

# PARENT STUDENT HANDBOOK





## Superintendent's Message

Dear parents and students,

Welcome to Vista Charter Public Schools: Home of the Eagles!

At Vista Charter Public Schools, we are committed to transforming the school experience. From the moment you walk into a Vista Charter Public school you will notice the difference. Beyond the warm welcome and inviting environment is a team of highly trained teachers, administrators, and support personnel, all of whom share the goal of ensuring that our students are highly engaged in their academic life and feel 100% accepted as part of the Vista family. Vista Charter Public Schools are the right fit for students of all achievement levels and aspirations, with an essential commitment to equity and a focus on improving college and career readiness skills for all students.

At Vista Charter Public Schools, we take an approach to education based on the idea that students work harder and dream bigger if their education is relevant to them. As students move through TK to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, they will experience a well-rounded curriculum that will expose them to art, music, dance, and theater. Literature, history, math, and science are integral parts of their experience and taught in ways that excite and bring out the joy of learning. They will learn to use advanced technologies as a creative means to an end and not an end in itself.

At Vista, students master core subjects through the power of applying knowledge in a real-world context. In addition to rigorous academics, our schools focus on increased proficiency in crucial areas such as critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration, which guarantees students are engaged and active participants in their own education. As a staff we will work tirelessly to make sure your children will be prepared for full participation in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global community.

I want you to know that you, our families, are an integral part of this experience and what you bring to the table as parents is highly valued and needed to ensure the continued success of our students. For those of you who have given of your time and energy, I invite you back for another year of service and participation at your school. For our new families, I invite you to get to know us better by becoming active members of the Vista community by volunteering in one of the many opportunities that abound at our schools.

With change comes growth and this looks to be a very exciting year. I thank you in advance for all you will do to make this the great educational community that it is. I look forward to working with you and will maintain an open-door policy to ensure good communication between our schools and home. And speaking of home, Vista is your child's home away from home. I invite you to make it yours too. Welcome to a new year and welcome to Vista Charter Public Schools where we transform the school experience.

Don Wilson, Superintendent  
Vista Charter Public Schools



## Principal's Message

Dearest Vista Family,

I have spent the vast majority of my professional career growing at Vista. I started my journey at Vista in 2011 as a 6th grade math and science teacher and have been in leadership here since 2019. I am very honored and blessed to be able to lead this organization into the future. This is a great school and organization and I look forward to ensuring that Vista continues to get better year after year.

I truly believe in developing the whole child. I believe in our rigorous instructional program that meets each student where they are at, supports them where they struggle, and pushes them in areas where they excel. I believe that teaching our core values of Grit, Empathy, Accountability, and Respect will lead to great personal and academic success. I believe that failure and mistakes can lead to a successful future. I believe in our community and families and that together we can truly make a difference in the lives of our students.

Thank you for choosing Vista, we take your decision to trust your child's education and safety with us very seriously. If at any time you have questions, concerns, or ideas that you wish to share with me and my team, I am glad to listen and partner with you. To ensure and make a lasting impact on your child it takes the school, the parents, and the community working together and over the course of these next years, I look forward to working with and for you.

Sincerely,

Daniel Sommer, Principal

Vista Charter Middle School



## Principal's Message

Dear Vista Family,

I am honored to lead Vista Horizon Global Academy, our elementary school in Los Angeles, and be of service as your principal.

This year will be full of opportunities for collaboration with our amazing families, school staff and Vista team and, as always, I am excited about all the possibilities for learning and growing together.

For those of you who have been part of our community, I am glad to know that you have returned, and for those of you who are new, I say welcome!

Our organization's mission to transform the school experience is at the heart of all we do. Through our signature instructional methods, which include social emotional learning practices such as the Way of Council, along with the workshop approach to teaching reading and writing, educating for global competence, and the integration of science, technology, engineering, math, and the arts, we continually bring student-centered pedagogy to life while balancing rigorous academic and social-emotional learning.

Our students engage in educational activities designed intentionally to be both challenging and just right for them so they can make steady progress in an environment that addresses the needs of the individual and the dynamic energy of the group. In our classrooms and on our campus, you will see students interacting with each other and their teachers in ways that raise their awareness of themselves and others so that we are continually developing the strength of our community of learners. In this supportive, collegial, and collaborative environment, our students develop into globally competent individuals who learn deeply, think critically, and lead courageously.

Families, you are our partners in this endeavor and an essential component of any successful school. Throughout the year, there will be numerous opportunities for you to get involved and make a difference in the lives of the members of our community. You can be assured that I will be reaching out to encourage involvement and understand how we can best meet the needs of your student.

As this new year unfolds, know that I am here to help families and students navigate the many challenges school presents and to also celebrate accomplishments right alongside you. My office door is open to each of you and I am always happy to speak with and assist you.

Sincerely,

Michael Rosner, Principal

Vista Horizon Global Academy



## Principal's Message

Greetings, Vista Family!

My name is Trent Speier, and I am incredibly excited and humbled to be the next principal of Vista Meridian Global Academy. I know Dr. Real has left me VERY big shoes to fill, but she has kindly offered her full support to Vista Meridian this year, and we are very grateful to continue to benefit from her guidance! Dr. Real will have an office on our campus as she moves into her new role as Director of Counseling, College, and Careers.

I have exactly one goal for our students: to help them become the best version of themselves. Throughout my years as a classroom teacher and school administrator, giving students the tools they need to succeed has always been my passion. I LOVE watching students learn and grow into fine young men and women, and it is my life's honor and joy to be a part of that process. I am thrilled to share this honor and joy with the Vista Meridian community.

Educators know that giving students support leads to student success. While we at Meridian agree with this statement, we also know that high amounts of student support leads to greater student achievement. Every day at Vista Meridian, each student will receive an unparalleled amount of support from their school. We will have instructional aides in every classroom. Our teachers will inspire our students with engaging lessons. Our support team will be there for students every step of the way. I have seen the dedication of our staff, and I am honored and humbled to be a part of this incredible team. We can't wait to share our passion and dedication with our students.

Vista Meridian is a special place. While we are moving into an amazing new facility, offering a number of dual enrollment options, participating in CIF sports, providing great transportation options, and a myriad of other services to our families, I do not believe that is what sets us apart. I have found what truly makes a school special is its people. I have had the opportunity to meet with students, teachers and staff on our campus, and I have been blown away by their dedication to each other. Very few schools out there have this attitude, and I am honored to be a part of our positive school environment.

This year, we are moving into a beautiful new building. While the facility is incredible, its beauty doesn't come close to our beautiful school culture. It is part of our DNA to love and care for our students, and that is never going to change. Thank you for allowing us to love and care for your students. It is our privilege to educate them.

Truly yours,

Trent Speier, Principal

Vista Meridian Global Academy



## Principal's Message

Dear Vista Family,

I am proud to serve as the new Principal of Vista Condor Global Academy and Vista Heritage Global Academy. We have continued to grow and improve as a school, and that is a direct tribute to the passion and dedication on behalf of our staff, students, and parents. This year, we will soar to even greater heights, as we build off of our successes and learn from our challenges.

At Vista Condor and Vista Heritage, we will continue our focus on preparing our students to become college-ready and globally competent through rigorous and relevant instruction and authentic educational opportunities. We will continue our focus on literacy through Reader's and Writer's Workshop. We will continue to deeply engage students in challenging academic tasks through the use of Kagan Structures. We will continue to build trusting, meaningful relationships through our nurturing, family atmosphere and through our practice of Way of Council. We will prepare our students for the jobs of tomorrow - jobs that don't even exist yet - through our innovative STEAM focus, utilizing Project Lead the Way and other state-of-the-art technologies. Finally, we will teach our students to be globally competent citizens of the world, ready to make an impact and become future leaders through our global education framework and partnership with the International Studies Schools Network.

I am going to take a page from the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) playbook when it comes to our motto for the 2023-24 school year, "ALL Means ALL." This motto will ring true on multiple levels. ALL students will receive a first-class educational experience that meets their individual academic and socio-emotional needs. ALL students will learn how to show empathy and how to be respectful of everyone around them. ALL students will know that there are multiple staff members at Vista that care for them, love them, and will go above and beyond to make sure they feel safe, comfortable, and ready to learn. ALL staff will commit to being the best possible educators every single day, serving every single student with the highest quality, as if it were their own child. ALL staff will learn continuously and grow professionally, modeling a growth mindset. Finally, ALL parents will be welcomed with open arms as valued members of our Vista Family. Together, when "ALL Means ALL," we will transform the school experience and we will transform the lives of our students!

It is an honor to serve this magnificent community. This community deserves nothing but the best, and that is my commitment to the entire Vista Family. You will get my best every single day and I expect the same from you, because every day is an opportunity to learn and work toward reaching our goals. Let's have a great year!

Warm Regards,

Roxanne Allessandro, Principal

Vista Condor Global Academy  
Vista Heritage Global Academy



## Principal's Message

Greetings Palm Lane Global Academy!

It is an honor to return to Palm Lane Global Academy (PLGA) for the 22-23 school year! As principal, it remains my daily priority to provide students with the tools they need to thrive academically as well as social emotionally.

I am thrilled at the exciting transformative changes our students will experience this school year. I am confident Palm Lane Global Academy will continue to excel and thrive under the adoption of the core tenants of Vista Charter Public Schools. I am convinced our hardworking and dedicated staff will continue to provide students with innovative learning opportunities that will foster meaningful learning and encompass 21st century learning skills, paving their future successes while promoting a growth mindset.

Fostering a school culture at PLGA that embodies a growth mindset will encourage students to embrace challenges with open arms and will empower them to overcome obstacles they may face when learning something new or developing a new skill. Growth mindsets understand the importance of persistence and determination and by changing the way students think they can change the way they learn.

This school year we will prioritize literacy and writing through Reader's and Writer's Workshop, promote cooperation and communication in the classroom through the integration of Kagan instructional strategies, and encourage academic discourse through a S.T.E.A.M. approach that incorporates hands-on learning and supports critical thinking. At PLGA we remain committed to preparing students to become college and career ready and strive towards global competency through rigorous and real-world learning opportunities.

Through the adoption and implementation of Way of Council, a signature practice of Vista Public Charter Schools, PLGA will foster a school community culture that strives to develop deep interpersonal relationships, build empathy between staff and students, and nurtures safe and warm learning environments. The 22-23 school year will adopt an innovative S.T.E.A.M. focus and through the utilization of Project Lead the Way, students will strive to develop global competency and become inspired to be an agent of positive change in the world. Together, the staff and students will engage in project-based learning and develop an action-oriented approach to addressing and solving real world problems.

I am thrilled at the exciting learning opportunities the students will be engaged in this school year. Weekly, students will attend various specialty classes including art, Spanish, health, as well as music through our partnership with El Maestro. Our school community will also welcome a full-time physical education teacher who will work with all grade levels two to three days per week.

It is truly an honor to serve this incredible community that I have quickly come to call home. Thank you for entrusting me with your children- a distinct privilege I will never take lightly. As we embark on a new school year, I look forward to a year of collaboration and partnership with the staff, students, families, and the larger community of Anaheim. I anticipate nothing short of an eventful, memorable, and exciting 22-23 school year. As always, I endorse an open-door policy and encourage you all to join me in striving to make this school year a historical one!

In Service,

Debby Prado

Palm Lane Global Academy

VISTA CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

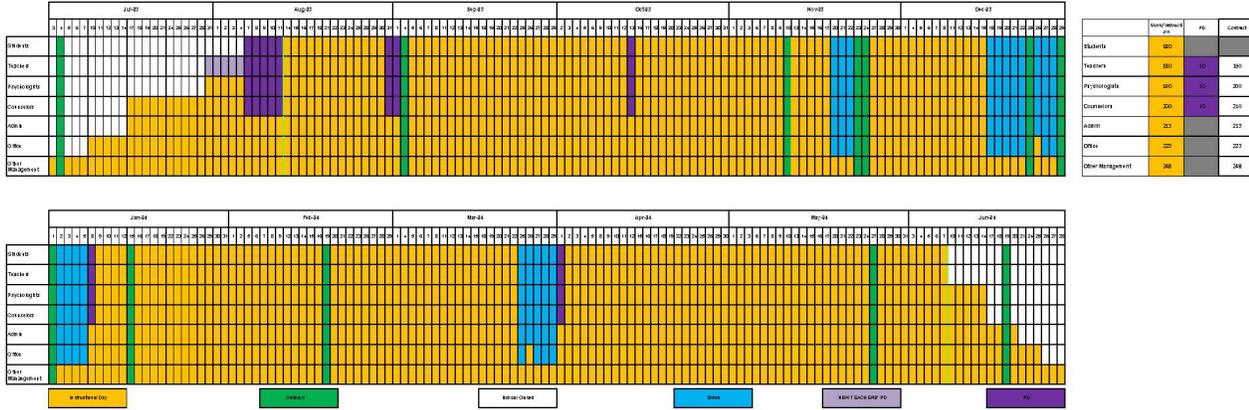
WE EMPOWER THE SPIRIT OF LEARNING

2023-2024

Instructional / Management  
Calendar

Superintendent: Donald Wilson Ed. D.  
Assistant Superintendent: Collin Feick Ed. D.  
Assistant Superintendent: Kate A Amayo

[www.vistacharterpublicschools.org](http://www.vistacharterpublicschools.org)



## BELL SCHEDULE

To see our updated Bell Schedule and dismissal procedures, please visit our schools' websites.

- [www.vistacharterms.org](http://www.vistacharterms.org)
- [www.vistahorizonglobal.org](http://www.vistahorizonglobal.org)
- [www.vistaheritagems.org](http://www.vistaheritagems.org)
- [www.vistacondor.org](http://www.vistacondor.org)
- [www.vistameridian.org](http://www.vistameridian.org)
- [www.palmlaneglobalacademy.org](http://www.palmlaneglobalacademy.org)

## SCHOOL/ HOME COMMUNICATION

Vista Charter Public Schools communicate with parents through various means, including but not limited to, phone calls, letters, email, school website, School Messenger, ParentSquare, and automated phone calls. These forms of communication may come directly from a teacher, principal, or other staff member.

All school communication regarding school wide events, assemblies, programs, schedule changes, student tardies and absences will be made through one of the above-mentioned forms of communication.

## REPORT CARDS AND REPORTING PERIODS

It is Vista Charter School policy that all students succeed and are given every chance to excel in school.

### Elementary Schools

We have 3 grading cycles during the school year (see school calendar):

1. Teachers will notify parents of struggling students prior to issuing report cards.
2. All students will receive a parent conference during each reporting period.
3. Report Cards will be available on the POWERSCHOOL website and hard copies will be sent home.

### Middle and High Schools

We have 4 grading cycles during the school year. (See school calendar)

1. There will be two reporting periods per semester.
2. Teachers will notify parents of struggling students prior to issuing progress reports.
3. 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> reporting periods are progress reports. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> reporting period is the final semester grade.
4. Any student in danger of failing will have a parent conference.
5. Report Cards will be available on the POWERSCHOOL website and hard copies will be sent home.

## BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND NUTRITION

1. Vista Charter Public Schools offer free breakfast and lunch for all students. Students are encouraged to take advantage of this program as it provides them with healthy meals each day.
2. If your child has special dietary requirements, please contact the main office for a form.
3. Although all students will receive free meals, all parents must submit a family income survey for their child.

## REWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMICS

Vista Charter Public Schools recognizes students for academic progress and achievement. Some ways that Vista Charter Public Schools honors growth and achievement are:

- Student of the Month
- Citizenship Awards
- Honor Roll
- Home Visits
- GEAR Awards
- Perfect Attendance

## BUS & VAN RULES

At Vista Charter Public Schools, it is our pleasure to provide the safest transportation possible on school-related field trips. On Vista school trips, safety precautions are a must! Your help is needed because safety is everyone's responsibility!

Students, when you are on the school bus, we expect you to behave as if you were in one of Vista's classrooms. The bus driver is in charge of the bus at all times. Any student who repeatedly violates the safety precautions and/or bus rules may be denied the privilege of riding the bus and is subject to other disciplinary action to be determined by the principal. To that end, the following conduct rules are called to your attention:

1. Students must go directly to a seat designated by Vista personnel and follow directions at all times. Students must remain seated, keeping aisles and exits clear.
2. Students must observe classroom conduct. All school rules apply on the bus. Obey the driver promptly and respectfully.
3. Students must be courteous and respectful to fellow students and to the bus driver.
4. Students must not engage in loud talking or laughing, excessive horseplay, or fighting, profane or abusive language.
5. Students need to understand that unnecessary confusion diverts the driver's attention and might result in a serious accident, thus threatening their own safety.
6. Students must refrain from chewing gum, eating and drinking on the bus.
7. Students must not have alcohol, tobacco or drugs in their possession on the bus.
8. Students must not throw or pass objects on, from or into the bus.
9. Students must treat bus equipment respectfully. Vandalism will not be tolerated. Keep the bus clean and sanitary.
10. Students must not extend any part of their bodies out of the bus windows.
11. Students are to remain absolutely quiet at railroad crossings until the bus has completely crossed and the driver says it is okay to talk.
12. Vista Charter Public Schools or our designated bus company is not responsible for lost or stolen items left on the bus.

**Driver and School Personnel responsibilities prior to written conduct report:**

- Drivers and school personnel will confer with the student and/or change the student's seating assignment.
- Drivers and school personnel are to contact the principal after repeated warnings have not been heeded.

*Title V, California Code of Regulations section 14103 states that pupils transported in a school bus or in a school pupil activity bus shall be under the authority of, and responsible directly to, the driver of the bus, and the driver shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils while they are on the bus or being escorted across a street, highway or road. Students who ride school buses are expected to adhere to the same rules of conduct and behavior on the school bus as in school. Any student who engages in misconduct, disrupts school bus travel, disrespects the school bus driver or jeopardizes the safety of school bus rides is subject to disciplinary action, including removal from the bus transportation program or suspension if the behavior rises to the level of a violation of the Suspension/Expulsion Policy as referenced herein. If you have questions regarding student conduct on the school bus, please call the Main Office.*

**VISTA STUDENT SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

Vista Charter parents are encouraged to maintain the following school supplies for their students, which include, but are not limited to:

- A backpack
- Pencils
- Pens
- Eraser
- Glue stick
- Notebook

- Colored pencils or crayons
- Composition books

If you are unable to provide school supplies, Vista will provide them. Teachers may request other supplies as needed.

**Sharpies and other permanent markers are not allowed on campus except as provided by teachers for classroom use.**

### **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS: CHROMEBOOKS, IPADS, BOOKS, ETC.**

For classes where specialized instructional materials are required, Vista will provide them. Students who take such materials home for reading or homework will have a number assigned to each item and be responsible for the care and return of the materials. Instructional materials must be treated with care and returned to VISTA in good condition at the end of the school year or when a student leaves Vista Charter Public Schools for any reason.

California law allows a charter school to charge parents for the cost of any damage or loss caused by their child to any school property, including specialized instructional materials.

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **Attendance Matters!**

Every student is expected to attend school on a daily basis, unless there is valid justification for his/her absence. (EC 48200). Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children go to school. Research is clear that school attendance is vital to students' achievement. Students who develop patterns of good attendance are much more likely to be successful both academically and socially:

- When students attend school, they get better grades, score better on standardized tests and are more likely to go to college.
- It is our responsibility to teach students the importance of attendance now so they are prepared for the future. Employers say good attendance demonstrates responsibility and is a key factor in the hiring and promotion of employees.
- Vista Charter Public Schools is working to improve in ways that will make students feel more welcome, safe and enthusiastic about showing up every day. Parents Influence Attendance-Get Involved!

Things families can do to help student attendance:

- Plan family vacations for non-school days only.
- Schedule non-emergency medical and dental appointments after school hours.
- Make sure your child's school has your accurate daytime contact information, including cell phone number and/or e-mail address.
- Communicate often with your child's teachers.
- Make your school aware of any problems that may be causing your child to miss school, such as personal business, car problems, lack of clean clothes, rain, walk outs or demonstrations.

**PARENTS, PLEASE COMMUNICATE WITH THE SCHOOL FOR EVERY ABSENCE WITH A NOTE, EMAIL, OR PHONE CALL.**

## **ABSENCES – EXCUSED**

A pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is:

1. Due to his or her illness, including an absence for the benefit of mental or behavioral health.
2. Due to quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.
3. For the purpose of having medical, dental, optometric or chiropractic services rendered.
4. For the purpose of attending the funeral services of a member of his or her immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than one day if the service is conducted in California and not more than three days if the service is conducted outside California.
5. For the purposes of jury duty in the manner provided for by law.
6. Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial parent.
7. For justifiable personal reasons including, but not limited to, an appearance in court, attendance at a funeral service, observance of a holiday or ceremony of his or her religion, attendance at religious retreats or attendance at an employment conference. When the pupil's absence has been requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative.
8. For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Section 12302 of the Election Code.
9. For the purpose of spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family who is an active-duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Education Code section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the Superintendent of the school district.

Immediate family member means: parent, guardian, brother, sister, grandparent or any other relative living in the household of the pupil.
10. For the purpose of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.
11. For the purposes of participating in a cultural ceremony or event.

Cultural means: relating to the habits, practices, beliefs and traditions of a certain group of people
12. For the purpose of a middle school or high school pupil engaging in a civil or political event (excused for only one schoolday-long absence per school year) provided that the pupil notifies the school ahead of the absence.

Civil or political event includes: voting, poll working, strikes, public commenting, candidate speeches, political or civic forums and town halls.
13. Authorized at the discretion of the school administrator

A pupil absent from school for the above excused reasons shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can reasonably be provided and, upon satisfactory completion, shall be given full credit. The teacher of any class from which a pupil is absent shall determine what assignments the pupil shall make up and in what period of time the pupil shall complete such assignments. The tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence.

## **ABSENCES – UNEXCUSED**

Any absence for reasons other than those listed as EXCUSED ABSENCES are deemed unexcused. VISTA Charters are required by law to seek an explanation (a written note or verbal justification) regarding all absences.

## **ABSENCES FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES**

Pupils who are members of religions that observe religious holidays that fall on school days may be excusable from school by making prior arrangements, as specified by the school principal and with written parental/guardian request [Education Code Section 48205 (a)(7)].

Additionally, students may be absent to attend a religious retreat, not to exceed four hours per semester [Education Code Section 48205(c)]. Such absences are considered excused absences, and pupils so absent are responsible for making up work missed.

## **TRUANCY**

Truancy means a student who is absent from school three (3) full days in one school year, or are tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day on three occasions in one school year without a valid excuse or any combination thereof.

Habitual truancy means a student who has been reported as truant three or more times within the same school year.

Truancy is grounds for referral to the SARB (School Attendance Review Board) and further truancy can be grounds for disenrollment.

*See the Vista Charter Public Schools Attendance Policy and Procedures regarding Notices, Procedures for Corrective Action and possible Disenrollment.*

C.C.R. TITLE 5, SECTION 306 – A PRINCIPAL OR TEACHER MAY REQUIRE SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION FROM THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF A PUPIL, EITHER IN PERSON OR BY WRITTEN NOTE, WHENEVER THE PUPIL IS TARDY OR ABSENT A PART OR ALL OF A SCHOOL DAY.

## **PUPIL PROMOTION AND RETENTION (PPR) POLICY**

Vista Charter Public Schools has created the following policy, with criteria for fluent English students (EO, IFEP, RFEP) and for Limited English Proficient students (LEP):

### **GRADES 2 to 12 CRITERIA FOR RETENTION**

#### **FOR STUDENTS FLUENT IN ENGLISH (EO, IFEP, RFEP)**

- English/Language Arts: A final (June) Report Card English grade of F (Fail); **OR**
- Mathematics: A final (June) Report Card Mathematics grade of F (Fail)

#### **FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS (LEP) LEVELS 1-4**

- English/Language Arts or Mathematics: A final (June) Report Card grade of F (Fail); **AND**

- No advancement in overall ELPAC score (English Language Proficiency Assessments for California) for the past two years, including the present year.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

- Will meet the criteria as indicated on their IEP.

**Parent/Guardian Notification:** Parents of students who have been identified for retention or at-risk for retention will be notified in writing as early in the school year as is practicable. A parent may request a meeting with the teacher or teachers responsible for the decision to retain the student.

**Opportunities for Remedial Instruction:** For students who have been identified for retention or at-risk for retention, parents will be notified by teachers of available intervention or remedial instruction, which will be provided for students as an opportunity to avoid retention.

**Process for Appeal:** A parent or guardian may appeal the teacher's decision to promote or retain a student. If an appeal is made, the California Education Code states that the burden shall be on the appealing party to show why the decision of the teacher should be overruled.

The school principal will attend the above-mentioned meetings and, after consultation with the teacher or teachers, shall make the final determination for the student's retention or promotion.

**Questions or Additional Information:** Please contact the school office if you have questions or need clarification of any of the information contained in the PPR policy.

## **ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, DRUG & VIOLENCE**

### **PREVENTION AND PROHIBITION**

Vista Charter Public Schools does not tolerate the use, possession, or sale of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco by students on school campuses or at school-sponsored activities. School administrators will take immediate action to prevent, discourage, and eliminate the use or possession of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco on campus and at school activities.

In cooperation with police and community agencies in disciplining students in violation, school administrators may use restorative justice, prevention education, direct intervention, expulsion, or arrest on a case-by-case basis to promote school safety and provide a drug, alcohol, and violence-free environment.

**For information and resources on how to stop smoking/vaping, please visit the California Smoker's Helpline by calling 1-800-NO-BUTTS (1-800-662-8887) or visit <http://www.nobutts.org/>**

## **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

California Education Code Section 49423 provides that any pupil who is required to take, during the regular school day, medication prescribed for him by an authorized health care provider may be assisted by the school nurse or other designated school personnel if the school receives:

1. A written statement from an authorized health care provider licensed by the State of California to prescribe medications detailing the method, amount, and time schedules by which such medication is to be taken; and
2. A written statement from the parent or guardian of the pupil indicating the desire that the school assist the pupil in the matters set forth in the health care provider's statement.
3. Students may not carry or use medication on campus without written consent. However, students may carry and self-administer certain medication (e.g., inhaled asthma medication or auto-injectable epinephrine medication) if the school receives the appropriate documentation.

This includes:

1. A written statement from the authorized health care provider detailing the name of medication, method, amount and time schedules by which the medication is to be taken and confirming that the pupil is able to self-administer the medication.
2. A written statement from the parent or guardian of the pupil consenting to the self-administration, providing release for the school nurse or other health care personnel to consult with the health care provider of the pupil regarding any questions that may arise with regard to the medication, and releasing the school and school personnel from liability in the case of adverse reaction.

Certain Asthma Action Plans may be sufficient for students to carry and self-administer asthma medication at school. A pupil may be subject to disciplinary action if the medication is used in a manner other than as prescribed. The required forms are available from the school nurse or administrator. School health personnel do not prescribe or give advice regarding medication.

## **TUBERCULOSIS CLEARANCE**

All new students entering grades TK-12, who have never attended any school in California, must present documentation of the results of the Mantoux test done at some previous time. Students entering grades K-12 from any other California school (public, private, or parochial) are exempt from the requirement.

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENTS FOR CALIFORNIA (ELPAC)**

State law requires Vista Charter Public Schools to assess the English language development of all English Learners (ELs) and of new enrollees in California public schools in order to determine each student's level of English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The ELPAC must be administered to new enrollees at the Vista Charter Public Schools with a home language other than English unless they have been assessed at another California Public School. Students who have previously been identified as being English Learners must also be administered the ELPAC annually to determine annual English language development progress until the EL student has been reclassified. For new enrollees who have a home language other than English, the ELPAC must be administered within 30 days of enrollment in a California public school. To find more information about the ELPAC, please contact your child's teachers or contact the school office.

State and federal law require that local educational agencies administer a state test of ELP to eligible students in kindergarten (or year one of a two-year kindergarten program, sometimes referred to as "transitional kindergarten") through grade twelve (ages 3-21). The ELPAC is aligned with California's 2012 English Language Development Standards, and is comprised of two separate ELP assessments:

- Initial ELPAC—an initial identification of students as English learners
- Summative ELPAC—an annual summative assessment to measure an English learner's progress in learning English and to identify the student's ELP level

For more information, please visit <https://www.elpac.org>

### **CALIFORNIA ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS (CAASPP)**

State law requires that Vista Charter Public Schools administer the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) tests annually in grades 3-8 and 11. On January 1, 2014, the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System was established. The primary purpose of the CAASPP System is to assist teachers, administrators, students, and parents by promoting high-quality teaching and learning through the use of a variety of assessment approaches and item types.

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System consists of the following assessments:

- Smarter Balanced English language arts/literacy and mathematics
- California Alternate Assessments for English language arts, mathematics, and science
- California Science Tests
- California Spanish Assessment

### **PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST: GRADES 5, 7 AND 9**

State law requires that Vista Charter Public Schools administer the Physical Fitness Test (PFT) annually to all students in grades five, seven and nine. The state designated PFT is the FITNESSGRAM®. The FITNESSGRAM® is a set of tests designed to evaluate health related fitness and to assist students in establishing lifetime habits of regular physical activity.

The complete FITNESSGRAM® test battery measures student performance in the following areas:

1. aerobic capacity
2. body composition
3. muscular strength, endurance and flexibility

Teachers and administrators are responsible for preparing students to do their best on the test by providing instruction and appropriate practice in the skills and abilities that are tested. It is recommended that schools should provide students appropriate practice as part of the regular physical education (P.E.) program throughout the year. Students are tested between February and May.

A “passing” score has been defined as meeting the healthy fitness zone for 5 of 6 events. Parents should see that their children participate in a regular program of physical activity and nutrition. To find more information about the FITNESSGRAM®, please contact your child’s teachers.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Upon parents request for assessment, Vista Charter Public Schools will be responsible for the development of assessment plans for students with suspected disabilities. The assessment plan will describe the types of assessments that may be used to determine the eligibility of students for special education instruction and services. Assessments will be conducted, within legal timelines, after receiving the parents’ written consent.

Vista Charter Public Schools shall conduct an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting that includes required team members within mandated timelines for each student assessed to discuss results, determine eligibility, and (if eligible) specify special education instruction and services.

Vista Charter Public Schools will make decisions regarding eligibility, goals, program, placement, and exit from special education through the IEP process according to federal, state, county and District timelines.

In the event that Vista Charter Public Schools is unable to provide an appropriate placement or services for a student with special needs, Vista Charter Public Schools will contact the appropriate authorizer or local district. Assessment and standardized testing procedures shall be implemented, including guidelines for modifications and adaptations, to monitor student progress.

Vista Charter Public Schools shall provide planned staff development activities and participate in available appropriate District training to support access by students with disabilities to the general education classroom, general education curriculum, integration of instructional strategies and curriculum adaptations to address the diverse learner, and interaction with non-disabled peers.

Vista Charter Public Schools will ensure that the teachers and other persons who provide services to a student with disabilities are knowledgeable of the content of the student's IEP. The Charter School will maintain responsibility for monitoring progress towards IEP goals for the student with special needs.

Vista Charter Public Schools will ensure that it makes the necessary adjustments to comply with the mandates of state and federal laws, including IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, regarding discipline of students with disabilities.

Discipline procedures will include positive behavioral interventions. Prior to recommending expulsion for a student with disabilities, Vista Charter Public Schools will convene a manifestation determination IEP. Vista Charter Public Schools will collect data pertaining to the number of special education students suspended or expelled.

#### Procedural Safeguards/Due Process Hearings

In the event that a parent or guardian of a student attending a VCPS Los Angeles campus initiates due process proceedings, both Vista Charter Public Schools and the District will be named as respondents. Whenever possible, the District and Vista Charter Public Schools shall work together in an attempt to resolve the matter at an early stage (informal settlement or mediation).

In the event that a parent or guardian of a student attending a VCPS Orange County campus initiates due process proceedings, Vista Charter Public Schools will work with the El Dorado Charter SELPA in an attempt to resolve the matter at an early stage (informal settlement or mediation).

If parents' attorneys' fees and costs are to be paid because parents are the prevailing party as a result of a due process hearing or settlement agreement based on the Charter School's alleged failure to fulfill its responsibilities under state and federal special education laws and regulations, the Charter School will be responsible for payment of those attorneys' fees and costs.

## **COMPLAINTS**

The LAUSD (in the case of a VCPS Los Angeles school) will investigate and respond to all special education complaints the District receives pertaining to the Charter Schools including the District's Uniform Complaint Procedures, Office for Civil Rights and California Department of Education Special Education Compliance Complaints.

Vista Charter Public Schools will cooperate with the District in any such investigations and provide the District with any and all documentation that is needed to respond to complaints.

The El Dorado Charter SELPA (in the case of a VCPS Orange County school) will investigate and respond to all special education complaints it receives pertaining to the Charter School including the Office for Civil Rights and California Department of Education Special Education Compliance Complaints.

Vista Charter Public Schools will cooperate with the El Dorado Charter SELPA in any such investigations and provide the it with any and all documentation that is needed to respond to complaints.

## **VISITORS TO SCHOOL CAMPUSES**

All campus visitors must have the consent and approval of the principal/designee. Permission to visit must be given at the time requested if at all possible or within a reasonable period of time following the request. Children who are not enrolled at the school are not to be on the campus unless prior approval of the principal has been obtained. Visitors may not interfere with, disrupt or cause substantial disorder in any classroom or school activity. Vista Charter Public Schools Policy states that smoking and the use of all tobacco products is prohibited on all Vista Charter Public Schools property or attending any school-sponsored events. Visitors are expected to:

- Follow the established school policy in requesting a classroom visitation
- Complete a visitor's permit upon arrival at the site
- Enter and leave the classroom as quietly as possible
- Not converse with the students, teacher and/or instructional aides during the visitation
- Not interfere with any school activity
- Keep the length and frequency of classroom visits reasonable
- Follow the school's established procedures for meeting with the teacher and/or principal after the visit, if needed
- Learn and follow the school-wide behavioral expectations
- Return the visitor's permit to the point of origin before leaving the campus.

Any individual who disrupts a school site or fails to follow school rules and/or procedures is subject to removal from the school site and may be further restricted from visiting the school.

## **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Any Vista Charter Public School employee who has a reasonable suspicion that child abuse has occurred or is occurring is required by law to file a suspected child abuse report with an appropriate child protective services agency: either the local police or sheriff's department, or the Department of Children and Family Services.

Vista Charter Public Schools are committed to working toward the creation of a city where the violent resolution of conflict is no longer an option. The goal is to create a safe school community where stakeholders

are aware of the impact that violent choices have on people and where they internalize, adopt and implement tools and strategies to effectively navigate situations where violence is a possibility.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION

Communicable disease inspections may be conducted periodically. A student suspected of having a communicable disease will be excluded from school until guidelines for readmission are met. Guidelines for exclusion and readmission follow policies set forth by the Vista Charter Public Schools, the state Department of Health and Department of Education. Guidance in addressing communicable diseases also comes from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and national organizations.

Temporary exclusion of a student from school generally occurs for communicable diseases, including, but not limited to, the following conditions: COVID, conjunctivitis (“pink eye”); skin infections (impetigo), strep throat, chickenpox, scabies, head lice, and pertussis (“whooping cough”).

Exclusion may occur immediately or at the end of the school day, depending on the disease, its communicability and Vista Charter Public Schools, county and state policy. Readmission to school is based on condition and appropriate treatment.

An effort will be made to notify parents/guardians about school exposure to chickenpox, head lice, or other communicable diseases that pose a risk to students. The parent/guardian of a student for whom chickenpox presents a particular hazard should contact the school nurse. Students at risk include those with conditions affecting the immune system and those receiving certain drugs for the treatment of cancers or organ transplants. Information on the treatment and prevention of head lice is available from the school nurse or school health personnel.

## COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Education Code section 48200 states that each person between the ages of 6 and 18 years not exempted under the provisions of Chapter 2 or Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 48400) is subject to compulsory full-time education. Each person subject to compulsory full-time education and each person subject to compulsory continuing education not exempted under the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 48400) shall attend the public full-time day school or continuation school or classes and for the full time designated as the length of the school day by the governing board of Vista Charter Public Schools.

Los Angeles City, Los Angeles County, City of Santa Ana, City of Anaheim, and Orange County have loitering ordinances. These ordinances prohibit any person under the age of eighteen and subject to compulsory school attendance from loitering in or upon the public streets, highways, roads, alleys, parks, playgrounds, or other public grounds during school hours on days when school is in session. Students who violate these ordinances may receive a citation, have to appear in court with their parent/guardian, have a fine imposed by the court, and risk having the issuance of their driver’s license delayed.

## CHANGE OF RESIDENCE, EMERGENCY INFORMATION

It is the responsibility of parents, guardians or adult foster caregivers to inform the school of any change of address, telephone number or emergency information. Parents must provide a manner to receive both written (U.S. Mail) and oral communication (telephone, cell) regarding their student. For the protection of the student’s health and welfare, and to facilitate immediate communication with the parent/legal guardian or caregiver, the school, in accordance with EC 49408, requires the parent/legal guardian to provide current

emergency information on an official Emergency Card at school. Every parent/legal guardian or caregiver must complete an Emergency Card for each student at the time of enrollment.

Emergency information should include, but is not limited to the following:

- Home address and current telephone, including cell phone
- Employment/business addresses and phone numbers
- Relative/Friend's name, address, and telephone numbers authorized to pick up and care for the student in an emergency situation, if the parent/legal guardian cannot be reached.

Parents of students with disabilities should also have the name of any other designated adult who can receive their child in case of an emergency.

Students will only be released to a person listed on the emergency card unless the parent/legal guardian has provided written authorization on a case-by-case basis. Parents are required to update this information at least 2 times per school year.

## GUN FREE SAFE SCHOOLS

The Federal Gun Free Safe Schools Act and California law prohibit the possession of firearms on school campuses. Pursuant to these laws, any student found in possession of a firearm will be subject to arrest and will be recommended for expulsion immediately. The term of expulsion shall be one year. Upon a finding that the student was in possession of a firearm, the governing board shall expel the student.

“Possession” includes, but is not limited to, purses, backpacks, automobiles.

## CELLPHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICES

- Cell phones are to be turned OFF (not placed on vibrate) and put away upon arriving to class or before entering any school building and should not be taken out at any time outside.
- Permission for student possession or use of a cell phone may be revoked for inappropriate use by either parents or administration.
- Vista Charter Public Schools assumes no liability for the damage, loss, misuse of the cell phone by the student or another person – this includes theft as the phone should be on the student's person at all times (i.e. not in unattended backpacks that are left in piles, tables or with friends)
- At any time during a school activity, a school official may give specific directions regarding student use or non-use of a cell phone in which the student is expected to comply.
- Students must comply any time a request is made by school personnel to cease the use of a cell phone, even before or after school.
- Cell phone use on the school bus is for emergency purposes only; driver authorization is required.
- Texting during tests, quizzes, including CAASPP testing, could result in immediate revocation of permission to carry a cell phone at school.

Consequences for violating the cell phone policy:

- 1st Offense: student warning, phone is sent to the Main Office for student to pick up at the end of the school day.
- 2nd Offense: Parent must come to the school to pick up the cell phone during school office hours.

- 3rd Offense: Parent must pick up the phone during school office hours and student loses the right to have a phone on campus and the cell phone will have to remain at home permanently.

## VISTA DRESS CODE AND UNIFORM POLICY

Our policy is based on student safety, mutual respect, and responsibility to establish Vista Charter Public Schools as a place of higher learning.

Students are required to wear their appropriate Vista uniform every day. They may wear a t-shirt or long-sleeved shirt under the uniform, but not over it.

Students must wear dark colored bottoms (pants, shorts, skorts, skirts). No large belt buckles or chains such as wallet chains are allowed. All shorts should be no more than a couple of inches over the knee.

Caps and hats are not allowed, except for outdoor field trips. Please wear tennis shoes or other closed-toe shoes only. No sandals, flip-flops, or open-toed shoes are allowed.

Only Vista sweatshirts are allowed. They may be ordered and purchased in the Main Office along with other Vista apparel.

Students are expected to wear their regular uniforms or PE uniforms (when applicable) for P.E. For student safety earrings must be small and have no large hoops.

Thank you for supporting and following this policy. Together, we can ensure that your child gets the most out of school by minimizing distractions and maximizing safety.

## DRESS CODES/UNIFORMS

Schools may adopt dress codes that are reasonably related to the health and safety of students. School dress codes and uniform policies must be implemented in a manner consistent with the rights set forth in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Section 2 of Article 1 of the California Constitution. The California legislature has determined that “gang apparel” is hazardous to the health and safety of the school environment, and therefore, the wearing of such apparel may be restricted. All dress codes must be gender neutral; students cannot be disciplined or prevented from wearing attire that is commonly associated with the other gender.

### DRESS CODE

All students shall be required to show proper attention to personal cleanliness, health, neatness, safety and suitability of clothing and appearance for school activities. In every case the dress and grooming of the student shall be clean and shall not:

- Cause actual distraction from or disturbance in any school activity or actually interfere with the participation of a student in any school activity
- Create a hazard to the safety of him/herself or others
- Create a health hazard

### UNIFORMS

California Education Code section 35183 allows a governing board to adopt a uniform policy that authorizes schools to require pupils to wear a school uniform. Vista Charter Public Schools has elected to adopt its own

student uniform policy (see above). Any uniform policy implemented by schools must be voluntary and must make provision for participation by economically disadvantaged students. Parents must be advised of their right to opt out of the school's uniform policy. Students whose parents choose not to participate in a uniform program may not be disciplined, discriminated against, or otherwise denied rights and privileges available to other students. Consistent with the above guidelines, hair, sideburns, mustaches, and beards may be worn at any length or style, and clothing may be of any fashion, style, or design, as determined by the student and his parents.

## **PUPILS WITH TEMPORARY DISABILITIES**

Instruction in the home or hospital is provided pursuant to state law for eligible general education students in grades K-12 whose non-contagious temporary medical disability prevents attendance in regular day class or alternative educational program for a limited period of time. The intent is to maintain continuity of the student's instructional program during the interim period of disability. A home/hospital teacher provides instruction in subjects/courses correlated with the student's school program to the maximum extent possible. Home/Hospital instruction is designed as a temporary interim service. It shall not replace, over an extended period of time, the regularly required instructional program. Instruction in the home/hospital will commence (1) when the attending physician authorizes service to begin, based upon the student's ability to participate, and (2) upon receipt of the parent's authorization for temporary transfer of educational duties.

Instruction in the home/hospital for a temporary period of time is also provided for students with a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) or students with a Section 504 Plan – under certain circumstances.

## **GIFTED/HIGH ABILITY AND HIGH ACHIEVERS**

Gifted and High Ability students need to be challenged beyond cursory presentation of information. Within our programs, we provide access to gifted and high ability students through the same approach as supporting our lowest achievers. Teachers have the ability to create flexible groupings, which allows students access to the curriculum at their instructional level.

Strategies for effective instruction that address the needs of Gifted and High Ability students include:

- Differentiation of Instruction
- Acceleration of the pacing of instruction can provide an appropriate level of challenge.
- Flexible grouping of students to allow for more appropriate targeting of students' needs
- Independent projects that present more rigorous tasks
- Provide additional challenge work
- Personal Learning Plan, in which students, with guidance can select their own targets for success.

Students are identified through an assessment process that begins with search (standardized test data, progress reports, cumulative records, etc.) & referral (either by teacher or parent). Applicants are screened by a committee for a recommendation of eligibility, and determination can be made by intellectual assessment, evaluation of academic abilities, and/or demonstration. Parents are notified in writing regarding the decision for identification.

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act for Homeless Children and Youth entitles all homeless school-aged children to the same free and appropriate public education that is provided to non-homeless students. A

homeless student is defined as a person between the ages of birth and twenty-two who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and may:

- Live in an emergency or transitional shelter; abandoned building, parked car, or other facility not designed as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Live “doubled-up” with another family, due to loss of housing stemming from financial problems (e.g., loss of job, eviction or natural disaster);
- Live in a hotel or motel;
- Live in a trailer park or campsite with their family;
- Have been abandoned at a hospital;
- Be awaiting foster placement in limited circumstances;
- Reside in a home for school-aged, unwed mothers or mothers-to-be if there are no other available living accommodations; or
- Be a migratory or abandoned, runaway, or throwaway youth that qualifies as homeless because he/she is living in circumstances described above.

A homeless student may attend his/her school of origin (the school that the student was last enrolled in or attended when housed) or the school of residence. Vista Charter Public Schools shall ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent/guardian/unaccompanied homeless youth, to and from the school of origin, if feasible.

The law requires the immediate enrollment of homeless students. Schools cannot delay or prevent the enrollment of a student due to the lack of school or immunization records. It is the responsibility of the new school to request all necessary documents from the previous school and refer parents to all programs and services for which the student is eligible. Referrals may include, but is not limited to: Free nutrition, special education services, tutoring, English Language Learners programs, Gifted and Talented, Magnet programs, preschool, and before and after school services. Unaccompanied youth have these same rights.

### **FEDERAL/STATE LAWS AFFECTING FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY (FERPA)**

The privacy of school records is protected by federal and state laws which cover nearly every type of pupil record maintained by local schools or school district central offices. Such records might include information about attendance, health, grades, behavior, athletic ability, or activities in class. The law generally prohibits the release of pupil records information without written consent of the parent, or adult student (18 years or older). Records or information maintained by any school official exclusively for personal reference or use are not considered pupil records and are not subject to Federal and State privacy laws.

Unless otherwise prohibited by law, any natural parent, adopted parent, or legal guardian may have access to and review the pupil records of their child. Also, students who are 16 years and older (or have completed the 10th grade) have the right to access their records. School and District employees and officials who have a legitimate educational interest have a right to access pupil record information without the consent of the parent or student. A legitimate educational interest is defined as a need for the employee/official to access pupil record information in order to perform his/her job duties. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student enrollment or transfer. In general, other individuals or agencies may be authorized to access, review and /or obtain pupil records by court order, parent/guardian consent, or by statute.

Directory information is routine information maintained by school districts about students. It is this special category of pupil record information that does not require the same level of confidential treatment as pupil record information. Under the law, a school district may identify certain categories of information as directory information and may provide directory information to certain individuals, officials and organizations identified by the district as those who have a legitimate need to know. Parents and/or adult students have the right to limit or deny the release of any portion of directory information. Additionally, parents and/or adult students may deny the release of directory information to any designated recipient.

Any and all of the following items of directory information relating to a pupil may be released to a designated recipient unless a written request is on file to withhold its release as indicated in the Information Release Form submitted to the school - Name, Address, Telephone, Date of birth, Dates of attendance, Previous school(s) attended.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Vista Charter Public Schools work diligently to make sure that students and staff are prepared for an emergency. It has a detailed Emergency Plan that provides guidance for the school staff in an emergency. Our school conducts emergency drills that meet or exceed the state mandated requirements and accommodate persons with disabilities.

Regular drills are a part of a school's activities. Our school conducts the following types of drills:

- Fire Drill
- Earthquake or Emergency Drill
- Protected Campus or "Lockdown" Drill
- Duck, Cover and Hold Drill
- Take Cover Drill

Parents are asked to make sure that their students actively participate and take these drills seriously. These drills make the public schools the safest place for students during an emergency. In addition to conducting regular drills, each school stocks emergency supplies to sustain students and staff. These supplies include the following: water, food, first aid supplies, search and rescue supplies and sanitation items. These supplies are checked regularly by school staff and inspected by Office of Environmental Health and Safety inspectors.

## **WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO BE BETTER PREPARED**

Parents can be better prepared for an emergency by doing the following:

1. Visit your Vista School and ask us about what will happen during an emergency.
2. Make sure that your child's Emergency Card is current and correct, as well as the designated adult who can receive your child in case you cannot be present.
3. Instruct your child to take all emergency drills seriously. Regularly review home and school emergency procedures with your child.
4. Prepare a Family Disaster Plan and review it regularly with everyone in your family.
5. Prepare a Disaster Supply Kit for your home, car(s) and work.
6. Eliminate the hazards from your home that could hurt you or your child in an emergency.
7. Contact the American Red Cross for disaster preparedness information. Visit the website: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
8. Get Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) from your local fire department.

## **WHAT PARENTS CAN DO DURING AN EMERGENCY**

Parents need to be familiar with the school's emergency procedures. Knowing where to go to pick up your child will save time and reduce anxiety. Parents should remember that Vista Charter Public Schools have emergency procedures in place to protect all the students and we will follow these procedures during an emergency. Parents should also remember that students look to them for guidance and support during an emergency; parents who are calm can inspire students to do the same. This will go a long way to promote recovery and a return to normalcy. Parents who have questions about our school's emergency procedures are encouraged to contact their principal.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

In the event that there is an emergency, parents should remember that schools are among some of the safest buildings in the community. By law, California public schools are built to a higher standard than other public buildings, as required by the Field Act; therefore, schools will generally not sustain the same damage as residential or commercial buildings. Schools also have extensive Fire Life Safety Systems that include fire alarms and sprinkler systems that are designed to protect students and staff.

In general, schools will respond to emergencies by moving students to the safest possible location. During fires or earthquakes, students will be moved out of the classrooms to a safe assembly area, usually the school field or play yard. During an emergency, parents who want to pick up their children may be asked to go to the Request Gate located on the school's perimeter. This is a specific location that schools will use to release students.

**Please remember that students will only be released to a person whose name is listed on the student's Emergency Card.**

During a threat of violence, students will be sheltered in a locked classroom away from anything that can hurt them. During an emergency when the campus must be protected, parents will not be able to pick up their children until the school campus is declared to be safe by the Police or Sheriff's Department. Parents need to understand that the students are being sheltered in a secure classroom for their safety and will be released only when it is safe to do so.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

New students will not be enrolled unless a written immunization record, provided by a health care-provider or the health department, is presented at the time of enrollment and immunizations are up to date. Students who require additional vaccine doses at the time of enrollment or who lack a written record are no longer allowed a grace period. All students new to Vista Charter Public Schools must show that they have received all currently required immunizations in order to be enrolled. The immunization status of all students will be reviewed periodically. Those students who do not meet the State guidelines must be excluded from school until the requirements are met. Students who have been exposed to a communicable disease for which they have not been immunized may be excluded from school at the discretion of the health department.

A doctor may exempt your child from some or all immunizations (for example, due to a medical condition). Ask your school or childcare provider for details.

## KINDERGARTEN-6TH GRADE REQUIREMENTS

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP, DTP, Tdap, or Td) — 5 doses  
(4 doses OK if one was given on or after 4th birthday. 3 doses OK if one was given on or after 7th birthday.)  
For 7th-12th graders, at least 1 dose of pertussis-containing vaccine is required on or after 7th birthday.
- Polio (OPV or IPV) — 4 doses  
(3 doses OK if one was given on or after 4th birthday)
- Hepatitis B — 3 doses  
(not required for 7th grade entry)
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) — 2 doses  
(Both given on or after 1st birthday)
- Varicella (Chickenpox) — 2 doses

These immunization requirements also apply to students entering transitional kindergarten.

California schools are required to check immunization records for all new student admissions at TK/Kindergarten through 12th grade and all students advancing to 7th grade before entry. Parents must show their child's Immunization Record as proof of immunization.

## 7TH-12TH GRADE REQUIREMENTS

- Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap) — 1 dose  
(Whooping cough booster usually given at 11 years and up)
- Varicella (Chickenpox) — 2 doses  
(Usually given at ages 12 months and 4-6 years)

Additional school immunization requirements for 7th graders typically apply to students who:

- Previously had a valid personal beliefs exemption filed before 2016 upon entry between TK/Kindergarten and 6th grade, or
- Are new admissions, including from out-of-state; applies to all grades.

California schools are required to check immunization records for all new student admissions and all students advancing to 7th grade before entry. Parents must show their child's Immunization Record as proof of immunization.

School immunization law requires all students entering 7th through 12th grades in California to be immunized with a pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine booster called **Tdap** and **Varicella** booster (commonly called the chicken pox).

Pertussis is a very contagious respiratory disease that can be severe and last for months. The immunity received from either early childhood immunization or pertussis disease wears off over time, leaving older students and adults susceptible again to pertussis. Immunization with Tdap can protect students, schools and communities against pertussis.

The new requirement affects all students – current, new, and transfers – in public and private schools. The law has two phases:

- All students entering 7th grade will need proof of a Tdap shot for school.
- All students entering 7th grade will need proof of Varicella vaccine for school.

## MISCELLANEOUS HEALTH INFORMATION

- A student returning to school with sutures, casts, crutches, brace(s), or a wheelchair must have a health care provider's written permission to attend school and must comply with any safety procedures required by the school administration and health services personnel.
- A student returning to school following a serious or prolonged illness, injury, surgery, or other hospitalization (including psychiatric and drug or alcohol inpatient treatment), must have written permission by the health care provider to attend school, including any recommendations regarding physical activity.
- An excuse (less than 10 weeks) from a physical education class may be granted to a student who is unable to participate in regular or modified curriculum for a temporary period of time due to illness or injury. A parent's written request for an excuse will be accepted for up to 5 days; thereafter, a written request is needed from the student's health care provider.
- A current Vista Charter Public Schools Emergency Information Card must be on file at the school so that parents can be notified promptly in case of accident or illness involving their child.
- School authorities may excuse any pupil in grades 7-12 from the school for the purpose of obtaining confidential medical services without the consent of the parent or guardian.
- California Education Code section 35183.5 mandates that students be allowed to wear protective gear (hats, sun visors and/or sunglasses) while outdoors at recess, gym, etc.
- Vista Charter Public Schools may regulate the type of sun protective clothing/headgear in accordance with California Education Code Section 35183.5. Our school is not required to provide protective materials. Students are also allowed to use sunscreen (over the counter) as an allowable sun protection measure for their outdoor activities while at school.

## DIRECTORY INFORMATION

"Directory information," which is defined as set forth below, may be released to requestors in limited circumstances by Vista Charter Public Schools, without additional notice to you, unless you timely "opt out" of such disclosures, in writing.

State and federal law allow directory information to be disclosed to any requestors, except those who intend to use the information for commercial purposes. However, this school's policy is to not release directory information to any requestor, for any purpose, without specific prior parent/guardian consent in each situation, except we will release such information to requestors that engage in political advocacy, lobbying, or information dissemination related to California charter schools, specifically in this instance to the California Charter Schools Association Advocates.

If you do not want Vista Charter Public Schools to disclose your contact and other directory information from your child's records to such persons or entities without your prior written consent, you must notify us in writing.

Vista Charter Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

- Parents'/Guardians' names;
- Address;

- Email address;
- Phone number;
- Dates of attendance;
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams;
- Degrees, honors, and awards received; and
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended

## INTERNET ACCESS

The Vista Charter Public Schools' website is located at [www.vistacharterps.org](http://www.vistacharterps.org). All uses of Vista Charter Public Schools' computers and networks are regulated by the Vista Charter Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) that can be found on the Vista Charter Public Schools website. Access to the Internet from Vista Charter Public Schools is a privilege, not a right. The purpose of providing access to the Internet and Vista Charter Public Schools network resources is for regular instructional or business activity, or to compile data necessary for educational research.

All student users, who access the Internet from Vista Charter Public Schools facility, must have a student signature and parental release form on file at the school. Vista Charter Public Schools is compliant with the Federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Specifically, CIPA requires schools to use technology to block access to Internet sites that are:

(A) obscene, (B) contain child pornography, or (C) that are harmful to minors. Keep in mind that the blocking technology may not be 100% effective, and there is no technical substitute for adequate supervision of a child connecting from school or home. More information regarding children's safety when using the internet may be found at <http://www.isafe.org>.

Student downloads of music, photographs and/or video must comply with all applicable copyright laws. Furthermore, any music, photographs and/or video should only be downloaded for Vista Charter Public Schools, and not personal purposes. Personal downloads, particularly if they are of copyright protected materials in violation of Vista Charter Public Schools AUP is forbidden and students are subject to discipline for unapproved and/or unlawful downloading activities. No user of Vista Charter Public Schools network should have an expectation of privacy. The Internet is a public network, and all communications on it are not private. Vista Charter Public Schools system operator has access to all user account directories and data, e-mail, web pages, and any other files stored on system servers.

It is the user's responsibility not to initiate access to material that is inconsistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and educational mission of the Vista Charter Public Schools as well as adherence to any city, state and federal laws. It is expected that users will not use Vista Charter Public Schools network to access to threaten, demean, defame, or denigrate others for race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, gender, sex and sexual orientation or other reason. Any statement of personal belief in email or other posted material is understood to be the author's individual point of view and not that of the Vista Charter Public Schools. Violation of Vista Charter Public Schools AUP can lead to loss of Internet privileges, and further disciplinary/legal action may also be taken.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A critical dimension of effective schooling is parent involvement. Research has shown conclusively that parent involvement at home and in their children's, education improves student achievement. Furthermore, when parents are involved at school, their children go further, and they go to better schools.

### IMPORTANT FACTS

1. Families provide the primary education environment.
2. Parent involvement improves student achievement.
3. Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, supportive, long-lasting, and well-planned.
4. The benefits of parent involvement are not limited to early childhood or the elementary level; there are continuing positive effects through high school.
5. Involving parents in supporting their children's education at home is not enough. To ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community, parents must be involved at all levels in the schools.
6. The extent of parent involvement in a child's education is more important to student success than family income or education.
7. We cannot look at the school and the home in isolation from one another; families and schools need to collaborate to help children adjust to the world of school. This is particularly critical for children from families with different cultural and language backgrounds.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION POLICY (PPP)

Vista Charter Public Schools recognize that, when schools and parents form strong partnerships, our children's potential for educational success improves significantly. Teachers and school administrators become more aware of parent and community expectations and may implement their suggestions regarding programs and operations. Parents learn the scope of the school's instructional program and set high expectations for their children. As a result, schools can better focus on student growth and success.

### SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Vista Charter Public Schools will provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables all students to meet California's student academic achievement. VCPS will:

- Provide a safe, supportive, and effective learning environment for all students.
- Monitor student progress.
- Provide parents with information about their children's progress through parent conferences, progress reports, and online access.
- Provide parents access to staff through email, phone calls, and personal conferences in a timely and professional manner.
- Offer parents the opportunity to volunteer in their child's school.
- Hold parent teacher conferences to discuss this compact and its relevance to the individual child's achievement as needed.
- Provide parents the opportunity to observe classroom activities.

### PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

We, as parents, will support my child's learning in the following ways:

- Read the Parent Handbook.
- Ensure my child is in school and on time daily and wearing the school uniform.

- Provide a quiet place for my child to work.
- Attend parent conferences and school events.
- Volunteer when and where able (highly encouraged).
- Ensure homework is completed and returned on time.
- Limit child's time watching TV and/or playing video games.
- Ensure my child reads a minimum of 30 – 60 minutes each day.
- Read all notices sent home and respond when needed.
- Visit the school website, check messaging apps and Power School regularly.
- Update the school every time phone numbers and/or addresses change.
- Inform the school each time my child is absent via phone call and written note.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students will share the responsibility to meet Vista's high academic standards in the following ways:

- Come to school on time prepared to learn.
- Do my homework every day and turn it in on time.
- Ask for help when I do not understand the content.
- Read for at least 30-60 minutes every night.
- Limit the amount of time spent watching and/or playing video games during the school week.
- Commit to a bully-free school and speaking to an adult if there is ever a problem.
- Immediately give all school notices to my parents or guardians.
- Wear the school uniform each day, high school exempted.
- Complete all of my class work and show my parents my agenda daily.
- Respect adults, my peers, and school property.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Vista Charter Public Schools will build and encourage strong familial relationships to ensure effective parent involvement. Vista is committed to support a partnership with you to improve student academic achievement. We encourage each parent to volunteer and support the education of their child. This can be achieved by completing a combination of the following:

- Read the parent handbook and return the signed tear-off.
- Attend any scheduled parent conferences initiated by parent or school.
- Attend Back to School Night and Open House.
- Attend family nights.
- Attend Coffee with the Principal.
- Attend special school events (as announced).
- Attend IEP meetings and SST meetings when applicable.
- Academic enrichment hours with the family (Museums, library, cultural events, etc.).
- Classroom observations.
- Volunteer onsite (office help, community service, translating, school maintenance, supervising students, etc.).

The above-mentioned list is only a suggestion of the many opportunities parents will have to participate at Vista Charter Public Schools. We believe that by participating you will be cultivating memories that will last a

lifetime. We want your child to attain the greatest heights of their potential. With you by their side, there is no limit to how high they will go.

## PARENTAL RIGHTS

Education Code Section 51101 provides that parents/guardians of pupils enrolled in public schools have the right to work together in a mutually supportive and respectful partnership with schools to help their children succeed.

Parents/guardians have the right to, and are requested to:

- Attend all school events.
- Read, sign and return the Parent Compact.
- Observe the classroom(s) in which their child is enrolled or will be enrolled within a reasonable time of making the request.
- Meet with their child's teacher(s) and the principal within a reasonable time of making the request.
- Volunteer, under the supervision of Vista Charter Public Schools employees, their time and resources for the improvement of school facilities and programs.
- Be notified if their child is absent from school without permission.
- Receive the results of their child's performance on standardized and statewide tests and information on the performance of the school.
- Have a school environment for their child that is safe and conducive for learning.
- Examine the curriculum materials of the class(s) in which their child is enrolled.
- Be informed of their child's progress in school and of the appropriate school personnel to contact if problems arise with their child.
- Have access to the school records of their child and to question anything that they feel is inaccurate, misleading or is a violation of the student's privacy rights and to receive a response from the school.
- Receive information concerning the academic performance standards, proficiencies, or skills their child is expected to accomplish.
- Be informed in advance about school rules, attendance policies, dress codes, and procedures for visiting the school.
- Receive information about any psychological testing the school does involving their child and to deny permission to give the test.

## PARENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law on December 10, 2015, requires that, upon request, parents be notified of the professional qualifications of their child's teacher in core academic subjects. This information includes: the type of credential the teacher holds, the teacher's college degree(s) and major(s). Vista Charter Public Schools make this information available to parents through its website.

The law also requires that all schools receiving Title I funds must inform parents of their right to ask schools about the qualifications of their child's teachers. Our school receives Title I funding and we are happy to share this information with you at your request.

Additionally, schools must provide timely notice to the parents of a child who has been assigned to, or has been taught in, a core academic subject for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet the ESSA teacher requirements.

Every Vista teacher continues learning through professional development activities and our teachers are evaluated each year to make sure that their teaching skills remain at the highest possible level.

For more information on ESSA, and the role of parents, please visit the United States Department of Education Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/essa>

### **PARENTS' RIGHT TO REQUEST A CHANGE OF PUPIL'S GRADE**

Under Education Code section 49066, parents have a right to request a change of a pupil's grade on the following grounds: Mistake; Fraud; Bad faith; and/or Incompetency in assigning the grade.

When grades are earned for any course of instruction taught in the public schools, the grade earned by each pupil shall be the grade determined by the teacher of the course. In the absence of any of the grounds listed above, the grade shall be final.

Any request for a grade change must start with the classroom teacher within 30 days of the date the grade report was mailed. The next step, if not resolved with the teacher, is a written request to the principal. If not resolved, the decision may be appealed to the superintendent, if not resolved there, an appeal may be filed with the Governing Board of Vista Charter Public Schools. At each step, the parent has the right to present information in support of the request. If you would like additional information, please ask your principal.

### **RESTITUTION/PARENT LIABILITY**

Civil Code 1714.01 provides that any act of willful misconduct of a minor which results in any injury to the property or person of another shall be the parent or guardian having custody and control of the minor for all purposes of civil damages and the parent or guardian having custody and control shall be jointly and severally liable with the minor for any damages resulting from the willful misconduct not to exceed \$25,000. California Education Code Section 48904 provides that the parent or guardian of a minor is liable to Vista Charter Public Schools for all property loaned to and not returned or willfully damaged by the minor. It also authorizes Vista Charter Public Schools to adopt a policy (see above) whereby the marks, diploma, or transcripts of these students would be withheld until the pupil or the parent/guardian pays for the damages or returns the property.

### **CHANGE IN ETHNIC/RACE IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS**

Vista Charter Public Schools is required to collect race and ethnicity data on all new enrolling students using a two-part question. The first part of the question asks whether or not the respondent is Hispanic or Latino. The second part of the question asks the respondent to select one or more races from the following five groups:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- White (Non-Hispanic)

Parents/guardians wishing to change the current ethnic and race category for their children must complete the Ethnicity/Race Identification of Students Form, sign and return to their child's school.

If you have any questions or need more information, contact the school attendance or admission office.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT; ELIMINATION OF HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

It is the policy of Vista Charter Public Schools to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment, of or by employees or students, is a form of sex discrimination in that it constitutes differential treatment on the basis of sex. For that reason, it is a violation of state and federal laws and a violation of the Vista Charter Public Schools policy.

Vista Charter Public Schools considers sexual harassment to be a major offense that can result in disciplinary action to the offending employee or the suspension or expulsion of the offending student in Grades 4 – 12.

Any student or employee of the Vista Charter Public Schools who believes that she or he has been a victim of sexual harassment shall bring the complaint to the attention of the proper administrator/ supervisor (whether in an office or a school) so that appropriate action may be taken to resolve the complaint. Complaints will be promptly investigated in a way that respects the privacy of the parties concerned. The Vista Charter Public Schools prohibits retaliatory behavior against anyone who files a sexual harassment complaint or any participant in the complaint investigation process. Any such complainant is further advised that civil law remedies may also be available to them.

Education Code Section 212.5 defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature made by someone from or in the work or educational setting, under any of the following conditions:

- Submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or a condition of an individual's employment, academic status, or progress.
- Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis of employment or academic decisions affecting the individual.
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact upon the individual's work or academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or education environment.
- Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through the education institution.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to unwelcome:

- Verbal conduct such as the use of suggestive, derogatory, or vulgar comments (including catcalls and whistling); sexual innuendos or slurs or making unwanted sexual advances, invitations, or comments; repeatedly asking for dates; making threats; and/or spreading rumors about or rating others as to their sexual activity or performance.
- Visual conduct such as displays of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, posters, written material, cartoons, drawings or graffiti of a sexual nature and/or use of obscene gestures, leering, or staring.
- Physical conduct such as unwanted touching, pinching, kissing, patting or hugging; the blocking of normal movement; stalking; assault; and/or interference with work or study directed at an individual because of the individual's gender.
- Threats and demands or pressure to submit to sexual requests in order to keep a job or academic standing or to avoid other loss and/or offers of benefits in return for sexual favors.
- Retaliation for opposing, reporting, threatening to report, or participating in an investigation or proceeding on a claim of sexual harassment.

For more information or assistance with student or parent/guardian concerns, contact an administrator.

## **STUDENT/SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT & CODE OF CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS**

Vista Charter Public Schools are committed to ensuring that employees and all individuals who work with or have contact with students conduct themselves with students in a way that is supportive, positive, professional, and non-exploitative. Vista Charter Public Schools will not tolerate inappropriate conduct or behavior towards or with students by its employees or any individual who works with or has contact with students. Parents or guardians who have any questions or concerns regarding the conduct or behavior towards or with students by an employee or individual who works with or has contact with students are encouraged to speak to a school administrator.

Education Code Section 44807 states that every teacher in the public schools shall hold pupils to a strict account for their conduct on the way to and from school, on the playgrounds, or during recess. California law prohibits the use of corporal punishment against students. However, a teacher, administrator, or any other certificated employee of Vista Charter Public Schools shall not be subject to criminal prosecution or criminal penalties for the exercise, during the performance of his duties, of the same degree of physical control over a pupil that a parent would be legally privileged to exercise but which in no event shall exceed the amount of physical control reasonably necessary to maintain order, protect property, or protect the health and safety of pupils, or to maintain proper and appropriate conditions conducive to learning. The provisions of this section are in addition to and do not supersede the provisions of Section 49000.

VCPS expects all of our students to understand and follow the following code of conduct that will create a safe learning environment, where the focus is on academic achievement, citizenship, the development of every students' talents, and physical development through exercise. We will hold all of our students accountable to this.

As parents choose to enroll their children at Vista Charter Public Schools, they understand that they are choosing, on their own accord, to follow and support the code of conduct set herewith, and that if at any point in time, they or their children fail to do so, our school has the right to inform and support parents, as well as enforce it.

We must all understand that the image that our school will portray is, in grand part, determined by the behavior of our students and the physical appearance of our building. Therefore, we must all students, teachers, administrators, staff and community members – make Vista Charter Public Schools a better place in which to learn and work.

## **RESTORATIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY**

Vista Charter Public Schools is committed to a holistic approach to student behavior and development. First and foremost, we apply restorative practices and use the Way of Council to address social emotional development. Interventions are categorized using a tiered approach.

### **TIER I INCIDENT INTERVENTION EXAMPLES**

- Warning
- Alternatives
  - Move from seat
  - Pre-arranged teacher buddy

- Other teacher generated options
- Call parent
- Parent conference
- Daily behavior report
- Teacher Mentoring during recess/lunch
- Student Success Team meeting (SST)
- Removal from class

#### **TIER II INCIDENT INTERVENTION EXAMPLES**

- Counsel student
- Parent conference
- Daily behavior report
- Restorative Circles
- Student Accountability Board
- SART (Student Attendance Review Team)
- Student Success Team meeting
- Refer to School Psychologist
- Refer to outside counseling/services

#### **TIER III INCIDENT INTERVENTION EXAMPLES**

- Student Conference
- Parent Meeting with Behavioral Contract
- Restorative Circles
- Student Accountability Board
- SART (Student Attendance Review Team)
- Loss of Privilege List
- Student Shadow
- Assign to groups
- In-house Suspension
- School suspension
- Expulsion

### **STUDENTS' PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Personal items of value (cell phones, cameras, electronic games, radios, and computers, etc.) should not be brought to school since loss, theft, or damage is possible. Also, such items can be distracting to the educational process and may be confiscated by school personnel.

Vista Charter Public Schools is not responsible for loss or stolen items (including those in backpacks).

### **STUDENT SEARCHES**

The 4th Amendment of the United States Constitution protects individuals from unlawful searches. However, the law allows school officials to conduct searches of students under certain limited circumstances.

#### **SEARCHES BASED ON REASONABLE SUSPICION**

If a student has engaged in conduct that causes an administrator to have reasonable suspicion that the student has committed, or is about to commit, a crime or has violated statutory laws or school rules, the administrator may conduct a search of that student. The administrator must:

- Be able to articulate the reason for his or her suspicion and the facts and/or circumstances surrounding a specific incident.
- Be able to reasonably connect the student to a specific incident, crime or rule or statute violation.
- Have relied on recent, credible information from personal knowledge and/or other eyewitnesses.
- Ensure that a search based on reasonable suspicion is not excessively intrusive in light of the student's age and gender and the nature of the offense.

When conducting a student search based on reasonable suspicion, school officials must adhere to the following practices:

- Conduct the search only if there are clear and specific reasons for suspicion and there are facts that connect the student to a specific incident of misconduct.
- Jackets, purses, pockets, backpacks, bags, and containers in the student's possession may be searched to the extent reasonably necessary.

Under no conditions may a body or strip search be conducted. Only school officials of the same sex as the student being searched may conduct the search. Searches based on reasonable suspicion must be conducted in a private area where the search will not be visible to other students or staff (except for a school administrator or designee witness, also of the same sex).

### **RANDOM METAL DETECTOR SEARCHES**

California courts and the California Attorney General's Office have approved the use of random metal detector searches for weapons.

Random use of metal detectors is appropriate only if:

- The method of selection of students to be searched is genuinely random.
- Students selected to participate in random metal detector searches are selected without regard to personally identifiable characteristics such as race, gender, surname, group affiliation, or past history of misconduct (i.e., selection is random).
- The searches are minimally intrusive.
- School officials provide parents and students with advanced and detailed notice of the random metal detector search procedures.

If, as a result of a metal detector search, reasonable suspicion arises that a particular student may have a weapon, school officials may conduct a search of that student, in a private area, in accordance with the above guidelines for reasonable suspicion searches.

### **BULLYING & HAZING POLICY**

Vista Charter Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and civil learning and working environment. VCPS takes a strong position against bullying, hazing or any behavior that infringes on the safety or well-being of students, employees, or interferes with learning or the ability to teach.

Vista Charter Public Schools prohibits retaliatory behavior against anyone who files a complaint or who participates in the complaint investigation process. The policy applies to all other persons within the school's jurisdiction. Complaints will be promptly investigated in a way that respects the privacy of the parties concerned.

Vista's school policy requires all schools and all personnel to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students and staff. "All students and staff of public primary, elementary, junior and senior high have the inalienable right to attend campuses which are safe, secure and peaceful" [Article 1, Section 28(c) of the California State Constitution]. To fulfill this, at the beginning of each school year, all students will sign an, "Anti-Bullying Agreement".

This policy shall encompass behaviors or actions that occur among students, VCPS employees and associated adults. The policy applies at school-related activities and events, at school's programs and activities, traveling to and from school, and all other areas of the school's jurisdiction. (Ed Code 489009(s)).

Bullying is defined as the deliberate antagonistic action or creation of a situation with the intent of inflicting emotional, physical, or psychological distress. The behavior may be a single or repeated act and may be electronic, indirect, non-verbal, psychological, sexual, social, physical or verbal.

Hazing is any method of initiation, pre-initiation, or rite of passage associated with actual or desired membership in a student organization or student body, whether or not it is officially recognized by the educational institution.

Parents and students are encouraged to work with the school site administration to address any problems or concerns.

## **CYBERBULLYING**

A STUDENT WHO ENGAGES IN CYBERBULLYING AT SCHOOL IS SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION EVEN IF THE BULLYING OCCURRED ON A PERSONAL CELL PHONE OR ANY ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY. COMMUNICATIONS THAT OCCUR OFF-CAMPUS BUT DO COMPROMISE THE SAFETY OR INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE SCHOOL MAY FALL UNDER VISTA CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS JURISDICTION AS WELL.

## **SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

Vista Charter Public Schools will follow the California Education Code regarding suspension and Expulsion as outlined under Section 48900 et seq.

Positive behaviors have been associated with positive academic outcomes (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Feshbach & Feshbach, 1987; Wentzel, 1993), while negative behaviors (e.g., inattention, distractibility, and withdrawn behaviors) have been associated with negative academic outcomes (Akey, 2006; Kane, 2004). VCPS cultivates a positive school environment that is characterized by mutual respect. Students are introduced to the school's expectations during the student orientation days, and they are also reviewed on the first day of school.

At VCPS we believe that high, clearly defined, and consistent expectations support students' self-confidence and that their efforts lead to success in school. Research demonstrates that schools in which students achieve high levels of performance tend to set high expectations and standards (Marzano, 2011). VCPS takes a proactive school-wide approach to behavior management.

VCPS's discipline policy requires every school within VCPS to adopt and implement a school-wide positive behavior support discipline plan. Under the District policy, "all school level plans will include: teaching school rules and social emotional skills; reinforcing appropriate student behavior; using effective classroom management and positive behavior support strategies by providing early intervention for misconduct and appropriate use of consequences."

## VCPS's School-wide Restorative Behavior Plan

Student Expectations:

- Grit
- Empathy
- Accountability
- Respect

## Key Elements to a School-wide Program

To have a successful program, we must have:

- Teacher Collaboration and Coherence
- Clarity and Consistency for Students
- Parent Communication and Documentation

## Our System

### Character, College, Community

Students build **character** that drives them to be **college** and career-bound and develop into effective citizens of their **communities**.

### School-wide Proactive Interventions

VCPS is committed to a holistic approach to student discipline and development. First and foremost, we apply restorative practice and Way of Council to address social emotional development and any disciplinary actions as outlined earlier in this petition.

Students earn recognition (verbal, notes, phone calls home, awards) for the following positive behaviors:

- Demonstrating Random acts of kindness
- Demonstrating Random act of service
- Following routines/instructions without adult prompts
- Maintaining Organized materials
- Completing homework consistently
- Outstanding or improved test scores
- Using courtesy properly
- Self-monitoring to improve behavior
- Taking initiative to improve academics
- Having a positive attitude/ Being a positive role model to peers
- Participating consistently in class

### Interventions

Some examples of interventions include:

- Verbal/written reprimand
- Community beautification (classroom or yard)
- Time-out activity (sent outside room or to another teacher)
- Written Reflection
- Changing seats
- Meaningful public or private apology
- + Choice / - Choice

These policies are distributed in the school's student handbook and describe the school's expectations regarding mutual respect, safety, personal responsibility, work habits, attendance, and more. Each family receives a copy of these policies and is required to verify that they have reviewed them with their children at the time of enrollment or at the beginning of the school year.

The discipline policy is not discriminatory or arbitrary. The process follows general principles of due process. Students sign agreements related to their understanding of and responsibility to the standards set forth in the discipline policy within the handbook. Students who do not live up to their responsibilities and who violate the school rules may expect some consequences for their behavior, such as:

Alternatives to Suspension:

- Warning
- Loss of Privileges
- Notices to parents by telephone or letter
- Referral to the administrator
- Request for parent conference
- Way of Council
- Harm Circle- restorative

Should the previous interventions not be successful, suspension or expulsion may occur.

- In-school suspension
- Suspension
- Expulsion

VCPS monitors student behavior in a variety of means such as such as classroom observations, data gathered using the system presented in this petition, analysis of suspension and expulsion data, and Power School.

VCPS is exempt from Education Code requirements and procedures related to student suspension and expulsion; however, VCPS is committed to the student discipline, suspension, and expulsion policies as outlined in this petition. Therefore, references in this charter to the Education Code are used as a guideline.

### **Jurisdiction**

A student may be suspended or expelled for any of the acts enumerated in Education Code § 48900, except for willful defiance and/or disruption, related to school activity or school attendance that occurs at any time including, but not limited to:

- While on school grounds.
- While going to or coming from school.
- While using school-owned computers and servers.
- During the lunch period whether on or off the campus.
- During, or while going to or coming from, a school-sponsored activity.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of or willfully causing the infliction of physical pain on a student. For purposes of the Policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

For students who are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from assigned school activities, alternatives to suspension or expulsion are attempted first.

### **In-School Suspension**

In-school suspensions are given as an alternative to out of school suspensions and are held in the Principal's office or other location designated by the Principal. A certificated/credentialed staff member supervises the student during the in-school suspension. During in-school suspensions, teachers provide the students with assignments to complete by the end of the school day. If the student has questions about the assignments, the teachers provide support. During the day of the suspension, the student's teachers address behaviors that may have contributed to the student's in-school suspension. In addition to completing assigned work, the student is required to complete a reflection addressing why the behavior occurred and what can be done in the future to ensure that the offense is not repeated. Parents/guardians are notified of the in-school suspension in writing by the Principal or his/her designee in the parent/guardian's native language. The notice contains the reason for the in-school suspension, as well as the length of time for the in-school suspension. The maximum number of days of in-school suspension per incident in one academic year is 6, and the maximum number of consecutive days is 3. In-school suspensions would always be subject to an administrative decision regarding the severity and nature of the underlying offense. In the case of a student who causes or attempts to cause hate violence, engages in harassment or threats or intimidation against students or staff, or who makes terrorist threats against school officials or school property, the administration would review the facts to determine if in school suspension would pose a threat to the safety of students, staff and visitors to the school. In many situations, in school suspension may not be an appropriate disciplinary option if a credible threat to school safety exists.

### **Grounds For Suspension, Out-Of-School Suspension And Expulsion**

A single suspension may not be issued for more than 5 consecutive school days. The total number of days for which a student, including students with a 504 Plan, may be suspended from school shall not exceed 20 days. Students with an IEP shall not be suspended for more than 10 school days in any school year.

### **Willful Defiance**

The Charter School shall not suspend a pupil enrolled in kindergarten or any of grades K through 8, inclusive, nor recommend the expulsion of a pupil enrolled in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, for disrupting school activities or otherwise willfully defying the valid authority of those school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

### **Homework**

The Charter School shall, upon the request of a parent or pupil, provide homework that would otherwise have been assigned, to a pupil who has been suspended for two or more schooldays. If a homework assignment that is requested and turned into a teacher, within the prescribed timeframe, is not graded before the end of the academic term, the Charter School shall not include the assignment in the calculation of the student's overall grade in the class.

### **Enumerated Offenses**

**Discretionary Suspension Offenses:** Students *may* be suspended for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:

1. Causing, attempting to cause or threatening to cause serious physical injury to another person, except in self-defense.
2. A pupil in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive, may be suspended from school or recommended for expulsion if the principal determines that the pupil has caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of, hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233.
3. Unlawfully possessed, used, or was under the influence of any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
4. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11014.5.

5. Using tobacco or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, et al.
6. Harassed, threatened or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
7. Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e., a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a responsible person to conclude that the replica is a firearm unless, in the case of possession of any object of the type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certified school employee, with the administrator's or designee's concurrence.
8. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
9. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
10. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
11. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
12. Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing as defined in Education Code Section 32050.
13. Aided or abetted the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person.
14. Engaged in sexual harassment as defined in Education Code Section 48900.2.
15. Engaged in harassment, threats, or intimidation directed against school district personnel or pupils as defined in Education Code Section 48900.4. The harassment, threats, or intimidation directed at school personnel or pupils must be on the bases of:
  16. Race/color/national origin
  17. Disability
  18. Other factor
  19. Against school district personnel.
20. Made terrorist threats against school officials, school property or both as defined in Section 48900.7.
21. Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act, as defined in subdivisions (f) and (g) of Section 32261, directed specifically toward a pupil or school personnel.

### **Recommend for Expulsion Offenses**

The Principal or Designee must recommend the expulsion of a pupil for any of the following acts committed at school or at a school activity off school grounds, unless the Principal or Designee determines that expulsion is inappropriate or that an alternative means of correction would address the conduct:

1. Causing serious physical injury to another person, except in self-defense.
2. Possession of any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the pupil.
3. Unlawful possession of any controlled substance listed in Health and Safety Code section 11053 et seq. (except one ounce of marijuana or over the counter medications or medication prescribed to student).
4. Robbery or extortion.
5. Assault or battery (as defined in Penal Code section 240 and 242) upon any school employee.

### **Immediate Suspension and Mandatory Recommendation for Expulsion Offenses**

Principal shall immediately suspend and recommend expulsion when the following occur at school or at a school activity off campus:

It is a federal mandate that a school expel, for a period of not less than one year (except on a case-by-case basis), any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school. In accordance with California Education Code § 48915, the following reasons shall constitute mandatory grounds for immediate suspension and recommended expulsion:

1. Causing serious physical injury to another person
2. Brandishing a knife
3. Possession, selling, or furnishing of a firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object

4. Robbery or extortion, offering, negotiating a sale or selling a controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind.
5. Violation of the Federal Guns Free School Act
6. Pupil has committed sexual harassment as defined in Section 212.5. The conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This section shall not apply to pupils enrolled in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive.

### **Out-Of-School Suspension**

A student may receive an out-of-school suspension if it is determined that the student's presence would be a danger to others at school and their removal from school is necessary.

### **Suspension Procedures**

Suspensions (whether in-school or out-of-school) shall be initiated according to the following procedures. The Principal, Assistant Principal, and Superintendent are authorized to suspend students, The procedures for investigating incidents and collecting evidence shall be fair and thorough.

### **Conference**

Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted by the Principal with the student and his or her parent and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student to the Principal.

The conference may be omitted if the Principal or designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

At the conference, the pupil shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against him or her and shall be given the opportunity to present his or her version and evidence in his or her defense. This conference shall be held within two school days, unless the pupil waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason including, but not limited to, incarceration or hospitalization. No penalties may be imposed on a pupil for failure of the pupil's parent or guardian to attend a conference with school administration. Reinstatement of the suspended pupil shall not be contingent upon attendance by the pupil's parent or guardian at the conference.

### **Notice to Parents/Guardians**

For suspensions of fewer than 10 days, the charter school shall provide oral or written notice of the charges against the pupil and, if the pupil denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence that supports the charges and an opportunity for the pupil to present his or her side of the story.

For suspensions of 10 days or more and all other expulsions for disciplinary reasons, the charter school shall do both of the following:

- a) Provide timely, written notice of the charges against the pupil and an explanation of the pupil's basic rights.
- b) Provide a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer within a reasonable number of days at which the pupil has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the pupil has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate.

The notice shall contain a clear statement that no pupil shall be involuntarily removed by the charter school for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the pupil has been provided written notice of intent to remove the pupil no less than five schooldays before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native language of the pupil or the pupil's parent or guardian, or, if the pupil is a homeless child or youth, or a foster child or youth, in the native language of the homeless or foster child's educational rights holder. In the case of a foster child or youth, the written notice shall also be provided to the foster child's attorney and county social worker. If the pupil is a Indian child, as defined in Section 224.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the written notice shall also be provided to the Indian child's tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker. The written notice shall inform the pupil, the pupil's parent or guardian, the homeless child's educational rights holder, the foster child's educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, or the Indian child's tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker of the right to a hearing as described above before the effective date of the action. If the pupil's parent or guardian, the homeless child's educational rights holder, the foster child's educational rights holder, attorney, or county social worker, or the Indian child's tribal social worker or, if applicable, county social worker initiates the right to a hearing as described above, the pupil shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the charter school issues a final decision. For purposes of this clause, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions specified in sections 2 and 3 above. A foster child's educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker and an Indian child's tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker shall have the same rights a parent or guardian of a child has to receive a suspension notice, expulsion notice, manifestation determination notice, involuntary transfer notice, and other documents and related information.

### **Length of Suspension**

The length of suspension for students shall not exceed a period of 5 consecutive days unless an expulsion is recommended. If a student is recommended for a period of suspension exceeding 5 consecutive days, a second conference is scheduled between the parent/guardian and the Principal to discuss the progress of the suspension upon the completion of the 10th day of suspension. The total number of days for which a pupil may be suspended from school shall not exceed a total of 20 school days in any school year, unless a pupil enrolls in or is transferred to another regular school, in which case the total number of schooldays for which the pupil may be suspended shall not exceed 30 days in any school year. During suspensions, teachers provide the students with assignments to complete by the end of the duration of the suspension. If the student has questions about the assignments, the teacher provides support. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Students with disabilities who are suspended shall continue to receive services so as to provide FAPE and enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP/504. Any discipline that includes removal from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days constitutes a change in placement and a manifestation determination shall be conducted.

An IEP or 504 meeting is required within ten (10) days of initial suspension or placement in an interim alternative educational setting.

## **Procedural Safeguards/Manifestation Determination**

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP/504, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- a. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- b. If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP/504.

The notice of this manifestation determination meeting shall be in the native language of the pupil or the pupil's parent or guardian, or, if the pupil is a homeless child or youth, or a foster child or youth, in the native language of the homeless or foster child's educational rights holder. In the case of a foster child or youth, the written notice shall also be provided to the foster child's attorney and county social worker. If the pupil is a Indian child, as defined in Section 224.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the written notice shall also be provided to the Indian child's tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker.

## **Expulsion Procedures**

### **Recommendations for Expulsion**

Students are recommended for expulsion if the Superintendent finds that one of the reasons for expulsion has occurred and at least one of the following findings is substantiated:

- Other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct.
- Due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the student or others.

The Principal or the Superintendent have the authorization to recommend to expel a student.

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP/504, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- a. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- b. If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP/504.

### **Expulsion Hearing**

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether or not the student should be expelled. The hearing is held within 30 days from the date of the recommended expulsion, after the Superintendent determines that an act subject to expulsion has occurred. The hearing is presided over by an Administrative Panel appointed by the Board, consisting of at least three members who are certificated and neither a teacher of the pupil nor a Board member of the School's governing board. A Facts and Findings document that includes dates, times, incidences, people present, and an objective anecdotal record of the events is prepared by the Superintendent to summarize the evidence adduced at the hearing.

The Superintendent or Principal prepares a written notice of the hearing, which is emailed and mailed, within 48 hours of the request for the hearing, and it is forwarded to the student and the student's parents at least 10 calendar days before the date of the hearing. The written notice shall be in the native language of the pupil or the pupil's parent or guardian, or, if the pupil is a homeless child or youth, or a foster child or youth, in the native language of the homeless or foster child's educational rights holder. In the case of a foster child or youth, the written notice shall also be provided

to the foster child's attorney and county social worker. If the pupil is a Indian child, as defined in Section 224.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the written notice shall also be provided to the Indian child's tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker. The written notice shall inform the pupil, the pupil's parent or guardian, the homeless child's educational rights holder, the foster child's educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, or the Indian child's tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker of the following:

- The date and place of the hearing
- A statement of the specific facts, charges and offense(s) upon which the proposed expulsion is based
- A copy of the disciplinary rules that relate to the alleged violation
- The opportunity for the student or the student's parents to appear in person at the hearing
- The availability of reasonable accommodations and/or language support
- The opportunity for the student to be represented by counsel

The decision of the Administrative Panel is final and shall be in the form of written findings of fact and a determination regarding the expulsion. The process for appeal is detailed in the section below. If the Administrative Panel decides not to expel, the pupil shall immediately be returned to his/her educational program.

### **Special procedures for Expulsion Hearings Involving Sexual Assault or Battery Offenses**

The Charter School may, upon finding a good cause, determine that the disclosure of either the identity of the witness or the testimony of that witness at the hearing, or both, would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm. Upon this determination, the testimony of the witness may be presented at the hearing in the form of sworn declarations which shall be examined only by the Administrative Panel. Copies of these sworn declarations, edited to delete the name and identity of the witness, shall be made available to the pupil.

1. The complaining witness in any sexual assault or battery case must be provided with a copy of the applicable disciplinary rules and advised of his/her right to (a) receive five days' notice of his/her scheduled testimony, (b) have up to two (2) adult support persons of his/her choosing present in the hearing at the time he/she testifies, which may include a parent, guardian, or legal counsel, and (c) elect to have the hearing closed while testifying.
2. The Charter School must also provide the complaining witness a room separate from the hearing room for the complaining witness' use prior to and during breaks in testimony.
3. At the discretion of the Administrative Panel, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which he or she may leave the hearing room.
4. The Administrative Panel may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.
5. The Administrative Panel may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours he/she is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.
6. Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Nothing in the law precludes the person presiding over the hearing from removing a support person whom the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The Administrative Panel may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany him or her to the witness stand.
7. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, the Charter School must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to the Charter School. The person presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the testimony of the complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way.

Nothing shall preclude the presiding officer from exercising his or her discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom he or she believes is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.

8. The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the hearing room during that testimony.
9. Especially for charges involving sexual assault or battery, if the hearing is to be conducted in the public at the request of the pupil being expelled, the complaining witness shall have the right to have his/her testimony heard in a closed session when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are not alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing by means of closed-circuit television.
10. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness's prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the panel conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstances can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal counsel, or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

#### **Record of Hearing**

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

#### **Presentation of Evidence**

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A determination by the Administrative Panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence presented at the hearing that the student committed an expellable offense.

Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay and sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses of whom the Administrative Panel or Governing Board on appeal determines that disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

If, due to a written request by the accused pupil, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900, a complaining witness shall have the right to have his or her testimony heard in a session closed to the public.

If the Administrative Panel decides not to recommend expulsion, the pupil shall immediately be returned to his/her educational program at the Charter School.

#### **Written Notice to Expel**

Following a decision of the Administrative Panel to expel, the Superintendent or Principal shall send written notice of the decision to expel, including the Administrative Panel's adopted findings of fact, to the student or parent/guardian. This notice shall also include the following:

1. Notice of the specific offense(s) committed by the student
2. Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the Charter School.

Reinstatement eligibility review date

3. Notice of any appeal rights and procedures
4. The type of educational placement during the period of expulsion and/or information about alternative placement options

The Superintendent or Principal shall send a copy of the written notice of the decision to expel to the education office for the student's district of residence and to the District as required by any operative DRL. This notice shall include the following:

1. The student's name
2. The specific expellable offense committed by the student

### **Suspension/Expulsion Appeal**

Parents are notified by the Principal or Assistant Principal through a telephone call and in writing in advance to enactment of the suspension or expulsion and can appeal a student's suspension or expulsion. The suspension of a student are at the discretion of the Principal. A suspension appeal may be made to the Superintendent within ten days of the suspension. Following due consideration of the facts and safety of students, a decision by the Superintendent regarding student suspension are considered final.

An expulsion may be appealed within ten working days and must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent. The student is considered suspended until a meeting is convened by the Superintendent to consider the appeal (within 30 working days). The appeal is considered by the VCPS Governing Board and the family has a meaningful opportunity to be heard in the appeal process. For a student who is not reinstated upon appeal, the family is sent written notification by the Superintendent, within 24 hours of such decision, including specific reasons why reinstatement was denied, and are given a new eligibility review date. The decision of the VCPS Board of Directors is impartial and final. VCPS creates and maintains records of the expulsion proceedings and make audio records and written findings available to students/parents and provide post-expulsion support to expelled students and their families to facilitate continued access to education.

### **Reinstatement and Readmission**

The readmission process includes a meeting with the Principal to determine whether the pupil has met the conditions of the rehabilitation plan and/or whether the pupil continues to pose a danger to campus safety. The Principal shall make a recommendation to the Governing Board for readmission, or, if there is a finding that the pupil has not met the conditions of the rehabilitation plan and/or continues to pose a danger to campus safety, for non-readmission. The Governing Board makes the final determination. These procedures shall be made available to the pupil and the pupil's parent or guardian at the time the expulsion order is issued. VCPS is responsible for reinstating the student upon the conclusion of the expulsion period.

### **Rehabilitation Plans**

The rehabilitation plan includes improved behavior, attendance and academic performance and shall include a date not later than one (1) year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to VCPS for readmission.

Criteria for the rehabilitation plan includes the following: enrollment in another school; upholding school rules and behavioral expectations; acceptable attendance; completion of school work; and community service hours. VCPS shall mail written notification to parent within 30 days prior to the end of the expulsion term. This notification requests the parent to submit written documentation to the school showing that the student has met the conditions of the rehabilitation plan. VCPS's Governing Board shall review the reinstatement documentation and vote to reinstate or not. If the board votes to reinstate the student, VCPS shall remove record of the student's expulsion from their student records. If the student does not meet the requirements of their rehabilitation plan as determined by the Board, the Board revisits at a later date not to exceed one (1) year.

## Expelled Pupils/Alternative Education

The school helps provide the parent necessary information and a list of placement options. Pupils who are expelled shall be responsible for seeking alternative education programs including, but not limited to, programs within the County or their school district of residence.

## TRUANCY

Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor of Vista Charter Public Schools. (EC 48260) Vista Charter Public Schools policy requires that parents be notified by mail upon a student's initial classification as a truant.

The first mandated truancy notification states:

- That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
- That parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution.
- That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.
- That the pupil may be subject to prosecution.
- That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

Any pupil is deemed a habitual truant who has been reported as a truant three or more times per school year after an appropriate Vista Charter Public Schools employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with the parent or guardian of the pupil and the pupil.

## TITLE IX CONTACT INFORMATION

Collin Felch, Deputy Superintendent & Complaint Manager  
Vista Charter Public Schools  
2900 W. Temple St. Los Angeles, CA 90026  
Phone: (213) 201-4000  
Email: [cfelch@vistacharterps.org](mailto:cfelch@vistacharterps.org)

## TITLE IX POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Each student and employee have a right to learn and work in an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination. No Vista Charter Public School student or employee shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender, or gender identity or expression.

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 is one of several federal and state anti-discrimination laws that ensure equality in education. Title IX prohibits discrimination, harassment, exclusion, denial, limitation or

separation based on sex or gender. Title IX applies to both male and female students in any educational institution receiving federal funding.

California Education Code Sections 200 through 282 and Vista Charter Public Schools' Policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation or gender. Title IX requires that every Vista Charter Public Schools or institution have a Title IX Bullying Complaint Manager to whom concerns or complaints regarding sex discrimination can be made.

## COMPLAINT PROCESS

- Students or parents/guardians should report their verbal or written Title IX complaint to the Vista Charter Public Schools administrator or Title IX Complaint Manager within six months from the date the incident occurred. This will begin the informal investigation process which must be completed within 60 days. Complainants have a right to a timely and informal resolution at the Vista Charter Public Schools site.
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Vista Charter Public Schools decision, an appeal of the findings may be made to the California Department of Education - Office of Equal Opportunity.

Where Can Students/Parents Obtain Further Information or Assistance?

- At Your Vista Charter Public Schools School site: Speak to the Administration or Title IX Complaint Manager using the contact information shown above.

## NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Vista Charter Public Schools is committed to providing a working and learning environment that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. The School prohibits discrimination and harassment based on an individual's actual or perceived age, ancestry, color, disability (mental or physical), ethnic group identification, gender (including gender identity), marital status, national origin, race, religion (including religious accommodation), sex (actual or perceived, including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition), sexual orientation, on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance, or regulation. Harassment based on any of the above-protected categories is a form of unlawful discrimination and will not be tolerated by the School. Harassment is intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student or employee that creates a hostile environment and can result in disciplinary action against the offending student or employee. Harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal remarks and name-calling, graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening or humiliating.

This nondiscrimination policy covers admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, all school programs and activities, including vocational education. The lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission to or participation in school programs or activities.

For inquiries or complaints related to adult-to-student, student-to-student, employee-to-employee, student-to-employee, or work/ employment related discrimination or harassment, or non-employee discrimination or harassment based on the individual's actual or perceived age, ancestry, color, disability (mental or physical), ethnic group identification, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation, contact:

For inquiries or complaints related to, contact:

Collin Felch, Deputy Superintendent & Complaint Manager  
Vista Charter Public Schools  
2900 W. Temple St. Los Angeles, CA 90026  
Phone: (213) 201-4000  
Email: [cfelch@vistacharterps.org](mailto:cfelch@vistacharterps.org)

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Vista Charter Public Schools (VCPS) is committed to providing a school environment free of harassment, discrimination, retaliation and disrespectful or other unprofessional conduct based on sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding or related medical conditions), sex stereotype, race, religion (including religious dress and grooming practices), color, gender (including gender identity, gender expression and transgender), national origin (including language use restrictions and possession of a driver's license issued under Vehicle Code section 12801.9), ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, registered domestic partner status, age, sexual orientation, military and veteran status or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law or ordinance or regulation. It also prohibits discrimination, harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics, or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics.

In addition, VCPS prohibits retaliation against individuals who raise complaints of discrimination or harassment or who participate in school investigations.

**All such conduct violates School policy.**

### Harassment Prevention

VCPS's policy prohibiting harassment applies to all students and employees of VCPS. VCPS prohibits harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct by and among students and by and among any employee of VCPS, including supervisors, managers and co-workers. VCPS's anti-harassment policy also applies to vendors, customers, independent contractors, unpaid interns, volunteers, persons providing services pursuant to a contract and other persons with whom you come into contact while working.

Prohibited harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations, comments, posts or messages;
- Visual displays such as derogatory and/or sexually-oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures;
- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with school because of sex, race or any other protected basis;
- Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests or sexual advances as a condition of continued employment, or to avoid some other loss and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors;
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment; and

- Communication via electronic media of any type that includes any conduct that is prohibited by state and/or federal law or by company policy.

Sexual harassment does not need to be motivated by sexual desire to be unlawful or to violate this policy. For example, hostile acts toward another person because of his/her gender can amount to sexual harassment, regardless of whether the treatment is motivated by sexual desire.

Prohibited harassment is not just sexual harassment but harassment based on any protected category.

### **Non-Discrimination**

VCPS prohibits unlawful discrimination by and among students, and by and among employees, interns and volunteers and students of VCPS.

### **Anti-Retaliation**

VCPS will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint or participating in any workplace or school investigation or complaint process and will not tolerate or permit retaliation by management, employees, co-workers or students.

### **Complaint Process**

If you believe that you have been the subject of harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct, you may file a Uniform Complaint Form or a Title IX Complaint Form, and VCPS must follow the Uniform Complaint Procedures found at 5 CCR sections 4600-4687 and/or applicable Title IX procedures. VCPS's Complaint Form can be found online at:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/vcps/Board.nsf/files/BGHNMQ60A0DE/\\$file/VCPS\\_Uniform%20Complaint%20Procedures%20Complaint%20Form.2019-2020.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/vcps/Board.nsf/files/BGHNMQ60A0DE/$file/VCPS_Uniform%20Complaint%20Procedures%20Complaint%20Form.2019-2020.pdf)

You may also request a copy of the Uniform Complaint Form from your teacher or an Administrator. Please follow the instructions on the Uniform Complaint Form to submit your complaint to the appropriate designated UCP Coordinator or the Title IX Coordinator.

If you need assistance with your complaint, or if you prefer to make a complaint in person, contact the UCP or Title IX Coordinator (your teacher can assist you with this process). Please provide all known details of the incident or incidents, names of individuals involved and names of any witnesses. It would be best to communicate your complaint in writing, but this is not mandatory.

VCPS encourages all individuals to report any incidents of harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct forbidden by this policy immediately so that complaints can be quickly and fairly resolved.

Supervisors must refer all complaints involving harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct to the Principal or designee of VCPS so VCPS can try to resolve the complaint.

When the VCPS receives allegations of misconduct, it will immediately undertake a fair, timely, thorough and objective investigation of the allegations in accordance with all legal requirements. VCPS will reach reasonable conclusions based on the evidence collected.

VCPS will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible. However, VCPS cannot promise complete confidentiality. VCPS duty to investigate and take corrective action may require the disclosure of information to individuals with a need to know.

Complaints will be:

- Responded to in a timely manner
- Kept confidential to the extent possible
- Investigated impartially by qualified personnel in a timely manner
- Documented and tracked for reasonable progress
- Given appropriate options for remedial action and resolution
- Closed in a timely manner

If VCPS determines that harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct has occurred, appropriate and effective corrective and remedial action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances involved. VCPS also will take appropriate action to deter future misconduct.

Any employee determined by VCPS to be responsible for harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to, and including termination. Employees should also know that if they engage in unlawful harassment, they can be held personally liable for the misconduct.

Any student determined by VCPS to be responsible for harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to, and including suspension and/or expulsion.

*Collin Felch, Deputy Superintendent & Complaint Manager*

*Vista Charter Public Schools*

*2900 W. Temple St. Los Angeles, CA 90026*

*Phone: (213) 201-4000*

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## **UNIFORM COMPLAINT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (UCP)**

### **Uniform Complaint Policy**

Vista Charter Public Schools (VCPS) complies with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. VCPS is the local agency primarily responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing educational programs. Pursuant to this policy, persons responsible for conducting investigations shall be knowledgeable about the laws and programs, which they are assigned to investigate. This complaint procedure is adopted to provide a uniform system of complaint processing for the following types of complaints:

1. Complaints regarding "pupil fees," including any fee, deposit or other charge that a pupil or a pupil's parent or guardian are required to pay or any "fee waiver";
2. Complaints of discrimination against any protected group including actual or perceived, including discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics in any VCPS program or activity; and
3. Complaints of violations of state or federal law and regulations governing the following programs including but not limited to: special education, Title II, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, consolidated categorical aid, No Child Left Behind, migrant education, career technical and technical education training programs, child care and development programs, child nutrition program

VCPS acknowledges and respects every individual's right to privacy. Discrimination complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process. This includes keeping the identity of the complainant confidential, as appropriate and except to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation or proceedings, as determined by the Complaint Manager or designee on a case-by-case basis.

VCPS prohibits any form of retaliation against any complainant in the complaint process, including but not limited to a complainant's filing of a complaint or the reporting of instances of discrimination. Such participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades or work assignments of the complainant.

#### **COMPLAINT MANAGER**

The Board of Directors designates the following Complaint Manager to receive and investigate complaints and to ensure VCPS's compliance with law:

*Collin Felch, Deputy Superintendent & Complaint Manager*  
*Vista Charter Public Schools*  
*2900 W. Temple St. Los Angeles, CA 90026*  
*Phone: (213) 201-4000*  
*Email: [cfelch@vistacharterps.org](mailto:cfelch@vistacharterps.org)*

The Complaint Manager or designee shall ensure that employees designated to investigate complaints are knowledgeable about the laws and programs for which they are responsible. Designated employees may have access to legal counsel as determined by the Complaint Manager or designee.

#### **NOTIFICATIONS**

VCPS shall annually provide written notification of VCPS's uniform complaint procedures to students, employees, parents/guardians, the Board of Trustees, appropriate private officials or representatives, and other interested parties.

VCPS shall make available copies of the uniform complaint procedures free of charge. The notice shall:

1. Identify the person(s), position(s), or unit(s) responsible for receiving complaints.
2. Advise the complainant of any civil law remedies that may be available to him/her under state or federal discrimination laws, if applicable.

3. Advise the complainant of the appeal process pursuant to Education Code 262.3, including the complainant's right to take the complaint directly to the California Department of Education (CDE) or to pursue remedies before civil courts or other public agencies.
4. Include statements that:
5. VCPS is primarily responsible for compliance with state and federal laws and regulations;
6. The complaint review shall be completed within 60 calendar days from the date of receipt of the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension of the timeline;
7. An unlawful discrimination complaint must be filed not later than six months from the date the alleged discrimination occurs, or six months from the date the complainant first obtains knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination;
8. The complainant has a right to appeal VCPS's decision to the CDE by filing a written appeal within 15 days of receiving the Charter School's decision; and
9. The appeal to the CDE must include a copy of the complaint filed with VCPS and a copy of VCPS's decision.

### **Uniform Complaint Procedures**

The following procedures shall be used to address all complaints, which allege that Vista Charter Public Schools (VCPS) has committed a violation of a law or regulation specified in its Uniform Complaint Policy. The Complaint Manager shall maintain a record of each complaint and subsequent related actions.

All parties involved in allegations shall be notified when a complaint is filed, when a complaint meeting or hearing is scheduled, and when a decision or ruling is made.

#### **Step 1: Filing of Complaint**

Any individual, public agency, or organization may file a written complaint of alleged noncompliance by VCPS. A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination or harassment shall be initiated no later than six months from the date when the alleged discrimination occurred, or six months from the date when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination. A complaint may be filed by a person who alleges that he/she personally suffered unlawful discrimination or by a person who believes that an individual or any specific class of individuals has been subjected to unlawful discrimination.

The complaint shall be presented to the Complaint Manager who shall maintain a log of complaints received, providing each with a code number and date stamp.

If a complainant is unable to put a complaint in writing due to conditions such as a disability or illiteracy, VCPS staff shall assist him/her in the filing of the complaint.

#### **Step 2: Mediation**

Within three days of receiving the complaint, the Complaint Manager may informally discuss with the complainant the possibility of using mediation. If the complainant agrees to mediation, the Complaint Manager shall make arrangements for this process.

Before initiating the mediation of a discrimination complaint, the Complaint Manager shall ensure that all parties agree to make the mediator a party to related confidential information.

If the mediation process does not resolve the problem within the parameters of law, the Complaint Manager shall proceed with his/her investigation of the complaint.

The use of mediation shall not extend VCPS's timelines for investigating and resolving the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to such an extension of time.

### **Step 3: Investigation of Complaint**

The Complaint Manager is encouraged to hold an investigative meeting within five days of receiving the complaint or an unsuccessful attempt to mediate the complaint. This meeting shall provide an opportunity for the complainant and/or his/her representative to repeat the complaint orally.

The complainant and/or his/her representative shall have an opportunity to present the complaint and evidence or information leading to evidence to support the allegations in the complaint.

A complainant's refusal to provide VCPS's investigator with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, or his/her failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation or his/her engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in the dismissal of the complaint because of a lack of evidence to support the allegation.

VCPS's refusal to provide the investigator with access to records and/or other information related to the allegation in the complaint, or its failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation or its engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in a finding, based on evidence collected, that a violation has occurred and may result in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant.

### **Step 4: Response**

#### **OPTION 1:**

Unless extended by written agreement with the complainant, the Complaint Manager shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of VCPS's investigation and decision, as described in Step #5 below, within 60 days of VCPS's receipt of the complaint.

#### **OPTION 2:**

Within 30 days of receiving the complaint, the Complaint Manager shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of VCPS's investigation and decision, as described in Step #5 below. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Complaint Manager's decision, he/she may, within five days, file his/her complaint in writing with the Board.

The Board may consider the matter at its next regular Board meeting or at a special Board meeting convened in order to meet the 60-day time limit within which the complaint must be answered. The Board may decide not to hear the complaint, in which case the Complaint Manager's decision shall be final.

If the Board hears the complaint, the Complaint Manager shall send the Board's decision to the complainant within 60 days of VCPS's initial receipt of the complaint or within the time period that has been specified in a written agreement with the complainant.

If VCPS finds merit in a complaint regarding Pupil Fees, Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and/or Physical Education Instructional Minutes (grades one through six), the remedy shall go to all affected pupils and parents/guardians. VCPS will make a good-faith attempt to identify and fully reimburse all pupils, parents and guardians who paid a pupil fee within one year prior to the filing of the complaint.

If VCPS finds merit in a complaint regarding Reasonable Accommodations to a Lactating Pupil, Course Periods without Educational Content (grades nine through twelve) and/or Education of Pupils in Foster Care, Pupils who are Homeless, former Juvenile Court Pupils now enrolled in a school, and pupils in military families Vista Heritage Global Academy shall provide a remedy to affected pupil.

### **Step 5: Final Written Decision**

VCPS's decision shall be in writing and sent to the complainant. VCPS's decision shall be written in English and in the language of the complainant whenever feasible or as required by law.

The decision shall include:

1. The findings of fact based on evidence gathered.
2. The conclusion(s) of law.
3. Disposition of the complaint.
4. Rationale for such disposition.
5. Corrective actions, if any are warranted.
6. Notice of the complainant's right to appeal VCPS's decision within fifteen (15) days to the CDE and procedures to be followed for initiating such an appeal.
7. For discrimination complaints arising under state law, notice that the complainant must wait until 60 days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies.
8. For discrimination complaints arising under federal law such complaint may be made at any time to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

If an employee is disciplined as a result of the complaint, the decision shall simply state that effective action was taken and that the employee was informed of VCPS's expectations. The report shall not give any further information as to the nature of the disciplinary action.

### **APPEALS TO THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

If dissatisfied with VCPS's decision, the complainant may appeal in writing to the CDE within fifteen (15) days of receiving VCPS's decision. When appealing to the CDE, the complainant must specify the basis for the appeal of the decision and whether the facts are incorrect and/or the law has been misapplied. The appeal shall be accompanied by a copy of the locally filed complaint and a copy of VCPS's decision.

Upon notification by the CDE that the complainant has appealed VCPS's decision, the Principal or designee shall forward the following documents to the CDE:

1. A copy of the original complaint.
2. A copy of the decision.
3. A summary of the nature and extent of the investigation conducted by VCPS, if not covered by the decision.

4. A copy of the investigation file, including but not limited to all notes, interviews, and documents submitted by all parties and gathered by the investigator.
5. A report of any action taken to resolve the complaint.
6. A copy of VCPS's complaint procedures.
7. Other relevant information requested by the CDE.

The CDE may directly intervene in the complaint without waiting for action by VCPS when one of the conditions listed in Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 4650 5 CCR 4650 exists, including cases in which VCPS has not taken action within 60 days of the date the complaint was filed with VCPS.

#### **CIVIL LAW REMEDIES**

A complainant may pursue available civil law remedies outside of VCPS's complaint procedures. Complainants may seek assistance from mediation centers or public/private interest attorneys. Civil law remedies that may be imposed by a court include, but are not limited to, injunctions and restraining orders. For discrimination complaints arising under state law, however, a complainant must wait until 60 days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies. The moratorium does not apply to injunctive relief and is applicable only if VCPS has appropriately, and in a timely manner, apprised the complainant of his/her right to file a complaint in accordance with 5 CCR 4622.

# UNIFORM COMPLAINT FORM

## I. Contact Information

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt#: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work or Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## II. Complainant

You are filing this complaint on behalf of:

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian     Pupil     Witness to the Incident     Other

## III. School Information

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

## IV. Basis of Complaint (check any boxes that apply)

District violation of state or federal law or regulations governing:

- Accommodations for Pregnant and Parenting Pupils
- Adult Education
- After School Education and Security
- Career Technical and Technical Education and Career Technical and Technical Training Programs
- Child Care and Development
- Compensatory Education
- Consolidated Categorical Aid
- Course Periods without Educational Content
- Educational and graduation requirements for pupils in foster care, pupils who are homeless, pupils from military families and pupils formerly in Juvenile Court now enrolled in a school district
- Every Student Succeeds Act
- Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP)
- Migrant Education

- Physical Education Instructional Minutes
- Pupil Fees
- Reasonable Accommodations to a Lactating Pupil
- Regional Occupational Centers and Programs
- School Plans for Student Achievement
- School site Councils
- State Preschool
- State Preschool Health and Safety Issues in LEAs Exempt from Licensing

Unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, based on actual or perceived characteristics of the following:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Marital or Parental Status  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ancestry                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sex   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Color                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical or Mental Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Race  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic Group Identification   | <input type="checkbox"/> National Origin   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Expression             | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Identity               | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Harassment (Title IX)                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gender                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Association with any of these actual or perceived characteristics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Genetic Information           |  |

Allegations of noncompliance of the following:

- Retaliation against a complainant or other participant in the complaint process or anyone who has acted to uncover or report a violation subject to the uniform complaint procedures

### v. Details of Complaint

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Attach additional sheets of paper if you need more space.

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Please **describe** the type of incident(s) you experienced that led to this complaint, in as much detail as possible, including all dates and times when the incident(s) occurred or when the allege acts first came to your attention and location(s) where the incident(s) occurred:

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List the **individuals** involved in the incident(s) complaint of:

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List any **witnesses** to the incident(s):

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**What steps**, if any, have you taken to resolve this issue before filing a complaint?

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**Signature of Person Filing Complaint**

**Date**

Please submit this complaint to:

Collin Felch, Deputy Superintendent & Complaint Manager  
Vista Charter Public Schools  
2900 W. Temple St. Los Angeles, CA 90026  
Phone: (213) 201-4000  
Email: [cfelch@vistacharterps.org](mailto:cfelch@vistacharterps.org)

# Title IX Discrimination Complaint Form

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(including gender equity/sexual harassment/sexual violence)

Collin Felch, Deputy Superintendent & Complaint Manager  
Vista Charter Public Schools  
2900 W. Temple St. Los Angeles, CA 90026  
Phone: (213) 201-4000  
Email: [cfelch@vistacharterps.org](mailto:cfelch@vistacharterps.org)

To file a complaint with the school, please complete and mail, email or bring this form to the office designated above. Or, you may call the office to make arrangements for a representative to meet with you there or at another location. If you are unable for any reason to complete this form and would like to make a verbal complaint, please call the office above to schedule an appointment.

Although the school cannot commit to keeping a complaint of discrimination confidential because of the school's obligation to investigate the complaint, the university will use its best efforts not to disseminate information concerning the complaint beyond those who have a need to know.

Please feel free to contact the office designated above if you have any questions regarding the process for filing or investigating complaints of discrimination (including sexual harassment).

*Note: A victim of discrimination or harassment is encouraged to use the school's internal complaint process. Persons believing they have been discriminated against or harassed may seek assistance from government agencies such as the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the federal Department of Labor, or Office of Civil Rights.*

## CONFIDENTIAL TITLE IX DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT FORM

### AFFILIATION

- Certificated employee
- Classified employee
- Administration
- Employment Applicant
- Student
- Parent/Guardian
- Other. Please explain your affiliation:

### COMPLAINANT:

\_\_\_\_\_

Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_

First Name

\_\_\_\_\_

MI

\_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_

Work Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone

### NATURE OF COMPLAINT: (Check one or more)

- Sexual Orientation
- Sexual Harassment/Workplace Violence
- Gender/Sex
- Other. Please explain:

### PERSON WHO DISCRIMINATED AGAINST YOU:

Name

Title

Department

**DESCRIPTION OF COMPLAINT:** Describe your complaint and why you believe this person discriminated/ retaliated against you. Explain why you have contact with this individual, e.g. supervisor, co-worker, faculty, customer, etc. Give date(s), time(s), place(s) the discrimination/retaliation occurred. (Attach additional pages as necessary.) **ATTACHMENT:**

**PREVIOUS ACTION:** Have you brought this matter to the attention of any other department(s) at the school? If so, please list the name(s) and department(s) of all other persons with whom you have discussed this matter. **ATTACHMENT:**

**COMPLAINT DOCUMENTATION:** Explain any documentation supporting your complaint. **ATTACHMENT:**

**CORRECTIVE ACTION SOUGHT:** (Attach additional pages as necessary.) **ATTACHMENT:**

**WITNESSES:** (Relationship= co-worker, supervisor, customer, faculty, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title/Relationship

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title/Relationship

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title/Relationship

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

**DECLARATION:**

