



**THE VANGUARD
SCHOOL**



**2016-17
Family Handbook**

Important Numbers

Director of The Vanguard School

Timothy Krushinski tikrushinski@vanguardschool-pa.org 610.296.6700 x101

Director of Clinical Services

Darren Levin, Ph.D. dalevin@vfes.net 610.296.6725 x102

Assistant Director of The Vanguard School

Thomas Smith thsmith@vanguardschool-pa.org 610.296.6700 x168

Assistant Director of Clinical Services

Annette Brandolini anbrandolini@vanguardschool-pa.org 610.296.6700 x296

PreK/K, K/1 and Elementary School Program Supervisor

Helene Greenstein hegreenstein@vanguardschool-pa.org 610.296.6700 x112

Middle School Program Supervisor

Dennis Smith desmith@vanguardschool-pa.org 610.296.6700 x266

High School Program Supervisors

Hugh Braun hubraun@vanguardschool-pa.org 610.296.6700 x212

Jennifer Schmidt jeschmidt@vanguardschool-pa.org 610.296.6700 x200

Vanguard Transition Center Program Supervisor

Jacque Murray jamurray@vanguardschool-pa.org 610.296.6700 x261

Administrative Assistants

Donna Metricarti, VFES Central dometricarti@vfes.net 610.296.6725 x104

Mindy Chidester, Elementary School michidester@vanguardschool-pa.org 610.296.6700 x142

Anne Peirce, Middle School and VTC anpeirce@vanguardschool-pa.org 610.296.6700 x202

Janet McDowell, High School jamcdowell@vanguardschool-pa.org 610.296.6700 x203

Address

1777 North Valley Road, Malvern, PA 19355

School Hours

8:10 am – 3:05 pm

Staff Hours

7:45 am – 3:45 pm (Vanguard School Program)

8:00 am – 4:00 pm (VFES)

www.vanguardschool-pa.org

KYW School Closing #861

Valley Forge Educational Services (VFES) admits students of any race, color, sex, age or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the organization. VFES does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies and clinical- and school-administered programs. Admission into VFES programs will be based upon our ability to meet the needs of the student.

Contents

Valley Forge Educational Services.....	1
2016-17 School Calendar	2

The Vanguard School Program

Pre-K/K and K/1	3
Elementary School	3
Middle School	3
High School	3
Vanguard Transition Center.....	3

Academic Enhancement Programs

Art	4
Educational Technology.....	4
Library	4
Music	4
PACE.....	5
Physical Education	5
Reading Services	5

Career Exploration and Development

Community-Based Vocational Training	6
On Campus Work Program	6
Work Orientation Readiness Center (WORC)	6

Academic Expectations

Attendance	7
Classroom Placement	7
Graduation and Diplomas.....	7
Homework	7
IEP Meetings	8
Official School Records	8
Progress Reports and Report Cards.....	8
Reevaluation Process.....	8
State-Mandated Testing	8

Clinical Services

Behavior Analyst and Behavior Support	9
Occupational Therapy.....	9
Physical Therapy	9
School Counseling.....	10
School Psychology.....	10
Speech-Language Therapy.....	10

Nursing and Health-Related Items

Medical Emergency Information Form	11
Health Requirements and Immunizations	11
Illness	12
Communicable Diseases	12
Medications and Prescriptions	12
Non-Prescription Medication	13

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support

School-Wide Behavior Support.....	14
Rewards	14
Vanguard Values	14

Policies

Acceptable Use of Technology	15
Bullying and Cyberbullying	15-16
Bus Transportation	16
Children on Campus	16
Conflicts of Interest	16
Controlled Substances.....	17
Dress Code.....	17
Elopement	17
Extra-Curricular Activities	17-18
Fighting or Assault	18
Harassment	18
Leaving Campus.....	18
Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse	18-19
Parent Employment.....	19
Personal Electronic Devices.....	19
Pets on Campus	19
Property Damage	19
Public Displays of Affection	19
Smoking and Tobacco Policy	19
Social Media	19
Visitors and Observations.....	20
Volunteers	20
Weapons.....	20

Code of Conduct

Level I-IV Offenses	21-22
Lunch Detention	22
Tobacco Products	22

General Information

Child Custody.....	23
Communication	23
Dances	23
Directory.....	23
Emergency Closings, Delays and Dismissals	23
Gym Attire	23
Lockers.....	23
Lost and Found	23
Lunch Programs.....	24
Photographs	24
Program Trips	24
School Supplies.....	24
Staff Transporting Students.....	24
Traffic Safety on Campus.....	24

Get Involved!

Achieve Parent Portal	25
Back-to-School Night	25
Classroom Volunteers and Chaperones	25
Curriculum Committee Volunteers	25
New Parent Orientation	25
Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	25
The Vanguard Voice Newsletter.....	25

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

PTO Information	26
-----------------------	----

Valley Forge Educational Services

Mission: VFES prepares children and young adults with special needs to realize their potential as contributing members of the community.

Vision: VFES, in partnership with the community, will develop and implement comprehensive clinical, educational and social programs for people with special needs so each individual is offered an equal opportunity for an independent and meaningful life.



Valley Forge Educational Services is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization with a specific mission. Our organization is governed by an independent Board of Trustees and managed by a highly skilled leadership team.

We offer a variety of educational services focused on guiding young children, adolescents and post-high school learners to independence. Started in 1959 by psychologist Dr. Milton Brutton to help children whose needs were not being met by mainstream educational programs, we have grown and evolved with each generation of special learners.

www.vfes.net



The Vanguard School is a state-licensed and approved private day school. We serve children and young adults, 4–21 years of age, who represent more than 56 school districts in a nine-county area in southeastern Pennsylvania.

The Vanguard School is a community of parents, teachers, clinicians and friends who share a commitment to the individual abilities and rights of each student. It is a place where every student is valued for his or her uniqueness and success is measured by confidence and self-reliance. The Vanguard School experience is a powerful alternative to less-comprehensive educational placements.

The Vanguard Transition Center offers opportunities for post-secondary education and the development of vocational, life and social skills to young adults, 18–21 years of age, who have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, neurological impairments and/or other health impairments. Students receive continuing education, counseling, self-advocacy training, therapies and career experience.

www.vanguardschool-pa.org



The Luma Center is home to StarPoint and StarPoint 2, The Vanguard School's Pre-K/K and K/1 classrooms. The programs support academic readiness, socialization with peers, self-care and communication goals. StarPoint utilizes developmentally appropriate practices to provide a safe, supportive and nurturing environment wherein children develop academically, physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively.

www.lumacenter.org



Summer Matters offers summer and respite programming to children and young adults with special-education needs including Extended School Year (ESY) programs and travel opportunities.

Our ESY program offers eligible students, 6–17 years of age, intensive individualized instruction in academics and social skills. Morning academic periods focus on maintaining reading, language arts and math skills.

The VTC Summer Experience focuses on daily living skills development, vocational training and post-secondary education for young adults, 18–21 years of age.

For campers, 8–21 years of age, Summer L.I.F.E. offers experiential learning and social development in the context of summer fun. The program is open to campers who may experience social anxiety or have difficulty making and keeping friends and would benefit from specialized small-group experiences.

Our newest program, The Vocational Immersion Program (VIP) equips young adults with developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder and related social challenges, 18–24 years of age, with key social and employment-readiness skills through a four-week intensive program that includes classroom-based instruction, online learning, workplace internships with job coaches and a week-long supported living experience.

www.summermatters.org



2016-2017 School Calendar

July							August							September								
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S		
					1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30			
31																						
Student Days: 19(38)							Student Days: 17(55)							Student Days: 17(72)								
October							November							December								
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S		
						1			1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3		
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
30	31																					
Student Days: 19(38)							Student Days: 17(55)							Student Days: 17(72)								
January							February							March								
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S		
						1				1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	26	27	28					26	27	28	29	30	31			
29	30	31																				
Student Days: 20(92)							Student Days: 18(110)							Student Days: 23(133)								
April							May							June								
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S		
						1				1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
16	*17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	*22	*23	24		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31				25	*26	27	28	29	30			
30																						
Student Days: 14(147)							Student Days: 22(169)							Student Days: 15(184)								

LEGEND	
	Extended School Year
	Summer L.I.F.E.
	Summer L.I.F.E./New Hire Orientation-Teacher Induction
	Staff In-Service/No students report
	No School/Offices Closed
	Early Dismissal for Students @ 12:30 PM
	New Parent Orientation
	Back to School Night
	Parent-Teacher Conferences/No students report
	Summer Staff In-Service

July	4 - Closed for Independence Day	November, Cont'd	22 - Parent-Teacher Conferences/ No students report	March	8 - Early Dismissal for students
	5 - 29 Extended School Year		23 - Parent-Teacher Conferences/ No students report/ School/Offices close at 1:00 PM	April	5 - Early Dismissal for students
August	1-5 - Extended School Year		24-25 - Closed for Thanksgiving Break	10-17 - Closed for Spring Break	
	14-26 - Summer L.I.F.E.		December	May	10 - Early Dismissal for students
	24-26 - New Hire Orientation		14 - Early Dismissal for students	29 - Closed for Memorial Day	
	29-31 - Staff In-Service		23 - Early Dismissal for students	June	7 - Early Dismissal for students
September	1-2 - Staff In-Service		26-30 - Closed for Winter Break	20 - Early Dismissal for students	21 - Tentative Last Day of School/Early Dismissal for students
	5 - Closed for Labor Day		January	26-29 - Summer Staff In-Service	
	6 - First Day of School		2 - Closed for Winter Break	July 5 - August 4, 2017	2017 Extended School Year
	15 - New Parent Orientation		11 - Early Dismissal for students		
	30 - Early Dismissal for students		16 - Closed for Martin Luther King Day		
October	3 - Closed for Rosh Hashanah		February		
	6 - Back to School Night		8 - Early Dismissal for students		
	12 - Closed for Yom Kippur		17 - Staff In-Service/ No students report		
November	8 - Staff In-Service/ No students report		20 - Closed for Presidents' Day		
	9 - Early Dismissal for students				

- ▶ The Academic Calendar includes 4 student days for Emergency Closings. Those days not used, will be deducted from the end of the school year.
- ▶ *if needed, additional make up days will be utilized as follows: First Day-Apr 17, Second Day-June 22, Third Day-June 23, Fourth Day-June 26.
- ▶ The school reserves the right to reschedule instructional days as needed to meet PDE requirements.

The Vanguard School Program

The Vanguard School provides programs for and is licensed to accept students with a Pennsylvania Department of Special Education exceptionality of autism, speech-language disorders, emotional disturbance and/or other health impairment (OHI). Children who experience developmental disabilities, learning differences or social-emotional or behavioral difficulties are also eligible for our program.

Pre-K/K and K/1

Our Pre-K/K and K/1 Programs, StarPoint and StarPoint 2, embrace the concept that each child learns and grows differently. StarPoint utilizes developmentally appropriate practices to provide a safe, supportive and nurturing environment wherein children develop academically, physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively. StarPoint and StarPoint 2 are licensed through the Pennsylvania Department of Education under The Vanguard School license.

Elementary School

The Elementary School program offers students the opportunity to thrive in small classes of five to nine students; each classroom has a certified special education teacher and a classroom aide. The Elementary School's academic component differentiates subject areas in content and presentation to meet students' needs. Curriculum is created through research-based programs and aligned with PA core standards. Instruction is paced to accommodate students with language delays, and motor planning and processing difficulties. Instruction is offered in reading, math, language arts, health, handwriting, science, social studies, physical education, music, art, computer, library and life-centered skills. Students receive social skills training through direct instruction and throughout the school day via scripting, modeling and guided practice. Community experiences are also integral parts of the program.

Within the classroom setting, each teacher is supported by a team of therapists who work with students individually, in small groups or on a consult basis. Other supports and services include school counseling, physical, occupational and speech-language therapies, behavior support, school psychology, reading support and school nursing.

Middle School

Middle School years are a time when children reach for increased independence from their parents and become more involved with their peers and school for validation. This can be especially difficult for students who may lack the social skills or coping mechanisms to deal with these changes. Students are supported through many initiatives across the curriculum and enhancement programs.

The Middle School implements a modified team-teaching approach with students changing classes about every 45 minutes. Increasing the students' awareness of their environment, working towards increasing independence and improving self-advocacy skills are a major focus of the Middle School program.

The Middle School offerings include math, reading, science, social studies, language arts, physical education, home arts, computers, music, wood shop, keyboarding, library, health, art, transition planning, the Work Orientation Readiness Center (WORC) and the Program of Adventure-Based Counseling Experiences (PACE).

High School

In High School there is a continuing emphasis on the development of academic skills, social skills and student independence. Through community-based instruction, daily living skills, self-determination and interpersonal skills, students work toward a successful transition to work, post-secondary education and community living. Offerings may include curricula geared toward college preparation, career exploration and daily living skills training.

The High School offerings include math, reading, science, social studies, language arts, physical education, home arts, computers, music, wood shop, keyboarding, library, health, art, transition planning and the Program of Adventure-Based Counseling Experiences (PACE).

Vanguard Transition Center (VTC)

The Vanguard Transition Center (VTC) offers post-secondary education, workforce development and daily living skills development to young adults.

As part of The Vanguard School, students receive continuing education, counseling, self-advocacy training and career experience. Evidence-based instruction in math, language-arts, daily living skills, employment skills, current events, healthy lifestyles and human social development are offered to all students along with community-based activities and recreational opportunities.

Enhancement Programs

Art

The art program at The Vanguard School nurtures creativity in each student, building skills and self-confidence through the artistic process. The program is taught to all age levels, taking into consideration individual strengths and differences.

Art instruction at the Elementary School level is geared toward familiarizing students with how to use art materials and have fun doing so. Projects are seasonal and align with classroom curriculum. Students work with a wide variety of media, learning basic art elements such as color, shape and form. They are introduced to famous American artists as well as the art of other cultures. Student work is displayed often on bulletin boards throughout the year and showcased in a yearly art show.

Middle School level art instruction focuses on developing skills in various art media and learning new techniques. Communication and expression through the creative process is encouraged. Students study artists, their methods and various cultures in depth. Student projects reflect the styles they learn.

In the High School, instruction is on an elective basis. Students choose from one of five classes; studio art, 3-D design, floral design, crafts and drawing and painting. In drawing and painting and studio art, students are expected to complete a sketchbook as a homework assignment. In drawing and painting, students are instructed in a different technique and style each quarter and complete a class assignment. In studio art, students complete two projects of their choice: a drawing, painting, sculpture or print project. In 3-D design, students create sculptures using various materials. In floral design students create seasonal wreaths and baskets as well as pressed flower entries for the Philadelphia Flower Show. In crafts, students complete two projects a quarter or a single long-term project. Students choose their own projects and may bring in items from home.

Art instruction at the Vanguard Transition Center level is focused on art as a means of enjoyment and expression in adult life. Students may choose from several different projects or create one of their own.

Educational Technology

At The Vanguard School, students are taught to increase their computer literacy and prepare for a technology-driven world. Computers are available in each classroom and in two computer labs.

Lessons align with the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards. These standards promote technology-based activities in which students can achieve success in communication, daily living skills and learning. Educational programs engage students through a combination of animation, audio components and interactive activities. Additional lessons teach and reinforce Internet safety and etiquette, computer and social skills, academic concepts and problem-solving abilities. Intermediate students are introduced to basic keyboarding skills through *Type to Learn 4*.

The Vanguard School also has an interactive SmartBoard in every classroom and students have access to iPads and laptops. This technology allows for computer-based instruction while enabling students to remain engaged in learning.

Library

The Vanguard Elementary School has its own library which features reading and reference materials as well as computer access to the Follett Destiny Library Catalog, online subscription databases and the Internet. Students come for regularly-scheduled library science classes and to exchange books.

The Edward L. Reed II Learning Center serves Middle School, High School and Vanguard Transition Center students. The library houses a robust collection of reading, curriculum, reference and professional materials, periodicals and other resources.

Music

The goal of The Vanguard School's music program is to provide a multi-sensory and holistic music environment. Each student has the opportunity to explore his or her musical creativity, enhance self-esteem and self-awareness, expand knowledge of music concepts and develop performance skills. Students work to promote a better understanding of various styles of music and integrate academic core-curriculum subjects into music activities when appropriate. Students engage in individual and group activities as well as public performances to incorporate learned skills into a positive social environment.

In addition to general music performances, students in the Middle School, High School and VTC have the opportunity to participate in a school musical theater experience. They can choose to be involved in all parts of the production including performance, set creation, prop design and stage crew. This past year, our music department produced the musical, Disney's Little Mermaid Jr.

Program of Adventure-Based Counseling Experiences (PACE)

PACE is an innovative, adventure-based counseling program. As an avenue for building personal, social and developmental satisfaction, PACE enhances a student's resilience and ability to cope with peer pressure, manage conflict and gain confidence.

PACE, utilizing an outdoor ropes course, games, group problem-solving initiatives and trust activities is founded on a set of behavioral expectations and values that our students are taught at the beginning of each school year. The students leverage communication skills, cooperation and trust to meet the concepts of challenge and adventure.

Using a group model with structured activities, PACE promotes a healthy lifestyle, community involvement and service, self-awareness, positive decision making and engagement in the lifelong learning process, ultimately aiming to prevent high-risk behaviors.

In order to motivate and stimulate oneself in a team-building effort, each student recognizes an awareness for safety, means of coping with stressful situations, the ability to work effectively in a group, respect for and an enjoyment of being with others, respect for their peers and responsibility for one's own actions.

Physical Education

Physical education is a regular part of each student's educational program at The Vanguard School. Classes take place in the Musser Gymnasium which is complete with ample equipment for learning a multitude of physical activities. Our experienced, certified physical education staff plan developmentally-appropriate lessons designed to meet the diverse needs of our student population. Students at The Vanguard School have a broad range of cognitive, motor, sensory, social, emotional and learning differences that may necessitate adaptations in their physical education program. The curriculum, task or environment may be modified so all children can participate fully, regardless of ability.

The staff also works closely with our physical therapists to develop individualized programs when needed. When a child demonstrates specific motor challenges, the types of modifications or specially-designed instruction needed is discussed with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and incorporated into the student's IEP.

In addition to the regular physical education curriculum at The Vanguard School, several special activities afford opportunities for our students to practice and enjoy their skills including:

- Intramural sports and games
- Sports and recreational field days
- Elementary School "Mileage Club" (a walking program for students and staff)
- Roller-skating program
- The Vanguard School Basketball Blast
- Annual Elementary School Gym Show
- Chester County Special Olympics Track Meet
- Iron Man Games
- Project ACES (All Children Exercise Simultaneously)

Physical education plays an important role in educating students. Research supports the importance of movement in cultivating both the mind and body. The unique learning opportunities provided through the physical education curriculum emphasize the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to choose and enjoy an active, healthy lifestyle. A physically-educated student will participate regularly in physical activities, maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness and demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior in physical-activity settings.

When the goals of the physical-education curriculum are achieved, students are inclined to choose physical activities for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and social interaction purposes.

Reading Services

Reading specialists at The Vanguard School are responsible for providing corrective and remedial services on an individual basis or in a small group or classroom group-learning situation. Their primary services include assessing students, evaluating strengths and weaknesses, maintaining testing data and developing programs appropriate to student needs. Additionally, consultative services are provided to teachers, other specialists and parents to encourage a multi-disciplinary approach to each child's education.

Students are referred for reading services by teachers, other specialists or members of the IEP team. Along with a reading assessment, the following guidelines help determine if services are warranted: a significant difference in reading performance and grade-level expectations as well as deficits in word-recognition skills, comprehension skills, vocabulary development or inadequate study skills, especially when any of these factors are interfering with the ability to progress in reading.

Career Exploration and Development

Community-Based Vocational Training (CBVT)

The Community-Based Vocational Training (CBVT) program is designed to provide a positive beginning in the world of work for members of our Vanguard Transition Center. It serves students having a range of abilities who need personalized support exploring potential careers, pursuing challenging work experiences, maintaining employment and seeking job advancements in their communities.

We have partnerships with a variety of CBVT business partners that provide educational on-the-job training. The type of work assigned and projects completed provide a meaningful learning experience so students may hone a skillset they can carry into future employment opportunities.

Onsite mentors at business sites work closely with a VTC job coach to develop a work plan based on the requirements of the job and the abilities of the student. The VTC job coach's role is to support the student and the mentor and ensure the necessary duties of the job are performed satisfactorily.

We work closely with our business partners to understand their needs and work environment. With a thorough understanding of a business, our job coaches start preparing students in classroom situations before they begin working at our community-based business sites.

Students gain valuable experience and critical on-the-job training as well as have the opportunity to explore occupations. Students greatly benefit from being trained by a highly-qualified mentor in a real-world setting which helps our students build the physical, social and employment skills needed to be successful in the world of world.

On Campus Work Program

The work program offers our Middle School and High School students the opportunity to learn new job skills, reinforce already established work skills, practice social skills, explore careers and gain valuable work experience in familiar surroundings with support and guidance.

Students in the program learn and practice job skills under the guidance of a peer coach and other staff members. Some of the jobs offered include assisting in Elementary School classes, working in the maintenance department, helping in the offices (e.g., typing, sorting, copying, performing data entry and filing), assisting in the library and delivering mail, announcements and newspapers on campus. Each day, you will find a variety of students working around campus. The enthusiasm and commitment that our student workers bring to the program each day is a reminder of the program's success. As the school year progresses, the student workers begin to demonstrate independence and general work and social skills necessary to succeed at a work site.

As part of the program, we host an annual Career Day where various presenters join us on campus to speak to our students in small-group settings about their careers and how they came to be in their particular positions.

Work Orientation Readiness Center (WORC)

Students may spend part of their day at WORC, our vocational-skills training program which reinforces important soft skills while students perform meaningful jobs across campus including copying, binding, data entry and mailing projects. Our professionals work with students to teach the importance of being on time, communicating politely with co-workers and supervisors, maintaining proper hygiene and grooming and other skills critical in the workforce.

Academic Expectations

Attendance

The Vanguard School requires that all students enrolled attend school regularly in accordance with state and federal laws. The Pennsylvania Department of Education recognizes that schools should be concerned with a pupil's absences in excess of ten school days. Excessive absences in any marking period will be reported to the parent or legal guardian and the student's school district of residence.

If a student is not in attendance for the school day, he or she may not participate in school-sponsored activities that occur that same day without approval from the Director of The Vanguard School including dances, clubs and program trips.

Reporting Absences: If your child will not be attending school, please notify the office by 8:30 am. When a student's absence is known ahead of time, please make arrangements with your student's teachers for make-up work the week before the absence. Any academic work missed because of a voluntary absence is the student's responsibility.

If your child has been assigned a one-to-one aide through an outside agency, it is your responsibility to inform the aide of your child's absence prior to the start of their school day.

Absence and Excuse Notes: Upon your child's return to school, he or she must bring a written note signed by a parent or legal guardian. If documentation is not supplied within three days of the absence, it will be considered unexcused. A physician's note must accompany all absences of three days or more.

Truancy: When a student accumulates three or more unexcused absences, his or her parents or legal guardians and school district of residence will be notified. Unexcused absences are illegal and any student who accumulates more than three is liable for prosecution under the compulsory attendance laws.

Early Dismissal: Parents who need to have a student dismissed early or excused from school for a period of time during the day must send a note and call the appropriate office. The student must be picked up and signed out at the school office by an authorized adult whose name is on file. Proper identification is required.

Tardiness: If your child misses the bus or arrives late, he or she should report to the school office upon arrival. The student should not go directly to the classroom.

If your child did not take the morning bus, you must call your school district of residence transportation office if you want them to transport your child home.

Classroom Placement

Teachers, specialists, therapists, school counselors, psychologists and program supervisors discuss classroom placement for each student. Each student's learning style, social and developmental maturity; academic strengths and other abilities and needs are taken into account, as are group dynamics and balance. Class groupings change every year and are finalized in late August.

Graduation and Diplomas

Federal and state special education laws permit students to continue their right to a free, appropriate publicly-funded education until 21 years of age.

Graduation and transition planning are the responsibility of the IEP team and should begin no later than the school year in which the student turns 14 years of age. These plans should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised at least once per year at the IEP meeting.

Students who successfully complete their final IEP and are at least 17 years of age may receive a high school diploma from their school districts of residence at the time of their graduation. The graduation date for each student younger than 21 years of age is determined by the IEP team.

Homework

Homework is an integral part of a student's learning experience and one that may require parental assistance and support. Homework serves many purposes including practicing learned skills, developing independent work skills, building healthy study habits and employing effective time-management skills.

If your child spends an excessive amount of time doing homework or is struggling with getting his or her work done for any reason, please contact his or her teacher or school counselor. Our staff will work with you to adjust expectations to alleviate any homework problems.

Do not complete homework for your child or spend an undue amount of time guiding them through homework. Teachers need to know if there are difficulties with completing homework so they may intervene accordingly.

Support and encourage homework completion from the Elementary School program through graduation. Healthy study habits foster feelings of competence and a positive attitude toward school as well as lay the groundwork for adopting successful work habits as an adult.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Meetings

The purpose of the annual IEP meeting is to determine whether or not the goals for your child are being achieved and to revise the IEP when appropriate. Parents and legal guardians are critical members of the IEP team and are expected to attend their child's meetings. Parents and legal guardians are welcome to bring a friend, advocate or other agency representative to the meeting. Please call our Special Education Liaisons at 610.296.6700, if you plan to invite other individuals to these meetings so we may plan accordingly.

An IEP meeting can be called at any time during the year if a teacher, parent or legal guardian or other individual involved feels a student's IEP is not meeting his or her needs. This happens if the goals set out for the student are no longer deemed appropriate. If you are concerned about your child's IEP, it is best to discuss your thoughts with his or her teacher or school counselor to determine the best course of action.

The IEP team includes the parents or legal guardians of the student; at least one special education teacher of the student or, if appropriate, one special education provider of the student; a representative of the public agency who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially-designed instruction and knowledgeable about the general curriculum and availability of resources of the public agency; an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results; and, at the discretion of the parents or legal guardians or agency, other individuals who have knowledge of or special expertise regarding the student.

The IEP must include a statement of the student's present levels of educational performance; measurable annual goals including benchmarks or short-term objectives; the special education, related services and supplementary aids to be provided to the student; an explanation of the extent to which the student cannot participate with children in more traditional education classrooms; any individual modifications in the administration of state- or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed for the student to participate in the assessment; the projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications along with the frequency, location and duration of the services and modifications; and a statement of how progress toward the annual goals will be measured and how the parents will be regularly informed of this progress. For students who have reached 14 years of age, the IEP also must address transition needs. The IEP team also will determine whether or not a student is eligible for Extended School Year services.

An IEP meeting may be called if a student's behavior necessitates the use of a physical management

intervention (i.e., restraint). In such cases, the team collectively addresses the behavioral needs of the student and a positive behavior support plan is added to the IEP.

Official School Records

The Vanguard School maintains an official school record for each student. This record is confidential and available only to the parents or legal guardians, educational officials, those who a parent or legal guardian designates in writing and, after 18 years of age, the student. Parents or legal guardians have the right to see their student's record and request changes if there are factual errors. The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 outline this process in detail. If you have any questions regarding FERPA, please contact VFES' Quality Assurance Office at 610.296.6725.

Progress Reports and Report Cards

IEP progress reports and report cards are provided four times a year at the conclusion of each marking period. These reports are designed to update parents and legal guardians on the monitored progress regarding a student's IEP goals and share information about student performance in academic subjects and enrichment classes as well as social, work and behavioral areas. The report cards also include a record of student attendance.

Reevaluation Process

Reevaluations are conducted at least once every two years. The reevaluation process begins with a review of existing data about the student (e.g., previous goals, progress monitoring reports, current level of performance and other relevant data) by the student's IEP team. The team must decide if any additional information is needed to determine: 1) if the student continues to have a disability and the student's corresponding educational needs; 2) the present levels of academic achievement and related developmental and functional needs; 3) whether the student continues to need special education and related services; and 4) whether any additions or changes to special education and related services are needed to allow the student to meet the measurable annual goals.

The IEP team may make a recommendation for additional testing. If it is determined that additional data is needed, parental consent will be obtained and appropriate tests and other evaluation instruments will be administered.

State-Mandated Testing

During the school year, a number of state-mandated tests and evaluations are administered to students including The Keystone Exams, Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and Pennsylvania's Alternate System of Assessment (PASA).

Clinical Services

Clinical services include speech-language, occupational and physical therapies, school psychology, school counseling, behavior support and nursing. All therapists and specialists have the advantage of being involved actively in the child's entire day; our clinicians are able to co-treat across disciplines and consult with teachers and other professionals on a regular basis.

The clinical staff has extensive experience with populations that have unique educational, therapeutic and behavioral-management needs.

Behavior Analysis and Behavior Support

When student behavior adversely interferes with academic or vocational progress, a board-certified behavior analyst may assess environmental variables that contribute to those behaviors. In collaboration with students' IEP teams and parents, those environmental variables are targeted for change. Treatments are drawn from principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and documented in the positive behavior support plan of the IEP. The focus of the behavior support plan is to identify: A) ways to prevent target behaviors, B) methods to teach and reinforce replacement behaviors, and C) safe ways to manage students' target behaviors.

Behavior support specialists work across all programs and are part of an overall interdisciplinary team. They are highly-trained in crisis management through a vetted training program. In addition, they help create a positive, inclusive school culture.

Sometimes students demonstrate unsafe behaviors toward themselves, peers or staff. When this occurs, our staff members use least restrictive interventions to maintain safety (e.g., prompts to safe behaviors and redirection). If these measures prove unsuccessful, physical management or use of a safe, protective room may be temporarily needed to ensure safety. Parents and legal guardians are immediately notified in these situations. These procedures are not used as a punishment, but rather only to maintain safety for students and staff.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

For students in need, we offer occupational therapy that focuses on improving students' academic success, and social, functional, vocational and adaptive skills. Our occupational therapy model emphasizes collaboration and support between OTs and other educators (e.g., teachers, aides, job coaches and therapists) when students are learning in their natural educational settings including the classroom, gym, cafeteria, social, and pre-vocational settings. Direct OT services are also offered for students with more significant challenges, for example, in fine motor, motor planning, visual-spatial or sensory domains.

Physical Therapy (PT)

Physical therapy at The Vanguard School takes place in our state-of-the-art clinic, throughout the campus, in the community and at off-campus work sites as needed. Activities are designed to build the skills needed for meaningful and beneficial movement as well as to integrate students into the community. Flexibility, balance, coordination, posture, strength and endurance are developed to enable the student to participate successfully in educational programs and activities. Therapy goals are integrated into the curriculum and individualized to meet the strengths and needs of each student. PT programs are coordinated with teachers and other specialists, working closely with the adaptive physical education program and PACE to develop gross motor skills and lifetime leisure interests.

School Counseling

To promote the educational, social and emotional development of our students, the school maintains a comprehensive clinical staff of school counselors. Through comprehensive school counseling programs, The Vanguard School follows the American School Counselor Association approach to guide students through social, academic and pre-vocational programs. Although the specific roles played by school counselors vary slightly from program to program, counselors at all levels strive to coordinate the developmental, preventative and responsive services that address a student's academic, behavioral, career, personal and social development.

In our Elementary School program, the school counselor provides individual and small-group counseling on an as needed basis for all students. Our elementary school students participate in planned classroom guidance sessions that emphasizes social thinking in areas such as conflict resolution, appreciating the perspectives of others, understanding feelings, self-advocacy, problem solving and coping skills.

For our older students, school counselors assume the role of transition coordinator. In this position, they work in conjunction with students, parents and legal guardians, teachers and other school and community personnel to assist in meeting the students' needs, which are often complex. The Middle School, High School and VTC counselors assist students in reaching their academic, personal and social goals.

School Psychology

School psychologists help students succeed academically, socially and emotionally. Evaluations, observations and consultation at all levels within The Vanguard School generate the development of interventions conducive to student growth and confidence.

Our psychologists coordinate and contribute to a multidisciplinary evaluation of each student's current performance and progress every two years. This evaluation focuses on the strengths and needs of each student in the areas of cognition, social-emotional functioning, behavior and executive functioning so that appropriate interventions can be implemented. The evaluation also contributes to the actualization and success of IEP goals.

Speech-Language Therapy

We strive to provide students with the strategies and skills needed to function within educational and community settings. Speech-language pathologists focus on promoting academic skills, fundamental receptive and expressive language skills and speech intelligibility. As the students get older, therapists prepare them for vocational and community interactions.

A therapy plan is developed based on observations in the classroom and other school environments, consultation with parents, teachers, assistants and specialists and formal and informal testing. Types of therapy include individual, small group, classroom and co-treatment with other specialists. The primary goal is the generalization of appropriate speech-language skills into educational and vocational settings. The therapists have the advantage of actively being involved in the student's entire day including bus time, program trips, lunch, special activities and on-site job training. Well-trained, experienced therapists work to design programs to target the following areas:

- Voice
- Fluency
- Articulation
- Auditory processing, memory and language comprehension
- Social communication
- Expressive language
- Compensatory strategies
- Effective use of assistive technology
- Clarity and precision of verbal expression
- Vocabulary and grammar
- Verbal reasoning and problem solving
- Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS)

Nursing and Health-Related Items

Medical Emergency Information Form

A Medical Emergency Information Form is completed by a parent or legal guardian at the beginning of each school year. This information is necessary for immediate use in the event of illness or accident. If a child becomes sick while at school, the staff will make every effort to reach you or the emergency contact person you have designated on the Medical Emergency Information Form. The emergency contact person listed must be someone who is able to pick up a child who is too ill or otherwise unable to remain at school. If you or your emergency contact changes any pertinent contact information during the year, please notify your child's school as soon as possible with the new information.

Health Requirements and Immunizations

Pennsylvania School Health Law requires periodic medical, dental and scoliosis examinations as well as immunization updates and possible tuberculosis (TB) screenings. These should be completed by your family doctor and dentist.

If these examinations are needed this year, please return the completed forms by the start of the new school year.

Students are required by law to have the following:

- Kindergarten/Grade 1 Physical Exam by a doctor
- Kindergarten/Grade 1 Dental Exam
- Grade 3 (ages 8–9) Dental Exam
- Grade 6 (ages 11–12) Physical Exam by a doctor
- Grade 7 (ages 12–13) Dental Exam
- Grade 11 (ages 16–17) Physical Exam by a doctor

You will be sent forms at the appropriate times for your health care providers to complete. These forms must be returned to The Vanguard School. Your school district of residence may be of assistance in obtaining these required examinations free of charge. Periodic testing for TB may be required and the school will notify you when such testing is needed. In accordance with education law, students receive, at no cost, an annual vision and hearing screening. Height and weight also are taken and recorded.

If there are any changes in your child's health status during the year, please inform us as soon as possible.

Please send us copies of any health-related evaluations and updated immunizations so we can maintain current health records.

Students receive a scoliosis screening between 11 and 13 years of age. If the results of these evaluations indicate the need for follow up by your family physician or pediatrician, you will be notified in writing. We request that a report of this follow-up visit be sent to the school nurse for inclusion in your child's records.

Pennsylvania state law requires that all children enrolled in a school in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania be protected against serious communicable diseases. In accordance with state law, The Vanguard School requires proof of the following immunizations prior to school entry:

- 4 doses of tetanus* (1 dose on or after the child's fourth birthday)
- 4 doses of diphtheria* (1 dose on or after the child's fourth birthday)
- 3 doses of polio
- 2 doses of measles**
- 2 doses of mumps**
- 1 dose of rubella (German measles) **
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine or history of disease

*usually given as DTP or DTaP or DT or Td

**usually given as MMR

Children, entering Grade 7 also need the following:

- 1 dose of Tdap (if 5 years have elapsed since last tetanus immunization)
- 1 dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV)

If the requirements are not met, the student will be placed on a provisional status and reviewed every 60 days for 8 months. Students may be excluded from school if non-compliance continues past this provisional period.

These requirements allow exemptions for medical and religious beliefs. Written proof of the reason for exemptions must be provided. If your child is exempt from immunization, he or she may be removed from school should a communicable disease present itself on campus. All immunizations and exemptions are kept on file at The Vanguard School.

Illness

Students with symptoms of illness should not be sent to school. If a student is ill, please keep him or her home until the student is completely recovered (i.e., his or her temperature is normal for 24-48 hours) with no signs of illness (e.g., fever, persistent cough, sores, rash, chills, upset stomach, diarrhea, sore throat, swollen glands, ear or eye discharge, etc.). This is not only best for the student, but will help to control the spread of any of these illnesses. Please inform the school nurse if the illness is due to a communicable disease (e.g., measles, chicken pox, etc.). Children will be sent home with symptoms of fever (100 or above), vomiting, diarrhea, excessive coughing, discharging eyes, sores, etc. All students should be free of symptoms for at least 24 hours before coming back to school. If your doctor has prescribed an antibiotic, your child should be kept home for 24 hours after starting the medication, after which the student is not considered contagious. Any student suspected of having any of the communicable diseases outlined below must remain out of school for the timeframe indicated. If a student is to be readmitted in less than the required days listed below, a doctor's certificate must be presented to the school nurse.

Disease	Incubation Period	Exclusion from School
Chicken Pox	14-21 days	6 days from the last crop of vesicles
Bacterial Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	24-72 hours	until the eyes are free of discharge or 24 hours after the start of treatment
Scarlet Fever & Strep Throat	1-3 days	24 hours after start of treatment
Impetigo	4-10 days	until skin is clear or 24 hours after start of treatment
Pediculosis (lice) and Pediculosis Corpus (body lice)	2 weeks	until treated, free of lice and nits
Pinworms	none	until the first dose of prescription treatment
Pertussis	5 days	until 5 days of antibiotic treatment
Ringworms and Ringworm of scalp	4-10 days	until skin is clear of all scabs and crusts or treatment has been started and area is covered
Any undiagnosed rash or fever (over 99.8)	N/A	until diagnosis is established or symptoms have not displayed for 24 hours

Communicable Diseases

When a student is diagnosed with a life-threatening or highly-contagious communicable disease, parents and legal guardians should notify the school nurse immediately to inform him or her of their student's medical condition and diagnosis.

The school nurse gathers data and information pertaining to the medical and environmental management of the disease from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the local County Health Department, the CDC and/or the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Based on the guidelines and recommendations gathered from local, state and federal agencies, the Leadership team will develop a campus-wide plan regarding how to communicate with parents and staff, which environmental precautions to take for sanitizing, how to maintain the physical plant and furnishings and whether or not to close the school or relevant school program.

It is the responsibility of the attending physician who has diagnosed and is treating the student to report necessary information to the County Health Department based on where the student resides.

Medications and Prescriptions

We recognize that parents and legal guardians have the primary responsibility in ensuring the health of their children. We recommend that all medication be given at home, but realize that the health and well-being of some children requires that they receive medication during school hours.

When it is necessary to administer medication during school hours, the student's parent, legal guardian or authorized representative must deliver all prescription and non-prescription medication along with the completed Authorization for Administration of Prescription/Non-Prescription Medication Form to the school nurse. All medication will be administered by the school nurse.

Please make arrangements with the school nurse to deliver the medication and review instructions for taking the medication. Provide all medication in the original bottle or package. Prescription medications must be in the original labeled prescription bottle with the student's name, the date, the physician's name, clear directions for administration and expiration date of the medication. Prescription or non-prescription medication in packaging or bottles from which pharmacist's instructions or manufacturer's labeling has been removed will not be accepted. Prescription or non-prescription medications that are more than one year old or contain an expiration date that has passed will not be administered.

All controlled medication such as stimulants, antidepressants and tranquilizers should have the number of pills being sent to school marked by the parent or legal guardian on the outside label of the bottle or package. The school nurse will keep a written record of the number of pills sent in and the date they were received.

All medication will be stored in a locked cabinet in the school nurse's office and will be accessible only by authorized school personnel. Students shall not carry or otherwise possess prescription or non-prescription medication on school property or at any school-sponsored activity unless permission has been granted by the school nurse.

Unless otherwise provided in writing or determined in the professional judgment of the school nurse that medications should be administered in another location, any student will be responsible for reporting to the school nurse's office at the time medications are to be given. Whenever necessary, teachers and school personnel will provide verbal reminders to a student to go the school nurse's office for medication.

Students are permitted to carry inhalers or Epi-Pens ordered by their licensed provider and authorized by their parents or legal guardians and the school nurse.

All discontinued or outdated medications will be returned to the parent or legal guardian immediately. At the end of each school year, all unused medications will be returned to the parent or legal guardian. If the parent or legal guardian does not come to school to retrieve the medication at the end of the school year, we will dispose of the medication and document the disposal.

The school nurse will maintain a record of the name of the student to whom the medication is to be administered, the prescribing physician, the dosage and time of medication and notations of each instance of administration. If a student refuses to take the medication, this refusal will be charted and the parent or legal guardian will be notified by phone or in writing.

Parents or legal guardians are responsible for maintaining the necessary supply of medication (both prescription and non-prescription) and any necessary medical equipment for administration.

No medications or medical supplies, even when they are identical, may be borrowed from one student's supply and given to another student.

Non-Prescription Medication

If parents or legal guardians provide written consent on the Medical Emergency Information Form, the school nurse will provide non-prescription pain-relief medication to students during school hours to address minor discomfort or the onset of fever.

The following will be administered on an as-needed basis, unless a parent or legal guardian instructs the school nurse to the contrary in writing: Acetaminophen (Tylenol), Ibuprofen (Advil), Benadryl (all forms), insect sting swabs, eyewash solution, lubricating eye drops, Vaseline and Aquaphor.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support

In our effort to establish The Vanguard School as a safe and effective learning environment, we have implemented a School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) program that actively encourages students to achieve their academic potential while simultaneously reinforcing their social and emotional learning skills. The underlying theme is teaching behavioral expectations in the same manner as any core curriculum subject.

SWPBS includes strategies for defining, teaching and supporting appropriate behavior across environments. Routines are taught to students at the beginning of the school year and reviewed until it is evident that students understand expected routines and are able to perform them. The goal is to establish a predictable, consistent and positive school culture for all students and staff.

Characteristics of SWPBS include:

- Interventions are planned and positive rather than reactive and punitive.
- Conditions (antecedents) contributing to inappropriate behavior are carefully managed or eliminated.
- Multiple opportunities for positive, corrective feedback are created while negative critical feedback is limited or eliminated.
- Appropriate social behaviors are taught directly, practiced frequently and made routine so they become automatic.

Rewards

The Vanguard School rewards students for positive behaviors in an effort to guide students in understanding the part their behavior plays in creating a positive learning environment. We hope to encourage positive behaviors in all students by having them understand clear expectations and by rewarding them when they follow these expectations correctly and consistently.

Vanguard Values

Respect, Responsibility, Readiness and Safety

Our goal at The Vanguard School is to teach and encourage appropriate behavior in all areas of school through concentrated instruction of The Vanguard Values: Respect, Responsibility, Readiness and Safety. We believe students who reflect respectfulness, responsibility, readiness and safety maximize not only their learning opportunities but also those of their peers.

Students are involved actively in learning about The Vanguard Values and how they apply to all areas of school through activities, lessons, demonstrations, videos and role playing.

At The Vanguard School, the focus is on teaching and encouraging appropriate behavior that reflects these core values.

In addition to learning The Vanguard Values, teachers and staff recognize and reward students when they engage in expected appropriate behavior.

Policies

Acceptable Use of Technology

The purpose of The Vanguard School Internet connection is to support research and education by providing access to unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. Each student and his or her parent or legal guardian must sign an Acceptable Use Agreement before the student can use VFES computers and access the Internet. The use of an Internet account must support education and research as well as be consistent with the educational objectives of the organization. Transmission or acquisition of any material in violation of any federal or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted infringement and threatening or obscene material. Use of the Internet for personal or commercial use, product advertisement or political lobbying is prohibited. Subscription to list servers must be pre-approved by the Director of Technology. The use of the Internet is a privilege. Inappropriate use will result in disciplinary actions that can include, but are not limited to, loss of Internet privileges, suspension and possible expulsion. The Director of The Vanguard School will deem what constitutes inappropriate use and his or her decision is final.

Bullying and Cyberbullying

We recognize that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from a safe environment necessary for successful learning and may lead to more serious issues.

Students shall be expected to respect the rights of others and ensure the atmosphere is free from bullying. Cognitive limitations, communication difficulties or behavioral and mental health concerns shall not exclude an individual from these expectations. An act of bullying by either an individual or a group of individuals is expressly prohibited on school property and at school functions. This policy applies not only to individuals who directly engage in an act of bullying, but also to individuals who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another individual's act of bullying as a bystander.

Bullying occurs when an individual or a group of individuals engage in written or verbal expression or physical conduct that:

- Will have the effect of physically harming an individual, damaging an individual's property or placing an individual in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or of damage to his or her property.
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive such that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive environment for an individual; or has the effect of substantially negatively impacting an individual's emotional or mental well-being.

Cyberbullying is defined specifically as electronically sending or posting harmful or cruel text or images via the Internet or other digital communication device.

Cyberbullying can include:

- Sending cruel, vicious or threatening e-mails
- Creating websites that have stories, pictures and/or jokes ridiculing others or using social media to post such things
- Posting pictures of other individuals online with derogatory phrases or questions attached to them
- Using someone else's e-mail to send vicious or incriminating e-mails to others
- Using instant-messaging and other tools to harass others

Every staff member and student is responsible for immediately reporting any acts of possible bullying they have observed or been made aware. Parents, legal guardians and any other individual also may report possible bullying to any staff member.

Staff members report possible bullying to the behavior support staff or the appropriate program supervisor as soon as possible after witnessing, becoming aware of or receiving report of an alleged act. The report is made in writing using the appropriate program-specific form. The staff member is responsible for writing a detailed description of the incident that includes the sequence of events, phrases or language used and parties involved. The behavior support staff informs the school counselor, program supervisor and psychologist that a report of possible bullying has been made.

The program supervisor shall promptly take interim action to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate. Behavior support staff or a designee initiates an interview or investigation process and notifies school counselor(s) or designee(s) that an investigation has been started. The program supervisor contacts parents by phone immediately after the initial interviews to inform them there is an allegation of bullying and that staff members currently are conducting interviews and gathering facts from all participants involved.

A report outlining the results of the initial investigation will be passed on to the school counselor and appropriate program supervisor. Upon receiving the report, the program supervisor works with appropriate members of the participant's or participants' team(s), including school counselor(s), psychologist(s) and behavior support staff or a designee, to further investigate and interview the individuals involved in the incident to determine whether the allegation is founded or unfounded.

If it is determined that the accusations are unfounded, the program supervisor will contact the parents or legal guardians after the investigation is completed. The

parents or legal guardians are sent a follow-up letter outlining the action plan to be taken and will list a contact person for questions or concerns.

If it is determined that the accusation is founded, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to school counseling; a conference with parents or legal guardians; positive behavioral interventions; loss of program privileges; transfer to another group, program or means of transportation; exclusion from school-sponsored activities; in-school detention; out-of-school suspension; referral for counseling, therapy or hospitalization in the community; and referral to law enforcement officials.

Once the appropriate disciplinary and corrective action has been determined, a letter is sent to the accused student's school district of residence by the Director of The Vanguard School reporting both the disciplinary- and corrective-action plans along with a timeline for delivery.

In the event that a participant does not respond to the initial action plans developed to correct bullying behaviors, the Director of Clinical Services or designee initiates a clinical analysis of motivators and precursor behaviors and formulates prevention, intervention and post-intervention behavioral strategies that make up an appropriate alternate intervention plan.

If problems persist and a participant continues to engage in bullying behaviors and incidents, The Vanguard School will schedule a meeting with the parents or legal guardians, the school district of residence and the participant to develop a more intense plan.

Bus Transportation

In most cases, daily transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the school district in which your child resides unless other arrangements have been made. The Vanguard School works closely with the school districts to ensure arrival and departure times are consistent with the school's daily schedule and calendar.

Students must observe the following rules and regulations:

- Remain seated.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself and inside the bus at all times
- Obey all directions given by the driver and/or bus aide.
- Refrain from eating and drinking on the bus.
- Use emergency exit for emergencies only.
- Do not tamper with the bus or any of its equipment.
- Refrain from offensive language and behavior.
- Do not throw things out of the window.

Any problems or concerns you have with your child's transportation first should be brought to the attention of the appropriate personnel in your school district of residence. The Vanguard School's Transportation

Coordinator, available at 610.296.6725 x104, can assist you further with any questions you may have. If it is necessary to change the schedule or means of transportation for your child, please let The Vanguard School and your school district's transportation office know in advance.

Transportation during program trips or other school-sponsored events is the responsibility of The Vanguard School staff.

Children on Campus

Siblings of VFES students and other children should not be on campus during program hours unless it is a family event. If a parent or legal guardian needs to bring a child to campus, the child must be with that parent or legal guardian at all times, the VFES Visitor Policy must be followed and parent and child must remain in areas designated for visitors. Whenever possible, the parent or legal guardian should obtain prior approval.

For family events and activities that occur outside program hours (e.g., Bingo Night, musicals, Community Day, Back-to-School Picnic, parent-teacher conferences), parents are responsible for the supervision of the children they bring to the VFES campus at all times. Children may use playground equipment when supervised; however, children are not permitted to use any equipment in program areas including, but not limited to, the gym, PACE, Education Center, OT/PT clinic and Murphy Lobby without authorization from VFES.

Parents and legal guardians are responsible and liable for any and all injuries or damage sustained to or by their child while on the VFES campus. All visitors are expected to comply with the VFES Visitor Policy.

Conflicts of Interest

As a 501(c)(3) corporation, VFES must adhere to all federal and state guidelines, regulations and statutes governing the operation of non-profit organizations. VFES staff members will neither give nor accept gifts or business courtesies that would violate any federal or state law or VFES' Conflict of Interest Agreement, cause embarrassment or reflect negatively on VFES' reputation.

VFES staff members may not give money or items of substantial monetary value, directly or indirectly, to any person or organization that is seeking to conduct or currently conducting business with VFES. Likewise, VFES staff members may not accept any compensation or item of substantial monetary value, directly or indirectly, from any person or organization that is seeking to conduct or currently conducting business with VFES.

Controlled Substances

The Vanguard School is a drug-free zone. Possession, sharing, selling, using or displaying illegal substances including firecrackers, alcohol, illegal drugs and paraphernalia are prohibited from all school property and school-sponsored events.

Abuse or violation of this rule will result in any or all of the following:

- Required assessment by a physician or professional recommended or approved by the school
- Counseling or other interventions indicated in the assessment
- Required chemical screening
- Suspension or expulsion
- Legal consequence

Dress Code

The dress code establishes limits on extremes in student appearance and promotes a safe and friendly environment that accepts all students. We want the focus of attention to be on student learning, not what the student chooses to wear to school. We recognize that clothing allows for self-expression, however, some items are not appropriate to our program environment and may be distracting to others or interfere with preparing our students for real-world learning and experiences.

Students who do not adhere to the following dress code and arrive at school or a school-sponsored event will be asked to change or leave.

- All clothing must be neat, clean and appropriate for the educational environment.
- All clothing must be free of holes, cuts, tears and/or rips that expose undergarments or skin.
- Clothing with any printed message, graphic or phrase referencing alcohol, profanity, illegal activity or violence is unacceptable.
- Any article of clothing that is deemed offensive to racial, ethnic or religious groups or a distraction to the educational environment is prohibited.
- Leggings must be covered with shorts or dresses longer than fingertips with hands outstretched along the sides of the body
- Shirts must cover the midriff on all sides. Sleeveless shirts must have straps at least three fingers wide.
- Dresses and skirts must have a bottom hem longer than fingertips with hands outstretched along the sides of body.
- Any headwear worn must have a necessary function and be approved in advance by administration.
- Long pants and warm jackets must be worn outside when the temperature is below 40 degrees unless a parent or legal guardian has provided written permission.
- Undergarments must be concealed under clothing.

- Costumes and sleepwear are permitted on special theme days only and must maintain a neat, appropriate appearance. Animal accessories, capes and crowns are unacceptable on days that are not special theme days.
- Limitations on jewelry and accessories may be imposed if they constitute a safety hazard.
- Tattoos with unacceptable content must be covered.
- Limitations may be imposed on hair length and style if it constitutes a safety hazard.

Elopement

Elopement is defined as an act of leaving or having left school boundaries or an educational setting without permission. If we believe a student is in imminent danger, a school supervisor may call law enforcement immediately. If 911 is called, the supervisor will contact the student's parent or legal guardian immediately.

Extra-curricular Activities for Middle School, High School and VTC Students

The Vanguard School has been an innovator in offering an integrated academic, social and life centered approach within a supportive environment where the ultimate goal is to have each student become an independent, functional and happy member of society. As part of our program, students are offered the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities. We support these events out of a sense of tradition, a desire to promote the social and academic development of students and to celebrate student achievements.

It is important to note, however, that while education is a right, participation in extra-curricular activities is a privilege. When a student joins an activity, the student also agrees to accept the rules, regulations and responsibilities as set forth by the school's Student Code of Conduct.

Following are the requirements pertaining to student participation in Vanguard's extra-curricular activities.

- Students must abide by the rules and regulations set forth in the Student Code of Conduct. These rules apply both in school and throughout the duration of the extra-curricular activity.
- Disciplinary actions supersede participation in extra-curricular activities.
- Students who have a half-day or full day in-school detention or out of school suspension the week of the extra-curricular activity may not participate.
- Students must meet their goals for the week in order to participate in any extra-curricular activities. The High School and VTC week runs Friday to Thursday. The Middle School week runs Monday to Friday.
- If a student is not eligible to attend an extra-curricular activity, the Behavior Team will notify both the student and the parents as soon as a determination is made.

- High School students can not owe any work for the classes on their schedule. This means no blue slips or work slipping notices.
- Students must be in attendance the day of an extra-curricular activity in order to be eligible to attend.

Fighting or Assault

Physical and verbal assault of any kind is strictly prohibited. This includes threatening to hurt or physically harm another person in any way on school grounds or during any school-sponsored activity. Under Pennsylvania state law, a person has committed aggravated assault if he or she attempts to cause or intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causes bodily injury to another student or school employee.

Harassment

It is the goal of VFES to provide an academic environment that is free from all forms of harassment for all students and staff. The law does not permit, nor will VFES tolerate, harassment of staff members or students by other staff members or students of The Vanguard School.

Unlawful harassment is defined as verbal, visual, written, graphic or physical conduct that is related to an individual's race, color, national origin or ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Such conduct could be sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment and/or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with another person's performance. Examples of unlawful harassment include, but are not limited to: physical contact, slurs, derogatory comments, jokes or other verbal statements, written or graphic materials (including electronic) relating to an individual's race, color, national origin or ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Sexual harassment is defined as a specific form of unlawful harassment that constitutes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or display of materials that evoke responses incongruent with maintaining the atmosphere of an educational environment.

If a student believes he or she is a target of unlawful harassment or physical or verbal assault, the student should report this to any staff member. The staff member will immediately notify his or her supervisor who will conduct an investigation of the incident. If unlawful harassment has occurred, the Director of Clinical Services is notified. The student or students involved in the incident are moved to the behavior area by the behavior support staff and remain under supervision until a determination has been made and/or the student or students' parents or legal guardians have been notified.

The Director of Clinical Services and/or the Executive Director will follow established guidelines to determine whether the incident meets the level necessary to report to law enforcement.

If a staff member believes he or she is a target of unlawful harassment or physical or verbal assault from a student, the staff member must immediately report the incident to a supervisor. A member of the behavior support staff also must be notified. The student or students involved in the incident are moved to the behavior area by the behavior support staff and remain under supervision until a determination has been made and/or the student or students' parents or legal guardians have been notified. The Director of Clinical Services and/or the Executive Director will follow established guidelines to determine whether the incident meets the level necessary to report to law enforcement. In the case of a physical assault, the staff member retains the right to press charges against the student. Should law enforcement be alerted to the incident, all staff members will cooperate with the investigating officer(s) within the parameters of FERPA and/or legal advice.

Leaving Campus

Students may not leave the campus grounds during the school day or during school-sponsored activities without parent or legal guardian and program supervisor approval. Students who have permission to drive to school are not allowed to leave campus before the end of the school day. Violations will result in the loss of driving privileges on campus.

Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

VFES adheres to the guidelines of the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law (Act 126) for reporting instances of suspected child abuse and neglect. The Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law states that anyone may report suspected child abuse and mandated reporters must report child abuse and neglect. All staff members are mandated reporters and may be faced with the task of reporting the suspected child abuse and neglect of one of our students.

When child abuse or neglect is suspected, the law requires mandated reporters immediately make an oral report of suspected child abuse or neglect via ChildLine, a statewide system. ChildLine forwards the report to the appropriate county child welfare agency which investigates the circumstances. They will conduct a safety and risk assessment and proceed with whatever action is needed to ensure the safety of the children.

VFES does not take the responsibility of reporting suspected child abuse or neglect lightly. We recognize the personal and family stress and turmoil that may be created in filing an allegation of abuse report. At the same

time, we also understand our role as mandated reporters as dictated by law and, more critically, the importance of our role in ensuring the safety and well-being of our students.

Parent Employment

Parents or legal guardians of current students are not eligible for employment at VFES.

Personal Electronic Devices (Including Cell Phones)

All VFES Acceptable Use Policies must be followed when utilizing personal electronic devices, including cell phones, on VFES property or when attending VFES sponsored activities. VFES is not responsible for any personal electronic devices that are lost, damaged or stolen.

Personal cell phones and gaming devices are not to be used during the school day. Cell phones must be turned off and secured. Each program will determine the placement of cell phones throughout the school day and at any VFES-sponsored activities. Misuse or violations may result in the confiscation of the device.

Use of personal electronic devices or cell phones to photograph, videotape, record or post images or sounds of VFES-sponsored activities is strictly forbidden.

Students may use electronic devices other than cell phones for educational purposes as determined by the educational team. In addition, students may use electronic devices other than cell phones at designated times (i.e., special academic or therapeutic activity, earned reward time and bus time) as determined by the supervisor.

Exceptions to this policy may be made for educational, health, safety or emergency reasons, with program approval or when identified in a student's individualized educational program (IEP).

Pets on Campus

With the exception of certified service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pets are not permitted on campus at any time. An exception would be made if a therapy animal is included in a child's IEP. Please leave pets at home or in the car when dropping off or picking up students.

Property Damage

Students are expected to act responsibly with school property and the property of others. Students who cause damage or destruction to VFES property, materials, textbooks or the personal property of others due to negligence, malice or during an altercation will be held financially responsible for their actions. This may include compensation for the cost of the item replacement or repair.

Public Displays of Affection

Students should refrain from inappropriate intimate behaviors which invade an individual's personal space or environment. This type of behavior is not allowed on campus or at school-related events. Inappropriate behavior in this regard will not be allowed and may result in disciplinary action.

Smoking and Tobacco Policy

The use of tobacco, electronic cigarettes, vapor pens, lighters and nicotine products are prohibited on school property and during school-sponsored events in the community. If students are found with banned substances in their possession, the products will be confiscated and parents and legal guardians will be notified.

Social Media

When outside of school, students should be held responsible for their own behavior when communicating on social media. Students will be held accountable for the content of the communications they post on any social media outlet that directly addresses any event, person or policy sponsored or represented by VFES.

Students may not disrupt the learning atmosphere, educational programs, school activities or the rights of others. Students must use good judgment; if actions impact the learning environment, our policies pertaining to bullying and harassment will be enforced.

Students may be personally liable for any electronic posts that are considered defamatory, proprietary, pornographic, harassing, libelous, copyright infringement, creating a hostile learning environment or otherwise unlawful. There is no reasonable expectation of privacy for information posted on social networking sites.

During the school day, as well as during all VFES-sponsored activities, students are not to access social media outlets using any personal electronic device in accordance with the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy. Noncompliance will result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, confiscation of the device as well as program supervisor and parent or legal guardian notification.

Visitors and Observations (Including Parents and Legal Guardians)

Visitors: All visitors, including parents and legal guardians, who come to campus for classroom activities, IEP meetings or conferences must provide valid, government-issued photo identification as a condition of access to any campus-based building, especially buildings that house school and recreational programming for our students. The visitor management system, Raptor, also provides VFES with a current list of visitors on campus should an emergency occur. Additionally, this system checks against certain criteria in a national database that is already available to the public. Sign-in locations include VFES Central Administration, Elementary School main entrance and the Middle and High School main entrance.

Once authorized, a visitor will receive a visitor badge that must be worn and visible at all times while on campus. The visitor must return the badge to the office upon leaving the premises. After a visitor is cleared, only his/her name remains in the system; no personal information, such as address or license number is stored.

Visitors who fail to provide acceptable identification and visitors who refuse to allow his/her government-issued photo ID to be processed through the visitor management system may be denied access. An administrator will speak with the individual to determine the purpose of the visit and whether entry to particular buildings will be allowed. If entry is approved, the individual will be escorted at all times during his or her visit.

Observations: VFES welcomes observations to our school, classrooms and programs by parents and legal guardians, community members and other interested educators. VFES recognizes the value of observing students; however, to minimize disruptions and not impact the learning process or environment, we have established procedures governing classroom observations. The paramount concern is for student safety and confidentiality.

In order to observe, parents and legal guardians must submit a request in writing to the student's program supervisor at least five program days in advance. Parent or legal guardian observations (including parent representatives) are limited to one 45-minute observation per quarter. The parent or legal guardian must be accompanied by a supervisor or their designee during the entire observation visit. No children may accompany the observer.

All observers are required to follow our Visitor Policy.

Volunteers

VFES values the contributions of volunteers and welcomes volunteers to assist in program activities and special events. To ensure the safety of all students, VFES abides by all clearance requirements established by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) for adult volunteers working with children. This includes parents volunteering directly with VFES **and** parents volunteering at VFES through The Vanguard School's Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO).

All adult volunteers (18 years of age or older), both VFES volunteers and PTO volunteers, must comply with the DHS clearance requirements. This includes parents and legal guardians who volunteer in the school, at special events, on field trips or as a half-day activity chaperone. No adult will be eligible to volunteer in any capacity until VFES Human Resources has received the following documents which must be updated every five years:

- **PA Access to Criminal History (PATCH)** from the Pennsylvania State Police
- **PA Child Abuse History Clearance** from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services
- A FBI fingerprint-based **Federal Criminal History** from the Pennsylvania State Police and Pennsylvania Department of Education is required if the volunteer has lived outside Pennsylvania at any time during the last 10 years

When an adult interested in volunteering has obtained the required clearances, he or she must bring the original of each clearance to the VFES Central Administration building where VFES Human Resources will make a copy of each clearance to retain on file. The adult also will be required to sign a disclaimer form affirming there are no charges pending that would prohibit selection as a volunteer. The VFES Human Resources office is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. To schedule an appointment, please call 610.296.6725 x161.

Prospective volunteers who have a conviction or an arrest pending final adjudication of a sex offense, controlled substance offense, crime of violence or serious violent felony will not be eligible to provide volunteer services at VFES.

Weapons

The possession, use or display of weapons or potential weapons are not permitted on the VFES campus or at any VFES-sponsored activity and will result in serious consequences including suspension and police involvement.

Code of Conduct

This code applies to Middle School, High School and VTC students. At the Elementary School level, infractions are handled on an individual basis and, when appropriate, in accordance with the student's IEP.

Goals of the Vanguard School Code of Conduct

- Establish and maintain a positive school climate in which learning can take place and rules and regulations are necessary.
- Help the students develop a sense of self-discipline and responsibility in the school community.
- Protect the basic rights of all members of the VFES community.
- Ensure all students receive a sound educational experience.

Minor violations of this code of conduct will be handled by the classroom teacher, program supervisor or a person in authority.

Level I Offenses

- Late to class without a valid excuse
- Inappropriate language including teasing, putdowns, name calling and unsolicited comments
- Violation of the dress code
- Public displays of affection including kissing, extensive hugging, inappropriate touching, sitting on laps, lying on the floor next to each other and back massages
- Eating or drinking outside of designated areas
- Littering
- Misbehavior in or taking food from the cafeteria
- Unauthorized use of electronic equipment
- Eating during class or in the hallways
- Refusal to place personal belongings in lockers
- Defacing or failure to return library books and materials
- Entering an unassigned area without permission

Consequence Progression

1. Reminder of rule
2. Verbal or nonverbal warning
3. Behavior misconduct slip
4. Lunch detention (15- or 30-minute lunch detention)
5. Contact parents or legal guardians
6. In-school detention (half or full day)

Level II Offenses

- Defacing or abusing school property including textbooks, furniture, walls and lockers. Graffiti on school property. Tearing posted materials off bulletin boards and walls. Misuse of AV equipment.
- Profanity, vulgar language, obscene gestures, inappropriate dress or comments or possession of pornographic materials
- Disrespect toward staff or student
- Possession of a laser pen

- Cheating or other serious acts of dishonesty
- Disruptive behavior including loudness, disrespect, defiance, rough-housing, running in hallway, sleeping in class and refusal to take direction
- Willful fighting
- Inappropriate use of a hall pass
- Cutting class or detention
- Leaving class without permission (walk out)
- Violation of school Internet policy
- Active or unauthorized use of wireless devices
- Throwing snowballs, stones, etc.
- Misbehavior for a substitute teacher
- Bus misconduct
- Driving to school without proper authorization
- Riding to or from school in a motor vehicle without proper authorization
- Gambling
- Tampering with school equipment (e.g., fire extinguishers, intercom, computers, telephones)
- Use of water pistols or other shooting devices
- Selling unauthorized items
- Chronic or continuous Level I behavior

Consequence Progression

1. Automatic behavior misconduct slip (15-minute lunch detention)
2. Lunch detention (30 minutes)
3. Lunch detention (45 minutes – includes loss of homeroom)
4. In-school detention (half or full day)

Level III Offenses

- Theft of school or personal property
- Physical assault including spitting, throwing objects, attacking, pushing and shoving with intent to fight
- Verbal assault
- Leading or participating in a riot: behavior of one or more students with the intention of causing disruption of the school environment.
- Insubordination: resisting redirection, leaving time-out, classroom or building, refusal to serve lunch detention and failure to accept consequences
- Extreme disrespect to staff including abusive language, threats and inappropriate remarks
- Vandalism
- Racial or ethnic intimidation
- Use or possession of tobacco products
- Threatening the safety of others
- Disruptive behavior on the bus resulting in possible harm to driver, passengers or destruction of property
- Bullying or harassment (verbal, sexual, physical threats)
- Intimidation
- Inappropriate behavior toward another person

- Forging signatures
- Truancy
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Continuation of Level II misconduct

Consequence Progression

1. Automatic incident report submission
2. Discipline referral, contact parents or legal guardians and/or suspension
3. IEP meeting, behavior plan and possible recommendation for alternative placement
4. Notification of Township Police, possible civil citation

Level IV Offenses

- Possession, use and transfer of weapons, firearms, knives and explosive devices
- Arson, false alarms or false 911 calls
- Bomb threats
- Possession, use, selling of alcohol or illegal controlled substances
- Extortion
- Tampering with the alarm system
- Commission of any other act punishable under the Pennsylvania Crime Code

Consequence Progression

1. Automatic incident report submission
2. Discipline referral, parent or legal guardian conference and/or suspension
3. Notification of Township Police, possible civil citation
4. Recommendation for alternative placement

Any student subjected to disciplinary action that necessitates removal from the normal classroom environment is still required to complete all classroom assignments.

Parents or legal guardians of a student shall be notified immediately by phone, if possible, or in writing, when a student has been suspended internally or externally.

A student who warranted a suspension cannot participate in or attend any extracurricular school activity during the suspension period. The suspension shall be effective immediately upon verbal notification to the student, with

written notification to the parents or legal guardians to follow. The suspension will continue until the start of the first school day a student is eligible to return to program. A student returning to school from a suspension, and who is a member of an extracurricular activity must have permission from the program supervisor’s office in order to participate on that day.

The Vanguard School reserves the right to give consequences to infraction not specifically covered in the Student Code of Conduct.

Lunch Detention (15, 30, 45 minutes)

Students are responsible for checking the Daily Announcements for their name on the lunch detention list. Students assigned to lunch detention are to:

- Arrive on time
- Remain quiet and respectful at all times
- Come prepared to complete the assignment given by the detention monitor
- Deliberate cut of lunch detention may warrant an in-school detention (half or full day)

Tobacco Products

Use of tobacco, electronic cigarettes, vapor pens, lighters and nicotine products on school grounds and busses will result in the following actions:

- First offense – parental notification and an automatic full day in-school detention
- Second offense – parental notification and automatic two day in-school detention
- Third offense – parental notification, one day out-of-school suspension and court citation (possible fines)

Possession of tobacco products on school grounds and on a bus will result in the following actions:

- First Offense – parental notification and an automatic half day in-school detention
- Second Offense – parental notification and automatic full day in-school detention
- Third Offense – parental notification, one day out-of-school suspension and court citation (possible fines)

In-School Detention (ISD) may be issued because of a serious safety or compliance misconduct. Assignment to in-school detention means that the student is removed from the classroom but not from the educational expectation. The student will report to an assigned location at a designated time where the student, with support from staff, will work on classroom assignments or other assigned tasks. If ISD expectations are met, the student returns to his or her regular scheduled program. ISD duration can range from one period to a full day, depending on the severity or frequency of the violation and compliance during the extent of the detention.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) may be issued when a student's actions violate law, school policies or school rules; the student may be suspended by the program supervisor. OSS shall be the temporary exclusion of a student from the school's program for a period not to exceed ten school days. A student who is suspended shall not be allowed to attend school or school-sponsored activities for a prescribed number of days. The program supervisor may suspend a student from riding the school bus for a prescribed number of days not to exceed ten. Parents and legal guardians of students suspended from the school bus have the obligation to provide transportation to and from school. If bus transportation is a related service on a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), a bus suspension must be counted towards the ten days of suspension.

General Information

Child Custody

The Vanguard School will presume that both natural, adoptive or foster parents and legal guardians have equal custody of the student and therefore equal rights to visit the student at school and access school-related information and official school records. If there is a different custody arrangement for your child, we must be notified in writing and have a copy of a court decree or similar legal document for your child's record. The school must be notified of changes in custody or visitation rights the date they become effective.

Communication

Our primary means of communication is through e-mail. Please ensure the Central Office has your most current e-mail address on file. If there is a change, please contact the Central Office at 610.296.6725 x104 to update your information.

Dances

The Vanguard School dances are for current Middle School, High School and VTC students only. No outside guests are permitted. The prom, held each June, is for High School and VTC students. Students who wish to bring a guest to The Vanguard School Prom must obtain permission from the Director of The Vanguard School.

Directory

The Vanguard School directory can be found in the Achieve Parent Portal. All parents are encouraged to include their student in the directory to facilitate communication, promote inclusion in social activities outside of school and as an aid for students seeking assistance with school assignments. If you have been in the directory in the past, you are not included automatically in future directories. We send an Information Verification Form every summer to obtain your permission to print your contact information in our directory and maintain up-to-date information. If there is a change in address, e-mail, phone number, etc. during the school year, please contact the Central Office 610.296.6725 x104.

Emergency Closings, Delays and Dismissals

Serious weather conditions or other emergencies may make it necessary to close, delay the opening of school or dismiss school early. Once a decision is made, an automated message will be sent to parents and legal guardians through the Valley Forge Educational Services phone notification system.

From time to time, technical issues beyond our control may cause some calls generated by this system to not be

received by the recipient. If the weather is inclement and you have not received a call, you should check the announcements section of our website at vfes.net. An e-mail notification also will be sent to the address on file. You also may obtain information on the radio or television. **It is important to listen for the status of both The Vanguard School and your school district of residence.** In some cases, The Vanguard School may be open but your district is not providing transportation. If that is the case, your child is not expected to attend school that day, but may be transported privately both to and from school.

If it is necessary for school to dismiss early or for your district to pick up the students early, be sure that your child knows what to do or where to go if you are not home to greet them.

Contact the Central Office at 610.296.6725 x104 if you need to add or change one of your contact numbers for these automated calls.

Please be aware that because of school closings, there may be changes in the school calendar especially concerning Spring Break and the last day of school in June.

Gym Attire

It is required that all students have non-marring sneakers for gym. They should bring them or wear them to school on days they have gym or they may not be allowed to participate. For safety reasons, items such as dangling jewelry or loose-fitting clothes should not be worn.

Lockers

Middle and High School students are provided a locker in which they can keep their belongings. Parents and legal guardians may provide a lock with a key or a combination lock. If that presents a problem, a lock will be provided by The Vanguard School.

Lost and Found

Lost and Found areas are located at the school office of each program. If your child has lost something of value, please report it to the appropriate school office immediately. Please be sure to label all clothing. Articles found at school with no identification are displayed periodically on tables in the halls for student inspection.

Lunch Programs

For a nominal price, The Vanguard School provides students a choice of healthy prepared lunches daily. The cafeteria offers menu selections every day with items that students can buy. A menu can be found on our website and is sent home monthly with the students so they can decide beforehand if they want to bring money to buy lunch.

Students may also bring their lunch. As part of its emphasis on practical daily living skills development, The Vanguard School encourages student independence and self-sufficiency in the lunch room. Microwaves are available for students to heat their food. Supervision by staff is constant, and help is always available.

Photographs

The school arranges for individual photographs each year. Information will be sent home with your child prior to the date. Look for dates in *The Vanguard Voice* and on the school calendar on the website.

Official IDs for older students are produced after pictures have been completed. These IDs enable the older students to get discounts at area stores and movie theaters or to attend school functions at their school districts of residence.

Our department of Marketing and Communications also will take photographs throughout the year to use in promotional materials, publications, social media and the school yearbook. Please complete and return the Annual Media and Publication Release Authorization Form so that we may include your child or young adult.

Program Trips

Program trips are intended to supplement and enrich classroom instruction by providing learning experiences in an environment outside the school. These trips are designed to help students relate school experiences to the reality of the world and study tangible topics and real processes in their natural environment. Additionally,

program trips have the potential to solicit new interests among students as well as bring the resources of the community—natural, artistic, industrial, commercial, governmental or otherwise educational—into the student’s learning experience.

Program trips and other off-campus activities require written approval before your child or young adult may participate. Before each scheduled trip, you will receive a request form outlining the destination and the educational purpose for each activity. Please return the completed form to school by the stated deadlines to ensure that your student will be able to participate in these valuable learning experiences.

School Supplies

In August, parents and legal guardians will receive information in a back-to-school packet indicating specific supplies your child will need. Your child’s classroom teacher will let you know if additional supplies are needed during the school year.

Staff Transporting Students

Staff are prohibited from transporting Vanguard School students in their private vehicles. This prohibition extends to program trips and community outings.

Traffic Safety on Campus

There are three entrances to VFES:

Entrance A is used to access the Elementary School, Vanguard Transition Center and VFES Activities Center

Entrance B is used to access VFES Central Administration

Entrance C is used to access the Vanguard Middle and High Schools

For traffic and safety, please use entrance A or C when entering the campus between 8:00 and 9:00 am and between 2:30 and 3:30 pm. We have a circular one-way traffic pattern during those hours. On early-dismissal days, the traffic pattern is in effect until after dismissal.

Get Involved!

The Vanguard School's primary means of communication is through e-mail. Please ensure the Central Office has your most current e-mail address on file. If there is a change, please contact the Central Office at 610.296.6725 x104 to update your information.

Your interest and involvement in your child's education is key to his or her academic success. Parents and legal guardians who participate in school activities and events will have additional opportunities to communicate with teachers and staff.

Achieve Parent Portal

Achieve is The Vanguard School's student management system. The Portal is the doorway into our system, giving parents and legal guardians access to information about their children and The Vanguard School as well as the student directory and important forms. To gain access to the Parent Portal, you will need the user name and password provided to you in your welcome packet. If you need assistance with signing into the system, please contact the Educational Technology Coordinator at 610.296.6725 x167 or achieve@vfes.net.

Back-to-School Night

Held in October, Back-to-School Night is an important tradition marking the beginning of the new school year. On this night, you will meet your student's teachers and clinical service team members. They will explain goals for the class and for your student. Additionally, they will share information about their teaching and treatment styles and methodology. This is an opportunity to meet other parents and legal guardians in your son or daughter's program.

Classroom Volunteers and Chaperones

Volunteers are an integral part of our school culture. There are various opportunities that include chaperoning an event or assisting with a classroom party. Please ask your child or young adult's classroom teacher or program supervisor how you can help. If you have something to offer or want to help out in whatever way you can, please discuss the possibilities with your student's teachers or the Director of The Vanguard School.

VFES requires individuals who wish to serve as a volunteer, without exception, to obtain the required clearances. Parents and legal guardians who volunteer in the school, at special events, on field trips or as a half-day activity chaperone must obtain clearances in advance and submit them to the VFES Human Resources department. For more information, please refer to our Volunteer Policy on page 20.

Curriculum Committee Volunteers

The Vanguard School offers the opportunity to serve in a volunteer capacity on several curriculum and program committees throughout the school year. If you are interested in joining, please contact The Assistant Director of The Vanguard School at 610.296.6725 x168.

New Parent Orientation

Held in September, new parent orientation is an opportunity for you to get acquainted with our campus, meet our staff and hear from our directors. You will have the opportunity to get answers to your questions and connect with other new parents and legal guardians.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in November for all students and again in the spring for the Elementary School. This is a critical opportunity for parents and legal guardians to join The Vanguard School team on behalf of their child. Additional conferences throughout the school year may be scheduled by contacting your child's school counselor or classroom teacher.

The Vanguard Voice Newsletter

The Vanguard Voice is a weekly e-newsletter for parents published during the school year. Important information is shared through this weekly e-mail publication including information about our programs, news, events and important announcements. The Vanguard Voice is e-mailed to all parents every Thursday morning. Parents and legal guardians are strongly encouraged to supply an e-mail address on their child's information verification form, so they receive this important publication.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Vanguard School values each parent and legal guardian's commitment to our school. We recognize you as key partners in helping our students reach their potential and prepare them for life. Participation in the PTO is critical and we welcome and encourage as much interaction and participation as possible.

The PTO offers parents and legal guardians of The Vanguard School students a chance to contribute to the school through volunteer work, special projects and activities. It also provides an opportunity for interacting with staff outside of the usual day-to-day routine, and a forum for furthering their education about their child's special needs and the field of special education in general. The Vanguard School PTO meets on a monthly basis at the school. All parents, legal guardians, grandparents and relatives are invited to join!

PTO-Sponsored Half-Day Events

The PTO sponsors a number of family friendly activities on half-day Wednesdays. Activities include Arnold's Family Fun Spot, swimming at the Phoenixville YMCA and more! Please watch The Vanguard Voice and check your email for notices throughout the year.

Join our PTO Facebook Group

The Vanguard School PTO has created a Facebook group to help keep parents up-to-date with the most current PTO information. We will post reminders about spirit days, PTO events, and other important information. You can find us at: The Vanguard School PTO.

2016-17 PTO Meetings

Meeting locations will be listed in The Vanguard Voice.

- Wednesday, September 7, 7:00 pm
- Wednesday, October 12, 10:30 am
- Wednesday, November 9, 7:00 pm
- Wednesday, December 14, 10:30 am
- January - no meeting
- Wednesday, February 8, 10:30 am
- Wednesday, March 8, 7:00 pm
- Wednesday, April 5, 10:30 am
- Wednesday, May 10, 7:00 pm
- Wednesday, June 7, 10:30 am

PTO Officers

Beth Brady

Co-President
bbrady06@gmail.com
610.368.4669

Suzy Merkins

Co-President
suzy.merkins@comcast.net
610.357.2089

Jeff Parnell

Vice-President
jtparn@yahoo.com
484.889.5114

Theresa Fry

Secretary
tcmoserfry@yahoo.com
610.547.6728

Robin Palmer

Treasurer
rplamer2@statestreet.com
mssoonermagic@yahoo.com
215.407.3144

Debbie Powell

Half-Day Event Coordinator
debfp777@gmail.com

Jeanie Schultz

Parent Coordinator
thehurricane20@yahoo.com
630.596.3959

Tammy Dinda

Parent Coordinator
tmdinda@comcast.net
610.213.6628

Keady Peaper

Parent Coordinator
keadyflynn@gmail.com
302.381.3262



Vanguard
Transition Center



WWW.VFES.NET