

Attendance

Veritas Christian Academy recognizes the significant impact of attendance on student learning and seeks to partner with parents in prioritizing consistent and on-time attendance so that students thrive within the classroom. Students who consistently arrive at school on time are set up for learning success. In order to adhere to North Carolina state truancy guidelines and to partner with parents in prioritizing consistent attendance and on-time arrival to school, VCA has outlined the following attendance protocols:

Excused Absence

Excused absences include illness, doctor's appointment, or death of a family member. Students must make up work immediately upon their return to school. Excused absences more than eight (8) require a doctor's note or the approval of the school nurse. Excused absences over ten (10) must be made up unless excused by the principal or school nurse.

Unexcused Absence

Any absence in which the student is out of school that is not related to illness, medical appointments, or bereavement is considered unexcused. Unexcused absences exceeding eight (8) days must be made up per the make up day protocols outlined below.

Make Up Protocols

- Summer Make Up Sessions will be scheduled during the week immediately following the last week of school.
- Summer Make Up Sessions will be billed at \$125 per session (4 hour sessions) and are scheduled by the school. For Grammar School students, one missed day requires one 4-hour make up session.

General Attendance Policies

- If a student has an unexpected absence, parents are responsible to notify the teacher and/or the attendance office (attendance@veritasnc.org) by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence.
- Students who are absent from school may not participate in evening school activities without the approval of the Grammar School Principal.
- A record of attendance for each student will be kept and the total number of days present and absent will be recorded on student report cards.
- Field trip days are considered school days. Students absent from field trips will be considered absent from school.
- Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. or returning to school after being removed for a portion of the day must be signed in at the Main Office.
- Students arriving after or checking out before 11:30 a.m. will be considered absent.
- All PreK Explorer absences and tardies will be considered excused. Parents should notify PreK Explore teachers if students will be absent.
- Final approval of excused absences and tardies rests with the principal.

Tardies

Being on time demonstrates respect for teachers and students and is an important life skill for students to acquire. VCA recognizes that extenuating circumstances sometimes lead to late arrival at school. However, not only do tardy students miss valuable instructional minutes, but their late arrival is also a disruption to the teacher and the other students in the class who arrived on time. Missed instructional time adds up quickly. In an effort to preserve valuable instructional time, VCA outlines the following protocols regarding tardiness:

Excused Tardies

Excused tardies include, but are not limited to, the following: doctor's appointments (with doctor's note), unexpected community-wide traffic disruptions, unforeseen circumstances (car trouble/accident, illness, etc.) or icy roads. The principal makes the final determination as to whether a tardy is excused or unexcused.

Unexcused Tardies

Any tardiness that does not qualify as excused will be recorded as unexcused.

Excessive Tardiness

- For every fourth unexcused tardy, the student's attendance will be recorded as an unexcused absence. Tardy-related absences factor into the unexcused absence policy outlined in the attendance section above and, therefore, may result in needed Make Up Sessions.
- Excessive tardiness may necessitate a parent-principal conference to discuss context, seek understanding, and develop a plan of action for on-time attendance.

Early Dismissals

Early dismissals significantly impact student learning and the cultural flow of the classroom as well as place a significant burden on staff. Therefore, we ask that parents refrain from picking students up ahead of the assigned carline time.

Early dismissals follow the same guidelines as tardies.

Excused Early Dismissals

Excused early dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following: doctor's appointments (with doctor's note), speech or occupational therapy, or bereavement-related activities. Early dismissal of a sick student will also excuse early dismissal of siblings. The principal makes the final determination as to whether an early dismissal is excused or unexcused.

Unexcused Early Dismissals

Any dismissal that does not qualify as excused will be recorded as unexcused.

Excessive Early Dismissals

- For every fourth unexcused early dismissal, the student's attendance will be recorded as an unexcused absence. Dismissal-related absences factor into the unexcused absence policy outlined in the attendance section above and, therefore, may result in needed Summer Make-Up Sessions.
- Excessive early dismissals may necessitate a parent-principal conference to discuss context, seek understanding, and develop a plan of action for full-day attendance.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

The following procedures have been carefully designed to ensure the safety of our students and to respect the time of our parents and staff. Parents and students are expected to follow the procedures outlined below.

All students must be dropped off and picked up through the car line in the cafeteria parking lot with the exception of all Pre-Kindergarten students with no siblings in the school who are picked up in a separate designated location.

Parents are not permitted to drop off or pick up students at any other location on the campus of Veritas Christian Academy and will be redirected to the drop off and pick up car line in the cafeteria parking lot by school personnel assigned to ensure this policy is properly implemented.

Arrival

- Students may not arrive at school prior to 7:30 am.
- Grammar School students who arrive between 7:30 am - 7:45 am should report to Sayers Hall (PK - 1) or the Forum (2 - 5) upon arrival. These students will be dismissed at 7:45 am to go to their classrooms.
- Grammar School students who arrive between 7:45 am - 8:00 am should go directly to their classroom.
- Students must arrive through the carline no later than 7:55 to avoid disruption to the beginning of the school day that begins promptly at 8:00.
- Students should be seated at their desks, ready to begin the school day, at 8:00 a.m.

Dismissal (Afternoon and *Early*)

- Families will be issued colored car tags corresponding to an assigned pickup time. Car tags must be displayed in the front window of the car. Anyone coming to pick up a student without a car tag must first stop at the front office for a temporary tag before getting back into the carline.
- All Pre-Kindergarten students with no older siblings in the school will be dismissed at 2:30pm (*10:30 a.m.*) and will be picked up in front of the school at the second set of double doors.
- Parents picking up only Grammar School students in Grades K - 4 should not arrive for afternoon pickup prior to 2:45 pm (*10:45 a.m.*) and loading will take place between 2:55 pm - 3:15 pm (*10:55 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.*) for these students only. Parents who wish to pick students up from the front office must do so before 2:45 p.m. (*10:45 a.m.*) p.m.
- No student will be dismissed from the office between 2:45 and 3:15 (*10:45 and 11:15*).

- Grade 5 students (and younger siblings) will dismiss at 3:25 (11:25) with the Logic/Rhetoric School Students.
- Pick-up for parents with only Grammar School students (Grades 1-4) ends promptly at 3:15 pm (11:15 a.m.). Parents arriving after this time must park at the front of the school and report to the Main Office to pick up their child.
- Parents picking up students in 5th grade, Logic/Rhetoric school or “duals” (grammar school siblings of older students) should not arrive prior to 3:15 pm (11:15 a.m.) and loading will begin at 3:30 pm (11:30 a.m.)
- There is no aftercare on early release days..

Dismissal During School Day

- Parents desiring to pick up students before regular dismissal should report to the Main Office to pick up child(ren). No student will be dismissed directly from the classroom at any time.
- Parents attending events in the classroom who desire to take students home with them must sign students out in the Main Office. Parents may not pick up students directly from classrooms.
- All early dismissals will be recorded in the Main Office per the Early Dismissal Policy above.

Communication

Veritas Christian Academy recognizes the importance of strong communication in our partnership with families. Therefore, the Grammar School provides the following communication avenues:

- Email - Email provides the most efficient avenue for reaching teachers or administrators with quick questions or to request a meeting. Please note that teachers may not have an opportunity to respond to email during the school day when their focus is on instruction and student care. Teachers will make every effort to respond to email within 24 hours of receipt.
- Weekly newsletters - Each teacher sends a weekly newsletter both in hard copy and electronically every Monday.
- Green folders - Each Monday students take home green folders with important information and communications. Parents should prioritize processing and returning these folders.
- Weekly School-Wide Newsletter - The VCA newsletter goes out via email each Monday and has important school-wide information.

The VCA Student Information System, FACTS, provides a family directory. Parents wishing to communicate with other families should utilize this directory for contact information. Neither the office staff nor teachers are authorized to release contact information outside what is found in the electronic directory.

Parents are asked to communicate directly with other parents regarding invitations, playdates, and other social events. Grammar School teachers are not able to send home birthday invitations or other social communication, either in hard copy or electronic form.

Discipline

The purpose of Grammar School discipline is to equip students in the development of habits that lead them to become wise and virtuous adults. The kind and amount of discipline will be determined by the teachers, and if necessary, the Principal and Headmaster. The vast majority of discipline problems are to be dealt with at the classroom level. The discipline will be administered in light of the particular student's behavior and attitude. Every effort will be made to be fair and consistent. All discipline will be based upon biblical principles, e.g., redemption, restitution, apologies (public and private), swift and just discipline, restoration of fellowship, no lingering attitudes, etc. Love and forgiveness will be an integral part of the discipline of a student as we seek to cultivate a culture of grace. Whenever possible, consequences should be linked closely to the behavior with an appropriately measured response.

Grammar School students are challenged to three Great Expectations: respect, responsibility, and restraint. Classroom rules and policies are designed with these expectations in mind. Minor corrections will be dealt with in the classroom. Repeated offenses will be brought to the attention of the Grammar School Principal so that administration and parents can partner together to shepherd the child. Any offense that is considered major will be addressed by the Grammar School Principal with the assistance of the Headmaster, if needed. Parents will always be informed if a major offense is committed by a student.

Devices

The school provides school secretaries and administrative personnel who are available to handle emergency communication between parents and students when necessary. The potential for misuse of cell phones (text messaging, privacy issues with camera phones, etc.) make these devices counter-productive to the educational process.

- Cell phones, smart watches, cameras, and other similar portable devices are not to be brought to school by Grammar School students.
- If a Grammar School student brings any unapproved technological device to school, it will be collected by the teacher and given to the Grammar School Principal to be returned to the parents.

General Dress Expectations

Veritas Christian Academy desires our Grammar School students to thrive in a community free of distractions and to embrace the spirit of community that comes from a uniform. For the sake of community, simplicity, and age-appropriate engagement, the following general dress guidelines apply to all Grammar School students.

- Clothing should be clean, sized to fit appropriately, unaltered, worn as designed, and free of holes and tears.
- Hair should be naturally colored and free of dyes.
- With the exception of Kindergarten students who are learning to navigate personal hygiene, all students must wear a belt with pants that have belt loops.
- Uniform shirts should remain tucked in (exception: Kindergarten)

- Outerwear should not be worn in the classroom.
- Jeans may be worn on Warrior T-Shirt Days and certain field trips. Jeans should be full-length, standard blue denim color and free of rips, holes, or tears.
- When Warrior T-shirts are requested for field trips, students should wear the current year's Warrior t-shirt.
- The purpose of a uniform is to project a unified purpose and community. In that spirit, Grammar School students are asked to refrain from wearing items which draw attention to themselves, such as makeup, fake nails, temporary tattoos or stickers, hair inserts, glitter, cologne, perfume, etc.
- Grammar school students may wear one bracelet, one ring, and one necklace. Necklaces must be worn underneath the collar/shirt so as to not be visible.
- Grammar School girls may wear one set of non-dangling earrings.
- The school uniform requires all students to have a "warmth layer" (French Toast sweater or half-zip pullover) with a logo. Additional outerwear items (i.e. winter coats) may be worn outside when weather necessitates. Non-uniform sweaters and sweatshirts are not considered outerwear and may not be worn on campus during the school day.
- The uniform code requires students to wear athletic shoes (or Mary Janes, for girls) to school each day in order to facilitate safe indoor and outdoor play in footwear appropriate multiple surfaces. Rain and snow boots are not necessary and should not be worn to school. Should different footwear be needed for an outdoor activity, teachers will contact parents in advance.

Grammar School Uniform Code

Desiring that students seek to distinguish themselves with their minds and virtue (1 Peter 3:3), rather than with their outward appearance, Veritas Christian Academy has a uniform code for all grade levels. The word "uniform" denotes unity in form/appearance; therefore, the code is intentionally simple so that students look alike and are easily recognizable as VCA students. In addition to providing continuity in appearance, the school uniform minimizes distractions and creates an environment in which students can focus on academic and character development without the distractions of clothing trends. Much like a sports team has a uniform to denote unity and identity, VCA's uniform code is designed to create a sense of belonging within the community.

Compliance with the uniform code and the dress code expectations reflects positive and appropriate partnership between home and school. Parents are expected to partner with VCA by purchasing items from the approved vendor and providing clothing items which meet the uniform requirements.

VCA recognizes that parents bear the responsibility for uniform compliance in our youngest students (Kindergarten - Second Grade). Uniform reminders will be sent to the parents when students are out of uniform, so that parents can make adjustments as necessary.

For older students, who are learning to dress themselves and take more personal responsibility, non-compliance will be addressed as follows:

3rd Graders - Teachers will clarify expectations with the student and send home a uniform

reminder to parents so that they can come alongside students to comply. Repeated non-compliance may result in discipline for the student.

4th and 5th Graders - Teachers will clarify expectations and remind students. Students out of compliance for a 4th time will be subject to discipline such as missed recess, copywork, lunch detention, being sent home to change, etc. Final decision on appropriate consequences rests with the Grammar School Principal.

Primary Items Which Must Be Purchased from French Toast	
<p>All primary items must be purchased through French Toast, our uniform vendor, via the VCA store on the French Toast website.</p> <p>Other items, even if purchased through French Toast, are not included in the VCA uniform.</p>	
Pants/Shorts (Boys and Girls)	Khaki
Bermuda Shorts (Boys and Girls)	Khaki
Girls' Skirts	Pleated Plaid - White/Navy
Girls' Jumpers	Pleated Plaid - White/Navy
Polo Shirts Long or Short Sleeve (Boys and Girls)	Navy **Logo Required**
Warmth Layer (Required)	Navy **Logo Required** Front Zip Cardigan Quarter Zip Fleece Sweatshirt Performance Quarter Zip Pullover
Additional Uniform Items - Vendor Optional	
Girls' Kick Shorts	Navy or Black (Required under all skirts and jumpers)
Socks (Boys and Girls) Girls' Tights/Leggings (solid)	Navy White Black
Shoes	Neutral-colored* athletic shoes or rubber-soled Mary Janes (girls' only) (without lights or wheels) <small>*Neutral-colored shoes are black, white, brown, gray, or navy, including laces and soles.</small>
Belts	Navy Brown Black (Required for any pants with belt loops)
Girls' Hair Accessories (non-decorative; solid)	Navy White Black

Accoutrements

- Backpacks, lunchboxes, coats, backpack charms, etc. should be free of licensed team logos and commercial characters (including, but not limited to, Disney, Pokemon, Mario, etc.). Backpacks may have one dangling backpack charm.

- Students are encouraged to bring reusable water bottles to class as they have access to multiple filling stations around campus. Water bottles for the classroom should hold 24 ounces or less and be able to close securely (such as with a retractable straw or a twist-top lid). BPA-free plastic is preferred to metal. For storage purposes, water bottles should not have side handles. For health/sanitation purposes, water bottles should not have exposed straws. Water bottles may only contain water.
- Toys, trading cards, personal items from home, etc., should not be brought to school unless requested by the teacher.

Extra-Curriculars

Grammar school students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of after-school clubs. Clubs vary each year. Parents may sign students up for camps via the school website. Payment is made through FACTS.

Grammar School students are not eligible to participate in VCA athletics.

Grammar School students who attend extra-curricular events (such as sporting events, etc.) must be under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian. Students must be within eyesight of parents at all times and must stay at the extra-curricular venue.

Grading

Veritas seeks to provide robust and meaningful feedback to parents regarding student progress while avoiding performance-driven anxieties associated with modern grading scales. The VCA Grammar School prioritizes the development of character traits, habits, and skills that create a solid foundation for life-long student learning. In light of these goals, feedback is provided in the following categories:

Kindergarten - Skill assessments only

1st and 2nd grades: Character Habits, Verbal Arts, Written Arts, Mathematics, Humanities

3rd, 4th, and 5th grades: Character Habits, Humanities, Rhetoric, Mathematics with skill assessments

PE, Art, Latin, Music: Skill assessments only

Report cards are issued at the end of each Trimester.

The following terms are used in communication with parents via the report card:

E - exceeding expectations

M - meeting expectations

R - requires improvement and/or intervention

S - strong skill development

G - age-appropriate development

U - undeveloped habit (needs further development to be on par with age)

Daily work is marked using the following checkmark system:

- √+ Mastery of concept; exceptional work
- √ Proficiency of concept; good work
- √- Reflects gaps in either understanding or instructions;

In order to help students succeed, papers reflecting work earning a √- will not be accepted. Students will be expected to redo the assignment to earn a √.

Lunch and Snacks

Lunch provides an opportunity for both good food and good fellowship, two hallmarks of classical studies. The following general guidelines apply to all Grammar School classes, though teachers have latitude to adjust as needed.

- *Students will be assigned seats or seating areas at teacher discretion.
- *A timed amount of silent eating is appropriate to give students time to focus on eating.
- *During fellowship time, students should talk quietly with those seated at their table.
- *Students should keep their food in the area in front of them.

Parents may order hot lunch for students using the FACTS parent portal. Students waiting in line to pick up lunch should do so quietly and with appropriate manners.

Lunches from home should follow the following guidelines:

- *Students do not have access to microwaves in Grammar School, so all food should be able to be eaten without being warmed.
- *Lunches should not contain candy. A small cookie or other sweet treat for dessert is acceptable.
- *Grammar School students should not bring sugar-added beverages (soda, kool-aid, tea, sports drinks, etc.) for lunch.

Parents may visit students for lunch with prior approval of the Grammar School Principal.

Office staff cannot procure hot lunches for absent students or students dismissing early, except for school-sponsored events. Parents wishing to pick up lunches for students should sign in at the office before collecting lunches directly from the cafeteria.

Students should bring two healthy snacks to school. Please note that snacks are often eaten in the classroom or while working, so snacks should be able to be eaten with one hand (crackers, cheese stick, apple slices, etc.). Yogurt (even in tube/pouch form), applesauce, and anything needing a spoon or fork, should be saved for lunch. Snacks should not include cookies or candy.

Birthdays

We acknowledge birthdays as we recognize each child's life is a gift from God. Please remember that it is not necessary for parents to send in anything for birthdays; however, if you want to do something special, we ask that you choose one of the options listed below.

Option #1 - Choose a book from The [Classical Reader](#) list to purchase and donate to the classroom or school library in your child's honor. A bookplate will be added in honor of your child's special day!

Option #2- Send individual treats to share. In order to minimize disruptions, birthday treats will be shared during a regularly scheduled snack or lunch time. Parents may join birthday students for lunch with prior notice to the teacher.

In an effort to create a safe and healthy environment for all of our children, we have established a list of birthday snack and treat ideas. Items to consider for birthday treats include fresh fruit (must be precut and packaged individually), small donut holes, bite size brownies, mini-cupcakes with white or chocolate icing, small cookies, animal crackers, popcorn, pretzels, cheese sticks, teddy grahams, goldfish, fruit snacks, mini muffins, or ice cream cups.

Full-size cupcakes and full-size donuts are not appropriate. Also, any icings should be free of dye, to avoid allergy issues. In addition, teachers are not able to cut and serve items, so small, individual items are required. All items must be free of nuts as we are a nut-cautious community. Items sent in that do not adhere to these guidelines will not be served and will be returned.

Note: If your child is having a private party, FACTS provides a family directory. Parents wishing to communicate with other families should utilize this directory for contact information. Students may not distribute birthday party invitations at school, and teachers are unable to send invitations in hard copy or electronic form.

Homework Guidelines

Believing that the family is of utmost importance in developing and nurturing character, Veritas Christian Academy recognizes the need for families to have time free from the pressures of school and that the majority of teaching and education should occur within the school day. Veritas Christian Academy utilizes homework as a means of reinforcing the material covered in the classroom and not an avenue for covering additional material. Grammar School students are expected to read each night (see below). Occasional math homework may also be assigned. Students may be asked to gather supplies from home for completion of in-class projects.

Since reading is foundational for student success, at-home reading is a key element of the home-school partnership. It is important that students be exposed to a variety of reading exercises in order to strengthen reading skills. At-home student reading should include all of the following methods:

*Parents reading aloud to students - Parents should read aloud to students on a regular basis, aiming for at least one hour of oral reading each week.

*Students read aloud to parents - As soon as possible, students should be reading aloud to parents. This may start with very small increments in the earliest grades and gradually increase to longer time spans in higher grades.

*Shared reading - Sitting side by side, parents read a page, then students read a page, taking turns.

*Independent reading - Some reading can also be completed independently when students are ready. Students should discuss their independent reading with a parent to strengthen comprehension, recall, and thoughtful engagement with the text.

Teachers will provide parents with the reading expectations for each student. Parent partnership is vital for student reading success.

Honors/Awards

In keeping with our pursuit of excellence in character, Grammar School Year-End Awards recognize students who are developing the habits of character that lay the rails for wisdom and virtue.

GRADES K - 2

In order to recognize student strengths and to cast a vision for character development, students in grades K - 2 receive a certificate recognizing a positive character quality which they display.

GRADES 3 - 5

Students in grades 3 - 5 are eligible for the following awards:

Carolingian Award

Recognizes students who consistently demonstrate excellence in penmanship and pursue excellence in presentation of each assignment.

Charlotte Mason Award

Recognizes students who have grasped the richness of nature in their lives and reflect the humility, servant hearts, and practicality of the common arts.

Nehemiah Award

Recognizes students who persevere through difficult tasks with a positive attitude and a teachable spirit.

Barnabas Award	Recognizes students who, like Barnabas to Paul, encourages others, puts others first, and brings out the best in peers
Warrior Award	Recognizes students who are developing habits of character that reflect the values of VCA and classical education (as seen on the Habits of Character list in report card)

In addition, students in Grades 3 - 5 are eligible to receive an award in each of the following:

- The Lillias Trotter Award in Art
- The J.S. Bach Music Award
- The Eric Liddell Award in Physical Education

Retention

Desiring that all students thrive in our school, VCA understands that retention is sometimes necessary for student flourishing. However, retaining a student in a grade is a significant decision and one that should be undertaken with careful consideration of multiple factors including, but not limited to, academic progress, student age and maturity, learning aptitude, attendance, and likelihood of retention being a positive factor for the child. Given the critical nature of the first four years (K - 2nd), retention is typically limited to these grades, with the expectation that students in grades 3 - 5 should be demonstrating growth in character habits and meeting academic expectations by the end of the third trimester. Students not demonstrating growth and/or not meeting expectations may be retained or placed on academic or behavioral probation, or required to secure a full psychoeducational evaluation.. Final decision regarding student placement and retention rests with the Grammar School Principal.