



Student Handbook

President: Bob Weber
Principal: Jennifer Gfroerer
Vice Principal: June Poling

4420 SW St. Mary's Drive
Beaverton, Oregon 97007
School Phone: 503-718-6500
FAX: 503-718-6520

www.valleycatholic.org

Valley Catholic School, sponsored by the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon, is directed by a School Board. Board meetings, held at 6:30 P.M. on the first Tuesday of every month during the school year, are open to parents of Valley Catholic students.

I. MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND BELIEF STATEMENTS

1.1 MISSION STATEMENT

Valley Catholic School promotes the development of life-long learners and leaders by teaching and living Catholic values within a strong tradition of faith, service, and personal and academic excellence.

1.2 PHILOSOPHY

The ultimate aim of education at Valley Catholic is to develop the whole person, both as an individual and as a social being. The philosophy of Catholic education is based on the concept that every person has supreme dignity, being created in the image and likeness of God and destined for eternal union with Him.

The specific objective of the school is to provide a learning environment in which the body and mind of each student can develop to full maturity and responsibility as a citizen with Christian values.

Valley Catholic endeavors to give students the fundamental knowledge necessary for an intelligent participation in life and to foster self-initiated learning through personal insight and critical thinking. The school strives to teach students how to search for truth and to face life without bias or prejudice. To reach these goals each student is encouraged to develop right principles, well-trained critical faculties, and a high degree of personal integrity.

The school desires to serve the community by graduating young men and women who are equipped with the social, intellectual, moral, cultural, and physical skills necessary to assume a responsible role in life.

1.3 BELIEF STATEMENTS

Students can nurture a personal relationship with God.

Students can learn to respect themselves and others as valued gifts from God.

Students can develop a well-formed moral and social conscience.

Students can prepare for any college or university through the academic and college counseling program.

Students can develop creative expression, critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, active social responsibility and positive methods of communication.

Students can become life-long learners and can adapt to a rapidly changing world.

Students can develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to make positive choices throughout their lives.

Students can interact in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration.

Students can contribute to and participate within a safe physical environment.

II. POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 ACCIDENTS/EMERGENCIES

If a student is seriously injured at school, efforts will be made to reach the student's parents/guardians, the person listed as the emergency contact, or the family physician. The school will call the emergency number 911 for major injuries. First aid for minor injuries will be administered by a trained staff member.

2.2 ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to be punctual and present for all classes and assemblies unless excused by parents and the school's administration. An attendance record is maintained by the school as a part of students' permanent records.

Late Work

Late work is not accepted.

Following excused absences, students must confer with individual teachers to arrange a make-up work schedule on the day the student returns to school. Students are responsible for making arrangements for make-up work within two school days of their return otherwise the make-up work will be considered late – including all quizzes, tests, and projects.

Exceptions to this standard are at the discretion of the teacher.

Absentee Admittance Slip

Parents/Guardian of an absent student must phone the school by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. Students must obtain an absentee admittance slip from the school office before being readmitted to their first class. Students are responsible for clearing absences within one school day.

Excused Absences

Oregon State Law (ORS 339.065) defines an excused absence as “an absence caused by the pupil’s sickness, by the sickness of some member of the pupil’s family, or by an emergency. The school’s administration may excuse absences for other reasons when satisfactory arrangements are made in advance of the absence.”

Students having medical or dental appointments during school hours will be excused pending verification of the appointment to the school office. Students leaving for an appointment during the school day must follow check-out procedures.

Unexcused Absences

Absences caused by students’ work schedules, sleeping late in the morning, or missing the bus or a ride are unexcused. No make-up work or re-testing will be provided when absences are unexcused.

Excessive Absences

Students missing more than ten class days in a course, for any reason – excused or unexcused, during one semester will be required to petition for credit and is subject to approval by the Middle School Academic Review Board.

Pre-Arranged Absences

Absences for travel during school time are discouraged. Travel during school time may reduce academic success. Pre-arranged absences should be arranged at least ONE WEEK in advance of the anticipated absence and students must complete the *Valley Catholic Middle School Prearrange Absence Form – Part One* in advance of the absence otherwise make-up work will not be accepted.

Upon return to school, students must complete the *Valley Catholic Middle School Prearrange Absence Form – Part Two*. Make-up work/tests will be considered on an individual basis (See *Late Work*.) Families should not automatically assume that make-up work will be provided ahead of time. Meeting with teachers individually about make-up work is the responsibility of the student. Teachers will make clear to students what work can be made up and when it is due; they will also identify the work that cannot be made up and the effect of this missed work on the student’s performance and grade. Teachers may choose to comment on the advisability of absence from their class. Please note school policy on excessive absences.

Tardiness

Tardiness will be considered unexcused unless parents/guardians have given the school an appropriate written excuse. Students not in class when the bell rings are tardy. Tardiness for classes during the school day is reported to the office. For unexcused lateness, students will be liable to disciplinary action. Students delayed by a staff member must take a note from the staff member explaining the delay.

Early Dismissal

When requesting an early dismissal, students must bring a note to the school office BEFORE school begins in the morning and pick up an *Early Dismissal Form*. The teacher of the class the student is leaving must sign the dismissal form.

Students will not be dismissed from class until the time listed on the dismissal form or unless the student is paged to the front office. The student must return the form to the school office before leaving the building. Students may not leave without first turning the *Early Dismissal Form* back into the front office.

If the time of dismissal changes from the time listed on the form, a parent/guardian may go to the front office or call to ask that the student be dismissed earlier than the time stated.

Students having an emergency appointment or becoming ill at school must obtain permission from a parent or guardian and the school secretary before leaving the building.

2.3 AUTOMOBILES AND PARKING

All drivers on campus must operate vehicles safely and obey the school's driving and parking rules.

Students are not permitted in the parking areas during school hours without permission from a school administrator.

The principal and the SSMO Campus Schools reserve the right to revoke the campus driving and parking privileges of any employee, parent, student, or visitor.

2.4 BACKGROUND CHECKS, AND CALLED TO PROTECT

Volunteers who will be working with students will be required to have background checks, complete the initial *Called to Protect* training, and all on-line training updates as required.

2.5 BOOKSTORE

The bookstore is operated by the school to provide a convenient source for textbooks. Students will be able to purchase the majority of their textbooks from the bookstore on a specified date prior to the beginning of classes.

2.6 BUILDING HOURS

The school buildings are open from 7:25 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. The high school library is open until 3:45 p.m.; it is the only area supervised between 3:10 p.m. and 3:45 p.m. for students not participating in school activities. After 3:45 p.m.—and before 7:30 a.m.—there is no supervision for such students.

2.7 CHANGE OF ADDRESS, E-MAIL, OR PHONE NUMBER

The school secretary should be notified immediately of any change of address, e-mail address, or phone number. Such notification is necessary for the maintenance of accurate school records and mailing lists and for communication with parents or guardians in emergencies.

2.8 CHILD-ABUSE REPORTING; FREEDOM FROM HARASSMENT; NON-DISCRIMINATION

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 school employees are included among "public or private officials," and will, as required by law, report child abuse.

It is the philosophy of Valley Catholic School that every person has supreme dignity, being created in the image and likeness of God and destined for eternal union with Him. The school insists that everyone be treated with dignity and courtesy and that the school be free of harassment, which it defines as unwelcome actions or words that threaten, violate, or intimidate others. Harassment may include, but is not limited to, verbal or practical jokes, unwelcome touching, offensive remarks or put-downs, and displays of offensive materials. Harassment may also include words or conduct directed toward another person because of race, color, religion or national origin. It also includes the intentional attempt to cause another person to fear physical injury.

Examples of behavior that may be sexual harassment include making sexually suggestive remarks, gestures, jokes or 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, or intimidating a person because of his or her gender.

Valley Catholic 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 student who feels he or she has been harassed by anyone, students or adults associated with the school, should immediately notify the principal, the school counselor, the dean of students, or any other school staff member.

Valley Catholic School is committed to providing an educational environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, whether based upon race, color, national origin, age, marital status, physical or mental handicaps, veteran status, on-the-job injuries, religious preference, sexual orientation or gender, and will not knowingly tolerate discrimination against or harassment of school staff or students by anyone—supervisors, staff members, students, parents, guardians, vendors, or visitors. All complaints of discrimination or harassment should be reported to an appropriate staff member. They will be investigated promptly and as confidentially as circumstances permit.

2.9 CLOSED-CAMPUS POLICY

Valley Catholic has a closed campus. Once students arrive at school, they must remain on campus throughout the entire school day. Parents/guardians must provide written permission in advance for a student to leave campus.

2.10 EMERGENCY CLOSURE

When weather creates hazardous road conditions, the administration may close school. Valley Catholic usually follows the Beaverton School District's decision for school cancellation or late start caused by weather conditions. School closure is announced on most local radio and television stations. If the number of excused school days becomes excessive, additional days may be added to the school year.

2.11 EMERGENCY DRILLS

Drills for fire, earthquake, lockdowns, and other emergencies are held regularly in compliance with state regulations. Students are to follow designated procedures.

2.12 FOOD

Students may bring lunch from home or purchase food from the cafeteria. Lunch tickets are available in the school office all day.

Food and beverages are not permitted in the school lobby, auditorium, or in the classrooms without permission from the teacher.

Students are expected to clean-up after themselves. Leaving litter for others to clean up is wrong for many reasons. The most important is that it assumes students are a privileged class for whom others—of a lesser class—clean. Such an assumption violates Valley Catholic's fundamental values.

2.13 IMMUNIZATIONS

In order to be admitted to school all students must be immunized according to current Oregon State Law.

2.14 INSURANCE

It is recommended that all students be covered by some plan of insurance. Student insurance information is available from the school office.

2.15 LIBRARY

The library is for research and quiet study. Students are expected to use the library responsibly by respecting the rights of other users, checking out materials correctly, and returning them on time. Books can be checked out for three weeks and magazines for one week. Fines are charged: 10 cents each school day for late non-reference materials and 25 cents each school day for late reference materials. All fines must be paid before report cards will be issued. No food, beverages, cell phones or headphones are allowed. Library hours are 8:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

2.16 LOCKERS

Lockers are school property. Each student is assigned a locker in the school for school and personal items. Students are expected to keep lockers clean, neat and locked. No tape or other adhesives are permitted on the exterior of lockers. Students should not publicize lock combinations and may not change school lockers without permission. The school is not responsible for any loss, theft, or damage to books or other personal property. To safeguard the well-being of all students and staff, the school reserves the right to inspect any locker at any time. Additional lockers in the gym are available for use during P.E. classes and athletic practices and contests. Locks for gym lockers may be obtained from the Physical Education Department; only school-authorized locks may be used on them, and they are subject to the rules described above.

2.17 LOST AND FOUND

The Lost and Found is located in the school office, the PE locker rooms, within each middle school homeroom, Elementary School cafeteria, and in senior hallway. Students finding lost articles are asked to take them to the school office where they can be claimed by their owner. Unclaimed articles are donated to local charities at the end of each quarter.

2.18 MEDICATION

No medication of any kind will be provided by the school, and no medication will be administered by any school personnel without written direction of a parent or a guardian. Prescription medication requires a direct order signed by a licensed physician. Any medication students take for more than one day must be brought to the school office. The medication will be stored and locked in a designated place where students have no access to it. All medications, including over-the-counter medications, must be in an original container or prescription bottle. A parent or guardian must complete a medication authorization form from the school office before any medications may be given, and the parent or guardian must specifically request in writing that a specific dose of medicine be given at a specific time to the student. The medicine's administration must be documented by the staff member giving the medication.

2.19 RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT

To enroll in school or attend classes, students must live in the same residence with one of their parents or legal guardians.

2.20 SEARCH AND SEIZURE

On campus the school administration may search students, their personal property—including packs, bags, and cars—and all lockers at any time. Property deemed injurious or detrimental to the safety and welfare of the students or staff may be seized if the school administration believes that an illegal act or a violation of school rules has been committed, is being committed, or is about to be committed.

2.21 SIGNS

All posters and signs must be approved by an administrator or club advisor. The content and placement is restricted. Plastic tape is never permitted on any wall, window, or other surface. Signs not meeting these requirements will be removed without notice.

2.22 FIELD TRIP PERMISSION

A permission slip or a fax of the original form completed by a parent or guardian must be on file in the school office in order for students to leave campus on field trips. Telephone calls or e-mails will not be accepted as authorization for field trips.

2.23 STUDENT I.D. CARDS

At the beginning of the school year students will be issued Valley Catholic School identification cards that may be used for admission to certain athletic and social events.

2.24 STUDENT INFORMATION DISCLOSURE

Valley Catholic School will disclose directory information for uses such as the school phone and address directory, yearbook, and school newspaper. Disclosable information includes any part of an education record that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Valley Catholic will not release student information to the general public without explicit permission from parents/guardians. Phone numbers, however, may be released to media sources

seeking information about athletes or other performers. Photographs and videotapes of unnamed students may be used for recruiting purposes. An information-release statement is included with the registration forms for both new and returning students; parents may choose there to allow or refuse the use of such photographs and videotapes of their students. Please contact the school office if you have questions regarding student photographs or videotapes.

2.25 STUDENT MESSAGES

Parents/Guardians: please note this carefully: Calling a student to the office interrupts the entire class. These calls will be made in emergencies only.

2.26 STUDENT WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

Parents or legal guardians of students transferring to another school or withdrawing from school must complete the Formal Withdrawal Procedure Form and submit it to the school office prior to withdrawal.

2.27 CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones and headphones may be brought to school and used until 8:00 a.m. From the beginning of school, the use of cell phones, ipods, all kinds of electronic devices and headphones are prohibited during the school day for middle school students—they may not, that is, be used during passing periods or break, lunch or, of course during classes. They may be used after the conclusion of the day's last class. Students who have cell phones or headphones out of their lockers or bags at any time during the school day except lunch will be subject to disciplinary action. A second offense will result in more serious disciplinary action and a call to the student's parents/guardian. In addition, cell phones and headphones are prohibited in the library at all times, even before school, during lunch, and after school.

2.28 TRI-MET BUS SERVICE

Tri-met offers regular bus service to Valley Catholic School. Inquiries about bus routes should be directed to the Tri-Met office at 503-238-7433. Student bus tickets are available in the school office all day.

2.29 VISITORS

All visitors to Valley Catholic, including parents and guardians, must have necessary business to conduct at the school, must obtain prior approval of the administration to visit the school beyond the school office, and must report at the school office on their arrival.

Students attending other schools are not allowed as guests of Valley Catholic students unless their visit has been scheduled through the VCS administration as part of the Spend-a-Day program.

III. RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Jesus is the center of Catholic Christian life. Therefore, daily prayer as a means of communicating with God is a priority at Valley Catholic. At least once a month, the entire community of faculty and students celebrate the Eucharist, either on a holy day or for some seasonal event.

3.1 CHAPEL

The chapel is located on the first floor next to the front entryway. All students and staff are encouraged to drop in for brief prayer throughout the day. To maintain a prayerful atmosphere, please travel in a quiet, respectful way in the hall outside the chapel.

3.2 LITURGIES

As a Catholic community, the Eucharist is the most sacred expression of faith we have. Valley Catholic Middle School celebrates Mass at least once a month in the school auditorium. In addition the entire Valley Catholic School community, grades 7-12, celebrates Mass once a month in the gymnasium.

Throughout the year, the school offers prayer services for special occasions or liturgical seasons such as weekly services during Advent and Lent.

3.3 PASSION PLAY, SAVED, AND OTHER LENTEN LITURGIES

Every year, students reenact the traditional Stations of the Cross while reflecting on how Jesus' words and actions are relevant to us to day. This is the largest production created by Valley Catholic Middle School, involving all the members of the seventh grade class.

3.4 RETREATS

Retreats are an important part of Valley Catholic's educational program. A retreat is a chance for students to get away from everyday pressures and distractions to contemplate their lives and their relationship with God. Two retreats are held each year for middle school students.

3.5 SERVICE

The Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon declare in their charism statement that they are called to be "compassionate, joyful servants of the Lord." Service opportunities are available to Middle School students at Little Flower Development Center, St. Mary of the Valley School, Maryville Nursing Home, the SSMO Convent, and at Valley Catholic itself.

VC middle school members of National Junior Honor Society, National Junior BETA Club, or middle school students who wish to earn a service letter are required to complete a minimum of 12 hours of service on or for the SSMO campus per semester. Log sheets must be completed and verified by the due date to receive credit.

IV. BEHAVIOR POLICY AND GUIDELINES

4.1 EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Valley Catholic community is expected to comply with the entirety of the VCS Handbook and adhere to the values and mission of Valley Catholic School.

The school reserves the right to refuse admittance, revoke attendance, suspend or expel any student who does not cooperate with the policies established in this handbook. The high standards adhered to by our school apply to after-school hours as well. If any parent, guardian, or student refuses to follow the standards of the school, he or she places the student's admission or attendance at Valley Catholic School in jeopardy, and the student is subject to expulsion or revocation of the student's admission.

As signatories of the registration form parents or guardians acknowledge that they must be in agreement with the above statement, demonstrate a spirit of cooperation, and uphold the school handbook, and they agree and acknowledge that if either they or their student violates this agreement, the student may, within the discretion of the school, be subject to revocation of acceptance, suspension, or expulsion.

In order to promote school safety and civility and to promote students' self-discipline, Valley Catholic students are required to follow these rules:

Treat adults, other students, and visitors with courtesy and respect.

Do not use the internet, cell phones, or other devices to send, forward, or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person or texts or images of a sexual nature.

Comply with all classroom guidelines set by individual teachers.

Avoid words or actions of a violent or threatening nature.

Never bring harmful or illegal substances or weapons to school.

Behave appropriately in class.

Always be honest and respectful towards the property of others.

Refrain from bringing valuables or large sums of money to the campus.

Maintain the cleanliness of the building and surrounding campus.

Refrain from chewing gum.

Be responsible for honest and ethical behavior in all pursuits. Many assignments are completed on the honor system with no monitoring of student behavior. The standards for ethical behavior are the same whether the work is completed inside or outside the classroom.

Do not plagiarize. Plagiarism is cheating. Plagiarism will result in a 0% for the assignment with no opportunity for resubmission. As defined by the Oregon Council of Teachers of English, plagiarism is the use of

another person's words, ideas or facts as your own without giving credit to the original writer . . . [using] more than three words in a sequence from someone else without giving credit to that source . . . [allowing] someone else to copy your paper [or any part of your paper] . . . [turning] in another student's writing as your own . . . [copying] materials from sources without using an in-text citation.

Scholarly writing must include accurate citations, copies of rough drafts, and photocopies of all source materials.

Consequences for Non-Compliance

Examples of violations of school rules are listed in two groups according to the seriousness of the offense. Because not all infractions can be included and because some classes of infractions include major and minor examples, additions and modifications to these lists may be made at the discretion of the administration at any time. The school reserves the right to suspend any student who is under investigation by public officials for a criminal act.

Consequences for Major Infractions

The consequence for a major infraction, on or off campus, may be immediate suspension with possible recommendation for dismissal. The examples listed below are merely examples; the list is not intended to be exhaustive—the school reserves the right to suspend or dismiss a student who has committed any infraction deemed by the principal serious enough to warrant suspension or dismissal.

Examples of Infractions That Might Be Major

Assault, fighting, intimidation, threat, or any form of harassment

Insubordination—an open act of defiance or disrespect toward a staff member

Consumption, possession, sale or supply of alcohol, marijuana, or other illegal narcotics or dangerous substances

Abusive language or action toward a staff member

Theft of school or personal property

Vandalism or abuse of school or personal property

Setting fires, setting false alarms, bomb threats, possession of explosives, weapons or other potentially dangerous instruments.

Refusal to report to detention

Repeated behavioral referrals

Truancy

Leaving school premises without permission

Dishonesty or unethical behavior in writing, speech, or actions

Dangerous driving

Inappropriate use of the Internet, cell phones or other devices—used on campus or off—that affects the climate of the school

Consequences for Minor Infractions

The consequence for a minor infraction may include confiscation of contraband items, copying pages of the school's rules, detentions, parent conferences, probation, or suspension from school activities or classes. Repeated violations will result in more serious disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Examples of Infractions That Might Be Minor

Disruption or non-compliance at school or a school activity

Use of profanity

Inappropriate campus parking

Improper display of affection

Dishonesty in writing, speech or actions

Unexcused absences from classes or school activities

Tardiness to class

Inappropriate attire

Food or gum violations

Cell-phone violations

4.2 DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

Assessment

As a condition of attendance, the school may request that a student have a professional psychological or substance abuse evaluation made at the expense of the parents.

Pages

One of the two most common sanctions is the requirement to copy pages of the school rules. Students who do not turn in a page of the rules at the time it is due will usually receive a detention.

Detentions

Detentions are one or more after-school work details of an hour and a half or more.

Probation

Probation is an agreement between the student and the school administration. Its purpose is to effect change in a student's behavior. Since student problems vary, probation agreements will also vary in duration time and details. All probation agreements, however, will specify what behavior must change and the consequences if it does not change.

Suspension

Suspension is a period during which a student must remain off campus and away from all school-sponsored activities. In-school suspension is a period during which a student is under administrative supervision at school and removed from regular school activities. Parents/Guardians will be notified immediately of the suspension, and a conference between the parents

and the administrators will be arranged. Suspended students are required to complete all class work assigned during their suspension and are subject, at each teacher's discretion, to academic penalties for missed class participation.

Dismissal (Expulsion)

Valley Catholic reserves the right to dismiss any student whose behavior is so detrimental that continued attendance would not be in the best interest of the student or Valley Catholic

The Dean of Students administers most of the school's discipline; suspension and dismissal, however, are at the sole discretion of the principal after consultation with the Dean of Students.

Dismissed students will not be allowed back on the Valley Catholic campus at any time for any reason and will not be allowed to attend any function that is the sole activity or event of Valley Catholic whether on Valley Catholic's campus or elsewhere.

Dismissal from Valley Catholic is final and not subject to appeal.

4.3 DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

Consumption, possession, sale or supply of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, or other illegal narcotics or dangerous substances on or about school premises or at any school-sponsored activity, on or off campus, is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, up to and potentially including expulsion.

V. ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Valley Catholic Middle School offers a well-rounded curriculum that provides college-preparatory and elective courses. To allow students to take full advantage of this curriculum, the following academic guidelines have been established.

5.1 ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE

Students who receive a grade of C- or less on their quarter report card will be required to take an after school Academic Skills class for the following quarter and any subsequent quarters until the quarter grades rise above a C- and a passing grade in Academic Skills is earned – both these requirements must be met for the same quarter before a student is dismissed from Academic Skills. Exceptions may be made – with the approval of the middle school administration – if the student already attends a formal tutoring program.

Students will be given a letter grade in the Academic Skills class. This letter grade will not be factored into any GPA calculations.

The Academic Skills class is designed to help students improve their studies. The school does not wish to remove students whose grades are low but who are making a good effort to improve. The school requires a good performance in Academic Skills as evidence of a desire to improve and a willingness to work to improve. Students assigned to the Academic Skills class must attend punctually and regularly and work quietly and cooperatively for the entire class period. If they do, they will receive a good grade in Academic Skills. If, however, they are repeatedly tardy or absent or do not work productively and politely, they will receive a low grade. Because they have not given evidence of an effort to improve, students who receive a grade lower than a C- in Academic Skills may be asked to leave the school.

5.2 ACADEMIC – SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS (Individual Learning Plan – ILP)

Special accommodations will be granted to any student with a current diagnosed learning disability or health issue. Diagnosed learning disabilities and health issues are considered current if the most recent diagnosis was completed within 26 months of the request for the special accommodation.

Special accommodations are noted on an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and are customized to each individual student, based upon the diagnosed disability or health issue.

No accommodations are granted without an ILP. All Individual Learning Plans are subject to review and granted at the discretion of the administration.

5.3 ACADEMIC PROBATION

Students with a GPA below 1.8, or four or more individual grades of C- or lower, for two consecutive semesters may be asked to leave Valley Catholic Middle School. Students in this situation may appeal to the principal to ask that an exception be made.

5.4 DROP/WITHDRAWAL POLICY – FOREIGN LANGUAGE

(Add) Students may drop Foreign Language courses anytime prior to the last three weeks of the quarter. Students wishing to withdraw from a class must receive the approval of the teacher and submit written parental/guardian permission to the administration. If a student's request for withdrawal is approved, the class will be given a grade and students will not receive credit for the course that quarter.

5.5 GRADING

Report cards are issued four times per year. Students' work is evaluated and marked according to the following scale:

A	4.0	Exceptional/Superior
A-	3.7	
B+	3.3	
B	3.0	Above Average
B-	2.7	
C+	2.3	
C	2.0	Average
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	
D	1.0	Below Average
F	0.0	Failure
P		Pass ("P" is not used in calculating GPA, but full credit for the class is granted.)
I		Incomplete (The teacher will set a date by which work must be completed; after this date an Incomplete will become an F.)
WP		Passing at the time of withdrawal, no credit
WF		Failing at the time of withdrawal, no credit

Valley Catholic does not give the grade of A+.

5.6 GRADUATION

In order to graduate from Valley Catholic Middle School, students are expected to earn credit in the following course:

English – 2 years	*Religion – 2 years
Mathematics – 2 years	Social Studies – 2 years
Science – 2 years	Music – 2 years
Health/ P.E. – 2 years	Computer Science – 1 semester
Art – 1 semester	Study Skills/Speech – 2 semesters

*Students must take Religion for each semester they attend Valley Catholic Middle School.

Students will be considered for foreign language based on academic achievement and feasibility. Students who receive lower than a C- in first year foreign language will be required to retake the first year course before admittance to the second-year course.

5.7 HOMEWORK

Typically students average 2-3 hours of homework each school day. Late work is not accepted.

5.8 HONORS

Students are awarded honors according to the GPA they have earned for the given semester.

FIRST HONORS are awarded to students whose GPA is 3.800 to 4.000

SECOND HONORS are awarded to students whose GPA is 3.550 to 3.799

THIRD HONORS are awarded to students whose GPA is 3.250 to 3.549.

5.9 NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

Valley Catholic Middle School is a member of the National Junior Honor Society. The National Honor Society (NHS) and National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) are the nation's premier organizations established to recognize outstanding high-school and middle-level students. Students become members of the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) by invitation only. They must receive and maintain a 3.75 grade point average, participate in service projects, and maintain high standards of scholarship, citizenship, service, leadership, integrity and character. Students must complete 12 hours of service to the each semester to maintain their active membership status.

5.10 SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID

Valley Catholic offers financial aid based on need. Parents/guardians apply by filling out a form administered by Tuition Aid Date Services (TADS). Application may be made electronically or by a paper form (available in the Finance Office). Please carefully observe application deadlines. Late application may reduce financial aid or make it impossible at all.

Valley Catholic offers also a variety of one-year merit scholarships. Scholarships will be awarded on the criteria listed on the application forms, which are available in the school office during the month of January for the next school year. Scholarships are awarded yearly to returning students who meet the specified criteria.

5.11 PARENT/GUARDIAN-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/Guardian-Teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to contact individual teachers or the Middle School Dean at any time. The school sets up parent/guardian-teacher conferences on an individual basis when needed.

5.12 TESTING

Semester exams are given twice a year. Students must be in their examination rooms before the bell rings. Late students may only be admitted at the discretion of the test proctor.

Final (Semester) Exams Policies

Final exams are an end of term evaluation and are used to assess each student's cumulative knowledge of the subject. Students do not attend regular classes on the days exams are administered but rather take the scheduled exams and then are dismissed for the day (most often dismissal is between 10:00 and 12:00).

Final exams are processed differently from regular tests and are not returned to the students. Finals are similar to other standardized tests (such as the SAT, IOWA, etc.) where the final scores are published for students to review but individual test questions are not. At each teacher's discretion, first semester final exams may be reviewed with the class as a learning tool for preparation of the second semester final exam.

An exception may be granted for an end-of-year review of the final exam if a student has a *Valley Catholic Individual Learning Plan* (ILP) on file.

If a student misses an examination due to an unavoidable emergency, the instructor may agree to give an Incomplete and schedule a makeup examination provided that the student's work is passing up to that point. Travel plans for vacation are not an emergency, and should not be made during the final examination schedule. Any arrangement to reschedule or make-up exam must be submitted to the Middle School Academic Review Board for approval.

Standardized Tests

Additionally, all students at Valley Catholic Middle School participate annually in a standardized examination program as requested by the Archdiocese of Portland. These examinations help parents/guardians and teachers promote academic excellence for Valley Catholic Middle School students.

5.13 ON-LINE GRADES (POWERSCHOOL)

Valley Catholic Middle School teachers will have available a cumulative grade to date for all students by the end of the third week of each nine-week quarter, as well as any other information the teacher deems important.

These grades are designed to inform students and parents or guardians of a student's progress and status in the class. Parents and guardians are asked to review these grades with their children and to consult with teachers if a lack of progress is indicated. Please note that end-of-term tests and projects may drastically affect a student's grade

VI. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

6.1 PERSONAL COUNSELING

A personal counselor is available to all Valley Catholic students in grades 7-12. Students may seek out counseling on their own or be referred by teachers, administrators, or parents/guardian. Personal counseling addresses the wide array of issues facing the adolescent.

Students involved in disciplinary action may be required to see the personal counselor. The counselor may make referrals to appropriate outside treatment resources. In some circumstances parents/guardian and students will be required to sign a release to allow an outside program or agent to confer with the school regarding findings and recommendations as a condition of a student's continuing to attend Valley Catholic.

6.2 ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Valley Catholic School is a college-preparatory school with high academic and behavioral standards. In an effort to support each student's transition into Valley Catholic Middle School's program, we will begin our school year with a full week of orientation.

The orientation program is an extra step in assisting students in the development of basic study skills. Many of these topics will be reinvestigated during academic classes as well as study skills classes. The orientation program lays the groundwork for the students to apply the techniques they learn to their daily assignments.

6.3 TEACHER AVAILABILITY

A parent or guardian wishing to speak with a teacher may call the school office and leave a message or write the teacher by e-mail. All teachers are required to check their e-mail prior to leaving school for the day.

VII. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

VCMS LETTERING PROGRAM

Valley Catholic Middle School students have the opportunity to earn a school letter. Students may earn letters in all Valley Catholic Middle School extracurricular activities including participation in a CYO sport, music (handbells, honors groups and mass choir), service/clubs (such as yearbook, altar serving, Student Council), and academics (such as Math Counts, honor roll, NJHS,). Letters are awarded at the end of each sports season as well as at the end of each semester. For a complete list, consult the *Valley Catholic Middle School Introduction to the Middle School Program* booklet.

7.1 ATHLETICS

Valley Catholic Middle School (VCMS) participates in Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) sports. Our students compete in football, volleyball, basketball, swimming, and track and field.

7.2 ASSEMBLIES

Students are required to attend all assemblies and to participate in them with courtesy, respect, and attention.

students in grades K-3 to resolve conflicts constructively during lunch recess. The middle-school student's role is to encourage and teach peer-to-peer resolutions to common school-yard problems. Conflict Managers help with clear communication skills, problem solving and empathy skills.

7.3 DANCES

Each year, Valley Catholic Middle School students plan two dances for the seventh and eighth grade students. The dances are held on Friday nights in the school cafeteria. Students from schools other than Valley Catholic Middle School may not attend.

7.4 FINE ARTS

Known for its musical excellence, Valley Catholic Middle School Music Department features band, choir and orchestra. Music class is taught every other day throughout the entire school year. The department presents winter and spring concerts. The music classes are often invited to perform outside of the school, at locations including the State Capitol, the Grotto, Beaverton City Hall and Washington Square Mall. Extracurricular activities include the handbell team, honor choir, honors orchestra and jazz band. In addition, students enter competitions and make public appearances. Private voice and instrumental lessons are also offered.

The Art Department displays its art work periodically in the front lobby and the halls of the school.

7.5 FOREIGN STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Middle-school students from Shukutoku Junior High School in Japan spend two weeks each spring attending classes at Valley Catholic Middle School. Middle-school families have the opportunity to host students during their two-week visit. Azumano International Exchange Company sponsors this exchange program.

7.6 STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Valley Catholic Middle School Senate seeks to promote school activities, unify students, uphold school standards and promote the welfare of the school. It develops student responsibility, initiative, and leadership.

VIII. CO-CURRICULAR MUSIC

Known for its musical excellence, Valley Catholic Middle School Music Department includes band, choir and orchestra. Music class is taught every other day throughout the entire school year. The department presents winter and spring concerts. The music classes are often invited to perform outside of the school, at locations including the State Capitol, the Grotto, Beaverton City Hall, and Washington Square Mall. Extracurricular activities include the handbell team, honor choir, Honors orchestra, and jazz band. In addition, students enter competitions and make public appearances. Private voice and instrumental lessons are available for a fee through SSMO Music Center.

IX. PUBLICATIONS

9.1 VALLEY CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL ON THE INTERNET

The Valley Catholic website (www.valleycatholic.org) features a special section dedicated to news, photos and events about the Middle School.

9.2 YEARBOOK

Valley Catholic Middle School's yearbook is published annually. Each edition highlights the people, events, activities, and achievements that make the year special.

X. STUDENT DRESS AND APPEARANCE

10.1 VALLEY CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL UNIFORM DRESS CODE

School Uniform

Student Dress and Appearance - Valley Catholic Middle School Uniform Dress Code

All VCMS students need four different “uniforms”:

1. Daily uniform wear (Monday – Thursday)
2. PE Uniform
3. Music Uniform (All groups – band, choir, orchestra)
4. Spirit Dress – Friday dress requirement

Students wear uniforms daily unless special non-uniform days are announced. All uniform tops must have the VCMS logo and must be purchased through Dennis Uniform or Lands End Uniform. All uniform pants, shorts, skirts, skorts, and capris must be purchased through a company offering a UNIFORM LINE and that follows all other color, length and style regulations.

Valley Catholic Middle School uniform:

Long pants and capris: Solid navy-blue or khaki chino-style cotton, cotton blend, or small wale corduroy pants, fitted at the waist. Any navy blue or khaki pants or capris offered through the UNIFORM LINE are acceptable.

Shorts: Solid navy-blue or khaki chino or walking-style shorts (fitted at the waist); shorts must touch the top of the knee cap and may hang as low as the bottom of the kneecap. Shorts shorter than the top of the knee cap or longer than the bottom of the knee cap are NOT ACCEPTABLE.

Shirts: All shirts must fit at the shoulders; they must be white, navy, chambray blue, cobalt blue, French blue, or gray heather. Shirts MUST have the Valley Catholic Middle School logo applied. (All shirts must be purchased through Dennis Uniform or Lands End Uniform,) Shirts may not hang any lower than the top of the pant's pocket and must be tucked in at all times. Any top – in the colors listed - offered through the UNIFORM LINE is acceptable with the logo (Polo, oxford, turtleneck, mock turtle neck).

Sweaters and sweatshirts: Solid navy sweater, fleece, sweatshirt, or vest. Sweaters, fleece and sweatshirts MUST have the Valley Catholic Middle School logo applied. Any top offered through the UNIFORM LINE is acceptable (Polo, oxford, turtleneck, mock turtle neck). Any navy sweater or sweatshirt offered through the UNIFORM LINE is acceptable with the logo.

Jackets: All jackets worn inside the school building, including at lunch, assemblies, and Mass must be purchased from Dennis Uniform or Lands End Uniform and must contain the logo. Any navy jacket offered through the UNIFORM LINE is acceptable with the logo (polartec, letterman/varsity, hooded squall).

Shoes: Shoes must be secure on the feet and have a closed toe. (Sandals and boots may not be worn on uniform days). Shoes may not have black soles **that mark**. Combat boots, hiking shoes, fashion boots, or high-heeled shoes are not allowed. Athletic shoes (tennis shoes) MUST have both a closed toe and a closed heel and must be worn for all PE classes.

Socks: Sock must be worn daily and must be visible above the shoe. Solid white, khaki, gray, cobalt, chambray, or navy blue socks, tights, or stockings must be worn with all shoes. Nylons must be solid white, khaki, gray, cobalt, chambray, or navy blue

Girl's Attire: In addition to the uniform code listed above, female students may also wear solid navy blue, khaki, or rampart plaid skirts and/or skorts (fitted at the waist), skirts and skorts must touch the top of the knee cap. Skirts and skorts shorter than the top of the knee cap are NOT ACCEPTABLE.

Hair: Hair is to be clean and neatly groomed, out of the eyes, and must not interfere with eyesight. Extreme fads in cuts, styles, or designs are not acceptable. Two-toned bleached hair, obvious highlights or streaks, and hair of an unnatural hair color is not allowed. The interpretation of “extreme” is the school's.

Hair accessories may not be distracting. Distracting styles, colors, or designs vary and are addressed on an individual basis. The interpretation of “distracting” is the school’s.

In addition, boys’ hair must be cut or styled above the collar.

Make-Up: Light make-up is acceptable. Glitter (of any kind) or heavily applied make-up is not acceptable (eyeliner, mascara, lipstick, etc.). The interpretation of “light make-up” is the school’s.

Jewelry: Visible piercings are acceptable only in the ear lobes. Earrings that hang down past the ear lobe are not acceptable for uniform dress days. Jewelry must not be distracting and may not make noise. Students may not wear dog-type collared jewelry, studded wristbands, wallet chains, ropes, studs, etc.

Other: No hats, caps, scarves, visors, bandanas or sunglasses are to be worn in the building.

*Please note –Any shirt worn under the uniform shirt must be solid white without printing of any kind. In addition, the uniform shirt must completely cover the undershirt; the buttons on the uniform shirt may not be opened to expose the undershirt, nor may the undershirt be hanging out of either the sleeves or the bottom of the uniform shirt.

PE Uniform (All students have a PE locker in addition to the homeroom locker):

The following supplies – including the PE shoes – must be left at school on an on-going basis (with a rotation of items for laundering purposes):

- **Shirts:** All PE T-Shirts must have a VCES, VCMS, VCS or CYO logo – there is no color requirement
- **Shorts:** Shorts must be black, navy blue, or cobalt blue (small accents are acceptable – such as white piping). Shorts must touch the top of the knee cap and may hang as low as the bottom of the kneecap. Shorts shorter than the top of the knee cap or longer than the bottom of the knee cap are NOT ACCEPTABLE.
- **Shoes and Socks:** Athletic socks, athletic/tennis shoes are required on PE days.

Music Uniform (All students (every grade) – band, choir, and orchestra - must have a music uniform. You will not need a complete music uniform until October, at the earliest.:

- **Shirt:** Long sleeve white oxford shirt with **VCMS logo** (fitted top for girls; standard cut for boys)
- **Pants:** Black uniform pants (capris, shorts, skirts, skorts are not acceptable)
- **Shoes:** Black dress shoes preferred. Shoes must have closed toe and closed heel. Heels over 1 inch are strongly discouraged. (White or brightly colored athletic shoes are not acceptable.)

Junior Kingsmen: Once auditions finish, members will be instructed on how to order ties at that time.

Honors Choir: Once auditions finish, members will be instructed on how to order special pieces at that time.

10.2 Spirit Dress

Every Friday is a Spirit Dress Day. Spirit dress days are designed as a way to reward student responsibility while promoting school spirit. When additional spirit dress days are announced, students should wear the standard school uniform as described in section 10.1, **Valley Catholic Middle School Uniform Dress Code**, or clothing that adheres to the following requirements:

- A t-shirt, sweatshirt or fleece (jacket or vest) bearing the logo of SMVS, VCMS, VCS or a SSMO approved/sponsored activity (such as CYO, Music Camps, sports camps, etc.). The logo must be visible at all times (Cannot be covered by non-uniform clothing/jacket) No other shirt, sweatshirt, fleece, vest or jacket may be worn in the building on these days.
- Any pants, shorts, skirts, or skorts that are acceptable under the free-dress guidelines are acceptable to wear IN CONJUNCTION WITH one or more of the tops listed above.

10.3 SPECIAL DRESS DAYS

On special dress days the standard uniform may be replaced with clothing of a specified design or color. Special dress days may occur during spirit week, on or near certain holidays, and in support of a sports team entering the playoffs.

On these days, students may wear the school uniform as described in section 10.1 **Uniform Dress Code** or shirt, sweatshirt, jacket, pants, shorts, or skirt must be of the day’s specified color (at least 50% of the designated color/s). Any other garments must conform to the free-dress guidelines as described in 10.5 **Free Dress** and must be worn IN CONJUNCTION WITH the article of clothing of the appropriate color for the special dress day.

Examples of special-dress occasions and colors:

Valiant Pride Days: Blue and white – hats, face paint, hair color acceptable

September: Hawaiian Day (Bright colors, floral prints)

Halloween: Black and Orange (Any shade including gray)

Thanksgiving: brown, orange, yellow, red

Christmas: Red and Green (Any shade)

Spirit Week: Dress requirements are announced

Valentine's Day: Red, Pink and Purple

Mardi Gras: purple, green, yellow

St. Patrick's Day: Green

Rejuvenation Week: Dress requirements are announced

May/June – Special dress day for eighth grade students: dates and requirements to be announced

10.4 FORMAL DRESS – GRADUATION

Valley Catholic Middle School's Graduation is a formal dress day. Students are expected to adjust to the special dress code guidelines:

GIRLS' ATTIRE

Dressy skirt and a blouse, dress shirt, and/or sweater, and dress shoes

Dress slacks and a blouse, dress shirt, and/or sweater, and dress shoes

Dress and dress shoes

If you wear a dress or shirt without sleeves to graduation, please bring a sweater or covering of some sort to wear AT ALL TIMES while you are in the convent building (For the graduation mass)

The following guidelines are used to determine appropriate dress:

Clothing should be neat, tasteful and hemmed

Skirts, dresses, or slits can be no more than two inches above the knee

All shirts, blouses, and dresses must have sleeves and modest necklines, or a shrug, sweater, etc. to cover shoulders while in the convent building (For the graduation mass)

Stomachs and backs must be covered

must have sleeves and a modest neckline

No sheer, midriff, tight, or clingy tops

No stomach or back skin can show when both arms are raised above shoulder height.

Sleeves should extend at least three inches down the arm beyond the edge of the shoulder

Shorts and jeans of any color or style are not acceptable for the graduation mass or ceremony

BOYS' ATTIRE

Dress slacks, dress shirt, and/or sweater, and dress shoes

Ties and/or blazers are optional but are strongly encouraged

Shorts and jeans of any color or style are not acceptable for the graduation mass or ceremony

10.5 FREE DRESS

Occasionally, students may be given a free dress day. On these occasions, students may wear clothing which adheres to the following, based on VCMS free dress code. Students are to dress and groom themselves at all school-sponsored activities in a manner that is modest, clean and appropriate to a Catholic school academic environment. While parents and students have the primary responsibility for personal appearance, the school administration is responsible for interpreting dress code regulations.

Students in violation of the dress code will be sent to the school office. Parents will be notified and asked to provide appropriate garments.

The attire of students has an important influence on the attitude toward learning within any school. Regard for the peer group and adults with whom the student works, individual expression, modesty, self-respect, and pride for Valley Catholic are all factors in determining the dress code. "Appropriate" describes dress that is proper for the task at hand. Tasks at school

include spiritual growth and serious learning within a respectful social setting. Student attire also must reflect pride and respect for the learning process.

Students in violation of the dress code will be sent to the school office, and a parent or guardian will be called and required to bring appropriate garments to the school. Should a parent or guardian be impossible to reach, students may be asked to change to a school-issued garment. Repeated disregard of the dress code will result in disciplinary action.

- Shorts should be neat, tasteful and hemmed.
- Shorts, dresses, or slits can be no shorter than two inches above the knee.
- Stomachs and backs must be entirely covered.
- All shirts, blouses, and dresses must have sleeves and modest necklines.
- Sheer, tight, or clingy tops are not allowed.
- Students' hair must be clean, neatly groomed, and not interfere with eyesight.
- No cotton or pajama style sweat pants
- No extreme cuts, styles, colors, or designs cut into the hair are allowed. The interpretation of "extreme" is the school's.
- Mustaches and beards may be worn if neat and trimmed.
- Visible piercings are acceptable only in the ear lobes. Jewelry must not be distracting or make noise.
- Students may not wear dog-collar type jewelry, studded wristbands, belts with chains, ropes, studs, etc.
- Footwear must be worn for all classes, including P.E.
- Students may not wear sunglasses in the school building.
- No hats of any type, including scarves, sweatbands, bandanas, or visors, may be worn by either boys or girls.
- Specifically noted as inappropriate are garments with holes or in disrepair, tattered clothing, visible underwear, spandex or running shorts, beachwear (such as cutoffs and swimwear), underwear T-shirts, gang-related symbols or clothing, and clothing advertising sex, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, gangs, violence, profanity or cult groups.

All rules regarding accessories and inappropriate messages on garments apply to extra-curricular events.

10.6 STUDENTS REPRESENTING THE SCHOOL

Valley Catholic encourages advisors and coaches of school activities to establish high standards in behavior, dress, and grooming for students representing our school in public. Advisors and coaches may require dress and grooming standards beyond those required for class. Students will be notified of the standards, and any student not in compliance may be denied the participation.

XI. TECHNOLOGY USE GUIDELINES

11.1 SSMO CAMPUS SCHOOLS TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT

SSMO Campus Schools encourage student and staff use of the SSMO Campus Schools computer network for word processing, computer coursework, browsing the Internet, and electronic mail. SSMO Campus Schools' electronic tools are to be used for educational and/or business purposes only. We recognize the need to use technology ethically and effectively and consider the use of the computer network a privilege, not a right. Student and staff users are personally responsible for their actions in accessing and using the schools' computer resources. Network administrators may review communications and electronic files to maintain system integrity and ensure the appropriate use of the system. Those who do not abide by the Acceptable Use Agreement will be denied computer access and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Users are given a network password and allocated an amount of network space for documents. Users are expected to remain within this allocated space, deleting materials that may take up excessive storage space. Faculty and staff are provided e-mail addresses. Students are not allowed to use e-mail on any school computer other than for educational purposes.

SSMO Campus Schools make no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the electronic services it provides. We are not responsible for any damages users suffer, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by negligence, errors, or omissions. All documents stored on the SSMO Campus Schools computer network become the property of the SSMO Campus Schools. Users obtain information via the Internet at their own risk. We specifically deny any responsibility for the accuracy, quality, or nature of the information obtained through the Internet.

Activities warranting disciplinary action include but are not limited to the following:

Providing strangers with personal information of any kind (including your name, address, and phone numbers, as well as personal information of other users)

Using passwords other than those assigned to you (Do NOT give your password to friends.)

Transmitting offensive messages or harassing others (staff, student, or the Internet community)

Disrupting others when they are using the computers or network

Copying another student's or staff member's work or intruding into another user's files

Plagiarizing and/or violating copyright laws

Transmitting material in violation of U.S. or state regulations

Broadcasting messages on the network

Employing the network for commercial or political purposes

Accessing student e-mail accounts, chat rooms or bulletin boards for non-educational purposes

Accessing, installing or playing games without teacher approval and supervision

Downloading or installing commercial software, shareware or freeware onto the network without the approval of the principal and the IT department

Using resources excessively (i.e. uploading or downloading large files)

Vandalizing or misusing technology (e.g. harming or destroying data of another user, wasting resources such as paper, Internet bandwidth or network space; damaging PC keyboards, mouse or monitor, etc.)

Attempting to log into the network as a network administrator (Those seen using the network for any illegal purpose, "hacking," or logging in as a system administrator should be reported to a staff member immediately.)

Performing unethical or illegal activities of any kind (Activities or messages related to or in support of illegal actions will be reported to the authorities.)

11.2 TEACHING APPROPRIATE INTERNET USAGE

As a Catholic, college-preparatory school system, SSMO Campus Schools recognize the need to educate young men and women to use technology ethically and effectively. It is important to our schools' mission to create lifelong learners who know how to find information in our rapidly changing world.

We believe the Internet offers a wealth of educational material for our students and teachers. Access to the Internet enables students and staff to explore thousands of libraries, databases, museums and other repositories of information. With access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material unsuitable to schools.

The SSMO Campus Schools computer network uses domain filtering software to block objectionable sites. SSMO Campus Schools do not use "search word" filtering software for several reasons:

It is impossible to block all inappropriate sites. A recent *Consumer Reports* article suggests that even the best filtering is only 70% accurate.

Filters reject much valid information, and “teachable moments” may pass before a site can be un-blocked.

Access speed is generally reduced when a filter is in place, thus increasing behavior problems and frustration.

Filtering is an effort to enforce morality from an external source. As a Catholic institution, our schools strive to foster an internal moral code. Filtering inappropriate websites does not teach students to be ethical or responsible Internet users.

The advent of the Internet does not change what is suitable for schools. VCS staff endeavors in a variety of ways to encourage appropriate Internet usage:

VCS has an Internet policy in place, and it is enforced.

All students and parents agree to the Technology Acceptable Use Policy printed in this handbook when they are admitted to an SSMO Campus School. Students are expected to read, understand, and abide by its standards.

The Acceptable Use Policy is discussed in the school library and computer labs at the beginning of each school year.

Signs are posted in the school library and lab clearly stating suitable Internet practice and the consequences for inappropriate use.

Faculty monitor student computer use throughout the day by walking about the room and by viewing computer screens remotely.

One-on-one computer-use instruction is given frequently in the lab and library.

Faculty members spend a great deal of time preparing Pathfinders—hyperlinks to pre-selected website—that fit the topic at hand. Pathfinders help focus students’ academic efforts and reduce opportunities for them to wander the Internet where they might stumble on inappropriate websites.

VCS subscribes to information databases that supply appropriate information for many projects teachers assign. By using these sources, students spend less time on the Internet at large and more time on focused searches.