise participate in these activities. These activities are approved in advance by the school board. We believe every family needs to be involved in fundraising efforts. In order to ensure that all families share in the commitment to be involved in VCA, each family is required to provide a minimum of five family service hours to the school community each

academic year. The VCA Family Service Hours Handbook provides the requirement details and guidelines for all volunteers to follow. Any parent, legal guardian, grandparent or family member 18 years of age or older may help to fulfill a family's service hours, as long as they have met the requirements as set forth in the handbook prior to completing their service hours. Each family is responsible for recording their service hours by completing a Family Service Hours Report Form and submitting it to the office at least once a quarter. In the event the family has not fulfilled their 5 hours of service requirement by the end of May, the family is required to "buy out" the remainder of their service hours at the rate of \$25 per incomplete hour. For any family whose service hours have not been fulfilled by the end of May, student report cards and/or records will be held until the balance of the money/hours have been settled with the VCA office.

## **GRADING**

Grades are assigned to students as a means of providing both student and parent with a clear picture of academic progress as well as behavioral assessment. 1. Each student will be graded on his or her academic achievement only, and not on effort put forth. 2. Report cards will be sent home on a set date school wide each quarter. This will be on the monthly calendar. In addition, Grades 5th-12th will receive mid term progress reports, issued at approximately 4 - 5 weeks into each grading period. 3. Parents are encouraged to ask for parent/teacher conferences any time one is deemed necessary. The teachers and administration welcome such opportunities. Preschool Assessment takes place quarterly with a teacher assessing the abilities of the students in such areas as gross motor and fine motor skills, social skills, cognitive abilities and language capabilities.

Kindergarten: Teachers will use the following system, without an accompanying numeric grade, in Phonics, Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. Also, Classroom Behavior that contributes to the learning environment, Bible, Practical Skills, Art, Computer, Music and P.E. will be graded as follows:

E = Excellent

S = Satisfactory (at grade level)

I= In Progress

U= Unsatisfactory (indicates no effort toward progress)

In addition, Kindergarten students will be assessed as to when the following items have been secured: Recognition of letters, letter sounds, recognition of shapes, counting, money recognition and value.

Grades 1-12: Teachers will use the 10% grading scale as follows, with an accompanying numeric grade.

**A+=98-100 C+=77-79**

**A = 93-97 C = 73-76**

**A-=90-92 C-=70-72**

**B+=87-89 D+=67-69**

**B = 83-86 D = 63-66**

**B-=80-82 D-=60-62**

**F = 59 and below**

## **HOMEWORK**

In Grades K-4, our goal is to begin using homework on a VERY limited basis to help students begin to develop the homework and study habits that they will need as they progress through school. We believe it is not too early to begin to address the issues of time management and responsibility in these young students. Any homework will help to reinforce the importance of the home and family in the education of students as you spend time working with them.

All homework assignments will be for the purpose of reinforcing teaching, providing guided practice, strengthening areas of weakness, and/or advancing areas of strength. No homework will be assigned as “busy work” unrelated to our goals and objectives. In addition, homework may sometimes consist of work a student did not complete in class. Additional homework will never be given as a disciplinary measure. Grades K-8 may utilize “Daily Folders” to communicate both homework and school information to parents. Suggestions will be made to parents on academic areas to work on with your child at home throughout the week. These suggestions will address new concepts being taught to the entire class, as well as specific areas of individual strengths and weaknesses to be reinforced at home.

In addition, the following guidelines on homework will be observed:

1. All homework assigned must be completed in a satisfactory manner and turned in on time. If homework is not completed, parents will be notified. Homework is considered late if it is not completed by the start of the school day.
2. Unsatisfactory work will be returned to the student to be re-done and submitted at the discretion of the teacher.
3. In Grades 5-8, late work will be assigned a penalty as determined by the teacher.
4. It is the expectation of the school that parents will work with the teacher to ensure that all work is satisfactorily completed and turned in on time.
5. We will attempt to assign minimal homework on Wednesdays.
6. If a student is absent because of illness on the day a project/special assignment is due, the project must be turned in on the first day the student returns to class.
7. If a student will be absent on the date a project or assignment is due because of a planned absence, such as a family trip or other non-illness related reasons, the project may be required to

be turned in prior to the absence.

8. Students who are absent from school will be expected to complete all make up work in a timely fashion. Teachers, at their discretion, may give students **at least** one day for every day the student is absent to turn in required work. The maximum number of days to complete the make-up work is five school days. This does not apply to vacations.

9. Before leaving for a vacation, a note must be given to the teacher AT LEAST one week in advance in order that he or she can prepare homework, etc. The homework is to be completed before or during the vacation. Homework assignments are due the first day the student returns to school.

## **Honor Roll**

Each quarter and at the semester, VCA will recognize those students in Grades 2-and up that have demonstrated a special measure of academic success, acknowledging their accomplishment.

Students can be named to these academic honor rolls during the school year as follows:

- HIGH HONORS - All grades for the quarter must be all A's.
- HONORS - All grades for the quarter must be all A's and B's.

## **Illness and Other Health Issues**

1. Students who have an unmedicated temperature of **100.4°F** or higher, or who have experienced diarrhea or vomiting overnight must remain at home. If any symptoms are EXPLAINABLE (i.e. allergy-like symptoms consistent with past health norms of the individual), they are allowed, and strongly encouraged, to attend school. Should a student become ill while at school, every effort will be made to contact the parents and/or listed emergency contacts to arrange for the pick-up of the student as soon as possible. Students must be unmedicated symptom free for **24 hrs** before returning to school, including an unmedicated temperature below **100.4 °F**. In some health situations, students may need to remain home for a longer period of time, as deemed necessary by health care officials. Parental cooperation with this requirement will assure that ill students will have time to recover and that other students will not be unnecessarily exposed to illness.

2. Minor injuries such as scrapes, cuts, and bruises will be treated by the staff at VCA without parental notification. If a student receives a more serious injury, including cuts appearing to require stitches or broken bones, the parents will be notified immediately. Any reported injury to the head will result in immediate parent notification regardless of apparent severity.

3. Pests and Head Lice. VCA has a "No-Nit" head lice policy. Parents are responsible for keeping head lice and/or other pests out of our school and are expected to cooperate in any way possible. Routine head checks could be conducted for the protection of all. Classrooms with recurring problems will be subject to more frequent checks. Parents will be notified if any cases are found.

**\*Vandalia Christian Academy does not carry or offer any type of school accident insurance. Please, make sure your child(ren) is/are covered by your family insurance program. We are not responsible for accidents.**

## **Immunization Requirements**

Immunization and health examination information must be provided to the school before or on October 15 as prescribed in Section 27-8.1 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-8.1). Vision and dental exams are required at designated grade levels. Students whose information is not provided to the school are subject to expulsion.

## **Language**

Only language that is pleasing to God may be used. Classes are taught in English.

## **Lunch**

Students in Grades PreK- and up may bring lunch from home any day of the week. Hot lunches are available through Deb's Catering.. The menu for these hot meals will be announced, along with the price of the meal, via the monthly lunch calendar which will be distributed to each student and also posted on the website.

Lunch guidelines are as follows:

1. Microwaves are not available; thus, lunches should NOT include items to be warmed up (Kid Cuisines, Hot Pockets, etc.).
2. Please do not send excessive amounts of candy and sweets with lunches.
3. Please do not send soda/carbonated drinks.
4. If the school provides a light lunch or snack for a student who did not bring a lunch, a fee of \$2.50 may be assessed per day.
5. Lunch boxes must have the student's name on it.

## **Lunch Fees**

Lunch fees can be paid at the beginning of the month upon placing your order.

## **Mandated Reporters:**

The faculty and staff of Vandalia Christian Academy are mandated reporters, required by law to immediately report any and all suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

## **Medication Administration**

Any medication, whether prescription or over-the-counter, will be administered by the teacher, secretary or administrator. Parents will need to complete a Medication Form available from the secretary.

PLEASE . . . GIVE DOSES AT HOME THAT CAN BE, SUCH AS MORNING AND NIGHT AND IF POSSIBLE A THREE TIMES A DAY DOSE BE ALL ADMINISTERED AT HOME. TEACHERS AND STAFF WILL ACCOMMODATE AS NEEDED.

## MEDICATIONS SHOULD NOT BE IN THE POSSESSION OF CHILDREN OR ADMINISTERED BY CHILDREN.

1. Only those medications which are necessary to maintain the child in school during school hours shall be administered.
2. Each child requiring medication at school shall have a plan for the administration of the medication developed and managed through the school office. The building administrator, the classroom teacher or the school secretary, and the parents will reach a consensus as to who will be responsible for administering the medication or supervising the child in self-administration.
3. Prescription medication will not be administered without written orders from a licensed physician.
4. Parents must sign a Medication Form available from the office requesting that medication be given during school hours.
  5. Medication must be brought to school by the parents. IT MUST BE IN ITS ORIGINAL BOTTLE WITH THE CHILD'S NAME AND CURRENT DOSAGE AND DATE.
6. Medication must be stored in a separate locked drawer or cabinet. Medications requiring refrigeration should be refrigerated in a secure area.
7. Unused medication must be removed from the school by the parents. Medication not picked up by the end of the school year will be disposed of by school personnel in the presence of a witness.
8. The responsibility for taking medication at the prescribed time of day rests solely on the student. In other words, the student is held responsible for contacting the appropriate school personnel at the appropriate time to give the medication.
9. All medication must be taken in the school office and in the presence of school personnel.
10. The above policies include, but are not limited to the self-administration and self-carry of asthma medication, epinephrine auto-injectors, and diabetes medication. *Undesignated Medications*

The school may maintain the following undesignated prescription medications for emergency use: (1) Asthma medication; (2) Epinephrine injectors; (3) Opioid antagonists; and (4) Glucagon. No one, including without limitation, parents/guardians of students, should rely on the school or district for the availability of undesignated medication. This procedure does not guarantee the availability of undesignated medications. Students and their parents/guardians should consult their own physician regarding these medication(s).

## **Neatness**

Students are to keep their desks neat and clean. Books and other objects are not to be placed in the aisles. This includes the inside of the desk.

## **Parent Involvement and Communication**

Because we believe that raising godly children is the single most important responsibility given to parents, the school encourages parents to be actively involved in every aspect of their child's life, which includes their formal education. Children benefit when parents and other extended family members are involved directly in their formal

education. The following outlines ways that such involvement is encouraged: 1. Assist in the classroom as a volunteer helper

2. Serve as a special guest volunteer by sharing special talents or vocations. This may include story-telling, music, crafts, teaching a Friday Devotion service, etc.
3. Act as a chaperone for field trips
4. Assist with special events at the school including programs, class activities and holiday celebrations
5. Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences; grades, progress and conduct are discussed
6. Request at any time, an informal or a formal conference, if you feel that there is a legitimate need for the meeting (see Unity Policy and Matthew 18 Principle)
7. Contribute to a positive school environment by following guidelines for handling problems and complaints (see Unity Policy and Matthew 18 Principle)
8. Closely monitor your child's progress and support the learning process with activities at home
9. Read all teacher and school correspondence PreK through eighth grade student folders are used to communicate from school to home or from home to school. Notes, calendars, notices, graded papers to be signed and returned, etc. are sent home in these folders. The teachers check student folders each day for communications to school from home.

PARENTS, PLEASE CHECK THIS FOLDER DAILY.

10. Praise and encourage your child as he/she strives to succeed
11. Support school discipline with your child as needed
12. Be an encourager to the school staff
13. Participate actively in the VCA Parent Organization

### **Parental Rights:**

In case of divorce or separation, VCA will assume that both natural parents have the right to access all student records. Should one parent desire that the other not have access to this information, it is the responsibility of that parent to inform the school of that desire and present the necessary legal documents restraining the other parent from access to the files. This access to school information applies to all confidential student information, including parent conferences and report cards.

### **Parent/Teacher Organization(PTO)**

VCA is committed to partnership education. The Parent/Teacher Organization provides opportunities for parents to become actively involved in the school. During the course of the school year the Parent/Teacher Organization's representative(s) meets regularly with the school administration to plan opportunities for parent involvement in the school and to serve as the liaison between the school and parents. The PTO will be directly involved with the school administration in planning and implementing the following:

1. Meeting on a monthly basis.
2. Planning and conducting fundraisers.
3. Maintaining lists of parents who are willing to serve as volunteers in the school and when there are special needs.
4. Developing and implementing a school-wide prayer chain.
5. Developing and implementing a plan for teacher appreciation activities throughout

the year.

6. Assisting in various programs and activities throughout the year.

***Please note: Family Service Hours VCA requires a minimum of 5 hours of volunteer service (per family) to the school annually due on April 1st.*** The hours must directly benefit VCA. Some examples include: cleaning up after an event, cleaning a room, assisting a teacher, lunch/recess supervision, yearbook, organizing a fundraiser or working at a fundraiser. The hours accrued will be reported by each family quarterly. If approved by the administrator, a relative 18 years or older may also assist in accumulating volunteer hours. Families who have not accrued 5 volunteer hours will be charged at a rate of **\$25 per hour**.

## **PROMOTION**

Kindergarten students should have the behavioral maturity and the academic skills needed to progress with the curriculum. A student who still has a significant number of “N’s”, “U’s”, or older students with D’s or F’s on their report card could be considered for retention. Parents will be notified as soon as the school becomes aware of academic or behavioral problems. Parents will be asked to provide remedial help over the summer for students who are experiencing academic problems.

VCA reserves the right to deny promotion to first grade to any student who has not mastered the basic skills necessary to participate in Grade 1 curriculum. Students in Grades 1-4 must have a 60% or better average in all graded areas. They must be able to read both silently and orally with adequate speed and comprehension. In addition, they must display the behavioral and social maturity necessary to benefit from the next grade curriculum. This includes, but is not limited to, the ability to work independently on assigned tasks and to interact positively with peers on a regular basis. Students who do not meet academic requirements will be required to receive remediation over the summer.

Students in Grades 5-12 must pass all of their core courses (Bible, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies) to be promoted to the next grade. Students who fail one or more of their core subjects will be required to complete an approved remediation program over the summer. Parents will be informed regarding concerns about promotion as soon as the school becomes aware of a potential problem or no later than the beginning of the fourth grading period. Specific concerns regarding areas of deficit will be communicated throughout the entire school year and every attempt will be made on the part of the teacher to promote success for all students.

It is crucial that all parents be involved directly in their child’s education. This is especially true for those students who may need some remedial help in difficult subject areas. Parents may be asked to agree to evaluation as it relates to either academic performance or behavioral concerns. This may be obtained through either the public schools or community resources. Failure to seek evaluation and/or support services may result in dismissal from the school.

## **Public Relations**

Everyone connected with our school is responsible for its quality and reputation. Everyone should endeavor to uphold the best interest of the school in his or her conversations. Remember to pray faithfully for students, teachers, board

members, and the school as a whole. Whenever possible, support the work of the teacher with your encouragement.

## **SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS**

The VCA School Board meets monthly (August – July) with the dates, times and locations to be announced on the monthly calendar distributed to all students. Meetings may occur more frequently, but the aforementioned method of communicating the meetings will be used. School Board meetings are open to school parents and faculty/staff. If parents want to bring an issue to the Board they must send their item to be included in the agenda, in writing, to the administrator one week prior to meeting. Please note that after the Board handles general business, the meeting will be concluded for guests and the Board will enter into a closed executive session. Call the administrator for more information in regards to the next scheduled School Board Meeting.

## **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

The “Tools for School” community-wide program generously provides the school supplies needed for each student. Check with local news and social media for the date of distribution. There is also a local Backpack Ministry in the community. A list of supplies needed for each class will be made available before school begins. If possible, a family donation to these ministries for this gift of school supplies would be appreciated.

## **Searches and Seizures**

In order to maintain order, safety, and security, faculty, staff, and the Administrator are authorized to conduct reasonable searches of school property and equipment, students, and their personal effects.

1. School property and equipment: Faculty, staff, and the Administrator may, at any time, without notice or consent, inspect and search property and equipment owned or controlled by Vandalia Christian Academy. This includes the right to search personal effects left by students or others on school grounds. If deemed appropriate, these searches may be with the assistance of law enforcement.
2. Students and personal effects: Faculty, staff, and the Administrator may search a student and/or a student’s personal effects in his or her possession when there is a reasonable basis for suspecting that the search will produce evidence that a student has or is violating the law, Vandalia Christian Academy rules or policies, or those established by a faculty or staff member.

The search will be conducted in a manner reasonably related to the search objective and the nature of the suspected offense, so as not to excessively intrude on the student when considering his or her age and/or sex.

## **Sex Offender Notification:**

State law prohibits convicted sex offenders from being present on school property when children under the age of eighteen are present, except in certain circumstances related to that individual’s children. Anytime a convicted sex offender is on Vandalia Christian Academy property, he/she is required to notify the Administrator or secretary upon arrival and departure. It is the responsibility of the convicted sex offender to remain under direct supervision of a school official or representative (as selected by Vandalia

Christian Academy) for the duration of his or her stay on school property. 1. The Illinois Sex Offender Registry maintained by the Illinois State Police can be found at <http://isp.state.il.us/sor/>.

2. The Illinois Statewide Child Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Registry, also maintained by the Illinois State Police, can be found at <http://www.isp.state.il.us/cmvo/>.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

For students in Grades K-8, VCA will utilize student testing primarily to track and monitor student achievement. These testing materials may include, but are not limited to: the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in grades 1, 3, 5, and 7. Specific information regarding standardized testing will be communicated during the school year. It is our goal as a school to use standardized testing in a responsible manner that will truly benefit the school, the student, and the parent.

## **STUDENT RECORDS POLICY**

As an Illinois State Recognized School, rules concerning student records at VCA are based on requirements of the Illinois School Code (Illinois General Assembly), 23 Illinois Administrative Code Part 425 (Illinois State Board of Education), federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and on the School Board's Student Records Policy. The "Student Temporary Record" consists of all information that is of clear relevance to the education of the student, but is not contained in the student permanent record, including a record of release of temporary record information, scores received on state assessment tests, the completed home language survey form, information concerning serious disciplinary infractions resulting in suspension, expulsion, or the imposition of punishment or sanction and information provided under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Any current or former student that is reported as a missing person by the Illinois State Police that requests records shall be reported by the building administrator to the local and state authorities. It may also include family background information, teacher evaluations, intelligence test scores, achievement test scores, aptitude test scores, psychological and personality test results, discipline information, teacher anecdotal records, special education files, any verified reports or information from non-educational persons, agencies or organizations, and records of honors and awards received and participation in school-sponsored activities. Student Temporary Records will be destroyed five years after a student graduates or permanently withdraws from school.

### **Transfer of Student Records**

1. The Student Permanent Record and selected Temporary Records shall be transferred as required by law to the records custodian of another school in which the student has enrolled or intends to enroll. Parents are requested to fill out the form titled "Transfer of Student Records" of intent to enroll a student in another school and/or district. Upon request, VCA will provide the parent with a copy of ISBE Form 33-78 (3/15) "Student Transfer Form." A child can be excluded from entry into an Illinois public school if this form is not presented. Certified copies of transfer students' records will be requested within 14 days of enrollment. VCA will send unofficial records of students transferring to other schools within 10 days of the request. Before we allow a student to transfer, the following steps are Followed:

a. The student account is checked to ensure that their balance is paid in full. If there is an unpaid balance, an unofficial record is sent to the receiving school. If the balance is paid in full, an official record is then sent to the receiving school. b. Check the student file to ensure that it is complete.

c. Check “Missing Children’s List” on the Illinois State Police website. If a child is missing, contact the Illinois State Police and provide them with any information that we have available.

### **Inspection of Records**

A parent or any person specifically designated as a representative by a parent shall have the right to inspect and copy all permanent and temporary records of that parent’s child. A student shall have the right to inspect and copy his or her permanent record. The request for inspection of records shall be submitted in writing to the school. Within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the request, the administrator or designated representative shall have an informal conference with the parents to interpret the information contained in the student temporary record. The parents shall be notified at this time of their right to challenge any part of the record and the challenge procedure. When requested, copies of school records shall be provided to the parents at a possible cost of \$.50 per page. No parent shall be denied a requested copy of records due to inability to bear the cost of such copying. Records sent to other schools or other persons or agencies requested by the parent will be sent without cost to the parent.

### **Challenge Procedures**

Parents shall have the right to challenge any entry exclusive of grades in the school student records on the basis of: accuracy, relevance, or propriety. The request for a hearing shall be submitted in writing to the administrator or designee of the school and shall contain notice of the specific entry or entries to be challenged and the basis of the challenge. An informal conference with the parents shall be held within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the request for a hearing. If the challenge is not resolved by the informal conference, formal procedures shall be initiated as outlined.

### **Access to Records without Parental Consent**

Records may be released without parental consent in connection with an emergency to appropriate persons if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons, provided the parents are notified as soon as possible of the information released, the date of release, the person, agency or organization receiving the information and the purpose of the release. The school shall grant access to, or release information from, school student records without parental consent or notification:

1. To an employee or official of the school or school district or State Board of Education, provided such employee or official or State Board of Education has a demonstrable educational or administrative interest in the student, and the records are in furtherance of such interest;
2. For the purpose of research, statistical reporting or planning, provided that: **a.** such person has permission of the State Superintendent of Education; and **b.** no student or parent can be identified;
3. Pursuant to a court order.
4. Review of Records - All school student records of currently enrolled students shall be reviewed to verify entries and eliminate or correct all out-of-date, misleading, inaccurate, unnecessary or irrelevant information every four years.

### **Destruction Schedule for Student School Records**

Student Permanent Records shall be kept for 60 years. Student Temporary Records, including the records of special education students, shall be maintained for five years after the student transfers, graduates, or permanently withdraws from school. Information maintained by staff members for their exclusive use shall be destroyed by the staff member maintaining the information not later than the student's transfer, graduation, or permanent withdrawal from the school.

### **SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS**

VCA will provide adequate supervision for all students (Grades PreK – and up) from 7:45 AM through 3:15 PM each day that school is in session. During arrival and dismissal times students and parents will be expected to follow all of the established school rules designed to insure their safety.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

VCA supplies textbooks for our students. The curriculum fee is used to purchase a set of books for your child, however, some of these texts are consumable and some are reusable. The reusable texts become property of this school. The consumable books will be given to the student upon completion of the material.

#### **Damaged Textbook Fee**

Textbooks, other than consumables, will be checked by the classroom teacher for damage upon return. Books that are lost or damaged must be replaced and will be charged to the student at the following rate:

- New 100%
- 1 Year Old 80%
- 2 Years Old 60%
- 3-5 Years Old 50%
- Over 5 Years Old 40%

### **TUITION AND FEES**

#### **Tuition**

Yearly tuition and fees will be determined in the spring of each year and communicated to families at that time, and also in the registration packets distributed at the annual Back-to-School Parent Meeting.

#### **A.Registration/Curriculum Fee**

A non-refundable registration fee is due each year for each student enrolled (see VCA Financial Agreement sheet).

A curriculum fee is due each year for each student enrolled. This fee offsets a portion of the expense of all textbooks needed by students, the purchase of consumable textbooks, standardized tests fees (1, 3, 5, 7) and classroom supplies used by the teacher. (Consumable textbooks become the property of the student; however, some may be asked to be turned back in at the end of the year if they are gently used).

B. Yearly tuition fees may be paid all at once or in ten monthly installments. The following policies apply to all installment payments of tuition:

1. The first tuition payment is due by August 15.
2. The nine subsequent tuition payments are due by the 15th of each following month, with the final payment being due in May.
3. Tuition installments become delinquent ten days after originally due.
4. If a student's tuition becomes one month delinquent, the student may be subject to suspension until the account is brought current. Students will not be allowed to re-enroll in VCA until all their accounts are current.
5. VCA will not forward a student's official academic records to a student's new school until all past due tuition, late fees, and other charges have been paid in full unless otherwise required to do so by law.
6. If a check is returned for insufficient funds, the parent will be charged a \$20.00 - \$30.00 fee.
7. The school will not accept responsibility for payments lost or late when they are sent with a student.
8. Parents should contact the Administrator or office ahead of time if there is going to be some payment difficulty so that satisfactory arrangements for payment can be made.
9. If a student enters after the school year has begun, tuition is assessed for actual months/weeks enrolled.
10. Registration fees are due each year for each student enrolled and must be paid prior to a student's first day of attendance. Registration fees are non-refundable.
11. Curriculum fees are due each year for each student enrolled. This fee offsets a portion of consumable textbooks, computers, and classroom supplies used by the teacher. (Consumable textbooks become the property of the student; however, some may be asked to be turned back in at the end of the year if they are gently used).
12. VCA will issue a receipt for each payment made upon request.
13. Partial monthly tuition will not be refunded. If a student withdraws from VCA after the first month in which tuition has been paid, no refund is allowed. If several months or full semester/year tuition has been paid, then upon withdrawal only the remaining full month(s) tuition(s) will be refunded.

**B. Families with Multiple Students Enrolled**

There is currently no multiple student discount available for the school year. If you are seeking financial assistance to continue enrollment in VCA please contact the office for more information.

**C. Tuition Assistance**

Tuition assistance is available to VCA students based on need. Forms are available from the office or the Administrator.

**Payment Options**

- The payment plan will be evaluated by the administrator and the BOE every year.
- The BOE reserves the right to require payment of all contracted obligations upon early withdrawal or dismissal of a student.
- Pay their tuition in 10 equal monthly installments
- Pay their tuition in full for the whole year

**VISITORS**

VCA is a closed campus. All visitors and volunteers must check in through the main office to receive permission to remain on campus. Doors will be secured shortly after the student body convenes at 8:00 AM and will remain secure until students are dismissed at the end of the day. Visitors interested in enrolling at VCA who visit classes are expected to abide by all VCA rules, including dress code regulations. Students who desire to bring guests to class must secure permission from the administration a minimum of one day prior to the desired visit. (Permission to visit classes is intended for those who are sincerely interested in attending VCA in the near future.)

## **Board Self Governance**

### **The Board Member Responsibilities**

When agreeing to serve on the VCA school board as stewards of The Lord, board members have a great privilege and responsibility. Each board member plays an important part in the mission of the school. Because their work affects the souls and lives of children and educators, board members will prayerfully, actively and faithfully serve to the best of their abilities. The School Board shall oversee the continuing operation of this ministry and generally oversee the school's business affairs. The responsibilities of the Board shall include, but are not limited to: making policy, acting on matters of personnel including hiring and firing, establishing tuition and fees, promoting Christian education in the community, and praying for the ministry of the school. The following sample policies describe the important responsibilities of competent and faithful board members:

### **Working with Administration and other Board Members**

- The board shall exercise its governing authority as a whole. No individual board member shall exercise such authority except as instructed by the board.
- Board members will relate to other individuals with integrity, honesty, and straightforwardness.
- Board members shall invest personal energy and skills in the purposes and objectives of the board, seeking opportunities where individual skills and abilities can be applied. **Serving**

### **Actively and Faithfully**

- Board members are to be faithful in attending meetings so that the business of the board can be conducted consistently and effectively and can benefit from the input of all members.
- The board chairperson will meet with any member whose poor meeting attendance becomes an issue. Based on the chair's report and recommendation, the board will determine whether that person will remain on the board.
- Board members shall make informed decisions by insisting on thorough and accurate information.

### **Policy Making**

- It is the board's responsibility, in consultation with the administrator, to adopt all school policies.

### **Duties of the Board:**

1. Attend all board meetings unless excused in advance by the chairperson.
2. Prepare for board meetings by reviewing the agenda and completing previously approved/accepted tasks.
3. Be familiar with the policy manual.

4. Participate in discussions and voting.
5. Demand accurate information to base decisions.
6. Support the board's final decision once they have been fully discussed and resolved by the board.
7. Maintain Christ-centered relationships with constituents of the board.
8. Evaluate the administrator according to the job description.
9. Keep board documents and discussions confidential.
10. Abide by policies that govern the behavior and operations of the board.
11. Help to establish the spiritual tone for the school. Board members shall individually and corporately pray for the administration, faculty, staff, parents, and children of the school. They will be inclined to prayer, ever mindful of their own dependence upon God for His grace and wisdom to manifest in their leadership.
12. The primary function of the school board is to set school policy; not to administer the school.  
The daily administration is the work of the Administrator. The board's policies set the boundaries within which the Administrator administers the school.
13. The school board shall procure, protect, maintain, and manage the property and equipment used by the school.
14. The school board shall oversee the general finance operation of the school by approving annual budgets, devising methods of raising necessary operating funds, and determining how these funds shall be disbursed.
15. The school board shall have the authority to borrow money in the name of the school but all measures will be taken to operate with a balanced budget.
16. The school board shall approve the fiscal year for the school.
17. The school board shall exercise due care to determine that the school operates the obtaining of competent counsel to advise the board on matters of safety, general liability, and personnel issues.
18. A significant duty of the school board is the selection of its administrative officer. The administrator will implement the board's legislated policies and directives and manage day to day operation of the school. The annual evaluation of the administrator is the responsibility of the entire board.
19. Upon recommendation of the administrator to the school board, the faculty and staff of the school shall be appointed by the board after careful consideration of each individual's spiritual and academic qualification. Such employees shall be chosen to meet the educational objectives and to execute the academic programs and policies of the school.
20. The school board shall have the authority to dismiss and/or not renew the contract of those who do not abide by the By-laws, their employment agreement, or fail to be a Christian role model.
21. The school board shall approve the educational programs and standards of achievement for the school. This shall include the review and approval by the board of all textbooks and courses of study recommended by the school's faculty and under the leadership of the administrator.
22. The school board shall evaluate itself annually. Each member shall also evaluate his/her willingness and ability to continue in a board position.

### **Operations Outside of Board Meetings**

- Individual board members may not speak or act on behalf of the board or represent the board

unless specifically authorized by the board to do so.

**Public Relations**

- Board members shall not reflect negatively to the general public on any ministry area of the school.

**General Policies**

- The board shall provide the highest quality service for the parents and students with Christian care and concern for them.
- No full-time employee of VCA is eligible to serve on the school board.
- Members of the board shall receive no compensation for their services. The board may authorize the reimbursement of expenses incurred by any board member in the performance of official school business.

# VCA Parent/Student Handbook Agreement

Registration will not be finalized until the following form is signed and returned to the school. In addition, the information contained in this handbook must be shared with your student. Please sign and return to VCA.

We have read the 2025-2026 Parent/Student Handbook in its entirety and agree to support and abide by the information contained within. We understand that the VCA School Board and Administration reserve the right to add or delete from the information stated in this handbook. (Parents will be made aware of changes that are made.)

Father/Guardian's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother/Guardian's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student name #1 \_\_\_\_\_ (signature if applicable): Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student name #2 \_\_\_\_\_ (signature if applicable): Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student name #3 \_\_\_\_\_ (signature if applicable): Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student name #4 \_\_\_\_\_ (signature if applicable): Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:

I/we understand that all families with children enrolled at Vandalia Christian Academy are expected to participate in fundraisers that support our school. My/our family is committed to participate in said fundraisers that support our school. I/we understand that I/we will be in default if I fail to make any type of payment herein. In the event of a default, I agree to pay all reasonable attorney fees and costs of collection to obtain payment pursuant to this agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature Parent/Guardian Signature

Executed at Vandalia, Fayette County, Illinois, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

## Appendix I

A teacher's walk with the Lord is always being watched by a great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12) Therefore, it is important that time is taken daily to present all aspects of the teaching day before the Lord. The scriptures forever remind us of what high standards are required of teachers.

### **Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct;**

All employees are expected to maintain high standards in their job performance, demonstrate integrity and honesty, be considerate and cooperative, and maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students, parents/guardians, staff members, and others. The teachers will constantly give attention to knowing their subjects better and improving teaching methods. They will carry a fair share of extra assignments and a full assignment of teaching-load. They will be loyal to the administration, staff and philosophy of VCA. Teachers will encourage and uphold other staff members and follow proper channels of authority. They will assume responsibility for materials and equipment and seek help when needed before emergencies arise. Teachers will maintain a professional relationship with students, staff and parents. They will also be professional in appearance, dress and actions. They will be responsible for following the expected policies and procedures of VCA.

### **Professional and Appropriate Conduct (Faith's Law)**

Professional and appropriate employee conduct are important Board goals that impact the quality of a safe learning environment and the school community, increasing students' ability to learn and VCA's ability to educate. To protect students from sexual misconduct by employees, and employees from the appearance of impropriety, State law also recognizes the importance for employees to constantly maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students by following established expectations and guidelines for employee-student boundaries. Many breaches of employee-student boundaries do not rise to the level of criminal behavior but do pose a potential risk to student safety and impact the quality of a safe learning environment. Repeated violations of employee-student boundaries may indicate the grooming of a student for sexual abuse. As bystanders, employees may know of concerning behaviors that no one else is aware of, so their training on: (1) preventing, recognizing, reporting, and responding to child sexual abuse and grooming behavior; (2) this policy; and (3) federal and state reporting requirements is essential to maintaining the VCA's goal of professional and appropriate conduct. Faith's Law is the entirety of Public Act 102-676, which closed significant legal loopholes related to combating grooming by: (1) broadening the definition of grooming prohibited by the Criminal Code of 2012 (720 ILCS 5/11-25); (2) authorizing the Ill. Dept. of Children and Family Services to investigate grooming allegations under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/3); and (3) requiring the Ill. State Board of Education (ISBE) to develop and maintain a resource guide for students, parents/guardians, and teachers about sexual abuse response and prevention resources available in their community (105 ILCS 5/2-3.188). ISBE's Sexual Abuse Response and Prevention Resource Guide (June 2023) is at: [www.isbe.net/Documents/Faiths-Law-Resource-Guide.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/Documents/Faiths-Law-Resource-Guide.pdf). The Administrator shall identify employee conduct standards that define appropriate employee-student boundaries, provide training about them, and monitor the District's employees for violations of employee-student boundaries. The employee conduct standards will require that, at a minimum: 1. Employees who are governed by the Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators, adopted by the Ill. State Board of Education (ISBE), 2. Employees are trained on educator ethics, child abuse, grooming behaviors,

and employee student boundary violations as required by law and policies. Employees maintain professional relationships with students, including maintaining employee student boundaries based upon students' ages, grade levels, and developmental levels and following school-established guidelines for specific situations, including but not limited to: a. Transporting a student; b. Taking or possessing a photo or video of a student; and c. Meeting with a student or contacting a student outside the employee's professional role. Beginning 7-1-24, each board conduct inservice training on educator ethics and responding to child sexual abuse and grooming behavior including, but not limited to, teacher-student conduct, school employee-student conduct, and evidence-informed training on preventing, recognizing, reporting, and responding to child sexual abuse and grooming as outlined in 105 ILCS 5/10-23.13 (a/k/a Erin's Law) for all teachers, administrators, and school support personnel. These expectations will be most effective when the in-service curriculum reflects local conditions and circumstances. This training is required by no later than January 31 of each year. It requires employees to complete mandated reporter training within three months of initial employment and at least every three years thereafter. 775 ILCS 5/2-109 requires districts to provide annual workplace sexual harassment prevention training to all employees. Employees report prohibited behaviors and/or boundary violations. Discipline up to and including dismissal will occur for any employee who violates an employee conduct standard or engages in any of the following: a. Violates expectations and guidelines for employee-student boundaries. b. Sexually harasses a student. c. Willfully or negligently fails to follow reporting requirements. Engages in grooming. Engages in grooming behaviors. Prohibited grooming behaviors include, at a minimum, sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct is any act, including but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, by an employee with direct contact with a student, that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Examples include, but are not limited to: A sexual or romantic invitation. Sexual harassment of a student is also prohibited. Sexual harassment of an employee is also prohibited. Grooming is defined as follows: "A person commits grooming when he or she knowingly uses a computer on-line service, Internet service, local bulletin board service, or any other device capable of electronic data storage or transmission, performs an act in person or by conduct through a third party, or uses written communication to seduce, solicit, lure, or entice, or attempt to seduce, solicit, lure, or entice, a child, a child's guardian, or another person believed by the person to be a child or a child's guardian, to commit any sex offense; to distribute photographs depicting the sex organs of the child, or to otherwise engage in any unlawful sexual conduct with a child or with another person believed by the person to be a child. 'Child' means a person under 17 years of age." Dating or soliciting a date. Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog. Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student. Self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature. A sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the student. All the above behaviors are reasons for immediate investigation, suspension and dismissal.

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Faiths-Law-Resource-Guide.pdf> link to Faith's Law Sexual Abuse Resource Guide.