



Policies and Procedures Handbook 2009-10

Policies and Procedures Handbook Table of Contents

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This handbook provides basic information on current policies and procedures of Valley Catholic Early Learning School (VCELS). This handbook supersedes all prior summaries and understandings of these subjects. This handbook is not a contract. It simply summarizes many policies, procedures, and benefits for VCELS families. The title “parent” also includes guardian if not otherwise stated. Parental request or permission to waive any of the rules for the certification of child care centers does not give VCELS permission to do so (CCD 414-300-0030, 11).

To make VCELS a quality environment for all we serve, we must have the flexibility to change, substitute or discontinue policies and benefits described in this handbook. Any policy may be changed by appropriate authority within SSMO Ministries Corporation at any time without prior notice. Some provisions are required by federal and state laws and are therefore subject to change to comply with changes in those laws and regulations.

VALLEY CATHOLIC EARLY LEARNING SCHOOL
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ADMINISTRATION AND WELCOME

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We welcome you to Valley Catholic Early Learning School! We value your family's presence here and will make every attempt to assist you in the care of your child. Your questions and input are very important to us and we encourage your involvement. Please contact us about any concerns you may have regarding the care of your child. Our staff stands ready to serve you.

CHARISM STATEMENT

We, the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon, living as women of prayer in simplicity and sisterly love, are called to be compassionate, joyful servants of the Lord.

MISSION STATEMENT

Valley Catholic Early Learning School, supporting the mission of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon is committed to enhancing the lives of young children through creative teaching, nurturing guidance and being caring examples of Jesus' love.

Valley Catholic Early Learning School (VCELS) carries out its mission by:

1. Encouraging learning in a safe, loving and accepting environment.
2. Respecting individual and cultural differences and celebrating their uniqueness.
3. Bridging generations through programs with Valley Catholic Elementary, VC Middle and VC High School students, Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon and Maryville Nursing Home.
4. Creating a community environment which fosters "family like" involvement and interactions.
5. Challenging teachers and staff to continue their education and to use the most current philosophies and practices available in the field of early childhood care and education.

CATHOLIC / CHRISTIAN ATMOSPHERE

Religion is incorporated into the curriculum using a developmentally appropriate and integrated approach. Daily activities and routines include: songs, stories, games, meal time prayers, etc. All experiences include a focus on concepts related to prayer, knowledge of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

All staff assists in carrying out the mission of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon and follows the mission statement of Valley Catholic Early Learning School. Teachers integrate Anti-Bias Curriculum which teaches the children to respect and embrace all God's creation.

Each day at 9:20 am, classrooms meet together for group prayer time in the lobby. Teachers and children share the responsibility of preparing prayer time and parents are always welcome to join us. During special events and/or Holy Days, a Priest or other religious is asked to participate. Because of the importance of prayer time, we ask that parents plan so that arrivals and departures from VCELS do not occur between 9:15am and 9:35am each morning (For the children's safety, the front doors are locked during this time).

Other experiences that carry out the Catholic/Christian atmosphere of VCELS include food drives and campus-wide activities which occur throughout each school year to assist with the support of those in need.

DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES AND GOALS

VCELS is a Catholic, not for profit, private, early childhood care and learning school for infants, toddlers and preschool age children with extended care offered for elementary school-aged children through the sixth grade. We provide opportunities for children to learn in a developmentally age appropriate and caring atmosphere rich in literacy and learning. Teachers foster the growth of each child's development by utilizing concepts consistent with the guidelines for "Developmentally Appropriate Practice" defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

At VCELS, we believe learning is a "process" and the children are active participants in this process. We encourage the children to solve problems, question, hypothesize, experiment, and develop their cognitive processes. We encourage children to have positive peer and social relations and facilitate the development of healthy self-esteem. We provide a Catholic/Christian atmosphere that fosters each child's personal relationship with God. We feel these components to learning are paramount in preparing our students to be life-long learners and successful in whatever endeavors they choose.

CLASSROOM TEACHER/STUDENT RATIOS

VCELS has an infant room (Rosebuds), three toddler classrooms (Daffodil 1, 2 and 3), three pre-kindergarten classrooms (Daisies, Sunflowers, Wildflowers) and an after school program (Snapdragons) for Kindergarten-6th grade students. Each classroom program has at least two teachers and maintains ratios at least:

1:4 for 8 weeks-through 23 months– Teacher : Student

1:5 for 24 – 35 months – Teacher : Student

1:10 for 3 – 5 years (to kindergarten) – Teacher : Student

1:15 for Attending Kindergarten through 6th grade– Teacher : Student

VCELS maintains these ratios to insure child-teacher bonds of affection, trust, and respect and to allow each teacher the opportunity to spend time individually with each child on a daily basis. Our teachers receive continuous education and training. Teachers are required to hold a current food handlers license, CPR and First Aid certification, complete training in Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect and “Call to Protect” the Portland Archdiocese training for all adults working with children and teenagers. Staff and volunteers over the age of 18 years having direct contact with the children must undergo a state and federal criminal history background check. All VCELS staff are held to a high standard of conduct as dictated by the SSMO Mission, Oregon Child Care Division and National Association for the Education of Young Children Code of Ethics.



CURRICULUM

Based on the mission statement and the developmental practices and goals as described in this handbook, our curriculum attends to the developmental needs of each child including:

- Spiritual, Social-Emotional, Cognitive, Language and Literacy, Logic and Mathematics, Creative Representation and Physical Movement.

We believe these areas of development occur most often in active learning situations in which children have opportunities to make choices and decisions, manipulate materials, use language in meaningful ways and receive "developmentally appropriate" adult support and guidance at all age levels.

Using center wide themes, the teachers plan their curriculum each week implementing activities that are "hands-on" and lend themselves to child-initiated play. This emergent play is facilitated by the teachers and used as a basis for future curriculum planning.

VCELS classrooms share a common development focus which is used as a guide in planning. It also provides teachers with an assessment tool to ensure that within each year, consideration is given to all areas of development. Each classroom has a wide variety of high-quality materials and equipment encouraging hands-on activities and learning that is meaningful, concrete and relevant to the children. Daily schedules differ in each classroom, however all classrooms plan for many experiences, such as group and individual activities, age appropriate field trips, as well as time when children are allowed to make their own choices.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to the curriculum by sharing ideas or materials with teachers and children. Daily schedules and lesson plans are posted in each classroom. All volunteers must receive "Call to Protect" training prior to volunteering and are never alone with the children nor used as teacher:student ratio at any time.

Teachers use observation as the means of assessing children. Observations of children occur on a consistent and continual basis throughout the year. Teachers observe children in a variety of settings and evaluate their progress in all areas of development. An intake conference will be scheduled prior to moving to the next classroom or enrollment at VCELS. Other conferences with your child's teacher may be arranged through the front office at any time.

Additional curriculum offerings include: Music & Body Movement, Preschool Spanish, Language Arts/Library, Intergenerational programming with Maryville Nursing Home, Valley Catholic Middle and High School students and numerous Home - School partnerships including home visits in the preschool programs. Special curriculum is offered center-wide during Christmas Break, Spring Break and Summer Break. These theme based weeks include arts and crafts, group activities, field trips and special events.

DISCIPLINE / GUIDANCE PRACTICES AND POLICIES

Part of the role of any early childhood program is to help young children develop appropriate school and social behaviors. We structure the classroom environment and program as much as possible to insure that each child has the opportunity to be successful. Our goal is for each child to assume responsibility for her / his behavior, for each child to learn that certain behaviors affect others and for each child to learn appropriate self-management and self-control skills.

When a child's behavior is inappropriate or unacceptable in the classroom, the teacher may use a number of techniques to guide the child in a manner consistent with the philosophy and goals of VCELS. The staff at VCELS do not use verbal abuse or physical punishment and such behavior will not be accepted. Each child in our program has the right to feel safe, secure and comfortable at VCELS.

Discipline at VCELS is developed as positive guidance, not punishment. Redirection or taking a break are the primary forms of discipline when necessary. Whenever possible, teachers allow children to experience the natural or logical consequences of inappropriate behavior. Discipline is fair, consistent and reasonable and is based on an understanding of the child's stage of development and emotional needs.

We encourage children to resolve conflicts with peers by "using their words" to state their needs and feelings to each other. An important part of learning to control one's behavior is learning to identify and label one's feelings. Early Childhood teachers help the children in our program learn to identify and verbalize their emotions and feelings by giving them the words and tools they need to be successful communicators.

When a child has an ongoing behavioral problem (biting, tantrums, and/or other harmful behavior), we require parent conferences to discuss our concerns. We believe attempts to change a child's behavior are more successful when teachers and parents work together toward a common goal. On rare occasions when a child's behavior becomes disruptive or harmful to themselves or others, VCELS reserves the right to dismiss the child from the program or to require the parents to seek additional professional help in order for the child to continue at VCELS.

We want everyone at VCELS to feel welcome, accepted and safe. Everyone has a right to be treated with respect. Relationships at VCELS are based on Jesus' basic principle of ". . . love your neighbor as yourself. [Mark 12:31]" We do not expect anyone in our school to be teased, bullied, harassed, or excluded either in the classroom or on the playground because of their: gender, skin or hair color, cultural background, religion, sexual orientation, body size or shape, physical disability, academic ability or performance, physical skills, special talents, personality or anything else that makes them the unique individual God made them to be.

We will not tolerate rough play. Any kind of play in which children are pulling each other to the ground, tripping or pushing each other or wrestling or rolling around on the ground is not allowed --- even if it's just "kidding around." We are obligated by law to protect our students from teasing, bullying, harassing and exclusion. We are committed to eliminating these

misbehaviors from our school community. We will act firmly when children have been referred to us for misbehaving in this manner.

Teasing, bullying and harassing may include, but is not limited to:

- verbal or practical jokes
- unwelcome touching
- offensive remarks or put-downs
- any words or conduct directed toward another person because of race, color, religion or national origin
- the intentional attempt to cause another person to fear physical injury

Examples of behavior that may be sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- making sexually suggestive remarks, gestures, jokes
- remarks about someone's appearance
- using derogatory sexual terms for people
- touching in a deliberate and unwelcome manner
- displaying sexual illustrations
- describing or asking about personal sexual experiences
- hazing, performing pranks
- intimidating a person because of his or her gender.

Exclusion is defined as intentionally and maliciously leaving someone out of a group or activity, whether in the classroom, at a school-sponsored function (field trip, etc.) or on the playground at recess time.

According to the Oregon Revised Statute 419B.101, "Any public or private official having reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom the official comes in contact has suffered abuse, or that any person with whom the official comes in contact has abused a child, shall report or cause a report to be made." All VCELS employees are included among "public or private officials" and will, as required by law, report suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

VCELS is committed to taking reasonable steps to prevent harassment from occurring and will take immediate and appropriate action when the administration knows it has occurred. Any child who feels he or she has been harassed by anyone, children or adults associated with the school, should immediately notify the Director, the Program Coordinator or any other school staff member.

VCELS is committed to providing an educational environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, whether based upon race, color, national origin, age, physical or mental disabilities, religious preference, sexual orientation or gender and will not knowingly tolerate discrimination against or harassment of school staff or children by anyone—supervisors, staff members, children, parents, guardians, vendors or visitors. All complaints of discrimination or harassment should be immediately reported to an appropriate staff member. They will be investigated promptly and as confidentially as circumstances permit.

EMERGENCY CLOSURES

Emergency conditions (severe weather, earthquake, fire or flood) can disrupt school operations. These extreme circumstances may require the closing of the school. Due to the hazardous or emergency conditions or extenuating facility circumstances, such as loss of power or phone service, the Director may alter Valley Catholic Early Learning School's schedule. Such alterations may include school closure, late opening of the school or early dismissal of the school. In all cases of school closure, late opening, or early dismissal, radio and television stations and their corresponding websites will be notified and parents will be called when possible.

Snow Policy – Valley Catholic School Administrators and Campus Schools President will make an independent decision regarding inclement weather closures based on campus and surrounding community conditions. Should it be determined that there will be a 2 hour late start, VCELS will open at 9:00 am but will be unable to provide care for school age children (Kindergarten -6th grade) due to CCD staffing ratio requirements.



EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

During emergency times, it may be difficult or impossible to reach VCELS by telephone. Administrative staff will use cellular phones, when possible, to contact the radio and television stations to alert parents of closure information.

When telephone access is available, VCELS administration will make every effort to contact parents by phone to update them concerning VCELS's situation. It is imperative for parents to have current contact numbers at all times for staff to be able to contact them.

Should VCELS Administration deem the building uninhabitable due to fire, earthquake or other natural disaster, children and staff will proceed to a safer location on campus for protection. Parents will be notified by phone, by radio and / or television stations as to where they will be able to pick up their children.

ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

VCELS is open from 7:00 am - 6:00 pm Monday - Friday except predetermined closure dates (See Appendix 1 for Calendar) and emergency closures. (See Emergency Closure page) While VCELS is open for 11 hours, best practices dictate that no child be in group care for that amount of time. For this reason, VCELS requests that for your child's best interest, s/he is not in our care longer than 9 or 10 hours per day.

As part of our Charism and Mission, VCELS admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available at all schools. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admissions policies, financial assistance programs or school administered programs.

Absences due to vacation, illness, holidays, inservice days, inclement weather closure days, etc. do not reduce Monthly Tuition Charges. All charges have been calculated on an annual basis, taking holidays and inservice days into consideration and divided into 12 equal monthly payments.

Admission Priority (VCELS) for fulltime students: Sibling of a current VCELS student, Catholic and date placed on the wait list. For Wildflower students- returning VCELS student, sibling of a VCELS student, Catholic and date placed on the wait list. In order to be placed on this list, a child must be at least 2 years old and turning 3 years by September 1st of the requested year. To attend, a child must be completely potty trained (see Readiness Section). Differently aged siblings will be allowed to attend part time preschool at the same time only if they are scheduled on opposite days. Siblings of students at VCELS are not guaranteed entrance into a VCELS program but are given priority admission. A waitlist form must be filled out with your child's requested start date. If a family refuses a spot and still wishes to remain on the waitlist, the child loses sibling priority and the date put on list will be updated to show the date the spot was turned down. Students of VCELS are not guaranteed entrance into Valley Catholic Elementary School (VCES) but are given admission priority (See VCES office for details.)

All Tuition Charges are due on the 1st of each month. If a payment is received after the seventh day of the month (or after the following Monday if the seventh falls on the weekend), the tuition account will be assessed a \$10 late fee unless the office has been notified in writing in advance.

Delinquent Tuition Accounts- If you miss a tuition payment, it is your responsibility (1) to call the Director immediately, (2) to let him/her know of your tuition payment status and (3) to propose a plan for how you intend to bring your tuition account current. By working closely with the Director, keeping the lines of communication open and determining a realistic payment plan, you can avoid having a delinquent tuition account. A tuition account is considered to be delinquent if it is 30 days past due. A delinquent tuition account will lead to VCELS withdrawal of services. If your child's or children's tuition account is considered delinquent at VCELS, it must be paid in full or attendance at any campus school (Valley Catholic Elementary School, Valley Catholic Music School, Valley Catholic Middle School or Valley Catholic High School)

will be prohibited. For example, an outstanding tuition account at VCELS will preclude your children from attending VCELS, advancing to or attending Valley Catholic Elementary School or Valley Catholic Middle or High School.

Deposit-To hold a spot that will not be open until a future date, the Child Registration Fee and a deposit of one-half the monthly fee is required if space is reserved more than three (3) weeks in advance. Deposit is nonrefundable but will be applied to the first month's tuition. (An example would be if a family is called June 1st for a spot that will not be available until August 1st.) To guarantee and hold a spot that is currently open, the Child Registration Fee and the monthly tuition is required. (An example would be that the spot is available August 1st but the family doesn't want to start until Sept. 1st.)

Late Pickup Fees: Full time (Rosebuds, Daffodils, Daisies, Sunflowers and Snapdragons)- The late pickup fee begins at 6:00 pm every evening. It is calculated based on the time of departure from building, not the time your child is clocked out of the system and according to the VCELS clock. The late pickup fee is \$3.00 per minute per child for each minute late. The Director will contact parents who are habitually late picking up their children to resolve the problem. If a solution cannot be reached, parents will be required to find alternate care for their children.

Late Pickup Fees: Part time Preschool (Wildflowers) – Wildflowers begins at 8:00am. Please arrive no earlier than 7:55am for class. If this time is abused, VCELS reserves the right to charge fees similar to late fees and follow the late pickup policy. The late pickup fee is \$3.00 per minute per child for each minute late. The late pickup fee is calculated based on the time of departure from building, not the time your child is clocked out of the system and according to the VCELS time clock. Part-time Preschool late pickup fees will begin to be calculated at 11:05 am giving parents a 5 minute grace period. The Director will contact parents who are habitually late picking up their children (or habitually early for Part time Preschool), to resolve the problem. If a solution cannot be reached, parents will be required to find alternate care for their children. For those children enrolled in extended care, pickup is at 2:30 pm with late fees beginning at 2:35 pm.

Non-Sufficient Funds Checks- There is a \$35.00 fee charged for all checks returned for non-sufficient funds. Having three returned checks will lead to cash-only payments.

Parental Notice of Withdrawal- A minimum of one month written notice prior to withdrawal from VCELS must be given or at least one month's tuition will be charged. Tuition will not be prorated should notice of withdrawal occur mid-month.

Registration Forms and Immunization Records (if applicable) are due a minimum of one week prior to child's start date. If there is a court ordered custody agreement in place, a copy of that agreement must be submitted at the same time. New Registration Forms are filled out annually for current children and families. Immunization Records must be updated with VCELS when Immunizations are given. During the school year, it is the parents' responsibility to make sure the information on file is up to date and accurate. A one time non-refundable Registration Fee of \$50.00 (per child) is charged upon enrollment.

Schoolage Inservice and Holidays- All children must be enrolled at VCELS to attend on Valley Catholic Elementary School early dismissals, inservice days, school breaks or other closure dates. Students who have scheduled to attend early dismissal, inservice, Christmas and Spring Break or Summer Camps will be billed according to the schedule provided by parent/guardian. Once scheduled, tuition will be charged whether the child attends or not. If a child has not been scheduled to attend and arrives for care, the rate charged will be \$15.00 per hour attended. This hourly rate will also be charged for those children who attend VCELS more days than his/her monthly schedule.

All tuition is non-refundable and non-transferable. Tuition for students who leave for behavioral reasons will not be refunded. Christmas and Spring Break weeks will not be prorated. Summer weeks may be prorated if also attending a Valley Catholic School camp. For cancellations other than verifiable medical reasons, tuition paid in advance will not be refunded. Please see the Director if there is a verifiable medical reason for withdrawal.

Tuition Assistance is available for low income households that apply and qualify. Financial assistance is awarded based on need according to information you submit for processing by March 1st of each year. Confidential decisions regarding tuition assistance are made in May for the following July 1-June 30.

VCELS Withdrawal of Services- VCELS reserves the right to refuse admittance, revoke admittance, suspend or withdraw any child who does not cooperate with the policies established in the Parent/Guardian Handbook. If any parent, guardian or child refuses to follow the standards of the school, they place the child's admission or attendance at VCELS in jeopardy and the child is subject to withdrawal or revocation of the child's admission. As signatories to the Registration Form, parents/guardians acknowledge that they must be in agreement with the philosophy and mission of VCELS, demonstrate a spirit of cooperation and uphold the Policies and Procedures Handbook. Parents/Guardians must also agree and acknowledge that if either parent or child violates this agreement, the child may, within the discretion of the school, be subject to revocation of acceptance, suspension or withdrawal of services.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

VCELS serves a morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack. We serve fruits and vegetables each day and plan meals that teach good nutrition to the children. Menus are posted at the computer desk and the VCELS website. When necessary, changes made to the Menu are posted at the computer desk with at least a day's notice.

Morning Snack is offered between 8:30-8:45 am. Snack will not be held for children arriving late.

Lunch is served between 11:00-11:30 am. If your Schoolage (Kindergarten-6th grade) child has a lesson or other engagement during that time, a sack lunch will need to be provided from home.

Afternoon Snack is offered between 2:30-3:00 pm. Schoolage children arriving from after school activities may be given a nutritious snack alternative other than the one listed on the menu.

Food Allergies must be recorded on the VCELS Allergy Form as well as providing a physician statement which describes allergy, reactions and treatment to VCELS Staff before enrollment. Both should be updated as changes occur. For parents of children with food allergies, please check the menu to see if you need to send replacements for a well balanced meal. For parents of children with dietary restrictions, CCD rules require VCELS to supplement any meal parents provide that does not meet nutrition requirements as defined in OAR 414-300-0270 so those supplemented items must be in the same food group. For example, if your child does not eat meat, a protein replacement must be provided. If one is not provided, your child will be served school lunch according to CCD regulations.

Life Threatening Food Allergies- If your child has life threatening allergies to food, parents provide all food for your child to consume while at VCELS.

Kitchen Use is for Staff only. Due to Health Department Regulations, there is no admittance to the kitchen other than VCELS staff.

Lunches/Food Items brought from home should not require refrigeration. Health Department regulations as well as space limitations do not allow us to store food for individual children. Food cannot be heated or prepared so it must be ready to serve. We ask that parents refrain from bringing peanut products even if your child is not allergic to them in consideration of the children who are.

Peanut Allergies- VCELS strives to maintain a menu that contains very limited opportunities for children to ingest peanuts due to the life threatening implications of peanut allergies. However, we are not able to guarantee that we are a "peanut-free" environment. If your child is allergic to peanuts and peanut products, please make sure an Allergy Form and Physician's Statement are on file with the proper medications as prescribed by his/her physician.

Rosebud food is provided by the family (including formula, bottles, baby food, etc.). A waiver to this policy is available for the Infant who is 11 months old and his / her family is ready for

him / her to eat "school food". As children begin to transition to school food, teachers will also begin to assist children in learning to use cups for drinking. For families who request their infants, younger than 12 months, be served whole, skim, 1% or 2% milk, the request must include a medical provider's written permission as well.

Sharing Food brought from home to share with the class must be store bought, in the original sealed container.

VCELS staff do not use food as punishment or reward. Staff do not withhold food from children unless notified in writing by the child's physician. We are teaching the children to learn to eat balanced meals therefore we need parental support to enforce good food habits.

GENERAL INFORMATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Arrival and Pickup- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to bring your child into the school, walk him/her to the classroom and check in and out every day. In case of an emergency, VCELS will not assume responsibility for a child who has not been checked in. As well as clocking in and out, it is important to check your family folder located next to the computer for parent information. Day-to-day information, billing, payment receipts and other pertinent notices are sent home through this means of communication.

Attendance records are maintained through the attendance computer located in the VCELS lobby. It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to check their children in and out each day. Parents must accompany their child(ren) to the classroom. For children arriving at VCELS from another school, VCELS staff will clock the children in. If children are not clocked out, VCELS Office Staff will contact parents by phone to confirm the child is with parents.

Daily drop off can sometimes be challenging for children and/or parents. If families need help with this transition, staff is available to support you during these times. When you leave your child in his/her classroom, always say good-bye and leave decisively. Children who cry when the parents leave almost always settle down quickly, and begin enjoying their day. Parents are encouraged to call VCELS to hear how their child is doing if they are concerned.

Children need to have time to familiarize themselves with the day's plans, greet friends and "settle in". If you are going to be late or your child will be absent, please call VCELS by 9:00am.

Children will not be "readied" for your arrival. Often, parents are delayed and children miss activities and experiences as they wait for your pickup. Please plan extra time at pickup if you want to change your child into clean clothes for departure.

Arrival at school will not be allowed between 10:00am and 2:00pm due to the disruption it causes in the children/classroom's daily routines. If your child needs to be picked up during this time, please let your child's teacher know that morning. Remember that if he/she will be

returning to school that day, they cannot arrive before 2:00pm and lunch will not be saved for him/her. Please be sure a teacher is aware of your presence when you arrive to pick up your child. Often parents like to talk and visit with one another when they pick up their children. Please keep your children with you during these times as you are responsible for them after you enter the classroom to pick them up.

Board of Education- VCELS is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon. The school is directed by a school board during the school year. Its meetings are open to parents of any Valley Catholic School. The Board agenda is posted by the attendance computer at least one week before the meeting is held each month.

- **ROLE:** The SSMO Little Flower Development Center Board dba Valley Catholic Early Learning School (VCELS) is accountable for the activities of VCELS to fulfill the mission of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon. This role involves the responsibility for management oversight, including the development of strategic directions, financial expectations and quality standards.
- **PURPOSE:** The Board of the SSMO Little Flower Development Center Corporation (Hereinafter the Board) values an open and transparent deliberation and decision-making environment. Additionally, the Board wants to be accessible and responsive to issues that impact VCELS. This open meeting procedure will provide an opportunity for VCELS faculty, staff, students, parents and SSMO Religious (Hereinafter Campus members) to attend regularly scheduled meetings and outline a protocol for comment and placement of discussion items on the Board's agenda.
- **PROCESS:** Campus members may attend scheduled meetings of the Board and give input during the open comment period provided by the agenda and subject to the rules set out in this procedure. The Board meets monthly on the first Tuesday of the month at the SSMO Convent. Meetings begin promptly at 6:30 pm. (The agenda is posted at VCELS a week before each meeting.) All parties will acknowledge that on occasion the Board will deal, in executive session, with topics or subject matter that are of a confidential nature. During executive session the meeting shall be closed to all except Directors and those necessary, as deemed by the Board Chair, to address the topic under discussion. Time for Campus member comment will be provided on the agenda. All parties will understand that the Board meets on a monthly basis and as such has many agenda items that must be addressed. (Bylaws Section 4.1) Each Campus member will be asked to limit his/her comments to five minutes to provide for maximum participation as well as fluidity of the agenda. The Chair will have the right to suspend the Campus member comment period in the interest of time, order or advancement of the meeting agenda.

Due consideration should always be given to following the appropriate "chain of command" by presenting issues to teachers, principals, directors or Campus Schools' President. In the event that a Campus member desires to place a topic on the meeting agenda the Campus member will give written notice of such request as well as any written material to the Campus Schools' President fourteen days in advance of the regularly scheduled meeting. While every effort will be given to addressing topics submitted in accordance with this paragraph, the Campus Schools' President and the Board Chair, taking into consideration the needs of the schools, will set the final meeting agenda. Appropriateness of the topic and associated discussion at the Board level will be considered prior to placing a topic on the agenda.

Additional opportunity for participation of Campus members is available by submitting written correspondence to the Campus Schools' President or the Board Chair. This correspondence will be communicated to the entire Board at the next available opportunity following receipt. In presenting written material to the Board as correspondence or attachments, due consideration should be given to relevance of the material.

Classroom Visits- We encourage parents to interact with their children in the classroom whenever possible, whether for lunch, snack or other special occasion. However, if your child has a difficult time when you leave him/her, you will be asked not to visit during the day or to plan on taking the child with you when you leave VCELS.

Classroom Transitions- Transitions are determined by the age and developmental level of the child. Administrative Staff work with parents and teachers to determine each child's readiness. Space availability in classrooms is also a consideration to move to the next class.

Clothes for School- We have fun at school. Our activities can be messy. Although we have smocks and paint shirts, we do not keep children from fully exploring their environments. We assume you are sending your child to school in clothes that allow them to fully participate in our program. Shoes should be sturdy and attached to the feet with straps or laces. Please don't send your child in shoes with slick bottoms or "dress-up" shoes. (For example, flip flops, skate shoes, cowboy boots, etc.) If your child arrives in inappropriate footwear, we will ask you to take him/her home to get safe shoes before beginning his/her day at VCELS. Make sure your child has at least one complete change of clothes (more during toilet learning times) at school and that they are the right type for each season. In order to keep extra clothes that fit and are weather appropriate, we will be giving reminders to update your child's extra clothes. An extra pair of boots at school is appreciated. Label, label, label!!!

Communication- Providing e-mail addresses allow us to communicate with parents electronically. VCELS and campus newsletters are published throughout the year. When parents contact VCELS teaching staff by phone or e-mail, we will do our best to be timely with our replies. Staff are very busy throughout the day providing care for your children but it is important to us to respond to your questions or concerns in a timely manner.

Complaint/Issue Resolution- Our goal is to resolve issues at the lowest possible level. We will make a good faith effort to:

- listen to you
- make sure we understand the issue from your perspective
- explain our view of the issue and how our policies apply
- come to a resolution that all parties can accept.

The procedure for resolving concerns or complaints at VCELS are as follows:

- 1) Concerns regarding individual school staff members should first be directed to that staff member. Please call, or make a brief personal contact to schedule a convenient time for both of you to meet. Administrative staff can facilitate scheduling these meetings.
- 2) If the issue is not resolved, the parent should then address it with the Director. The Director will notify the staff member that a parent has contacted her/him with a concern

providing confidentiality for the family if requested. The Director may include both the staff member and the parent with him/her in the mediation of the issue.

- 3) If the issue is not resolved at the Director level, then the Campus Schools President should be contacted next.
- 4) If there is no satisfactory resolution at the Campus Schools President level, the last step is contacting the President of SSMO Ministries Corporation. She has the final say in any issue. (Current names for those positions are available on the Front Office bulletin board.

The VCELS Education Board does not address or mediate complaints about school personnel.

Daisy & Sunflower Preschool Readiness- It is the VCELS policy that children transitioning to either room must have the following readiness milestones:

- Is completely potty trained* or transition rate equal to the Daffodil rate will be billed,
- Attention span of approximately 15 minutes (i.e.: can sit for typical “Group time”),
- Listening skills developed sufficiently to understand and follow simple directions,
- Language skills readily used to express needs, wants, frustrations, etc.
- Readiness exhibited for associative play.

* Potty trained means:

- being aware of the sensations and knowing that they do indeed have to use the toilet,
- taking the initiative to go into the bathroom and use the toilet,
- letting teachers know when they have to go,
- wearing underwear (and staying accident-free) for a minimum of one month. (No pull-ups.)
- having the necessary skills to clean themselves after using the toilet.

If a child starts in either room and teaching staff determine the readiness milestones are not present in the child, VCELS reserves the right to charge the transition tuition rate equal to the Daffodil Rate until such time as the child meets the readiness criteria.

Directory- A parent/guardian directory is published at the beginning of each school year (Fall). Families are given the opportunity to indicate if you do not wish your home phone number and address to be published. We ask that families respect this list and do not use it for solicitation purposes.

Driving and Parking on Campus- Please observe the **10 MPH** speed limit at all times. Watch for children in every area of campus. Since we are limited in space, we ask that you only use the area in front of the VCELS building for quick drop off or pick up times (5 minutes or less). When spots are available in the staff parking lot, this area can also be used for stops of less than 5 minutes also. The gravel lot across St. Mary’s Drive is available for your use if you are going to be parked longer than a few minutes. If parents/guardians are picking up Valley Catholic Elementary School, Valley Catholic Music School, Valley Catholic Middle School or Valley Catholic High School students, please do not park in front of VCELS so that area is available to those who need access to VCELS. For safety reasons, do not park along the red curbs for any

length of time. While using the SSMO campus, please respect the “No Smoking” and “No Dogs” policies.

Drop-off and Pick-up of Children

We understand that our school beginning and ending times may not fit into every parent’s daily work schedules, but there are no school staff members assigned to supervise children before 7:00am or after 6:00pm. We want our students to be safe. We will not leave a child unattended and it is imperative that your child stays at your side at all times when entering or leaving VCELS and that you accompany them to his/her classroom. We also will not leave a child alone waiting to be picked up at the end of the day, so it impacts our personal lives when we wait with a child for a late-arriving parent. We appreciate your understanding and consideration on this issue, and be assured that we will be flexible if there’s an unforeseeable circumstance preventing you from picking up your child on time. Please call us as soon as possible in that event. Late Pickup Fees will be billed if your child is picked up after VCELS closing time. VCELS closes at 6:00pm M-F.

Family Involvement- Our program and teachers care about both the child and her / his family. We strongly encourage our parents to become involved in our program by participating in classroom activities and attending school functions. Classroom participation includes activities that are planned specifically for parent and family inclusion, as well as time when parents join in the daily routines. We believe this partnership with the families broadens our program and enriches the environment.

Field Trips- Full-time Preschool children will have the opportunity to go on several field trips each year. Notice will be given to parents ahead of time with details included. Due to the limited schedule of our Part-time Preschool Program, field trips may be scheduled if time allows but are not guaranteed. For field trips requiring transportation away from campus, public transportation (Trimet/Max) will be used or a contracted bus service will be hired.

All children attending Snapdragon summer camps must have a signed summer registration form. Written details of field trips will be posted in the classroom and/or front lobby doors.

On field trips, teachers carry registration forms including emergency information and field trip authorization, a first aid kit and any medications which need to be administered while away from VCELS. All children will wear matching t-shirts listing VCELS’s name and phone number (but not listing the child’s individual name). Depending on the nature of the trip, chaperones may be requested at the time of field trip notice. With field trips planned during lunch times, a sack lunch will be provided. If running water is not available, hand cleaning wipes will be used before meals.

Holiday Classroom Parties- Teachers plan and implement classroom parties and celebrations based on holidays. In order to promote healthy eating habits, VCELS will provide healthy alternatives for snack on those occasions. Please do not supplement these celebrations at your own expense nor ask others to contribute money.

Holy Week- In keeping with the solemnness of this time, parties do not take place on Holy Thursday (including birthday celebrations) but rather will be scheduled at a different time. VCELS will be closed on Good Friday for staff inservice.

In-School Parties- Before your child's birthday, parents/guardians will receive a form designed to help plan classroom celebrations. These celebrations are arranged between teachers and parents. Please stay within the guidelines decided with teachers. We believe in trying to instill in our children an awareness of excessive consumerism. We do not wish to reinforce that aspect of our culture with overindulgence at school. We would like them to experience and appreciate the simplicity and joy of sharing small treats and each other's company while celebrating birthdays at school. We ask you to respect our request to keep classroom parties simple.

Infant Sleep- Infants must be put to sleep on their backs (CCD 414-300-0300, 6).

Make up Days- "Make-up" days are not allowed for Wildflowers children. For example, if a child is scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday but misses his/her Thursday class, s/he may not come on Friday to "make-up" missed time. Also, no credit will be given for missed days.

Messages To and From Students during the School Day- Messages from parents to students are to be delivered to the school office. Office Staff will relay messages to students during a time and in a way that is not disruptive to the classroom. We ask that parents not go to classrooms themselves to deliver messages. This disrupts the children's routine and may require that you take the child with you.

We allow Schoolage (Snapdragons) students to call their parents from the office only if it is an urgent matter. Family business and arrangements for social activities must be made at home. Students must always ask their teacher's permission first to go to the office to call parents. We do not allow students to call home for forgotten homework, textbooks, PE clothes, musical instruments, to make later plans, etc. We want to support parents in their efforts to help their children become reliable and responsible. If you realize your child has forgotten something, and you choose to bring it to school for them, we ask that you deliver the item to the office and we will take it to your child. Please do not deliver forgotten items directly to your child's classroom.

Nap / Rest time- Each of our classrooms has a nap period as part of the day. After a period of rest, if a child is not sleeping, he/she is encouraged to read or play quietly. Please send extra socks, a cot-sized blanket and small pillow for your child to use at naptime. A soft, cuddly comfort item is also appreciated. Phone calls to staff cannot be transferred into the classrooms between 11:00am and 2:30pm.

Out of School Party Invitations- Unless everyone in a class is invited to a party, invitations are not to be brought to and/or distributed at school.

Outside of VCELS Care- According to the VCELS Employee Code of Conduct, employees may not be alone with children in VCELS programs whom they meet outside of VCELS. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, driving or riding in cars, and inviting children into their homes.

Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to prior Director approval. Also, parents should not interrupt staff members who are in the course of their work to discuss non-related VCELS activities. Written authorization is required for any child to be released to the staff member. When hiring a VCELS employee for an out-of- VCELS task such as “babysitting”, the outside work is neither a reflection nor connection to VCELS and not part of any VCELS financial obligations or agreements. Should a confidentiality breach occur during a non-related VCELS activity, Director approval may be revoked at any time.

Pictures -Opportunities to have school pictures taken occur twice a year. Class pictures are taken during one of the photo sessions. Purchase of photographs is optional.

Due to confidentiality issues, the use of personal camera phones, still and video cameras may be limited during class activities. During all school events (Christmas Program, Ice Cream Socials, etc) it is the responsibility of parents with confidentiality issues to remove their children from the event if your child’s picture should not be taken.

Potty Training- Once a child begins trying to use the toilet, we ask that all children, both boys and girls wear clothing that does not involve snaps and zippers. This includes “onesies” or body suits, overalls, jeans, belts and any other piece of clothing that they cannot work quickly. We want this to be a positive experience, not one of frustration.

Security Items- Pacifiers and other security items will be used as needed as determined on an individual basis. Staff and Director will work together with parents to determine developmentally appropriate practices.

Teacher/School Staff Gifts- Please do not take it upon yourself as a parent to individually purchase, or plan to purchase, a gift for a teacher or other school staff member, with the intention of asking the rest of the parents in the class to contribute toward the gift. Please consult with the Director first if you or several parents are considering purchase of a large group gift. This will generally not be allowed. Other parents may have their own personal gift or sentiment planned. They may not be able to help pay for, or appreciate being asked to contribute toward purchase of a group gift. The initiator of the large group gift idea may end up disappointed with the lack of support for the gift they’ve chosen. However, there may be special circumstances where a large group gift is appropriate, such as a wedding, the birth of a child, or retirement --- especially if all the families in the classroom have been consulted and included in the planning. If in doubt, please consult with the Director before setting out to ask other parents to contribute to the purchase of a large group gift.

Toys from Home- If a sharing toy brings about inappropriate behavior, VCELS teachers may remove the toy from the child and place it in safe keeping until the end of the day. When helping your child choose a toy to share, please refrain from allowing toys that are violent in nature, no guns or weapons, no glass, porcelain or similarly fragile nor expensive to replace as VCELS cannot be responsible for toys that are damaged, lost or misplaced.

Visitors must stop at the front desk when entering VCELS. No child will be released to any person not authorized by her / his parent or guardian. Written authorization is required and the

authorized person must present identification to the VCELS Office before the child will be released. Visitors to VCELS are required to sign in and wear a name tag when in the building.

Volunteers- Volunteers serving at VCELS will support and model the moral teachings of the Catholic Church and function faithfully within the mission and structures of the school with proper respect for those serving in ministries.

Volunteers work in a collaborative role with others ministering to the development of the children and the school as an educational institution. Volunteers are asked to practice CONFIDENTIALITY as a living principle, and to respect the dignity of those with whom they work and come into contact.

Volunteers accept responsibility to use contacts made through the school in such a way so as not to disrupt the peace, order, and tranquility of the school community.

Should volunteers come into conflict on school related issues, it is the responsibility of both to resolve the dispute through personal diplomacy and/or the complaint/issue resolution process explained in this Handbook.

Any person who has a conflict with a school volunteer outside of the boundaries of school activities must settle that dispute outside of, and without involving or using school resources.

All volunteers must attend the “Call to Protect” training and be enrolled in the State of Oregon Criminal History Registry before volunteering at VCELS.

Parent involvement is important to VCELS. The goal of staff is to form a partnership with parents. By working together, we can create a special place for children to learn and grow surrounded by people who love them.

Wildflower Preschool Readiness- It is the VCELS policy that children first attending the Wildflower Room must have the following readiness milestones:

- Turned age 3 by September 1st,
- Is completely potty trained*,
- Attention span of approximately 15 minutes (i.e.: can sit for typical “Group time”),
- Listening skills developed sufficiently to understand and follow simple directions,
- Language skills readily used to express needs, wants, frustrations, etc.
- Readiness exhibited for associative play.

* Potty trained means:

- being aware of the sensations and knowing that they do indeed have to use the toilet,
- taking the initiative to go into the bathroom and use the toilet,
- letting teachers know when they have to go,
- wearing underwear (and staying accident-free) for a minimum of one month before attending. (No pull-ups.)
- having the necessary skills to clean themselves after using the toilet.

If a child starts in the Wildflower Preschool Room and teaching staff determine the readiness milestones are not present in the child, VCELS reserves the right to withdraw services until such time as the child meets the readiness criteria and space in the class is available.

HEALTH POLICIES

Illness- If a child becomes ill at school, the responsible person will be notified and expected to make appropriate arrangements for pick up within the hour. For all emergency / accident situations, VCELS will notify a parent / guardian, provide appropriate first aid, and if necessary arrange transportation to hospital care.

Symptoms for exclusion- According to CCD and the Washington County Health Division administrative rules, a child may not be in the facility with one of the following symptoms, or combination of symptoms, of illness:

- Fever greater than 100;
- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose, runny, watery or bloody stool);
- Vomiting;
- Nausea;
- Severe cough;
- Unusual yellow color to skin or eyes;
- Skin or eye lesions or rashes that are severe, weeping or pus-filled;
- Stiff neck and headache with one or more of the symptoms listed above;
- Difficult breathing or abnormal wheezing; or
- Complaints of severe pain.

Further, 24 hours time must elapse after a new round of antibiotics or other medication has begun and / or the child is symptom free. Any child sent home because of illness may not return to VCELS until the second business day after leaving VCELS unless sent home on Friday. In some instances, a written note from a physician may be required for re-admittance (may be faxed to us: 503-626-6220).

If a child is sent home sick for any reason and the child attends another Valley Catholic School, VCELS staff will notify the other school.

Medications: No prescription medication nor non-prescription medication including but not limited to: pain relievers, sunscreen, cough syrup, diapering and first aid ointments may be given to a child without a written, signed, and dated medication authorization on file at VCELS. Prescription medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name, name of drug, dosage, and directions for administering, date and physician's name. A written record of all medications administered is filed at the front desk. Certain medications and medical procedures will not be administered by VCELS staff. Parent(s) shall be informed daily of medication administered to their child.

If your child has been given medication prior to arrival at school, please let your child's teacher know the reason for medication as well as the time of last dose.

Please don't ask for your child to be given Tylenol (or other over the counter medication) if they are fussy or if they are biting, etc. CCD 414-300-0330, 6c states “. . .prohibited punishment includes . . . non-prescription chemical restraints used for discipline or to control behavior.”

If your child is not able to participate in daily activities (i.e. going outside for play) for health reasons, it is best for them to be home until they are fully recovered and are able to be involved with the group and classroom routines. In some instances, we will require your child be picked up if he/she is unable to participate in daily activities.

Immunizations: Please let staff know when Immunizations are given so we can help your child be as comfortable as possible. Tylenol, etc. can be left at the front desk to be given as needed for pain relief.

When your child is absent due to illness, please contact VCELS immediately.

STAFF MEETINGS AND INSERVICES

Staff meetings are held after hours on the third Wednesday of each month. Staff meetings allow us time to reflect on our practices as a center, review and re-think policies and procedures, and provide an opportunity for teacher training workshops. As early childhood educators, we are often so busy with our immediate responsibilities of caring for and educating young children, communicating with parents, and attending to classroom needs, that we are isolated and in need of insightful dialogue with co-workers.

VCELS will be closed for Inservice days in order to hold staff trainings. The exact dates will be announced with the calendar each year. Rates are calculated with these dates in mind so they are not pro-rated or refunded for Inservice days.

We recognize that closing VCELS for Inservices inconveniences our families and can be a hardship and we appreciate your support. Research shows that high quality programs for young children include ongoing teacher education. Both the Child Care Division of the State of Oregon and the National Association for the Education for Young Children (our accrediting body) require frequent inservice training.