



Scholar & Family Handbook

**Every Child College Bound.
No Exceptions. No Excuses.**

VERITAS

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VERITAS PREP CHARTER SCHOOL

Our Mission

Veritas College Preparatory Charter Schools prepares Memphis students in grades six through eight to enter and to excel in high school and college as accomplished scholars and to contribute to their communities as ethical leaders.

Walking In TRUTH – Teamwork, Respect and Responsibility, Urgency, Tenacity, Honesty

Our Expectations

Veritas Prep holds members of the school community—students, families, and staff—to the highest standards. To provide the very best education for Veritas Prep students, all of us must work together to create an atmosphere conducive to academic excellence. To create this environment, we must collectively and consistently ensure that Veritas Prep students meet basic, but critical, expectations:

Demonstrate **T**eamwork

Works well with staff, fellow scholars, and all other members of the Veritas Prep community.

Demonstrate **R**espect & **R**esponsibility

Treat others the way you wish to be treated. Show respect for your self, classmates, teachers, and your school. Come to school and class prepared to succeed.

Demonstrate **U**rgency in Behavior

Follow all directions immediately and execute all tasks in an efficient manner. Your time is the most precious resource that you have.

Demonstrate **T**enacity

No matter how hard things become, ALWAYS give your best and NEVER give up!

Demonstrate **H**onesty

Always speak and act truthfully and forth-rightly.

These expectations, known collectively as “**walking in TRUTH**” form the basis of many policies outlined in this handbook.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Students, Families, and Teachers

The Veritas Prep School-Student-Family Accountability Contract, reprinted on the following pages, represents some of the most important responsibilities for being a member of the Veritas Prep community. For students, the Contract provides an overview of what being a Veritas Prep student is all about. For families, the Contract outlines some of the specific expectations the school will hold you to in order to provide the best possible education for our students. In exchange for what students and families do, the faculty and administration of Veritas Prep will work tirelessly to provide students with a safe and orderly environment in which they can achieve academic success.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Hours of School Operation

In the pursuit of excellence, Veritas Prep has an extended school day and school year. This gives students more time for academic growth and non-academic enrichment. It also gives students the time and support needed to make great strides in realizing their potential, both academically and personally.

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, the regular school day lasts from 7:45am until 4:30pm. Each day doors open at 7:20 a.m.

On Fridays, the regular school day lasts from 7:45am until 2:00pm. Students who require additional time to master academic content may be REQUIRED to stay until 4:30pm on Fridays.

The school building will open to students at 7:20am on Monday-Friday and on each of our scheduled Saturday Schools. **All students are encouraged to arrive as close to 7:30am as possible in order to eat breakfast and be seated for the Beginning of Day Routines by 7:46am.**

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Wednesdays, students should not be on school grounds after 4:40pm without permission from the school. On Fridays, students should not be on school grounds after 2:10pm without permission from the school.

Inclement Weather Closings

In the event of poor weather conditions such as heavy snow or ice, please listen to the local television or radio stations for relevant information regarding school cancellation. **Veritas Prep Charter School follows the exact same delay and cancellation policies as the Memphis City Schools District.** If Memphis City Schools are closed, so too is Veritas Prep. If Memphis City Schools are delayed by two hours, so too is Veritas Prep.

B. Attendance Policy

Given the fast pace and high rigor of Veritas Prep's curriculum, **missing one day at Veritas can have a detrimental effect on a student's learning.** Regular attendance is required. Poor attendance is not tolerated.

Parents are expected to ensure that their child is in school; please do not allow your child to miss a day of school except for serious illness. Excessive absences will be considered a violation of the School- Student-Family Accountability contract. We ask that families not schedule vacations or non-emergency appointments during school time. **Families should take advantage of 2:00pm dismissal on Fridays, as well as half-days and vacations, to schedule appointments and travel.**

All student absences, including illness, suspension, appointments, and vacations, count as absences. **Veritas Prep does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. If a student exceeds 15 absences in a school year, Veritas Prep Charter School reserves the right to retain the student.** Exceptions are made for court-mandated appearances with proper documentation and religious observances. Additionally, students are afforded rights under

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (“Section 504”), the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”) should their absences be related to a disabling condition. Other rare exceptions may apply.

In order to help ensure that students do not exceed 15 absences, Veritas has certain support policies in place. They are detailed below:

- At 5 student absences, Veritas will contact the family in writing.
- At 10 student absences (or five absences within the first academic quarter), Veritas’s administration will require a meeting with the student’s family, during which an Attendance Pledge will be established aimed at ensuring attendance patterns improve.
- At 12 student absences, Veritas’s administration will require a family meeting to discuss violation of the Attendance Pledge.
- **The school reserves the right to retain any student who exceeds 15 absences.**

Students who are absent from school cannot attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence, unless the school has given advance permission.

In cases of truancy, Veritas Prep Charter School may report the student and/or family to certain state agencies or file an official complaint with the court. According to Tennessee Code (Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3001), all students between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) years of age are expected to be in school. All students will be expected to comply with these laws and the school will follow procedures set out in Tennessee Code (Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3007) if the student does not comply with the law. In cases of truancy, the Executive Director (or her/his designee) will investigate the situation. Veritas Prep Charter School operates in compliance with the Department of Education’s (DOE) requests and requirements, which can include mandated reporting of truancy to appropriate state agencies.

Veritas keeps accurate records of attendance and will make the records available for inspection by the DOE as needed. All questions regarding student attendance and attendance records should be directed to the school’s Dean of Community Engagement.

If a student is absent for the first five days of school, or at least ten consecutive days during the school year, and there has been no successful contact between the family and the school to explain his absences, that student may lose his seat at Veritas Prep and may be considered un-enrolled from the school.

C. Incomplete Days: Lateness and Early Dismissal

At Veritas, if a student does not complete a full school day, he is assigned an Incomplete Day. If a student is not in his assigned seat by 7:46am, for any reason, he is assigned an Incomplete Day. If a student is dismissed early, for any reason, he is assigned an Incomplete Day. If a student arrives late and leaves early, this counts as **two** Incomplete Days.

Incomplete Days due to traffic, medical appointments, family emergencies etc., are not excused.

Veritas may excuse Incomplete Days in cases of court-mandated appearances, disability-related appointments and religious observances, if proper documentation is provided. **Please use Friday afternoons, days off and early dismissals as times to schedule medical and other appointments.**

Late students must check in at the main office before reporting to class. Students leaving early must check in with the main office before leaving.

Excessive Incomplete Days are not tolerated. In order to ensure that students show up on time and do not leave early, Veritas has certain support policies in place. They are detailed below:

- **Every 5 Incomplete Days count as one absence in the Veritas attendance policy.**
- Weekly TRUTH Reports will include updated attendance information for your reference.

If a student needs to be sent home due to a behavioral infraction, a parent/guardian must come to the school, meet with the Executive Director and/or Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and remove the student from school grounds. Incomplete Day consequences apply in cases of suspension. Students being sent home for behavioral infractions will not be dismissed unless the parent or guardian has physically come to the school (please see Code of Conduct for more details), unless certain rare exceptions apply.

D. Homework and Get Smart

Homework is an essential component of Veritas Prep's academic program. Students have four daily responsibilities related to homework:

1. Write down all homework assignments in their Homework Log.
2. Complete all homework assignments to the high standards set forth by the school.
3. Read independently for 20 minutes.
4. Show completed homework assignments to a parent and receive signatures only if the parent feels that the completed homework meets Veritas Prep's high standards.

All homework assignments are collected each morning before the school day begins. **If a student has not satisfactorily completed his homework that is due on a given school day, even if absent, late, or dismissed early the prior day, or tardy (i.e. arriving after homework submission time), he will be required to go to Get Smart during the assigned time.**

Get Smart is a quiet, constructive place where students begin the successful completion of their next evening's homework assignments. During Get Smart, academic support is provided by Veritas Prep staff members. The goals of Get Smart include increasing homework completion rates, improving homework quality, helping students achieve mastery of academic objectives, and building academic confidence.

If a student has earned Get Smart, he will be notified by his homeroom teacher during PM Homeroom.

E. Make-Up Work Policies

Students who are not in school miss critical academic assignments and assessments. Our school make-up policy is designed to hold students accountable for all missed assignments and assessments, as well as to ensure timely make-up work such that students do not fall behind academically.

Absent Folders. If a student misses a class for any reason (absence, lateness, and early dismissal), the student's missed homework assignments will be compiled in a folder on the student's desk. **We strongly encourage students or their families to pick up this folder between 4:00pm and 5:00pm on the day of the absence.** Students who do not submit this work by 8:05am on the following day will be assigned Get Smart.

Homework. If a student is absent, late, or dismissed early for any reason, all missed homework assignments are due:

- By 8:05am on the day of the student's return, for purposes of assigning Get Smart.
- By 8:05am on the day following the student's return, for the purposes of academic credit. (If a student has been absent for more than one consecutive school day, he will have as many school days as absences to submit missed homework for purposes of academic credit. For example, if a student is absent on Monday and Tuesday, the student has two days to complete the homework for purposes of academic credit. In this case, the work is due by Friday morning at 8:05am.)

Assessments. If a student is absent for any reason (up to five consecutive days), or if a student is late and/or dismissed early, all missed assessments (e.g., tests, quizzes) must be made up within the number of consecutive school days that the student had been absent. For example, if a student had been absent for three consecutive days, he would have three school days to take the missed assessment. If a student is absent for five or more consecutive school days, he must meet with the school's Director of Curriculum of Instruction to determine a reasonable timeline for making up missed assessments.

In rare circumstances, exceptions to the make-up policy may be granted by a school administrator.

F. Saturday Academy

Saturday Academy is a part of our regular school year. Saturday Academy sessions will be held throughout the school year. The exact dates of Saturday Academy are listed on the Veritas Prep Yearly Calendar.

The following policies apply to Saturday Academy attendance:

1. **Saturday Academy is part of the regular Veritas Prep program and therefore attendance is mandatory.** Other than for family/medical emergencies, or student illness, students will not be excused from Saturday Academy, as it is a critical part of the school's academic program. In the case of a family emergency, a note from a parent/guardian is required by Monday morning. In the case of a medical emergency or student illness, a doctor's note is required by Monday morning.

2. **Also, no student will be excused from Saturday Academy unless a parent has directly communicated with a Veritas Prep staff member (or left a voice message) regarding one of the above-listed exceptions by 8:00am on Saturday morning.**
3. Students who arrive late to Saturday Academy will earn a detention to be served on Monday. Students who are absent from Saturday Academy without excuse (see above) will be required to serve in-class suspension on Monday.

G. Additional Academic Supports

At Veritas Prep, we work tirelessly to assist our students in their pursuit of academic success. In addition to the specific supports already noted above, and those supports in place for students with specific learning needs (e.g., Special Education students, English Language Learners), there are two specific ways in which struggling students are supported by our staff:

Academic Tutoring. All core subject teachers at Veritas Prep provide tutoring in their respective subject areas. These tutoring sessions are scheduled carefully as to never conflict with other student commitments. Teachers invite specific students to attend these tutoring sessions based on quantitative analysis of individual academic weaknesses/strengths. Other students may request tutoring invitations from their teachers, which may be granted depending on space availability and the anticipated tutoring topics.

H. Dress Code

Veritas Prep Charter School has a dress code. The dress code applies during all school days and during all school-sponsored events.

The Veritas Prep dress code has been adopted to improve the educational environment for all students. Specifically, we have instituted a dress code for the following reasons:

- to foster a sense of school identity and community;
- to prepare students for the expectations related to professional attire that future institutions, organizations and employers will have;
- to ensure that our students focus on learning instead of clothing;
- to increase school safety and security by making the presence of visitors/outside immediately apparent;
- to reduce the cost of clothing for families.

Enforcement of Dress Code Policy

It is the goal of the school to have a dress code which makes things easier for parents and students rather than more difficult. For that reason, we have made every effort to be clear about this policy and consistent in its enforcement. Parents who have questions or concerns should contact the school immediately and seek clarification.

Like all school policies, the dress code policy is strictly enforced. Although it may seem as if small exceptions should be no problem, we can not allow deviations from this code. Our staff does not have the time to inspect every item for acceptability or exception. If the policy states “shoes should be all black,” it means just that. It is important that all students adhere to the same code. If an exception is made for one student, it would then have to apply to all students, and the code has changed. It is in the best interest of everyone if Veritas means what it says

and says what it means. Please read the code and purchase school clothing accordingly. We have tried to make the policy clear and detailed in order to reduce ambiguity. Families who have concerns or questions should contact the school immediately.

Students who are out of dress code are not allowed to attend their classes. Parents of students who are not in dress code will be asked to bring the proper attire to school. In addition, dressing inappropriately will result in disciplinary consequences.

The Veritas Prep dress code is not intended to suppress speech or expression. Students have alternate ways to express themselves through, among other things, verbal and written speech in the classrooms.

Purchasing of Clothing

School Uniforms will be provided by Glory Apparel. To maintain professional uniformity and to foster community, certain items MUST be purchased through the uniform vendor.

School Dress Code Policy:

*Mandatory Items – School Dress Code (every student **must have** the following): * Items that must be purchased from the school.*

- Veritas Prep Blazer*
- Khaki (tan) Pleated or Flat front slacks*
- Veritas Prep skirt*
- Veritas Prep Tie*
- White Oxford Shirt
- Black or brown belt.
 - Belts must look professional and must be all black or brown. They may not be overly wide.
 - Buckles must be professional and not oversized or distracting.
- Black or brown socks.
 - Socks must be solid colors with no patterns or logos.
- Black or brown dress shoes.
 - Shoes must be 100% black or brown with no other color or logos.
 - Shoes must be tied and fastened at all times.
 - Soles of shoes should be rubber to avoid the student slipping and injuring themselves or of scuffing of floor.

*Optional Items – School Dress Code (students **may choose** to wear the following in addition to the mandatory school dress code). The following starred (*) optional items must be purchased from our vendor.*

- V-neck sweater or v-neck sweater vest with Veritas Prep's logo.*
- Cardigan with Veritas Prep's logo.*
- White undershirt.
 - All undershirts must be white and not oversized.
 - Shirt sleeves should not show from under the uniform shirt.

We recommend that each student have either a sweater or vest to ensure they are comfortable in class during the cooler months, as temperatures can fluctuate slightly.

Dress Code Specifics

- **Students may not wear clothing with logos (except for the fitness sneakers during recess), unless it is the Veritas logo.**
- Clothing must be **sized appropriately** to fit the student. Clothes may not be too big or too small.
- Students clothing should be neat, pressed, clean and free of significant **stains** (e.g. large ink blots, food stains, etc.).
- Students are expected to wear clothes in a professional manner. To that end students **may not alter** their clothing in any way (e.g. writing/drawing, cutting, etc.) Pant cuffs may not be frayed.
- Once students enter the school building, wearing of **hats, head wraps, bandanas, kerchiefs, or jackets** is not permitted unless it is in accordance with religious observation. Hats worn in the school building will be confiscated. **Dyed hair** or a hairstyle (e.g. Mohawks) that serves as a distraction –as determined by the school– is not permitted.
- Students may not wear **accessories** that are unprofessional, distracting or potentially unsafe. Any clothing or accessory that might disrupt learning or that does not conform to standards of health, safety and cleanliness is not allowed.
 - excessive jewelry (as determined by the school) is not allowed
 - earrings are not allowed
- **Chains and necklaces** may only be worn beneath students' shirts, and may need to be removed during Fitness class.
- When students **enter the school building**, they must be in the proper uniform. Students must be in uniform while on school grounds and may not change out of their uniform before dismissal.
- Shirts must be **tucked in**, shoelaces must be **tied** and Velcro must be **fastened** at all times.
- Students may not use beepers, headphones/music equipment (e.g. CD-players, iPods, etc.), or cell-phones while in the school building, even if it is before or after school. These items will be confiscated and the student will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

I. Cell Phones

We understand that many parents provide their children with cell phones as a means to stay in communication with their child as well as to provide a very important means by which a child can access help if danger arises. At Veritas Prep, we respect the rights of parents to provide for the safety of their child. Children will be permitted to carry cell phones to and from school. However, in order to eliminate the distractions that cell phones provide in academic settings, we have instituted the following system:

1. Parents must complete a form acknowledging that their child has a cell phone.
2. Each morning upon arrival, the child will turn the cell phone in to the Office Manager.
3. Cell phones will then be turned off and placed in a locked container until the end of the school day.
4. Cell phones will be returned to the child each day as they are exiting the building.

If a student has a cell phone on their person at any time during the school day, the phone will be treated as contraband and confiscated and the student will face additional consequences. The Director of Student Life will call the parent to schedule a time at which the parent can retrieve the phone.

J. School Supplies

Students are required to have a traditional book bag. Families are expected to provide school supplies. A list of required supplies will be mailed to each family during the first week of August.

During student orientation, all students will be provided with one 3-ring binder for core subject (mathematics, English, science, and social studies). Students will also be provided with a folder in which to keep nightly homework assignments.

Also during orientation, students will be trained to use a system to keep track of assignments and due dates.

Students should not bring non-essential items of value to school – monetary or otherwise – since they cannot be securely stored. Although Veritas Prep prides itself on being very safe, the school does not accept responsibility for any missing items of value. Students who bring inappropriate items to school, including but not limited to toys, iPods, CD players, laser pointers, beepers, and pagers, will have such items confiscated. A parent or guardian must come to the school to retrieve the confiscated items, as students may not retrieve confiscated items themselves. Repeated violations may result in suspension.

K. School Breakfast and Lunch

The school participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program, which provides free or reduced price breakfasts and lunches as well as free milk to eligible students. At the beginning of the school year, each family will be mailed a letter describing eligibility and an application to participate in the program. We urge families, regardless of whether they think they will qualify, to return the form.

Families of students who order lunch and have particular dietary restrictions should alert the school's Office Manager as early in the school year as possible.

Breakfast & Lunch. Students may either purchase lunch and milk from the school or bring their own lunches from home. The school does not have its own cafeteria or kitchen, so we have arranged for MCS to provide our breakfast and lunches.

Since school breakfasts and lunches are prepared off-site, the school must have an accurate number of meals that students wish to order. Near the end of every month, students will be given a calendar displaying the school breakfast and lunch meals that will be served each day of the following month. Families should determine the days for which they want to order the breakfast and lunch for the month. These selections—and money—are due to the student's homeroom teacher by the second to last school day of the month. For example, the order and breakfast/lunch money for the month of October are due on Monday, September 29th.

Students are expected to pay for ALL the breakfasts and lunches they have ordered for the coming month.

Any student who owes breakfast or lunch money will receive an invoice for the amount due from the school no later than the end of each academic quarter. The school cannot accommodate last minute changes to lunch orders.

Students are not allowed to use the vending machines. Lunch will be served each day at to all students.

Soda and chewing gum are not allowed at Veritas Prep. Any student drinking soda or chewing gum will be asked to throw these items away and will receive an automatic detention.

L. Grading Policies

Veritas Prep students take four core academic classes (mathematics, English, social studies, and science) during a given school year. Mathematics and English classes meet for six fifty-minute blocks per week, and one 45-minute block per week, for the entire school year. Science and social studies classes meet for seven 50-minute blocks per week, and one 45-minute block per week, for the entire school year.

At the mid-point of each academic quarter, students will receive Progress Reports with information about their performance in each core subject area. At the end of each quarter, students will receive formal Report Cards with detailed information about their performance in each core subject area.

On each Report Card, students receive one grade per core subject class. All grades are based on a 0 to 100% scale. Each grade is comprised of the following components:

Skill and Content Mastery (85% of overall grade). The Skill and Content component measures student mastery of a subject's skill and content standards, as determined by performance on formal assessments and in-class assignments.

Homework (15% of overall grade). The Homework component measures both a student's completion of, and performance on, Homework assignments.

Honor Roll. At the end of each quarter, an Honor Roll will be published. Students with all three core grades above 90% earn True Scholar status. Students with all three core grades above 80% earn Honor status. All honor roll students will be recognized at a formal, quarterly ceremony.

Failure. At the end of the year, the quarter grades for each core academic subject are averaged together into a final, yearlong Course Grade. A student fails a core subject if his final, yearlong Course Grade is below 70.0%

M. Promotion Policies

If a student passes all core subjects, has not been absent for more than 15 days of the school year, and has fulfilled community service requirements, the student is promoted automatically to the next grade level.

If a student fails one core subject, he must attend summer school in order to have an opportunity to be promoted to the next grade level. The student must pass a subject-specific minimum competency test at the conclusion of summer school in order to be promoted to the next grade level. If the student does not pass the minimum competency test, he may be retained.

If a student fails two or more core subject areas, he will be automatically retained and must repeat the grade level.

N. Homeroom Teachers and Student Advisors

At the beginning of the year, all students are assigned to an **Advisory**, known as a “Pride”, and a respective **Advisor**. Prides are named after prestigious four-year colleges and universities. Students take all core academic classes within their Homeroom. All administrative forms (e.g., lunch order forms, permission slips) will be collected by Advisors on a daily basis during Morning Homeroom.

Several weeks into the school year, all students are also assigned an **Advisor**. Advisors will develop and maintain close relationships with their advisees throughout the school year. Families should expect to hear updates from their child’s advisor on a regular basis. Families should also see their child’s advisor as the point person for all non-subject specific questions and concerns.

O. Community Service Requirement

One component of the Veritas Prep mission is to graduate students who will engage productively in their communities. In order to further expose students to needs within their communities, develop good service-related habits, and ensure that the school’s mission is fulfilled, all students are expected to serve the surrounding communities while enrolled at Veritas Prep.

Students are required to complete the following number of community service hours during the 2010-11 school year:

- 6th grade students: 5 hours (completed during an all-school Community Service activity)
- 7th grade students: 7.5 hours (completed during an all-school Community Service activity)
- 8th grade students: 10 hours (completed during an all-school Community Service activity)

P. Extracurricular Activities

Veritas Prep's program focuses relentlessly on the development of core academic skills. However, in order to best prepare our student body for future pursuits, students must also be exposed to extracurricular activities on a regular basis.

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays the school will offer extracurricular activities for all students. Students will sign up for a specific extracurricular activity at the beginning of each academic quarter. While most activities will be taught by Veritas Prep staff members, some activities will be taught by external instructors.

Please be advised that some extracurricular activities (e.g. sports teams) may (a) last beyond regular dismissal time, (b) hold mandatory meetings on weekends, and/or (c) occur off of school grounds. In such situations, families will receive permission slips which detail this additional information.

Students who earn Get Smart or Detention are not eligible to participate in extracurricular activities during that respective day.

Q. Individual Incentive and Accountability System: Student Truth Paycheck

Veritas Prep has developed a student Truth Paycheck system to provide students, families, and teachers with a frequent, comprehensive report of student performance. A student's weekly Truth Paycheck total is impacted by his fulfillment of behavioral, academic, and attendance expectations.

All students receive Truth Paychecks every Friday before dismissal. At the beginning of each "Truth Paycheck week" (weeks begin on Monday and end on Saturday), a student's score starts at 100 points. Simply by **meeting** school expectations throughout the week, students can retain their beginning balance of 100 Points.

Students may increase their TRUTH Scores by exceeding expectations during a given week by:

- Earning Merits from a staff member for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:
 - volunteering to help a student or teacher,
 - volunteering service to the school,
 - exemplary classroom behavior (taking initiative, showing courtesy, performing an act of kindness)
 - outstanding effort or improvement in core academic subjects
- Accomplishing something worthy of public recognition at Community Meeting

Students will decrease their TRUTH Score when they fail to meet expectations. Specifically, TRUTH Points are deducted when:

- Students do not meet behavioral expectations (e.g., they earn demerits or detentions)
- Students do not meet attendance expectations (e.g., they are absent, late, or dismissed early)
- Students do not meet homework expectations

At the end of each week, a student's points are transferred into the student's Bank. Students may use accumulated points to spend on prizes (e.g., school supplies, lunches with staff members, gift certificates, tickets to sporting events) at the Veritas Prep store or during Veritas Prep auctions.

Over time, a student's average weekly REAL score is also monitored. Students with **high REAL Report averages** earn rewards, including but not limited to:

- school celebration invitations,
- field trip invitations, and
- "gold" and "purple" passes (a series of privileges reserved only for students with the highest REAL averages)

Students with **low REAL Report averages** lose privileges and receive other consequences. Specifically:

- Students are not invited to the REAL store.
- Students cannot participate in various extracurricular activities (i.e. school celebrations or school field trips).

Weekly TRUTH Paychecks are sent home for review and to be signed by parents/guardians. Students who do not return their Paychecks by the due date will be assigned a detention.

CODE OF CONDUCT

A. Purpose

Veritas Prep Charter School has created a Code of Conduct in order to:

- ensure that our school is a respectful space for learning,
- allow students to focus on their learning, and
- prepare students to become engaged citizens who follow rules set by our communities.

The Code of Conduct describes behaviors that Veritas Prep considers inappropriate or unacceptable (which we will call “behavioral infractions”) and the consequences of those behaviors.

B. Our Philosophy

Students who do not meet the school community’s clearly defined standards for reasonable and acceptable behavior will not be permitted to disrupt the education of others. Without a firm and consistent discipline policy, none of what we envision for the school can happen. This is the basis of our student Code of Conduct.

C. Behavioral Infractions

The following list of behavioral infractions is not comprehensive; it offers examples of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviors. While we have stated possible consequences for certain behavioral infractions, Veritas staff has sole discretion to determine the consequence of each behavioral infraction.

A school-related behavioral infraction refers to the violation of this code occurring:

- while the student is on school grounds or school-related transportation,
- during school-sponsored activities and trips,
- during all other school-related events, and
- off of school grounds that results in substantial disruption to the learning environment

Students are expected to always respond respectfully to the authority and direction of school staff. Behaviors that are considered disrespectful include but are not limited to: rolling of the eyes, making inappropriate remarks or sounds in response to a request, or questioning a staff person’s action or authority in a disrespectful manner. Such disrespect will not be tolerated.

At Veritas we seek to help students become mature young adults. To that end, while we will not tolerate disrespect, we do allow for students to express disagreement in a respectful manner. The school has developed routines and procedures that enable students to easily

express such disagreement with respect for all involved. Failure to disagree respectfully will result in further consequences.

Enforcement of Veritas Prep's Code of Conduct is based upon a framework of progressive discipline. Specifically, minor infractions result in less severe consequences while larger infractions result in more severe consequences. Furthermore, first-time infractions result in less severe consequences while repeated infractions result in more severe consequences.

Demerits

If a student commits any of the following infractions, the student will receive a demerit. In addition to a demerit, the student may receive additional targeted, corrective consequences and/or lose other school privileges as determined by Veritas Prep staff.

Infractions which may warrant a demerit include, but are not limited to:

- Being out of uniform (e.g., shirt is untucked)
- Being unprepared for class
- Poor posture during class
- Making inappropriate noises during class
- Failing to follow directions or procedures of the class or school
- Talking out of turn
- Other behaviors deemed inappropriate by school staff

Detention

If a student commits any of the following infractions, the student may receive a detention. Infractions which warrant a detention include, but are not limited to:

1. Receiving three demerits within a given week (Monday - Saturday)
2. Low-level disrespect towards a fellow student
3. Low-level disrespect towards faculty, staff, or other members of the school community
4. Low-level disrespect of school property
5. Deliberately disrupting class
6. Horseplaying or engaging in physical contact that causes a disruption
7. Possessing an electronic device (e.g., cell phone) in the school building
8. Failing to return forms by school-mandated deadlines (e.g., REAL Reports, Report Cards)
9. Chewing gum
10. Possession of, or drinking, soda
11. Being late to Saturday Academy

In-Class Suspension

At times, particular infractions warrant consequences that are more severe than detention, but less severe than Out-of-School Suspension. Therefore, Veritas Prep has an In-Class Suspension

model ensuring that students have access to the curriculum while at the same time ensuring that students face serious consequences.

Specific infractions which may warrant In-Class Suspension from the community include, but are not limited to:

1. Low-level forging, cheating, plagiarism or dishonesty
2. Skipping school

In addition, students who have not met behavioral expectations over an extended period of time, as measured by a Truth Paycheck score less than a specific school-determined threshold, may face In-Class Suspension.

Furthermore, in order to promote and uphold our school community's values and Code of Conduct, students who communicate with a student who is currently In-School Suspended may also earn the consequence of being In-School Suspended.

Out-of-School Suspension

Infractions which may warrant an Out-of-School Suspension include, but are not limited to:

- Gross disrespect of a fellow student
- Gross disrespect of faculty, staff, visitor, or school transportation provider
- Damaging, destroying, or stealing personal or school property or attempting to do so (including graffiti)
- Using or possessing tobacco products
- Disrupting detention, or In-Class Suspension through misbehavior
- Committing sexual, racial, or any form of harassment or intimidation
- Using abusive, vulgar or profane language
- Making verbal or physical threats, empty or otherwise
- Setting off false alarms
- Gambling
- Serious forgery, plagiarism, or cheating
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Being charged with a felony
- Being referred out of class three times in a given week (Wednesday-Tuesday)
- Repeated offenses for which the student has already earned In-Class Suspension

Expulsion

Expulsion is defined as the exclusion from Veritas Prep Charter School on a permanent basis at the discretion of the Executive Director and/or Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Pursuant to federal law, a student shall be expelled when the student is determined to have brought a firearm to school, or to have possessed a firearm at school. Exceptions to this

expulsion requirement may be made in writing by the Executive Director, in his sole discretion, in exceptional circumstances.

Pursuant to Tennessee law, a student shall be expelled when the student is found to be (i) possessing, purchasing, or carrying a concealed deadly weapon, (ii) possessing a destructive weapon, (iii) unlawfully dealing with a switchblade knife, knuckles-combination knife, or martial arts throwing star. A “deadly weapon” is defined to include any firearm, bomb, switchblade knife, BB gun, Billy club, blackjack, bludgeon, metal knuckles, slingshot or razor, regardless of its intended use, as well as any bicycle chain, ice pick or other dangerous instrument which is used, or attempted to be used, to cause death or serious physical injury.

In addition, a student may be expelled for the following behavioral infractions:

- Use, possession, or distribution of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs for which the student does not have a valid prescription, a drug-like substance, and/or a look alike substance;
- Assaulting educational personnel;
- Being convicted of a felony or being found guilty of a felony either by admission or adjudication;
- Repeated, deliberate and fundamental disregard of school policies and procedures
- Assault (i.e. threatening assault, hitting, kicking, punching, slapping, pushing) against fellow students or other members of the school community
- Theft or destruction (or attempted theft or destruction) of personal or school property including arson
- Harassment and violations of civil rights, as delineated in the Veritas Prep Student and Family Handbook

In addition to any of these infractions, any breaches of Federal, state, or local law, may be handled in cooperation with the local police department and may result in expulsion.

E. Procedures for Disciplinary Action

The following section explains the procedures for determining consequences students may face for violation of this Code of Conduct. All students are entitled to due process commensurate with the disciplinary consequences to which they may be subject.

Detention

Requirements: Detentions are served the day after the respective infraction is earned. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, if a student has earned one detention only, he will serve it from during recess and/or lunch (during extracurricular activities). If a student has earned one detention and Get Smart, he will serve the Get Smart from during lunch and recess (during extracurricular activities) and the detention from 3:50-4:30pm. If a student has earned two detentions, he will serve one detention during lunch and recess and a second detention from 3:50 – 4:30pm.

Detention is not held on Friday. If the need arises, detentions earned on Thursday can be served on Monday.

Student Notification: Students will be notified by the Dean of Student Life or the Executive Director as to when the detention will be served.

Family Notification: If a student has earned detention, the school will do its best to contact the family, via automated message, within 24 hours of when the infraction was earned. Thus, it is imperative that the school always have correct contact information for all parents and guardians. Families should provide the school with all relevant contact information as requested at the beginning of the year and keep the school updated if family contact information should change.

In-Class Suspension

Requirements: In the morning, students will need to check in with a school administrator who will reiterate the expectations of In-School Suspension. Students on In-Class Suspension will:

1. Attend classes, receive instruction and complete class work;
2. Wear an in Class Suspension shirt, provided by the school, signaling that they have lost the privilege of wearing their regular school uniform, which is earned by all students who complete Student Orientation;
3. Not be permitted to communicate with any students throughout the day, including during breaks and lunch, except as specifically instructed by a teacher during an academic discussion;
4. Not participate in selected class activities, as determined by each teacher;
5. Not participate in recess; and
6. Not attend reward events including field trips, dances etc. (exceptions may be made in extraordinary circumstances at the sole discretion of the school administration)

Violation of the requirements of In-Class Suspension may result in additional days of In-Class Suspension or an out of school suspension.

The number of days on In-Class Suspension, determined by a school administrator, will be commensurate with the severity of the behavioral infraction, but will not exceed 10 consecutive days.

Student Notification: If a student is assigned In-Class Suspension, he will be notified by a school administrator the day before, or the day of, In-Class Suspension.

Parental Notification: Parents of those students who have been assigned In-Class Suspension will be contacted by the school. A parent meeting may be required.

Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsion

Short-Term Suspension. For suspension between one and ten days, the following procedures will apply:

When an infraction occurs, the student will be removed from class and sent to the Main Office, Executive Director's office, or another designated school location. The student's parent or guardian will be notified of the incident by a school administrator.

Unless a student presents a danger or risk of substantial disruption to the educational process, the student shall receive the following prior to a suspension of one to ten days:

- An explanation of the evidence uncovered by an individualized investigation of his case
- Notice and an opportunity to present his version of the relevant facts
- A written, objective finding of the student's misconduct by an impartial decision maker.

Students shall have no right to appeal a decision regarding a short-term suspension.

In the case of danger or a risk of substantial disruption, the student will be removed from the school building and provided notice and the opportunity to present his version of the relevant facts as soon as possible.

In the case that a student is assigned a suspension, the student's parent/guardian must immediately come to the school, meet with a school administrator, and remove the student from the school building. If the parent/guardian cannot immediately come to the school building, the student will wait in a designated area until the parent/guardian arrives. Veritas Prep will not dismiss a suspended student until a parent/guardian comes to the school. Written notice will be sent home designating the length of suspension.

In order for the student to re-enter the Veritas Prep community following an Out of School suspension:

1. The student may have to write a letter of apology and publicly present this letter to Veritas Prep staff and/or students.
2. Students who are suspended two or more times may be asked to submit a reasonable and genuine plan for improvement in addition to an apology.
3. The student may have to meet additional conditions as required by Veritas Prep.

Once the above conditions are met, the student will be welcomed back into the community. If a student has not met the above requirements, he may earn In-Class Suspension.

Students are responsible for completing academic work missed during the suspension. This work will be available in a folder for pick-up by a family member at the school daily between

3:30-5:00pm. The completed work will receive full credit, if submitted by deadlines in accordance with the school make-up policy. If a student does not complete this work, the student may face standard academic consequences (e.g., Get Smart, no academic credit).

Long-term Suspensions and Expulsion. Prior to a suspension of more than ten days, in addition to the procedures outline for short-term suspensions, the following procedures will apply:

- The student shall receive written notice of the following:
 - Specific misconduct charged, a statement of the evidence, and the specific provisions of the student disciplinary code allegedly violated;
 - Date, time and place of a hearing, typically scheduled at least five (5) days after the date of notice;
- The school will record (by tape or other appropriate means) the hearing and a copy of such will be made available to the student upon request.
- At the election of the student and/or his representative, the hearing may be open or closed to the public.
- Notices and proceedings will be translated into the student's/parent's primary language if necessary for their understanding of the proceedings.
- A student and/or parent, upon request, will have the right to review the school's evidence prior to the hearing, including a summary of proposed testimony of witnesses.
- All decisions regarding long-term suspension or expulsion of a student will be in writing and supported by substantial evidence. The written decision shall set forth findings of fact, the basis of the decision in law or the student disciplinary code, and the disciplinary action to be imposed, if any.
- The written decision shall be provided to the student, his parent/guardian and, if applicable, legal counsel. The written decision shall explain that the student may file a request for review within (10) days requesting an appeal to the Governing Board. Such appeal shall be based solely on the record established at the hearing (i.e., no additional evidence will be accepted by the Governing Board). The Governing Board will deliberate on the student's appeal in Executive Session and will vote to accept or reject the decision of the impartial decision maker in Public Session, without identifying the student. The student, his parent/guardian and, if applicable, legal counsel, will be informed of the Governing Board's decision in writing.
- After following Veritas Prep's appeals process, the student may contact MCS for information on MCS's process for appealing a long-term suspension or expulsion.

F. Discipline of Students with Special Needs

Federal and state law provide certain procedural rights and protections relating to discipline of students who have been identified under such laws as having special needs based upon a disability. Generally a handicapped student may not be excluded from school for misconduct that was a result of his handicapping condition. A copy of these rights may be obtained from a school administrator.

G. Student Searches

In order to maintain the security of all its students, Veritas Prep Charter School reserves the right to conduct searches of its students and their property when there is reasonable suspicion

to do so and follows federal and state law regarding any searches it conducts of its students and their property. If searches are conducted, the school will ensure that the privacy of the students is respected to the extent possible, and that students and their families are informed of the circumstances and results of the search. School crates and desks, which are assigned to students for their use, remain the property of Veritas Prep Charter School, and students should, therefore, have no expectation of privacy in these areas

H. Bus Behavior

The Veritas Prep Charter School Code of Conduct applies on school bus transportation. Students who take the school bus are expected to act responsibly and respectfully at all times. All school rules apply on the bus. Certain additional rules will apply to the bus. Students will be given assigned seats. A school representative will meet the bus every day. No child will exit the bus before the representative checks with the driver as to behavior. Failing to be in the assigned seat, putting hands out of the bus, throwing things, using bad language, not obeying the bus driver, are all infractions, as well as those listed in this Code of Conduct. More serious behavior (i.e. fighting) will be investigated and dealt with just as if it happened on school grounds.

Infractions, if serious enough, can warrant immediate loss of bus privileges for the year. Other consequences (e.g., demerits, detentions, suspensions) apply as well.

Families are strongly encouraged to reinforce the importance of proper bus behavior and the potential consequences for bad behavior.

Consequences for misconduct by Special Education students riding on transportation provided by their Individual Education Plan will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

I. Field Trips/End-of-Year Events

The school's curriculum may sometimes require outside learning experiences or special school events. During these activities, it is important for all students to be responsible for their behavior since the site of the activity or event is a temporary extension of the school grounds.

A permission slip that allows students to attend all school-sponsored field trips and events will be sent home at the beginning of the school year and should be signed by a parent or guardian. The school will attempt to notify all parents and guardians before each school-sponsored trip. For trips that are not school-sponsored (e.g., voluntary trips), a permission slip will be sent home prior to the trip/ event, and must be signed by a parent or guardian.

A student may be considered ineligible for a trip for reasons including but not limited to: low TRUTH points average, not returning the school-sponsored trip permission form, involvement in a disciplinary incident on a prior trip, poor school attendance, misbehavior in school in the days prior to the trip, etc. Students who are considered ineligible for attending a trip will be required to attend school that day.

If parents or other volunteers assist with such trips or events, students must afford these chaperones the same respect they would provide to teachers. Appropriate behavior must be

maintained when attending school-sponsored events, and riding on school-provided transportation. Past inappropriate behavior, or excessive demerits and/or suspensions, may result in loss of privileges in attending or participating in class trips and events, end-of-year or otherwise.

J. Cheating, Plagiarism, and Copying Other's Work

Cheating on homework or exams, using resources inappropriately, and copying other people's work – students' or otherwise – is not only unfair but in the case of plagiarism, illegal. If students are unsure about an assignment or unsure about a test question or testing procedure, they should go to their teacher and ask for direction. Specific guidelines regarding cheating and plagiarism will be reviewed with students during Student Orientation and continued throughout the year. The school will determine appropriate consequences. Cheating, plagiarism, and copying other's work may result in In-Class Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, loss of academic credit, and/or other consequences.

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

Veritas Prep Charter School

A. To Contact Us

Veritas Prep Charter School
690 Mississippi Boulevard, 38126
Memphis, TN

Tel. 901.526.1900
Fax 901.526.1988

www.veritascollegeprep.org

We are committed to establishing and maintaining an open and respectful line of communication between families and Veritas Prep staff, each of whom has their own phone extension and e-mail address. Families should contact staff by telephone or e-mail and understand that we will try and return calls within 24 hours in the event that a message is left. Families will also have an opportunity to meet with staff during the three scheduled parent-teacher conference days. In addition, meetings can be arranged at any time by appointment. If a parent needs to see a staff person more immediately, the parent should report directly to the appropriate Main Office, which will facilitate the soonest possible contact.

B. Transportation

Veritas Prep contracts with a local bus company. Please contact us for more information.

C. Health Care

Medical Records

Before a student can enroll in the school, the school must have on file the following forms:

- *Medical Requirements Checklist.* This form contains records showing that the student has: 1) up-to-date immunizations; and 2) permission to receive screening for vision, hearing, and postural and gait problems.
- *Emergency Treatment Card.* This form includes the student's name, birth date, grade, homeroom or teacher, home address, home telephone, the name, place of employment and work telephone of the parent, guardian or Relative Caregiver; two other names, addresses and phone numbers of individuals who can be contacted at times when the parent, guardian or Relative Caregiver can not be reached; the name and telephone number of the family physician and family dentist; any medical conditions or allergies the student has; and the student's medical insurance. Most importantly, it gives the school permission to initiate emergency medical treatment in the event that a parent or guardian cannot be reached.
- *Request To Dispense Medication Form.* If a student requires medication while in school, the school must have on file a Request to Dispense Medication form, filled out by the student's

physician. No student is allowed to bring medication to the school without the nurse's full knowledge. Students who have provided the school with medication dispensation authorization forms should bring the medication (other than Tylenol and ibuprofen, which the school will stock in the health office) to the school on the first day, or contact to the school to make other arrangements. All medication must be presented in its original container from the pharmacy and must be brought in by a parent or accompanied by a note from the parent.

The medication dispensation authorization form requirement applies to all medication, including Tylenol and ibuprofen. If a student needs to take Tylenol or ibuprofen during the school day, the student must have on file the authorization signed by his physician and a parent or guardian, giving the school permission to administer the medication during the school year. The medication dispensation authorization form requirement also applies to asthma inhalers, which students should keep in their backpacks. If a student needs to use his asthma inhaler during the school day, he should go to the health office to self-administer the inhaler.

Health and Illness

The school requests that children do not come to school if they are ill. If school staff believes that a child needs to see a doctor, is contagious, increases the risk of illness to other children, or requires prolonged individual staff attention that interferes with the safety and regular functioning of the classroom, the school will contact families and ask them to pick up and take their child home.

Parents will be contacted if a child has a moderate-to-high-fever; is experiencing vomiting or diarrhea; shows signs of contagious diseases; and/or has an illness that prevents the child from participating in activities.

Health Education, Sex Education, and Sexuality Education Policy

Veritas Prep provides a comprehensive science based health education curriculum designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills to make responsible, well-informed personal health decisions. The health education curriculum covers a wide variety of topics, including human sex education and human sexuality issues.

Parents or guardians are encouraged to contact the school if they have any concerns regarding Veritas Prep's curriculum.

D. Visitor Policy

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit Veritas Prep at anytime during the school year. All visitors are required to report to the Main Office upon entering the building. Any visitor who does not report to the office or is found in the building without authorization will be asked to leave immediately.

In case of an emergency, parents or guardians should contact the Main Office either by phone or in person. Under no circumstances should parents or guardians contact students in their classrooms or attempt to withdraw students from the building without notifying and receiving permission from staff members in the Main Office.

E. Nondiscrimination

Veritas Prep Charter School does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or genetic information, or any other protected classification under federal or state law.

F. Harassment

Veritas Prep Charter School is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or genetic information. Harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school-sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. Veritas Prep Charter School requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

Definition of Harassment

In General. Harassment includes communications such as jokes, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct that offends or shows disrespect to others based upon race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

By law, what constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristic on which the harassment is based. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may reasonably be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, individuals should consider how their words and actions might reasonably be viewed by other individuals. It is also important for individuals to make it clear to others when a particular behavior or communication is unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive.

Sexual Harassment. While all types of harassment are prohibited, sexual harassment requires particular attention. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Acceptance of or submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or education.
- The individual's response to such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting an employee or as a basis for educational, disciplinary, or other decisions affecting a student.
- Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties, education or participation in extra-curricular activities.
- The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or school environment.

Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited

Harassment in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden. This includes harassment by teachers, administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals in school or at school related events. In addition, retaliation against any individual

who has brought harassment or other inappropriate behavior to the attention of the school or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated by Veritas Prep Charter School.

Persons who engage in harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination/expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the school administration and/or the Governing Board, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

H. Corporal Punishment and Student Restraint

Veritas Prep Charter School maintains a strict Code of Conduct and clear disciplinary procedures. These procedures do not allow for corporal punishment but rather include a clear set of consequences including demerits, detentions, loss of privileges, suspensions, and expulsions.

School personnel can use reasonable and necessary force to quell a disturbance or prevent an act that threatens physical injury to any person, obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object within the student's control, for self defense or the defense of others, to prevent the student from inflicting harm on himself, or to protect the property or safety of others. A written report shall be submitted to the Executive Director whenever the use of such reasonable and necessary force is required.

I. Student Records

Student Records - (General)

The Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and its implementing regulations, provide parents and eligible students (those who are age 18 or older) with rights of confidentiality, access, and amendment relating to student records. A copy of the FERPA statute and implementing federal regulations is available upon request to the Executive Director. The following is a general overview of the rights of parents and students.

Access and Amendment

A parent or eligible student has a right to access student records and to seek their amendment if the parent or eligible student believes them to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. In order to obtain access or to seek amendment to student records, please contact the Executive Director or his designee. Student records will be made available for review at Veritas Prep as soon as possible, but in no event later than 45 days. If the parent or eligible student believes the student records to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights, the parent or eligible student may request that Veritas Prep amend the student record, which request shall be considered and ruled upon within a reasonable time. If such request is denied, the parent or eligible student will be afforded notice of a right to hearing on the matter.

Confidentiality

Release of student records generally requires consent of the parent or eligible student. However, the Regulations provide certain exceptions. For example, staff employed or under contract to the district have access to records as needed to perform their duties. Veritas also releases a student's complete student record to authorized school personnel of a school to which a student seeks or intends to transfer without further notice to, or receipt of consent from, the eligible student or parent.

In addition, Veritas has a practice of releasing directory information, consisting of the following: the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of the members of athletic teams, class, participation in recognized activities and sports, honors and awards, and post-high school plans. In the event a parent or eligible student objects to the release of any of the above information, the parent/eligible student may state that objection in writing to the Executive Director or his designee. Absent receipt of a written objection by the third week of school, the directory information will be released without further notice or consent.

Please see the Regulations for a description of other circumstances in which student records may be released without the consent of a parent or eligible student.

L. Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Acceptable Use

The Internet is a global network linking computers around the world. Internet use provides valuable opportunities for research, curriculum support, and career development. Veritas Prep offers Internet access to its students and staff. The primary purpose of providing access to the Internet is to support the educational mission of the Veritas Prep. Veritas Prep expects that students and staff will use this access in a manner consistent with this purpose.

While the Internet is a tremendous resource for electronic information, it has the potential for abuse. Veritas Prep makes no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the factual reliability of data available over the Internet. Users of the Veritas Prep Internet service assume full responsibility for any costs, liabilities, or damages arising from the way they choose to use their access to the Internet. Veritas Prep has installed special filtering software in an effort to block access to material that is not appropriate for children.

Unacceptable Use

The following is a list of prohibited behaviors. The list is not exhaustive but illustrates unacceptable uses of the Veritas Prep's Internet Service.

- disclosing, using or disseminating personal identification information about self or others;
- accessing, sending or forwarding materials or communications that are defamatory, pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit, threatening, harassing, or illegal;
- using the Internet service for any illegal activities such as gaining unauthorized access to other systems, arranging for the sale or purchase of drugs or alcohol, participating in

- criminal gang activity, threatening others, transferring obscene material, or attempting to do any of the above;
- using the Internet service to receive or send information relating to dangerous instruments such as bombs or other explosive devices, automatic weapons or other firearms, or other weaponry;
 - vandalizing school computers by causing physical damage, reconfiguring the computer system, attempting to disrupt the computer system, or destroying data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means;
 - copying or downloading of copyrighted material without authorization from the copyright holder, unless the copies are used for teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research. Users shall not copy and forward or copy and upload any copyrighted material without prior approval;
 - plagiarizing material obtained from the Internet. Any material obtained from the Internet and included in one's own work must be cited and credited by name or by electronic address or path on the Internet. Information obtained through E-mail or news sources must also be credited as to sources;
 - using the Internet service for commercial purposes;
 - downloading or installing any commercial software, shareware, freeware or similar types of material onto network drives or disks without prior permission; and
 - overriding the Internet filtering software.

Safety Issues

Use of the Internet has potential dangers. The following are basic safety rules pertaining to all types of Internet applications.

- Never reveal *any* identifying information such as last names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, parents' names, parents' employers or work addresses, or photographs.
- Use the "back" key whenever you encounter a site that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Immediately tell a faculty member if you receive a message that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Never share your password or use another person's password. Internet passwords are provided for each user's personal use only. If you suspect that someone has discovered your password, you should change it immediately and notify the Executive Director.

Privacy

Users should not have an expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computer files sent and received on the school computer network or stored in the user's directory or on a disk drive. Veritas Prep reserves the right to examine all data stored on storage devices involved in the user's use of Veritas Prep's Internet service.

Internet messages are public communication and are not private. All communications including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver. Network administrators may review communications to maintain integrity system-wide and ensure that users are using the system responsibly.

Violations

Access to the Veritas Prep's Internet service is a privilege not a right. Veritas Prep reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend specific user privileges and/or to take other disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion (students), or dismissal (staff) for violations of this policy. The School will advise appropriate law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through Veritas Prep's Internet service. The School also will cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the service.