

****IMPORTANT****

**Please Read the Family Handbook and
Review the entire
Student Code of Conduct with your child.**

**PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN THIS FORM
TO YOUR CHILD'S HOMEROOM TEACHER BY
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026.**

I HAVE READ AND REVIEWED THE FAMILY HANDBOOK, AND THE CODE OF
CONDUCT AND UNDERSTAND THE OUTLINED RULES AND PROCEDURES.

PARENT'S NAME (PRINT): _____

PARENT'S SIGNATURE: _____

STUDENT'S NAME (PRINT): _____

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE: _____

STUDENT'S HOMEROOM: _____

DATE: _____

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VINELAND PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL



FAMILY HANDBOOK 2025-2026

Vineland Public Charter School Mission

To provide a nurturing, supportive, creative, and actively engaging environment for students and families that facilitates the performing and visual arts and the development of well-educated and responsible young adults with a lifelong love of learning.

School Staff

Executive DirectorDr. Ann Garcia
School Business Administrator/ Board SecretaryMr. Dennis Zakroff
SuperintendentMr. Matthew
Ackiewicz
PrincipalMr. Matthew
Larson
Co
Principal
....Mr. Joseph W. Zlotek

School Hours

Arrival.....8:00-8:15am
Dismissal.....2:50-3:15pm
Early Dismissal....12:25-12:45pm

Welcome

Dear VPCS families,

Welcome to Vineland Public Charter School. We are happy to provide you a choice for your child's educational experience. Selecting our school provides your child the opportunity to be part of a new and exciting educational experience. Our program is constructed with a focus on the arts and is based on the rigor of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. We look to bring out the creative thinker in your child and provide an education that will prepare him/her for the world in which he/she will be part. Thank you for entrusting your precious gift/s with us.

**Yours in education,
Mr. Matthew Larson**

Board of Trustees

President	Mrs. Vanessa Phillips
Secretary	Ms. Christina Murphy
Member	Mrs. Vanessa Bones
Member	Mrs. Fatma Gadalla
Member	Mr. William Palmer
Member	Mr. Octavio Mendez

* The Board of Trustees meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 6:45 P.M. in the school building. Everyone is invited to attend.

* From time to time, it becomes necessary to hold special meetings. If so, notices of these meetings are advertised in the local paper and posted on our website,

<https://www.vinelandpubliccharterschool.org>.

The Voice of the Board

The Vineland Public Charter School Board of Trustees welcomes the opportunity to serve the children residing in Cumberland County. As the first charter school in Cumberland County, we would like to thank you for making VPCS your choice for your child's education.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS OR DELAYED OPENINGS

School Closing/Delayed Openings

In the event that school is closed or the opening of school is delayed due to inclement weather (or any other emergency), announcements will be made over our **School Messenger** System. The **School Messenger** System will call your home phone, cell phone, and will send an email to your computer. **School Messenger** has enabled us to personally communicate with parents about emergency situations, upcoming school events, and important issues impacting your child. Please be sure to update your child's emergency information and telephone numbers during the school year.

School closings/delayed openings will also be posted on 6ABC Action News School Closings website and on the school answering machine. PARENTS ARE ASKED TO MAKE CERTAIN THEIR CHILDREN KNOW WHAT TO DO AND WHERE TO GO IN THE EVENT OF AN EARLY DISMISSAL OR DELAYED OPENING. Set up a plan with your child (ren) as to who will be with them, where to go and what to do. This saves anxious moments and tears.

To ensure maximum safety for the children in our schools, ALL parents and visitors are required to report directly to the office and sign in. No one is permitted in the halls or classrooms without a visitor's pass and authorization from the office.

PARENT PORTAL

Vineland Public Charter School is pleased to offer OnCourse as our "Parent Portal". OnCourse provides parents with the ability to view real-time information from a safe read-only login. Parents can securely monitor their child's progress by retrieving grades, assignments, and reports. If you do not already have access to OnCourse, a **Parent Portal** registration form and an access code will be provided at the start of the school year.

PARENT CUSTODY ISSUES

If there are issues involving custody, whether legal or person in nature, make sure the office is provided appropriate documentation. If you are not the primary residence of the child, but would like copies of all school notifications, please send a letter of request to the office.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance is essential if a student expects to be successful in school. Absenteeism can be a major cause of poor performance or failure. Students who are absent more than twice a month are considered to be chronically absent and have a high rate of dropouts.

The Board of Trustees recognizes the following as the only legitimate cause for absence from school: personal illness, attendance required in court, or other reasons with approval from the principal. In addition, any student who is absent 10 days within the school year may be subjected to administrative review by the principal before the student can be considered for promotion.

Students with 39 or more absences in a school year will be considered for retention (repeating) in the current grade level.

Early dismissals prior to 12:00pm will be considered an absent school day as the student does not meet the New Jersey requirement for a four hour instructional day.

The Board of Trustees requires a phone report or written statement from a student's parent/guardian explaining the reason for their child's absence from class or school. **The written notice is required to be presented to the office on the morning following the student's absence.**

Absentee Notes

1. Whenever a child is absent from school, for any reason, **parents are requested to call the school office between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. to report their child's absence.** This procedure is a protection for each child and the child's parent. **A note must be sent to the school the day the child returns to school explaining the reason for the absence.** The note should be given to the school secretary. It will be forwarded to the school office. Doctor's notes must be submitted within four weeks of the absence, or the absence will be unexcused.
2. For further clarification, please refer to the late policy on the school website.

The Board of Trustees reserves the right to verify written statements and to investigate the cause of each absence and/or repeat absences or tardiness.

For clarification of excused and unexcused absences, please refer to Administrative code 6A:16-7.8

Late Arrival and Early Dismissal

According to New Jersey State Law (18A: 38-25), children between the ages of six and sixteen years old must regularly attend school. It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to ensure consistent school attendance. Consistent student attendance is highly correlated with student achievement. Please make every effort to promote the excellent school attendance of your child, as instructional time is extremely important. Students with poor attendance will be monitored. All students should arrive at school on time. **When circumstances require that a student arrive late to school, the parent must sign the student in and explain the reason for the tardiness.**

Tardiness

It is understood that there are times when doctor's appointments and special circumstances warrant a tardy or early pick-up. Please try to schedule appointments outside of school hours to avoid a loss of instructional time. Habitual tardiness or constant early pick-ups will result in a meeting with the principal to discuss the situation.

The Vineland Public Charter School has established a procedure for student tardiness as follows:

1. Students arriving late to school should report to the main office and must have a late slip to enter class.
2. Students are late if they arrive after the starting bell rings at 8:15 a.m.
3. Tardiness will be unexcused except for the following reasons:
 - a. Illness or medical appointments (with doctor or parent note)
 - b. Religious observance
 - c. Personnel (with administrative approval)
4. Following nine (9) **unexcused** late arrivals at school, a letter may be sent home from school reminding parents of the procedure and consequences of continued tardiness which can include, but are not limited to, exclusion of non-academic and after school activities due to missed academic instruction.

5. **Late arrivals beyond 10:45am will be considered an absent school day as the student does not meet the New Jersey requirement for a four hour instructional day.**

Summary of the Attendance Policy Rules, Regulations, and Procedures:

Every parent has the responsibility to make sure his or her child attends school regularly. According to NJ State Law (18A:38-25), children between the ages of 6 and 16 must attend school regularly. There is a strong relationship between a student's attendance and academic growth.

- Whenever a child is absent from school for any reason, it is the parent's responsibility to call the office prior to 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence and bring in a note when he/she returns to school. In order for a child to have an excused absence, a note is required for all absences within 1 day of returning to school.
- When tardy to school, a student must be signed in at the office by an adult and receive a late pass identifying the reason why the child was tardy. This is to be given to the teacher.
- When being dismissed early from school, a student must present a note to the office in the morning. If approved, he/she must be signed out at the appropriate time in the office. The note will be verified and kept in the office for that day.
- Participation in after school activities/events is not permitted if a student is absent from school on the day of the event. If a student is tardy (after **8: 15 AM**) or leaves school early, he/she will need written approval by administration to participate.
- Excessive absences from school could result in promotion remediation. Excessive defined according to the length of the class and includes all unexcused absences:
Full year =19 days

Students should never leave the school property for any reason unless a parent, guardian, or school faculty member accompanies them. A student will not be permitted to leave the school grounds until the child is properly “signed-out” by a parent or guardian at the school office.

MORNING AND AFTERNOON ARRIVAL & DEPARTURES OF STUDENTS

1. **Students should not arrive at the Vineland Public Charter School before 7:40 a.m., as there is no teacher supervision before that time.** Class begins at 8:15 a.m. at the Vineland Public Charter School. If students arrive before 7:40 a.m. he/she will be unsupervised.
2. Students should board their assigned bus unless the child’s parent notifies the school otherwise before 2:30 p.m.
3. Parents should ensure that their child is aware of his/her bus number, bus stop, address, and possibly the name of the bus driver. If there are any questions, please contact the office.
4. All students in Kindergarten through grade 5 must be met at the afternoon (p.m.) bus stop by a parent/guardian.

Signing Students In and Out of School

The Vineland Public Charter School discourages the early dismissal of students when classes are in regular session. Students should be removed from school early only for legitimate reasons when a reasonable situation prevents the child from attending school for the entire day. State law mandates students’ attendance except for religious holidays and “Take Your Child to Work Day.” **Needless early dismissals are disruptive both to the child’s education and to the class that is interrupted.** Of course, there are occasions (medical appointments, etc.) when dismissing a child early is warranted. In such cases, the parent needs to report to the school office to “sign-out” the child, stating the legitimate cause for the early dismissal.

NO student will be dismissed to any person other than their parent/legal guardian or persons listed on the registration form or emergency card, without prior written notice by the parent/legal guardian that another authorized adult may pick up the student from school. The adult picking up the student must report to the main office to sign the student out of school and provide picture identification.

Parents are to provide written notifications to the teacher in the morning when they are planning to pick up their child from school, unless it is an emergency.

Children are to go directly home when they are dismissed and not to remain in school or on the school grounds unless requested by the teacher or administration.

PUPIL EDUCATION RECORDS

Pupil education records of the Vineland Public Charter School will be maintained in a manner that ensures student confidentiality, yet provides for accessibility by parents and appropriate professionals through procedures defined by State regulations. Your child's records will include data to identify each pupil, attendance records, and descriptions of pupil progress and health records.

Board of Trustees Policy also permits the inclusion of the following in pupil records: information contributed by teachers, samples of pupil work, standardized testing information, parental input and discipline reports. Your child's records are maintained in his/her school building.

The Pupil Records Act, N.J.A.C. 6:3-21, requires every Board of Trustees to notify, annually, all parents within the school district of their rights in regard to pupil records. According to this statute, parents and guardians have the right of access to their child's school records.

Pupil records are subject to challenge by parents on the grounds of inaccuracy, irrelevancy, disclosure or denial of access to individuals, organizations or agencies; or violation of the privacy or other rights of the pupil. The records may be viewed by appointment during normal business hours in the Office of the Principal of the school in which your child is enrolled.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/TELEPHONE NUMBER

For the safety of your child, it is imperative that the school office be notified immediately of a change of address, home or work telephone numbers and email addresses.

TRANSFERS

Arrangements for transferring students out of the Vineland Public Charter School must be made in person at the school office. Parents will need to provide their new address and the name and address of the school their child will be attending.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Report Cards & Marking Procedures

From Kindergarten to Grade 8, report cards will be issued three times each year for marking periods of approximately 14 weeks each. Parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled for the first and last report period to discuss each child's educational, social and physical development throughout the school year. Report cards are based on the following rating scale:

Kindergarten Grades

4/C = Consistently Observed

3/U = Usually Observed

2/S = Sometimes Observed

I = Infrequently

+= Partially Proficient

Academic Grades 1 & 2

E/4 = Exceeds Grade Level Expectations

M/3 = Meets Grade Level Expectations

P/2 = Progressing Toward Grade Level Expectations

N/1 = Does Not Meet Grade Level Expectations

I = Infrequently

+= Partially Proficient

Academic Grades 3-5

A = 100-90

B = 89-80

C = 79-70

D = 69-60

I = 59-40 ↓ Student is not at a satisfactory level of achievement. Intervention is needed to help students meet the necessary skills/standards.

I = Infrequently

+= Partially Proficient

Academic Grades 6-8

A = 100-90

B = 89-80

C = 79-70

D = 69-60

F = 59-40 Student is not at a satisfactory level of achievement. Intervention is needed to help students meet the necessary skills/standards.

I = Infrequently

+= Partially Proficient

Special Area Teachers

4 = Exceeds Grade Level Expectations

3 = Meets Grade Level Expectations

2 = Progressing Toward Grade Level Expectations

1 = Does Not Meet Grade Level Expectations

Placement of Students in Classrooms

It is the policy of the Vineland Public Charter School that the school principal and faculty will assign students to appropriate classes based on individual needs and educational development. Utilizing heterogeneous grouping, all classroom placements will be assigned in a manner that guarantees educational excellence and equity in instruction. When assigning classroom placements, the following criteria are considered: standardized achievement test results, classroom achievement, reading ability and grouping, social and emotional development of the individual child, and special needs. Special consideration regarding each child should be brought to the attention of the school principal by teachers or parents.

Homework Policies

The Vineland Public Charter School's General Rules and Regulations emphasize the importance of completing homework assignments. Homework assignments are encouraged by the policies of the Vineland Public Charter School Board of Education as they promote student achievement and school effectiveness.

It is recommended that the following time be spent on home study and work in the evening:

Kindergarten	10-15 minutes
Grade 1	15-20 minutes
Grade 2	20 minutes
Grade 3.....	25 minutes
Grade 4.....	35 minutes
Grade 5.....	40 minutes
Grade 6.....	40-50 minutes
Grade 7-8.....	60+ minutes

Specific time spent on homework, of course, may vary from child to child. Individual student needs are considered when assigning homework, and assignments may be made up at the request of a parent with the permission of the classroom teacher.

Homework assignments are designed to reinforce skills taught in the classroom, and all homework assignments should have educational value. Parents should discuss any concerns regarding homework with the classroom teacher. It is recommended that parents spend some time each evening working with their child on educational activities regardless of whether or not there is a specific assignment.

Parents can have a very positive impact on their child's success in school. Remember that you are the most important person in your child's life.

Vacation and Homework

It could be the busy pace of today's lifestyle, but conflicting schedules due to parents' occupations or older siblings' schedules seem to have caused an increase in parents removing their child from school for family vacations. Officially this practice is discouraged. If, however, a student is removed from school for a vacation, they will have the same number of school days to make up any work missed upon return; therefore, if a student misses three days of school, the student will have three days to make up the work.

Also, please note that because our reading and math curricula are performance and activity based, they can no longer be assembled into a packet or work to be sent home before the vacation. Rather, all work will be presented and made up upon the student's return. This will allow both the student and the teacher the needed opportunity to explain and to provide all the materials necessary to complete the assignment.

GENERAL SCHOOL RULES AND REGULATIONS

The following is an overview of several of the most important general student regulations of the Vineland Public Charter School.

Snacks

Students in Kindergarten and first grade (only) will bring in their own snack from home. Your child will need **1 healthy snack each day** to help make sure he/she will not become hungry or fatigued. Please send in one daily afternoon snack of individual portion size. We encourage parents to select healthy snack options. Snacks should be: crackers, fruit/vegetables, cheese, dried fruit, granola bars, and so forth. **Cookies, cakes and candy are not acceptable snacks and will be returned uneaten.** Please do not send in high fat or sugary foods. Students in grades K-8 are allowed to bring water bottles. Only water is permitted outside of the cafeteria. Please note a classroom refrigerator is not available. VPCS is not able to provide daily snacks.

See Snack policy for details.

Field Trips

VPCS encourages and supports class and school field trips. As part of the educational and performing arts program, students may be taken on field trips approved by the Board of Trustees. Field trip admission fees are paid by the school whenever possible. Parents are notified in advance whenever a trip is planned and of the cost if there is an admission fee. Any student who does not have parental approval will be unable to participate. Students may not be able to participate in field trips at the discretion of administration.

Fire Drills/Security Drills

Every month Vineland Public Charter School students and school personnel must participate in school wide emergency drills. These drills are in cooperation with the police department and are to prepare us to evacuate the building in case of an emergency. Drills include such areas as: fire, bomb threat, lockdowns, and evacuations. Along with the security drills we will conduct a fire drill every month.

Classroom Procedures

Each individual teacher will establish his/her own classroom procedures. Questions about individual rules and consequences should be discussed with the classroom teacher.

Student Drop-off Areas

No vehicle should either obstruct emergency access to any school building or block another vehicle from its access to exiting the parking area. Parking should only be in designated parking spaces. Students should keep clear of designated parking areas for safety purposes, except when arriving or departing. For the safety of our children, students who are brought to school in the morning by private vehicles should be dropped off as follows: Parents will pull up at the drop off location and teachers or school staff will meet the vehicle and help the student out of the car and guide them to the school entrance.

Student Drop-off Times

Students should not be dropped off at the Vineland Public Charter School prior to 8:00 a.m., as there is no adult supervision until those times.

Personal Belongings

Students should respect the personal belongings of each other and should never remove any article from the school that does not belong to them. Though the school does manage a “lost and found” area, students are strongly encouraged to take good care of their personal belongings. It is recommended that all children’s possessions (lunch bags, lunch boxes, overcoats, jackets, sweaters, hats, gloves, instruments, electronics, etc.) be plainly marked showing ownership.

Toys are NOT permitted at school unless granted by the child’s teacher. *We discourage bringing any toys, electronic devices, or articles of significant monetary value to school. The school will not be responsible for items lost, damaged, or stolen.*

Care of Public and Private Property

Parents are reminded of their responsibilities to instruct students in the proper care of school textbooks and other school materials. Restitution must be made for any materials or property damaged or lost by students, including free textbooks or materials loaned by the school. Cooperation with covering school textbooks is requested. Each child is also expected to show respect toward all public and private property both surrounding the school as well as en route to and from school.

As our children grow older and more mature, both school and home should foster increased student responsibility for bringing to school all necessary items.

VPCS Cell Phone Policy 2025-2026

1. Student cell phones will be collected in the morning by the assigned homeroom teacher, or prior to a subject area class. Note-for consideration- if not collected, phones should be silenced in book bags.
2. Cell phone use is prohibited in classrooms, restrooms, playground and school offices, unless otherwise stated by a teacher or administration. This includes any form of “smart” communication. (ex: Apple watches, smart watches, etc)
3. During the instructional day, cell phones must remain out of sight and in silent mode.
4. Unless explicitly allowed by a teacher or administrator, headphones and other listening devices may only be used before and after school hours.

5. If students need to place an emergency phone call during the day, they may request to go to the main office to use an office phone. Phone calls made by students from the classroom school phone are prohibited.
6. Students will be subject to disciplinary action if their use of their cell phone disrupts the school's educational/learning environment. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: cheating, bullying, harassment, unlawful recording or photographing, violating other school rules.
7. The school and its staff are not responsible for any damage to or theft of a student's cell phone. Students must properly secure and take care of their own phones while they are in their possession.
8. Students and their parents must read the cell phone policy and return a signed copy to the office at the beginning of the school year. **Signing the family handbook acknowledges acceptance.**

If students violate the school's cell phone policy, the following will occur:

The student's cell phone will be confiscated and held in the main office and must be picked up by a parent/guardian. The student's parents will be contacted and informed of the refusal to follow the school's cell phone policy. Before being allowed to pick up their phone at the end of the day, the student's parent/guardian must discuss and review the cell phone policy with administration.

**Administration reserves the right to adjust these consequences on a case-by-case basis if needed. For example, extreme behaviors that break the law or that engage in bullying or harassment of other students will result in a consequence within our code of conduct.

Money in the School

Students are discouraged from bringing money to school except for school lunch or other school activities. VPCS is not responsible for any money lost or stolen.

Restitution of Stolen and Damaged Property

A student who steals or damages any property not belonging to him/her will be required to make appropriate restitution to the party involved. Additional disciplinary action may be taken at the discretion of the school principal.

Inspection of Storage Areas

The school principal or designee may conduct regular inspections of pupils' desks or other in-school facilities provided by the school district to pupils for the storage of property.

Chewing Gum

Students are not permitted to bring chewing gum into the school building or on school grounds. It is the intention of this regulation to avoid the litter it causes which is extremely difficult to clean.

Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drugs

The use of tobacco products, alcohol or drugs by students on school property is prohibited.

Bottled Beverages

For safety reasons, bottled beverages (water, juice, etc.) brought to school for lunch should be in plastic containers. Glass bottles are prohibited in school. Only water will be allowed in the classroom.

Birthdays/InvitationsBirthdays

We will allow birthday and holiday celebrations with food only if prior arrangements have been made with the teacher and the treats are in accordance with New Jersey Nutrition School Laws-see parent letter regarding snack policy.

Invitations

Teachers will gladly distribute invitations for your child's parties provided that everyone in the class receives an invitation. If you are only inviting a few people from the class, invitations must be distributed outside of school. Please note: we cannot provide addresses or phone numbers of students.

Visitors to the School

All visitors to the school (parents, PTA, etc.) MUST report to the school office, sign the visitor's log, and get a visitor's badge every time they visit the school. A visitor may not bring a child or children, or family/friends/relatives to a classroom **without the express permission of the teacher and the principal.** To maximize the greatest level of safety and security for our students, visitors are not permitted to wander through the building without permission. Parents may NOT interrupt the classroom teachers during the day. If you wish to speak with your child's teacher, please call the office to make an appointment.

Volunteers

Parents are encouraged to share their time and talents. Volunteering might include anything from clerical and cleanup assistance, helping in the classroom, sharing of a particular expertise or talent, or helping out on the playground. Please contact the main office if you are interested in being a volunteer.

Pets

Pets are not permitted on school property, but if for some reason it becomes appropriate for animals to be brought into the classroom, teacher/administrator permission must be granted. It is the sole responsibility of the parent to transport the pet to and from school, and supervise the visit.

Dress Code

Students should respect and abide by the following school uniform dress code adopted by the Vineland Board of Trustees:

1. Students' attire should meet the requirements of the uniform designated for the school.
2. Students' attire shall be neat, clean and reflect an appearance of modesty and good taste.
3. Students attending any school functions (field trips, activities during school hours and evening programs) shall dress as directed by the teacher/administrator. If a child does not dress as directed, he/she shall not attend the activity and will be provided academic work (if the activity is during the school day).
4. Hair shall be clean and well groomed. Students' eyes should be visible at all times.

5. Hats may not be worn in the building since they can be expected to obstruct the vision of others. Hats shall not include headwear of religious significance, such as yarmulkes.
6. Any accessory (jewelry, pins, spiked wristbands, etc.) that constitutes a safety hazard and/or distraction will be removed at the request of the teacher/administrator.

Uniforms

1. (Solid navy blue, black, or khaki): jumpers, pants, skirts, skorts, capris, or Bermuda shorts. Bermuda shorts may be worn from the first day of school until October 15th. Students may resume wearing Bermuda shorts on April 15th.
2. (Solid white, light blue, grey, black, or navy blue): blouse or polo shirt with buttons and long or short sleeves.
3. Solid navy blue, black, grey, light blue or white crew neck sweaters only. Hoodies are NOT permitted. (Students will be asked once to remove hoodies inside the building, if seen again, they will be confiscated and must be picked up by a parent/guardian)
4. Undergarments must be worn and must not be visible at any time. Pajamas/ slippers are prohibited.

TOPS: Shirts and tops must be long enough to cover the stomach and back at all times, yet no longer than the end of the fingertips. Attire must have sleeves that cover the shoulders. Low-cut tops are not permitted. Ripped or torn garments are not permitted.

BOTTOMS: Pants must be worn at the waistline with buttocks and undergarments covered. Shorts must extend in length to the end of the fingertips. Ripped or torn garments are not permitted.

SHOES: Footwear must be worn at all times. Sandal-like shoes are inappropriate (No crocs or ugg slippers). Dark colored shoes and sneakers are permitted. Ripped or torn shoes or sneakers are not permitted.

SPECIAL DRESS DAYS: A detailed list of appropriate wear will be provided for:

After School Clubs Dances Dress Down Days Field Day Field Trips Performances
Special Dress Day Spirit Wear Day Classroom Celebrations

***Please see enclosed uniform policy.**

Enforcement: The dress code shall be enforced according to the lines of authority, i.e. the teacher, the principal, the executive director and the school Board of Trustees, in that order.

If a student is not abiding by the dress code, parents will be contacted to bring in appropriate clothing as soon as possible on that day, or face the possibility of consequences.

Uniform Violations/Consequences

Anything not covered explicitly by the Dress Code, but seen to be unsuitable or inappropriate, shall be left to the discretion of the Vineland Public School teachers, staff and administration. Dress Code violations will result in consequences, which may include lunch detentions, after-school detentions and parent contact. Repeated violations may result in suspension for an inability to follow school rules.

- Middle Schoolers = Loss of Points increasing per infraction
- Email = Parents for each uniform violation
- 2nd Violation = Detention
- 3rd Violation = Parent phone conference and loss of dressdown
- 4th Violation = Restriction of school activity/Parent Conference/possible suspensions

Any situation that is not either specifically covered in these general rules and regulations or discussed in the Vineland Public Charter Schools Family Handbook will be considered a matter of discretion by the school principal and/or faculty, based upon appropriate local and state regulations. We ask that all parents please discuss these school regulations with their children. Each school regulation is designed to encourage safety habits, respect, cooperation, order and a positive learning climate. Vineland Public Charter School will strive to promote fair and assertive discipline, love, care, and respect.

STUDENT HEALTH POLICIES

Immunization Requirements for School Entry

Immunization requirements for school entry, attendance or transfer into the Vineland Public Charter School are consistent with the New Jersey State Sanitation code and are **outlined for your convenience on our website**. The following documents shall be accepted as evidence of your child's immunization history:

1. An official school record,
2. A record form from the public health department,
3. A certificate signed by a health-care provider indicating compliance and listing the individual immunizations, or
4. An official record of immunization from the New Jersey Immunization Information system indicating compliance with immunization requirements.

The Vineland Public Charter School is not able to knowingly admit or retain any child whose parents or guardian has not submitted acceptable evidence of the child's immunizations. Exemptions to this requirement are identifiable and additional information can be obtained from the school's Health Services Office. An official New Jersey School Immunization Record will be maintained for every student.

Administration of Medication

If a student needs medication, including cough drops, during school hours, it is necessary for you and your health care provider to complete a brief form for each medication. All medication given during school hours, including medication given by parents must be administered through the school's health office in presence of the school nurse. This would include over the counter medication. The first dose of any new medication must be given at home. The medication authorization form is available in the nurse's office and is required for each medication your child will be receiving. No medication will be administered in school without proper documentation from a legal prescriber; nor will the medication be administered without the medication being pharmacy labeled. Forms may be faxed to the school provided our Health Service office receives the original. **Please remember that a student may not bring medication to or from school.** Arrangements may be made with the school nurse to pick up any remaining medication.

Students with chronic health conditions (asthma, diabetes, anaphylaxis or other life threatening diagnosis) who may require self-administration of a medication require separate documentation. These forms are available in the nurse's office. Every effort will be made to accommodate student needs. Please feel free to call if you have any questions.

Food Allergies and Administration of Epinephrine

School policy and procedures for the administration of epinephrine for food allergies may be viewed on the district website and is available in the school offices.

Emergency Information

The Vineland Public Charter School Health Department requires that parents fully complete the Emergency Information form to be kept on file in the main office and the Health Services Department. The purpose of this form is to enable the school to administer emergency first aid and provide for emergency treatment of students by a school nurse or licensed physician in the event that a parent or guardian could not be reached in an emergency. Please complete the Emergency Information form with the names and telephone numbers of valid emergency contacts that will be accessible during school hours in the event of illness or injury to your child. Please inform all contacts they will need to present picture identification when picking up a child.

Health Screenings/Services

The Vineland Public Charter School Health Services Office provides health screenings to students as recommended by the New Jersey Department of Education. A certified school nurse for students who are enrolled in Kindergarten through fifth grade conducts the school auditory and vision screening programs. *Scoliosis screening is provided to 5th grade students who are at least ten years of age.* Height and weight screenings are performed annually. Health screening referrals are made as indicated by the current School Health Services Guidelines.

Physical Examinations

Each student must have a physical examination upon entry into Vineland Public Charter School as required by the State of New Jersey. This examination must be done no more than 365 days prior to entry and must state what, if any, modifications are required for full participation in the school program. Students will have 30 days after entering school to produce evidence of a current physical examination. Because of the importance of obtaining subsequent examinations at least once during each developmental state, Vineland Public Charter School also recommends that a physical examination be performed at least once during the early childhood (grade 3) and pre-adolescence (grade 6). Your Health

Care Provider must do physical examinations; if you do not have a Health Care Provider, please contact the school Nurse.

Diagnosis and Treatment

While health guidance is available, the Health Services Office does not diagnose, prescribe treatment, treat injuries occurring at home or give treatment other than first aid as outlined by the school physician's standing orders. For additional information regarding health regulations or services, please feel free to contact the school nurse or your healthcare provider.

HOME INSTRUCTION

When a child is expected to be out of school for a prolonged period of time because of certain illnesses or immobility, parents may request that a teacher be contracted for home instruction through the administration. A certificate must be obtained from the attending physician with a statement of the nature of the illness or disability and also a statement that the child is capable of receiving instruction without endangering the child's health.

INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICES TEAM

The Vineland Public Charter School has an Intervention and Referral Services Team, and implements procedures and strategies as warranted. This team provides the faculty with direction in formulating coordinated services and team delivery systems to address the full range of student learning, behavior and health problems in a general education program.

COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL/PARENTS

Appointments with Teachers and Principal

If you would like a conference with a teacher or the principal, it is important that you call the office to make an appointment so that time can be set aside for a conference. Often parents come in without an appointment and are disappointed because the teacher or principal may not be able to see them due to prior commitments. Please see the teacher first to discuss any classroom concerns.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parents will receive written notification from the school explaining the schedule for each conference session and appointment procedures. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend their parent-teacher conference. Parents are also welcome to contact the school at any time to schedule additional appointments with classroom teachers, if necessary. We feel that it is very important to maintain good communication with the home.

Telephone Calls to Teachers

Telephones of any kind should not ring in the classrooms so the teacher is able to give undivided attention to the classroom instruction during class time. In an emergency or a situation that needs immediate attention, a message should be given directly to the school secretary who will relay the message.

School Visitations

All visitors at the Vineland Public Charter School must immediately report to the school office and sign in. Parking is restricted to designated parking spaces to avoid the obstruction of emergency vehicles and/or school buses. Visitors must conduct themselves in accordance with school policies and must not disturb the operation of the school or class sessions in any way. When visiting classrooms, care should be taken to prevent the interruption of instruction. Teachers cannot conduct conferences while instructing or supervising pupils.

Any forgotten items (lunches, money, books, etc.) that are left for a child after instruction begins should be given to the secretary in the main office.

There is no smoking on school grounds.

Notices Sent Home From School

Every Tuesday notices will be sent home from the school via email to keep you informed concerning school policies and activities. Please ensure the main office has an accurate up-to-date email address to guarantee you are receiving all weekly communications from the school. Please look for the **Communication emails** and be sure to return all information requested as soon as possible.

Parental Concern Procedures

Parental concerns should be handled first with the classroom teacher(s) to ensure communication between the proper parties. If a resolution to a problem cannot be reached at this level, the school principal will become involved. A conference including the school principal, teacher(s) and/or parent(s) may be scheduled to discuss the concern and find a reasonable and fair solution in the best interests of the child. Documentation of the problem, conferences related to it and proposed solutions would be recommended.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Nutritious school lunches will be served each day for those students who elect to participate in these programs. The school lunch program will provide a nutritious, well-balanced lunch every day. White milk, chocolate milk, and apple juice are available for purchase.

Parents have the ability to purchase lunch for the following week by sending in the lunch selection sheet and money. Credit for school meals is not possible, so please ensure that your child's money comes to school with his/her weekly lunch order. Checks for lunch should be made out to the Vineland Public Charter School.

Families will be provided with an opportunity to make an application for free or reduced priced meals at the beginning of each school year. Income guidelines published by the New Jersey nutrition programs determine eligibility for these benefits. If a family experiences a change in its income during the school year that would affect its eligibility for benefits, the school should be notified immediately and a new application must be completed. We will be happy to assist families in securing the benefits to which they are entitled and to answer any questions regarding our meal programs. The Vineland School District is compliant with all State and Federal mandates regarding nutrition. More information will be distributed throughout the school year.

Please note: We are unable to heat a student's lunch brought from home or deliver school lunches brought from home on a consistent basis. If a student chooses not to purchase school lunch please send your child in with their lunch. **Outside food will be required to be eaten in the main office. Food delivery services are not permitted and will be returned.**

TRANSPORTATION

Bus Conduct/School Bus Safety

The bus driver is in full charge of the school bus at all times and is responsible for order; passengers must obey the driver promptly and respectfully. The rights of pupils to ride on the bus are conditional, requiring good behavior and observance of bus rules. Students should be on time at their designated bus stops. No child should stand in the roadway while waiting for the bus. Children should observe safety rules when walking to and from bus stops and conduct themselves in a safe and orderly manner while waiting for their buses. Crowding and pushing when entering and exiting buses is prohibited. A child should not approach a bus at a loading zone until the bus has come to a complete stop, not enter or exit the bus when it is in motion. Several other important transportation regulations should be discussed with your child:

1. Students should go immediately to their assigned seat on the bus and remain there until the bus reaches its destination.
2. Keep arms and other parts of the body inside the bus at all times.
3. Assist in keeping the bus safe and clean; respect and protect its furniture and equipment.
4. Loud talking or excessive noise on the bus is prohibited as this kind of confusion distracts the driver who must concentrate on the road.
5. Any damage to the bus should be reported immediately to the driver.
6. In case of a road emergency, remain in your seat until your driver gives instructions.
7. Keep the aisles clear.
8. Be courteous and responsible passengers.
9. Do not open or close windows without permission of the driver.
10. Never throw any article from a bus window.
11. For safety reasons, live animals and large items such as skateboards, surfboards, etc. are not permitted on the bus.
12. On all buses equipped with seatbelts, students are required by law to buckle-up and remain buckled until ready to depart the bus.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Organized groups wishing to use the facilities must complete a Building/Grounds Usage form available from the school office and provide proof of liability insurance.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that the misuse of drugs by any pupil seriously impedes that pupil's education and threatens the welfare of the entire school community. The Board of Education is committed to the prevention of drug abuse and the rehabilitation of drug users by educational means, but will take necessary and appropriate steps to protect the school community from harm and exposure to drugs. For the purpose of this policy, "drug(s)" includes:

- All controlled, dangerous substances set forth and prohibited in N.J.S.A.24: 21-1 et.seq.
- All chemicals which release toxic vapors as defined and prohibited in N.J.S.A2A:170-25.9
- All alcoholic beverages
- Any prescription or patent drug, except those for which permission to use in school has been granted pursuant to board policy.

The Vineland Public Charter School Board of Trustees prohibits the use, possession, distribution and/or consumption of any drug on school premises, at any event away from the school premises sponsored by this board, and on any transportation vehicle provided by this board.

A complete copy of the board's policy is available upon request.

MANDATORY REPORTS TO DCP & P (formally known as DYFS)

Child abuse or neglect as defined by New Jersey Statute means, "physical injury or neglect, mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a person under circumstances that indicate the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened thereby." The reporting laws specify that school personnel who have "reasonable cause to suspect" that a child is being abused or neglected must report that suspicion to the The Division of Child Protection and Permanency.

Employees in Vineland Public Charter School have been trained to respond to the child who needs help. The major responsibilities of school personnel are to identify an abused or neglected child, and to comply with the laws requiring reporting of the suspected abuse to the proper authorities. Whether the report is for physical injury, mental injury, neglect, or sexual molestation, the investigation and determination of acts must be left to the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS), which are specifically designated for that purpose. The purpose of the child abuse and neglect reporting law is to protect children whose health and well-being may be affected through the infliction, by other than accidental means, of harm through physical injury or neglect, mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment. School district employees are required to report suspected child abuse or

neglect before they make the required report to The Division of Child Protection and Permanency. If you need to report suspected abuse, call 1-877-NJ ABUSE.

RIGHT TO KNOW

On January 8, 1998, Governor Whitman signed into law legislation (P.L. 1998, C. 364) governing the use or storage of certain hazardous substances in public schools. This law provides for annual notification that any construction or other activities involving the use or storage of any hazardous substance will be posted on a bulletin board in each school and that hazardous substance fact sheets for these particular substances will be available for review.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

Vineland Public Charter School Board of Trustees guarantees to all persons equal access to all categories of employment, retention, and advancement in this district, regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, marital status or non-applicable handicap, without favoritism or harassment as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1973 and NJAC 6:4-1 et seq. If you have a complaint concerning discrimination, please contact the school Affirmative Action Officer, Mrs. Kim Hutchinson. Affirmative action policies for employment and classroom practices are contained in the Policy Manual.

ASBESTOS PLAN

As required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) of 1986, all occupants of a school building must be notified at least once a year in regard to the availability of the asbestos management plan. Our building is considered to be asbestos free; however, we are re-inspected at least once every three years.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT NOTICE

This notice is being distributed to comply with the New Jersey School Integrated Pest Management Act. Vineland Public Charter School Board of Trustees has adopted an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy and has implemented an IPM Plan to comply with this law. IPM is a holistic, preventive approach to managing pests that is explained further in the school's IPM Policy included with this notice.

All schools in New Jersey are required to have an Integrated Pest Management Coordinator (IPM Coordinator) to oversee all activities related to IPM and pesticide use at the school.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN

The New Jersey Integrated Pest Management Act of 2002 requires school districts to implement a school integrated pest management policy that includes an Integrated Pest Management Plan. In accordance with the requirements of the Act, Vineland Public Charter School Board of Trustees shall ensure implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) procedures to control pests and minimize exposure of children, faculty and staff to pesticides. These procedures shall be applicable to all school property in the Vineland School District.

IPM Coordinator (IPMC)

The principal is the district's Integrated Pest Management Coordinator (IPMC) and is responsible for the implementation of the school integrated pest management policy.

Integrated Pest Management Procedures in Schools

Implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) procedures will determine when to control pests and whether to use mechanical, physical, cultural, biological, or chemical methods. Applying IPM principles prevents unacceptable levels of pest damage by the most economical means and with the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment.

The Integrated Pest Management Coordinator (IPMC) shall consider the full range of management options, including no action, at all. Non-pesticide pest management methods are to be used whenever possible. The choice of using a pesticide shall be based on a review of all other available options and a determination that these options are not effective or not reasonable. When it is determined that a pesticide must be used, low impact pesticides and methods are preferred and shall be considered for use first.

N.J.S.A. 13-1F-19 through 12:1F-33

SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

Vineland Public Charter School Code of Conduct

IMPLEMENTATION OF CODE OF CONDUCT

Our positive discipline approach is designed to alleviate behavioral problems. However, sometimes a student may behave inappropriately. The disciplinary response is designed to help the student learn the

appropriate behavior. A student's teacher may handle many of these inappropriate actions. However, at times the principal and/or guidance counselor may get involved. Parental involvement may also be required. It should be noted that no behavioral policy could possibly cover all the disciplinary infractions, which may arise; therefore, the building principal will administer appropriate action, as required.

***Code of Conduct can be found on the school website.**

Appropriate student behavior is considered essential for an optimum learning experience. Distractions initiated by individual students tend to affect the safety and welfare of others. Therefore, it becomes necessary to provide conduct regulations that deter inappropriate behavior.

Each student should recognize his/her rights and remember that each right carries with it a responsibility. The student must also understand that he/she progresses through the grade levels; there is an increasing responsibility to serve as a role model for younger students. Each student must learn to accept and support the rules and regulations of the school as necessary to create an optimum learning environment and that any violation of these represents an infringement of the rights of his classmates. To achieve this goal, Vineland Public Charter School has adopted a code to provide a consistent effort to maintain good conduct in our schools. Our conduct code also applies to all school-related activities that operate within or outside our schools.

Please read and discuss the code with your child. Your child's teacher will also review this code with the children at school. We appreciate your support and look forward to a successful year. If you have any questions or concerns, please call your school office.

This Code of Conduct applies to all students on school premises before, during and after school hours. It also applies to students being transported by bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity. Students are held to these expectations during all school functions, activities and events. Any student whose conduct has a positive or negative effect on maintaining order in the school will be subject to this Code of Conduct.

IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL AND STAFF INVOLVEMENT

It is essential that parents/guardians, staff and students work together to develop a disciplined environment.

The school is not by itself responsible for, or equipped to develop, socially acceptable behavior by students. This is a shared responsibility of parents and students in partnership with the school. Vineland Public Charter School is committed to developing partnerships between parents/guardians and its staff to teach socially responsible behavior. Parents/guardians will be expected to support the establishment of these partnerships and implementation of this policy.

If parents/guardians require assistance to meet their responsibilities in developing their child's appropriate behavior, the school will seek to link the child and the family to appropriate supportive agencies.

Staff is expected to:

Explain the Code of Conduct to their students.

Enforce the Code of Conduct in a consistent fashion.

Function as a positive role model for the students.

Contact parents as deemed necessary to enforce the Code of Conduct and to maintain parent/guardian involvement.

Parents/guardians are expected to:

Read the Code of Conduct with their child (ren) and explain it as necessary.

Function as a good listener to both their child (ren) and the school staff when conflict arises.

Function as a positive role model for their child (ren).

Contact the school as deemed necessary.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES/EXPECTATIONS

All students are expected to show respect for self, others, property and the educational environment and to conduct themselves in a safe, non-threatening way. In order to ensure a positive and productive learning atmosphere, students are expected to:

Follow all school rules and regulations.

Make a sincere effort to do their best work.

Cooperate with teachers, administrators, school employees and other students.

Be courteous and respectful to classmates at all times.

Respect all individual and cultural differences.

Dress appropriately as stated in the Family Handbook.

Take pride in their school and community.

STUDENTS RIGHTS

1. Students will be provided with a learning environment that allows each student to develop into a productive citizen.
2. Students will obtain an education in a safe and non-threatening environment.
3. Students will be ensured of privacy and confidentiality concerning matters of discipline and counseling.
4. Students will be protected from illegal search and seizure.
5. Students will have the right to due process.
6. Students will have the right to appeal disciplinary action.
7. Students will be informed of all aspects of the Code of Conduct.
8. Students are encouraged to inform teachers, guidance counselors or administrators if they believe a staff member or other student is treating them unfairly.

SPECIAL AREAS

Trips, extra-curricular activities

In addition to the responses listed, inappropriate behavior on a trip or during extracurricular activities may result in the suspension of or removal from further trips/activities

Cafeteria (Charter Café)

We also stress that all students keep our school clean. Thus, if a table area is dirty, please encourage your child to help us and pitch in by assisting in the clean-up.

*The Principal/school authority has the right to change/modify these responses as needed.

Each classroom teacher will devise general classroom rules, along with positive and negative consequences. They will be submitted in writing to the school principal and communicated to the student at the beginning of each school year. Class regulations should be posted in each classroom. These classroom behavior rules will be written as observable behaviors expected of students, designed to create a positive educational environment. The emphasis will be on positive and assertive disciplinary techniques designed to help alleviate the need for serious disciplinary measures.

The suspension of a child will only be exercised in accordance with State and local regulations as a last resort for serious disciplinary offenses as explained by New Jersey State Law, or when other alternative measures have failed to correct the problem. The Vineland Public Charter School reserves the right to initiate emergency-oriented exclusionary acts of suspension, consistent with State law and regulations, to protect the students and employees of the school.

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

The Board of Trustees prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards.

Harassment, intimidation or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a pupil's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its pupils in a safe environment; and since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Definition: "Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means any gesture, written, verbal or physical act that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus and that: (1) is motivated by an actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental or physical or sensory disability; or by any other distinguishing characteristic, (2) a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances that the act will have the effect of harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property, or

placing a pupil in reasonable fear of harm to his/her property; or (3) has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with the orderly operation of the school. Acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may also be a pupil exercising power and control over another pupil, in either isolated incidents (i.e., intimidation, harassment) or patterns of harassing or intimidating behavior (i.e., bullying).

For clarification please refer to Vineland Public Charter School HIB policy found on the school website.

Expected Behavior

The Board expects pupils to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other pupils and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.

The Board believes that standards for pupil behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the pupils, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), staff and community members, producing an atmosphere that encourages pupils to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school and community property on the part of pupils, staff and community members.

The Board believes the best discipline is self-imposed, and it is the responsibility of the school staff to use disciplinary situations as opportunities to help pupils learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with pupils shall apply the best practices designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage pupils' ability to grow in self-discipline.

The school prohibits active and passive support for harassment, intimidation or bullying. Pupils are encouraged to support other pupils who walk away from these acts when they see them, constructively attempt to stop them, and report these acts to the Principal or designee.