



## **Valley Oaks Charter School 2011-2012 Parent Handbook Policies, Procedures, and Parent Rights**

Welcome to the 2011-2012 school year! The staff at Valley Oaks Charter School (VOCS) hopes that you had a relaxing summer break and are ready to resume your homeschooling endeavors. In this handbook, we have provided the revisions and updates to VOCS policies, procedures, and parent rights. Please take time to review the information and use it as a reference guide throughout the year. Many of these legal items may or may not directly relate to our charter school program, but by law, parents must be informed each year. If you have any questions, please contact your resource teacher or your school administrator.

### **Background**

Valley Oaks Charter School was established in 2000 by Kern County Superintendent of Schools to provide support for parents/families who choose to homeschool their children. Currently the program serves over 1,000 students, grades K-12, at five sites in Kern County. Furthermore, the school is fully accredited through Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

Since Valley Oaks Charter School is chartered by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS), all policies and regulations guiding that organization apply to Valley Oaks Charter School (VOCS). Copies of KCSOS Board, policies and VOCS Board policies, are available upon request. Any modification to the policies must be approved by the Charter Board, and procedures are guidelines developed by the school staff for consistent operation of the school. They are subject to change to best serve our programs.

### **Valley Oaks Charter Mission**

The mission of Valley Oaks Charter School is to support parents seeking assistance and accountability in their homeschooling endeavors. To provide high quality learning experiences, parents, working in partnership with credentialed teachers will access the vast and diverse resources of the school and community including the museums of Kern County.

### **Policies, Procedures, and Rights**

#### **Accelerated Student Work Load Policy**

Students should be assigned work in courses that are (1) at or slightly above their current ability level, (2) Aligned with the courses routinely assigned at the district of residence, (3) needed for graduation, (4) designed to promote learning in a proficiency area, and (5) Designed to promote success in the world of work. In addition, all coursework should be incremental in nature ensuring that the student is continually challenged and is experiencing skill improvement in academic areas.

Students are enrolled in 31 credits, as a guideline to obtain the minimum number of units to graduate, within four years. Students who request to enroll in coursework, at a faster pace, up to 36 credits per semester, must submit a memo to the site administrator for approval. Periodically, there is a request for an accelerated level of work, (above 36 credits per semester), due to exceptional circumstances. Written administrative approval must be obtained by submitting a memo to the site administrator and Chair of the Governing Board justifying the request.

### **Acceptance of High School Credits Policy**

As a part of the California public school system, Valley Oaks Charter School has an obligation to make sure that all credit posted on a Valley Oaks Charter School transcript is credible and consistent with the spirit of the law. Valley Oaks Charter School will maintain a list of schools that have been approved by the Valley Oaks Charter School Board of Directors for credit transfer. Any high school transcript from a school that is not on the approved list or does not meet the criteria below for “Acceptance of High School Credit” will require approval of either the chair of the Valley Oaks Charter School Board of Directors or, at the discretion of the chair, the entire Board of Directors. Valley Oaks Charter School will apply credits, from other educational institutions, to a student’s transcript upon graduation. If a student transfers from Valley Oaks Charter School to another school/district, that school/district will make its own judgment relative to acceptance of credits.

### **Acceptance of High School Transcript: (All criteria listed below)**

- Any current WASC \*accredited public or private school \*\*Single School Accreditation
- Meets legal requirements for operation in California
- No transcript concerns identified by Valley Oaks Charter School Administration

### **Recommendation for Acceptance of High School Transcript: (One of the two criteria listed below)**

- Public schools without WASC \*accreditation if a representative of the responsible Local Educational Agency (district) identifies the type of school, verifies that it operates consistent with all laws required by California Education Code and, if necessary, provides evidence that credits awarded are supported by student activities and demonstrated proficiency.
  - In the absence of L.E. A. verification the student/parent may have the opportunity to provide evidence of competence.
- Private schools without WASC \*accreditation if a representative of the private school produces evidence that it operates consistent with all laws required by California Education Code and, if necessary, provides evidence that credits awarded are supported by student activities and demonstrated proficiency.
  - In the absence of private school verification the student/parent may have the opportunity to provide evidence of competence.

### **Recommendation for Rejection of High School Transcript:**

- Any school that does not satisfy the above listed categories.

### **Procedure:**

1. Upon receipt of a high school transcript, a determination will be made relative to whether or not it is from a board approved school. If so, the credits will be accepted. If not, an evaluation of the transcript and the source school will be completed by the principal/designee to make a recommendation (Transcript Review Form) to the chair of the board of directors.
2. The chair of the governing board will review the recommendation and either take action (approve or reject transcript) or refer it to the full board of directors for action (approve or reject transcript).

**Note:** All courses with religious content will be reviewed individually.

**\*Equivalent of WASC as determined by Valley Oaks Administration/Governing Board**

**\*\*Single School (CDS Number) Accreditation**

### **Acceptable Use Policy**

Electronic information services (Internet) are available to students and teachers at school programs operated by Valley Oaks Charter School. Valley Oaks Charter School strongly believes in the educational value of such electronic services and recognizes their potential to support curriculum and learning. The goal in providing these services is to promote educational excellence by facilitating research, innovation, and communication. Student access at school will be for educational purposes and under staff supervision. Valley Oaks Charter School is currently making Internet services available through our school-based local area networks.

As a member of a school community and as representatives of their school in the global electronic community, students are expected to abide by a *code of conduct*. Access to the Valley Oaks Charter School Internet will be limited to students who have agreed to this *Code of Conduct*.

### **Student Code of Conduct For the Valley Oaks Charter School Electronic Community**

1. Personal Responsibility:

As a student of this school, I will accept personal responsibility for reporting any misuse of the network to the Internet teacher or system administrator. I understand that all the rules of conduct described in the Valley Oaks Charter School discipline code apply when I am on the network.

2. Acceptable Use:

The use of my assigned account will be in support of education and research and will support the educational goals and objectives of Valley Oaks Charter School. I am personally responsible for this provision at all times when using the electronic information service.

In addition I will abide by the following:

I will only use Valley Oaks Charter School Internet access for academic research and class projects.

Use of other organization's networks or computing resources, which I may log into, will comply with rules and appropriate to that network.

I understand that accessing or sending any material in violation of any law is prohibited. This includes-but is not limited to-copyrighted material; threatening or obscene material; or material protected by trade secret.

I will not use Valley Oaks Charter School Internet access for commercial activities.

I will not use Valley Oaks Charter School Internet access for product advertisement.

I am aware that the inappropriate use of electronic information resources can be a violation of local, state, and federal laws that I can be prosecuted for violating those laws.

3. Privileges

I understand that the use of Valley Oaks Charter School's information system is a privilege-not a right-and inappropriate use will result in restrictions or modifications of those privileges. The system administrator(s) may close an account at any time deemed necessary. The administration, staff, or faculty may request that the system administrator modify or suspend specific user accounts.

4. Network Etiquette and Privacy:

I understand and will abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These rules include (but are not limited to) the following:

**BEING POLITE.** I will not send or encourage others to send abusive messages.

**USING APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE.** I understand that I am a representative of our school and district on a non-private system and that what I say and do can be viewed globally!

**PRIVACY.** I will not reveal my home address or personal phone number or the addresses or personal phone numbers of other students.

**ELECTRONIC EMAIL.** I understand that electronic mail (e-mail) sent through Valley Oaks Charter Schools network is not guaranteed to be private. Valley Oaks Charter Schools reserves the right to monitor or review e-mail sent over the Valley Oaks Charter Schools Internet access system. Inappropriate language or advocacy of illegal activity in e-mail messages may result in loss of system privileges and/or other disciplinary measures.

I understand that e-mail via the Valley Oaks Charter Schools Internet connection must be school related and must abide by the guidelines outlined here. I will immediately report any threatening, obscene, or harassing e-mail to school staff.

I understand that sending of any material in violation of any law is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to copyright, threatening, or obscene material.

5. Security:

If I identify a security problem, I will notify the system administrator at once. I will understand that all use of the Valley Oaks Charter Schools system must be under my own account and that any user identified as a security risk will be denied access to the information system.

6. Vandalism:

Vandalism in the electronic community is any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user or any other agencies or networks that are connected to the system. This includes-but not limited to the uploading, downloading, or creation of computer viruses. I understand that any vandalism will result in the loss of computer services, disciplinary action, and legal referral.

### **Accreditation**

Valley Oaks is fully accredited by the Schools Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). If you have questions regarding VOCS status with WASC, you may contact:

Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
Accrediting Commission for Schools  
533 Airport Blvd., Suite 200, Burlingame, CA 94010  
Phone (650) 696-1060

### **ACT (American College Testing)**

The ACT is a national college admissions examination that consists of subject area tests in: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. The ACT Plus Writing includes the four subject area tests plus a 30-minute Writing Test. ACT results are accepted by all 4-year colleges and universities in the U.S.

The ACT includes 215 multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes to complete, including a short break (or just over four hours if you are taking the ACT Plus Writing). Actual testing time is 2 hours and 55 minutes (plus 30 minutes if you are taking the ACT Plus Writing).

The ACT is administered on six test dates within the United States, U.S. territories, Puerto Rico, and Canada-September, October, December, February, April, and June. In other locations, the ACT is administered on all of the above dates except September. Currently, Valley Oaks Charter School is not a testing center for the ACT. If you are interested in information regarding the ACT, testing centers, and preparation please talk with one of our academic counselors. To register for the ACT click on the following link. <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/index.html>

### **Admissions**

Admission to VOCS will be given to students whose parents make a request to the charter school pursuant to E.C. 1981(b), who meet the established criteria, and who follow through on required admission procedures. To best serve you and your student, it is important that we follow California Ed Code law §51746, which requires full-time independent study to be the most appropriate educational alternative for the pupil.

Primary requirements of enrollment are 1) attendance at an orientation session, 2) an adult at home who is willing to work 5-6 hours per day instructing the student, 3) willingness to meet on an as needed basis with a resource teacher to demonstrate attendance/student work, 4) depending on course of study (i.e. Tues/Thurs./parent directed classes), participation and completing satisfactory class work is required. 4) student documentation: a birth certificate, an up-to-date immunization record, a social security number, and 5) other documentation that provides information regarding your student's educational needs.

Preference for year-to-year admission to VOCS is given to those students previously enrolled at Valley Oaks, children of the staff, siblings of students already enrolled, and students who have documented evidence of being previously homeschooled.

Upon acceptance in Valley Oaks Charter School, parent/guardian signs a Master Agreement contract agreeing to be full partners in the education of his/her students.

### **Agriculture**

Participating in Hokit Farm at Valley Oaks teaches students about science and a positive work ethic. Students learn the basics of animal and plant production, plant propagation, composting, and animal care. Classes are conducted on the grounds during the enrichment class times and at other times arranged with the agriculture teachers. Parents of kindergartners and first graders should stay with their children at all times. Parents of 2nd through 8th graders are encouraged to assist their children in these activities so that they can reinforce the science being taught. A series of agricultural lessons that have been developed for parents to teach their children on Hokit Farm is available. Lessons plans and materials for hands-on projects can be used anytime that you visit the school during regular school hours.

Students should only be on the farm when an adult (parent or teacher) is actively supervising them. Students will be required to practice safe procedures at all times. Working on the farm involves some activities that carry larger responsibility for safety: working with tools, handling animals, walking on uneven ground, and working where insects and manure may be present. If parents have concerns about these factors they should discuss them with staff members.

### **Algebra Requirement**

All high school students graduating from Valley Oaks Charter School must pass Algebra I in order to earn a high school diploma. [Ed Code § 51224.5] If a student has taken and passed a complete Algebra I course or its equivalent in grades 7 or 8 from an accredited school, the Algebra I requirement **will be** met. If a student passes Algebra I in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, that student **may** retake the course in high school for unit credit or may take other courses in high school to meet the requirement of 3 years of mathematics.

### **AP/Honors Enrollment**

High school students can enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) and Honors courses through the APEX Learning System. When completing an AP/Honors course, a qualifying grade on the final may give the student high school credit and college units. These courses require disciplined responses on a timetable established by the APEX Learning program. Each course has its own qualifications but in general, a student usually needs to be a junior or senior, be receiving A or B grades in all academic subjects, and have the recommendations of the resource teacher. The resource teacher will make a determination regarding the student's potential for completing the course with high grades. Please refer to the section titled "Grading Policy" in order to review the grading standards of AP and Honors classes. If you are interested in enrolling in AP or Honors classes, then please contact your resource teacher.

### **Attendance**

**Students are required to work on assignments on a daily basis and complete 180 days of work.** Anything less than 180 days indicates a less than adequate effort to give the student a quality education. Since VOCS follows Independent Study codes, attendance is defined by the quantity and quality of work. When you meet with your resource teacher you should have all assigned work completed. If there is a problem with what has been assigned, contact the resource teacher immediately. Lessons can be modified or tutoring options can be discussed.

When students do not complete and turn in an acceptable amount or quality of work, the resource teacher cannot give full attendance credit. The Master Agreement and Attendance Work Record (AWR) define the learning expectations agreed to by the home teacher doing the daily instruction and the resource teacher. Failure to complete this work will put the student in jeopardy of being placed on probation.

According to law, your child may be excused for absence only when it was:

1. Due to illness.
2. Due to quarantine under the direction of a city or county health officer.
3. For the purpose of having medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic services rendered.
4. For the purpose of attending the funeral services of a member of your immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than one day if the service is conducted in California, and not more than three days if the service is conducted outside California.
5. For the purpose of jury duty in the manner provided by law. [E.C. sections 46010, et seq.]
6. To attend certain student education conferences. **(new)**
7. Absence for Religious Purposes: With your written permission, your child may be excused to attend religious services away from school. However, your child will be required to complete a certain number of minutes for that day. Such absences are limited to four days per month. [E.C. section 46014]
8. Absence for Justifiable Personal Reasons: Upon your written request and approval by the school principal, your child may be excused from school for justifiable personal reasons such as an appearance in court, observation of a religious holiday or ceremony, attendance at religious retreats, or an employment conference. [E.C. section 48205]

### **California High School Exit Exam (E.C section 60850)**

Each pupil completing grade 12 shall successfully pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) as a condition of graduation. Each pupil shall take the examination beginning the grade 10 and may take the examination each subsequent administration until he/she passes the examination. A pupil with an individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan may take the CAHSEE with accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the test. For more information, visit: [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/documents/chaseega08\\_003doc](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/documents/chaseega08_003doc).

### **California High School Proficiency Exam (5 C.c. R. 11523)**

The California High School Proficiency Exam (CHSPE) is a voluntary test that assesses proficiency in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills taught in public schools. Eligible pupils who pass the CHSPE are awarded a Certificate of Proficiency by the State Board of Education. A pupil who receives a Certificate of Proficiency may, with verified approval from the parent or legal guardian, leave high school early. The certificate of Proficiency, however, is not equivalent to completing all course work required for regular graduation from high school. For the following website: <http://www.chspe.net/>.

### **California Scholarship Federation (CSF)**

The California Scholarship Federation and California Junior Scholarship Federation (CSF and CJSF) exist to promote and recognize high standards of scholarship, service and citizenship on the part of students in California schools. Membership is held during the semester following when the qualifying grades were earned and is for one semester only.

In order to become a member, the student must submit an application each semester the student is eligible. A point system specified in the CSF State By-Laws establishes the membership requirements. To secure eligibility for CSF membership, a student must earn sufficient points from pre-approved course lists. The majority of the required membership points must come from University of California accepted course work. Life Membership (Seal bearer) is achieved by qualifying for chapter membership for four or more semesters in the last three years of high school, and earns the CSF gold Seal on diplomas and transcripts. Each year colleges and universities throughout the United States award scholarships to CSF

Life (Seal bearer) Members. These students are also eligible to be nominated by the chapter adviser for the Seymour Memorial Awards. For more details on CSF and approved course lists, see Brandi Sherman, or your resource teacher.

**CAMP KEEP (i.e., Kern Environmental Education Program):**

At various times each year, Valley Oaks Charter School is requested to send qualified high school students to serve as volunteer cabin counselors with an elementary school attending the Camp KEEP program. Approved students attend one of two outdoor science school sites along the central coast: KEEP Ocean in Montana de Oro State Park (south of Morro Bay), or KEEP Cambria Pines (located in Cambria). Both sites provide a beautiful coastal location to study, learn and appreciate the natural environment for a 4 or 5 day program. Interested students would contact their resource teacher to apply for the openings. A student must be in good academic standing (GPA minimum 2.0), must have approval of staff, administration, and parents, and must be able to be 100% free of any outside commitments for a one week period.

**Career Technical Education:**

Although VOCS does not offer a career technical educational program, students have the opportunity to learn more about this program. The California Department of Education defines “career technical education” as a program of study that involves a multi-year sequence of courses that integrates core academic knowledge with technical and occupational knowledge to provide students with a pathway to post-secondary education and careers. Career technical education includes agriculture education, home economics, industrial and technology education, and regional occupational centers and programs, among other educational programs.

*Website for Career Technical Education:* Students can learn more about career technical education at the following California Department of Education website: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct>

**Classroom Instruction**

Valley Oaks Charter School has committed to teaching enrichment classes to support the needs of parents and students. The enrichment classes were developed to help parents and students engage in the learning process with a team of teachers guiding the instruction weekly. Courses and electives are taught throughout the week, for the entire school year. Labs, associated with certain courses, are also taught throughout the week. At the initial parent/teacher meeting, a termination of the student’s educational path will be made and a schedule will be created for the courses needed.

**Closed Campus**

Since student safety is our top priority, Valley Oaks Charter School is a closed campus. Students may not leave campus at any time unless accompanied by parent or the parent has provided prior approval and the request has been approved by site administration. Neither the county office nor any officer or employee shall be liable for the conduct or safety of any pupil during such time as the pupil has left the school grounds pursuant to Education Code § 44808.5.

### **College Entrance Requirements**

In addition to the rights described in Education Code §51100-§51102, students and parents have the right to be informed of college entrance requirements. It is critically important to know how to assist those students who choose to pursue a college education. Students and parents need to know the series of college preparatory classes to take in high school. The minimum requirements vary, depending on the selected college or university.

### **The "a-g" requirements can be summarized as follows:**

- (a) History/Social Science – Two years, including one year of world history, cultures, and historical geography and one year of U.S. history or one-half year of U.S. history and one-half year of civics or American government
- (b) English – Four years of college preparatory English that include frequent and regular writing, and reading of classic and modern literature
- (c) Mathematics – Three years of college preparatory mathematics that include the topics covered in elementary and advanced algebra and two- and three-dimensional geometry
- (d) Laboratory Science – Two years of laboratory science providing fundamental knowledge in at least two of these three disciplines: biology, chemistry, and physics
- (e) Language Other Than English – Two years of the same language other than English
- (f) Visual & Performing Arts – One year, including dance, drama/theater, music, or visual art
- (g) College Preparatory Elective – One year (two semesters), chosen from additional "a-f" courses beyond those used to satisfy the requirements above, or courses that have been approved solely for use as "g" electives

*Websites:* The following UC and CSU web sites help students and their families learn about college admission requirements, and also list high school courses that have been certified for undergraduate admission:

- UC: [http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide/ag/a-g/a-g\\_reqs.html](http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide/ag/a-g/a-g_reqs.html)
- CSU: [www.csumentor.edu/planning/high\\_school/subjectvs.asp](http://www.csumentor.edu/planning/high_school/subjectvs.asp)

To gain admission to college, students must also take and submit scores from either the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT). Your child's high school counseling office can provide the testing dates and locations.

### **College Board**

The College Board seeks to ensure that every student in the United States has access to a high-quality education and is prepared to succeed in college. Their College Readiness initiatives promote curricula, assessment tools, district and guidance resources that help K-12 students prepare for the academic rigors of higher education. Through Advanced Placement® college-level courses and exams, high-school students can earn college credit and advanced placement, and learn from some of the most skilled, dedicated and inspiring teachers in the world.

College Board College Readiness programs include:

- Advanced Placement (AP®)

- SpringBoard®
- ReadiStep™
- CollegeEd®
- CLEP®
- PSAT/NMSQT®
- EXCELeator™

The College Board also helps students connect with and successfully complete a high-quality college education with their College Connection and Success programs and resources. They provide resources, tools and services to students, parents, colleges and universities in the areas of college planning, recruitment and admissions, financial aid, and retention. The SAT® and Student Search Service® programs alone have helped millions of students of diverse backgrounds learn about colleges, apply and enroll.

The College Connection and Success programs and resources comprise:

- SAT, SAT Subject Tests™ and SAT Readiness Tools
- Student Search Service
- College Planning
- College Search
- CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®
- Scholarship Search

To find more information about College Board go to [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

### **Concurrent Enrollment Policy**

Education code 48800 states that districts may determine which student may benefit from academic enrichment or vocational work. The purpose of the code is to provide educational enrichment for a limited number of eligible students. Student may be authorized, with parental consent, to attend a community college as a special part-time student and to enroll in one or more courses of instruction offered at the community college level. All approvals must be obtained prior to the beginning of courses taken.

1. Participation in concurrent enrollment is to provide an educational enrichment opportunity for a limited number of eligible pupils. (EC48800)
2. The educational enrichment opportunity will usually result in a request for concurrent enrollment in courses currently not offered by the approving school.
3. Pupils shall be enrolled in a combined course of study that is full load, as defined by Valley Oaks Charter School.
4. Pupils should be classified as juniors or seniors. The principal or designee may grant exceptions.
5. After consultation with appropriate college representatives and/or college catalogues, the principal/designee will determine which courses will be considered for concurrent enrollment and whether they will apply to high school and/or college credit.
6. If a course is offered at Valley Oaks Charter School, students will not be given approval to enroll in the same course in college for high school credit. The principal or designee may grant exceptions.

7. Any college course taken for high school credit to meet subject graduation requirements must meet Valley Oaks Charter School content expectations for that discipline, as judged by the principal/designee.
8. Credit for academic coursework shall be awarded at the rate of 2.5 credits for each credit earned in college, not to exceed 10 high school credits per course.
  - a. The following courses: Modern College Arithmetic/Pre-Algebra, Elementary Algebra, Geometry, History B2 History of the World History Since 1500, and History B17b History of the United States are 3 unit college courses, within the Kern Community College system. Upon successful completion of these select courses, the student will receive 10 units of high school credit.
  - b. Courses taken outside the Kern Community College system will be approved on an individual basis, by the principal or designee.
9. Activity-based courses will be approved on an individual basis, by the principal or designee.
10. A maximum of one-college course per quarter or semester will be approved for high school credit (maximum of 10 high school credits). This limitation does not apply to courses taken for college credit only. The principal or designee may grant exceptions.
11. The pupil and/or pupil's family will pay all fees
12. College/University Coursework and units are not incorporated into Valley Oaks Charter School's master agreement.

### **Conferences with Parents and Students**

Valley Oaks Charter school is dedicated to a high level of communication among parents, students and teachers. During the enrollment process of an incoming student, there will be a series of meetings to discuss the appropriate educational plan. Goals, objectives, scheduling, and career choices are just a few of the options that will be discussed during these initial meetings.

While the student is enrolled with Valley Oaks Charter School, the parents and students will be involved in "quarterly meetings." Quarterly meetings are designed for parents, students and the entire teaching staff to get together throughout the year, in order to communicate effectively about the student's progress and make educational changes.

### **Discipline Policy**

Learning self-discipline is an important part of a student's education. Parents are encouraged to teach their children the positive character traits of honesty, respect for others, self-reliance, independence, integrity, and kindness.

While participating in school-sponsored events, all students of Valley Oaks must conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates these qualities.

The staff of Valley Oaks Charter School wants to provide the best educational opportunities possible for all students. In order to have an environment that facilitates a safe and sound education for all students, a standard of behavior is expected from all students.

When this standard of behavior is not met, the nature, seriousness, and frequency of the inappropriate behavior will determine the action taken.

The discipline policy for Valley Oaks applies:

- While students are on school grounds.
- While students are going to and from school.

- During nutritional breaks.
- During or while going to or coming from a school sponsored activity.
- While attending any activity sponsored by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools.

The following are unacceptable behaviors that may lead to suspension or expulsion:

- Dress that does not meet school standards
- Unauthorized use of electronic or mechanical devices including CB radios, cellular phones, laser pens, boom boxes, walkmans, game boys, portable DVD players, lighters, etc.
- Disruptive behavior
- Insubordination (i.e. not obeying directions, refusal to work)
- Profanity/obscenities
- Unauthorized use of computer technology
- Gambling
- Fighting, threatening, physical aggression, bullying
- Defacing/destroying school or private property
- Theft or attempted theft
- Possession of weapons, firearms, look-alike weapons, explosives, fireworks
- Sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, color, sex, disability, national origin, ethnicity, or religion
- False alarms, bomb threats, 911 calls, threats against persons, hoaxes
- Use or possession of tobacco, tobacco products, or drugs

Parents are liable for all the damages caused by the willful misconduct of their minor children that results in death or injury to other students, school personnel, or school property. Parents are also liable for any school property loaned to the student and willfully not returned.

Parents' or guardians' liability may be as much as \$10,000 in damages and another maximum of \$10,000 for payment or reward, if any. [E.C. 48904]

The school may withhold grades, diplomas, or transcripts of the student responsible until such damages are paid or the property returned or until completion of a volunteer program in lieu of payment money. [E.C. 48904]

If your child commits an obscene act or engages in habitual profanity or vulgarity, disrupts school activities or otherwise willfully defies the authority of school personnel, and is suspended for such misconduct, you may be required to attend a portion of the school day with your child. [E.C. 48900.01]

**Sexual Harassment:** Students in grades 4 through 12 may be suspended or expelled for sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which interfere with an individual's performance at school and/or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. Students who believe they have been harassed or have witnessed sexual harassment are encouraged to report it immediately to a resource teacher or the office staff. A copy of the district's policy on sexual harassment is included at the front of the handbook. [E.C. 48980, 48900.2, and 212.8]

**Search:** The school principal or designee may search the person of a student (including backpack, purse, bag, etc.) if there is a reasonable suspicion to believe the student may have a concealed weapon, narcotics, stolen property, or contraband.

**Suspensions and Expulsions:** Students may be suspended from school activities by the principal for up to 10 days of activity for infractions of the discipline code and Grounds for Suspension listed in State Education Code 48900. For more serious offenses as defined State Education Code 48915, the administration will ask the Governing Board to expel a student from Valley Oaks.

Students will wear clothing that is conservative and in good taste while on school grounds and/or involved in school activities. Decisions as to appropriate school dress, consistent with the following definitions/guidelines, will be at the discretion of the Valley Oaks administration.

### **Dress Code Policy**

#### **Valley Oaks defines “appropriate” dress as:**

- Pants (not showing skin and /or undergarments, no sagging)
- Shorts-mid-thigh or longer; (no words)
- Skirt / Dress: mid-knee or longer
- Top/Shirt/Dress (not revealing, collared style)
- T-shirts (VOCS school-related, or appropriate words/logos)
- Footwear (appropriate for each school activity)

#### **Dress that is NOT appropriate:**

- Any type of clothing with inappropriate or vulgar graphics or words.
- Any type of clothing that is ripped or torn, including commercial/off-the-rack and or tailor-made clothing which has been ripped or torn.
- Any type of hats, beanies or hoods worn indoors. (Students may wear hats or protective covering during school activities that are held outdoors.)
- Any type of clothing that is revealing. No skin should be showing at the waistline. No part of any undergarment should be showing. This includes see-through materials, bare midriffs, spaghetti or no straps, tank or tube tops, low-cut tops, and sagged pants.
- Any clothing that is inappropriately sized.
- Any clothing related to gang activity.
- Any clothing that is dangerous with spikes, studs, chains, etc.
- Anything that may draw attention to the style or student and away from learning such as body-piercings (small conservative ear piercing are acceptable), visible tattoos, unnatural-colored hairstyle.

If a student arrives for an activity inappropriately dressed, the staff member will refer the student to the site administrator(s) for one of the following options:

- 1) Providing the student the opportunity to modify his/her appearance
- 2) Providing the student with appropriate school clothing to wear
- 3) Calling the parent to bring a change of clothes
- 4) Sending the student home to change

### **Due Process Protections and Complaint Procedure**

#### **Uniform Complaint Procedure**

The district has established procedures to address allegations of unlawful discrimination and complaints alleging violation of state or federal laws governing educational programs. It is unlawful to discriminate on the basis of ethnic group identification, religion, age, sex, color, or physical or mental disability.

If there is a problem that a parent or student wants to have solved, the correct procedure is to:

- Discuss the problem with the resource teacher and try to resolve the situation.
- File a written complaint with the administration. Be specific about details – time, place, people involved, and what the resolution attempts have been up to that point. The administration will investigate and verify the details of the situation described in the report.
- Meet with administration to discuss resolution of the problem.
- If a resolution is not agreed on, the written complaint along with a report from the administration will be forwarded to the chair of the Governing Board. The decision made by the chair in consultation with other members of the board will be final.

In all dealings, the tone of all parties must be respectful. All procedures will be handled as confidentially as possible. Complainants will be protected against retaliation as a result of the filing of any complaint or participation in any complaint process.

You may contact the site principal, Valley Oaks Charter School, 661-852-6753 or 661-822-6900 to obtain a copy of the formal complaint procedures.

In addition to the above procedure you have a right to:

- (1) Direct your complaint to the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Compliance Office.
- (2) Direct your complaint to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- (2) Appeal to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction a complaint that has not been resolved to your satisfaction by the school district.

In addition to this procedure, you may wish to:

- (1) Direct a complaint to appropriate agencies for investigation.
- (2) Consult with an attorney to determine if you have legal rights that may be pursued through available civil law remedies. You may wish to contact the following low-cost or free legal service:

Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance  
615 California Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA 93304  
(661) 325-5943

### Complaints Regarding Discrimination and the Education of Disabled Students

Valley Oaks Charter is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals in education.

Our programs and activities shall be free from discrimination based on sex, race, color, religion, national origin, lack of English skills, ethnic group, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability or any other unlawful consideration. We promote programs that ensure that these discriminatory practices are eliminated in all district activities. [E.C. § 56501]

You have certain rights under the law, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1974, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, formerly known as EHA). The California Department of Education and the Office for Civil Rights of the U. S. Department of Education have authority to enforce these laws and all programs and activities that receive Federal funds. [E.C. § 260, et seq., and the above cited federal statutes]

If you wish further details in this regard, or wish to file a complaint, please contact Division Administrator or other appropriate agency.

### Student Sexual Harassment

Students in grades 4 through 12 may be suspended or expelled for sexual harassment. The Board of Trustees prohibits sexual harassment in the educational environment by any person in any form. Sexual harassment is in violation of federal and state laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1982.

Within the educational environment sexual harassment is prohibited between students, employees and students, and supervisors and students. Repeated or unwarranted verbal or physical sexual advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements, or sexually discriminatory remarks made by someone in the educational environment which are offensive or objectionable to the student or which cause the student discomfort or humiliation, or which interfere with the student's performance, are prohibited. Action will be taken when necessary to eliminate such practices or remedy their effects.

Students who engage in such harassment may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion (Education Code sections 212.5; 230; 48900.2). The principal or designee shall discuss the district's sexual harassment policy with his/her students and employees and assure them that they are not required to endure sexually insulting, degrading or exploitative treatment or any other form of sexual harassment. The principal or designee shall provide staff in-service or student instruction and counseling as needed (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972).

Students and staff are encouraged to immediately report incidents of sexual harassment to the principal or designee. The principal or designee shall promptly investigate each complaint of sexual harassment in a way that ensures the privacy of all parties concerned. In no case shall the student be required to resolve the complaint directly with the offending person.

### Electronic Communication Devices Policy

The following policy sets guidelines for limited use of electronic communication devices on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities.

Students may possess and use electronic communication devices on school district property and at school-sponsored activities subject to the following:

- **Use of devices on school grounds:** All electronic communication devices, Compact Disc Players, MP3 players, and Cellular Phones, must be turned off during the official instructional day, including lunch period. Electronic communication devices may be used before and after the official instructional day.
- **Permission for other uses:** If a student wishes to use an electric communication device at an unauthorized time for medical purposes, his/her parent or guardian must submit a written request for permission to the school principal or his/her designee to determine the validity of the request.
- **Student Responsibility:** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their devices are turned off and secured at all times.

Any student who violates the above is subject to disciplinary action, including confiscation of the electronic communication device for the remainder of the official instructional day.

Valley Oaks Charter School is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic communication devices or any charges incurred as a result.

### **Faculty**

A complete list of faculty phone numbers and emails will be made available to each student and family.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are a part of the education of each child participating. In most cases, a field trip will have pre and post educational materials for parents/guardians to integrate the learning with the trip.

Parents need to accompany their student on the field trips not only for supervision but also for knowing how to review and reinforce the learning at home. A personal development class has been designed to enrich the high school experience. This class will be designed around the community, fine arts performances, and exhibits. Personal Development is a course that is mandatory while attending Valley Oaks Charter School. The student will receive high school credit for successfully completing this course. The Kern County Museum and the California Living Museum are two facilities that will be used extensively to enrich the educational experience of each student.

### **Fog Delays**

The school will operate on a normal schedule regardless of weather conditions. When spotty fog conditions exist, parents should use their best judgment in determining whether they will attend classes or meetings. If the decision to stay home is made, the parent and student need to contact the office and the teachers, in order to obtain assignments that may have been missed.

### **Grading Policy**

The Governing Board believes that grades serve a valuable instructional purpose by helping students and parents/guardians identify the student's areas of strength and those areas needing improvement. Parents/guardians and students have the right to receive course grades that represent an accurate evaluation of the student's achievement.

The teacher of each course shall determine the student's grade. The Board or Valley Oaks Charter School Administration shall not change the grade assigned by the teacher, unless the teacher who determined such grade is given an opportunity to state the reasons for which such grade was given.

Teachers shall evaluate a student's work in relation to standards, which apply to all students at his/her grade level. The principal shall ensure that student grades conform to this system. Teachers shall inform students and parents/guardians how student achievement will be evaluated.

Grades shall be based on impartial, consistent review of the quality of the student's work and his/her mastery of course content and objectives.

Students shall have the opportunity to demonstrate this mastery through a variety of methods such as program participation, homework, tests, and portfolios.

If a student misses activities and/or meetings without an excuse and does not subsequently turn in homework, take a test or fulfill another course requirement which he/she missed, the teacher may lower the student's grade for nonperformance.

**Grades for achievement**

Grades for achievement shall be reported for each marking period as follows:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Grade Point Equivalent</b>
A	4.0 Grade Points
A-	3.7 Grade Points
B+	3.3 Grade Points
B	3.0 Grade Points
B-	2.7 Grade Points
C+	2.3 Grade Points
C	2.0 Grade Points
C-	1.7 Grade Points
D+	1.3 Grade Points
D	1.0 Grade Points
D-	.7 Grade Points
F	0 Grade Points
I	0 Grade Points

Whenever it becomes evident to a teacher that a student is in danger of failing a course, the teacher shall arrange a conference with the student's parent/guardian or send the parent/guardian a written report. Progress reports will be sent home on a monthly basis to maintain a high level of communication and progress towards completion of coursework.

**Incompletes**

An incomplete is given only when a student's work is not finished because of illness or other excused absence. If not made up within four weeks, the incomplete shall become an F.

To request an incomplete, the student must contact the resource teacher and complete the appropriate forms, for administrative approval. The principal or designee may grant an extension of the incomplete status.

**Pass/Fail Grading**

The Principal or designee may identify courses or programs, for which students may, with parent/guardian permission, elect to earn a Pass or Fail grade instead of an A-F grade. Students who receive a Pass grade shall acquire the appropriate semester units of credit for the course. The grade shall not be counted in determining class rank, honors list, or G.P.A.

**Grade Weighting for Advanced Placement/Honors Courses**

Students may earn extra grade points for Advanced Placement and Honors courses.

The following is a list of those advancements:

- A        5 points in a Honors/Advanced Placement
- B        4 points in a Honors/Advanced Placement

**Grades in Sequence Courses**

Although a grade of D in a particular course is passing and a student will earn credit for the course, the student will not be able to move to the next level in the sequence of courses. For example, if a student earns a D in an Algebra I course, then the student may not move on to Geometry or Algebra II. The student must receive a C or better, in order to move on to the next course in sequence.

**Repeating Courses**

With the approval of the principal or designee, a student may repeat a course in order to raise his/her grade.

Both grades received shall be entered on the student's transcript, but the student shall receive credit only once for taking the course. Note: The highest grade received shall be used in determining the student's overall grade point average.

**Adding/Dropping Courses**

A student who drops a course during the first three weeks of the semester may do so without any entry on his/her transcript. The student and parent must contact their resource teacher and discuss the decision to add or drop classes. A change of request form must be filled out, in order to ensure the appropriate changes have been made to the student's schedule.

A student who drops a course after the first three weeks of the semester shall receive an F grade on his/her transcript, unless otherwise decided by the principal because of extenuating circumstances.

**Evaluation of Transcripts**

Prior to enrollment, the student and parent must provide transcripts of coursework from all other institutions. This will enable the coursework earned, during previous high school years, to be evaluated by Valley Oaks Charter School administration.

## Graduation Policy

To receive a Valley Oaks Charter School diploma, students must meet the following requirements:

1. Total Credits Requirement:
  - a. Students must earn two hundred and twenty (220) Semester Units.
2. Course Requirements:

a. English/Language Arts	40 Semester Units
b. Mathematics	30 Semester Units
i. Algebra - 10	
c. Science	20 Semester Units
i. Life Science – 10	
ii. Physical Science –10	
d. Social Studies:	30 Semester Units
i. World History/Geography – 10	
ii. U.S. History/Geography –10	
iii. Government – 5 and Economics – 5	
e. Fine Arts or Foreign Language	10 Semester Units
f. Physical Education	20 Semester Units
g. Health	5 Semester Units
h. Career Education	5 Semester Units
i. Technology	5 Semester Units
j. Senior Seminar	5 Semester Units
k. Personal Development	*8 Semester Units
l. Electives	

**\*Determined by one unit per semester enrolled**                      Semester Units to total 220
3. Basic Proficiency Requirement:
  - a. All students must pass the California High School Exit Exam to receive a high school diploma from Valley Oaks Charter School.
  - b. To receive a diploma all students designated “special education” shall have completed the necessary total credits as indicated in Section 1 of this policy and met the requirements specified in their I.E.P.’s (Individualized Education Program), including any alternative means and modes necessary for the student to complete the Valley Oaks Charter School’s prescribed course of study. The IEP Team shall declare a student ineligible for graduation if the requirements of the IEP have not been met.
4. Certificate of Completion Requirements:
  - a. Any “regular education” student who is unable to pass the California High School Exit Exam will be eligible to receive a “Certificate of Completion if he/she meets all of the following criteria:
    - i. Satisfies the “Total Credits Requirement” found in section 1 of this policy.
    - ii. Satisfies all “Course Requirements” found in section 2 of this policy.
    - iii. Satisfactorily attempts to take and pass the California High School Exit Examination, as judged by the principal or his/her designee.
    - iv. Satisfactorily enrolls in remedial courses in the 11<sup>th</sup> and/or 12<sup>th</sup> grades, as judged by the principal or his/her designee.

- b. Any “special education” student who is on a non-diploma track and is receiving a functional or non-academic curriculum shall be eligible for a “Certificate of Completion” instead of a diploma. To receive a Certificate of Completion, a student shall have completed the necessary total credits as indicated in Section 1 of this policy and met the requirements specified in his/her IEP (Individualized Education Program). The IEP Team shall declare a student ineligible for a Certificate of Completion if the requirements of the IEP have not been met.

**Health Issues**

Immunizations

You may find it convenient to have your child immunized at the same time that the physical examination is conducted. You may wish to investigate the pros and cons and options of immunizing your child. The school strongly recommends that you discuss these with your doctor prior to embarking on an immunization plan. Immunization services may be available to you at no cost through the Child Health and Disability Prevention Program. Immunizations must be up-to-date before admission to any K-12 school program is granted. To enter or transfer into any public or private K-12 school, children under the age of 18 must have immunizations as outlined below.

VACCINE	REQUIRED DOSES
<b>Polio</b>	<b>4 doses</b> at any age, but...3 doses meet requirements for ages 4-6 if at least one was given on or after the 4th birthday; 3 doses meet requirements for ages 7-17 years if at least one was given on or after the 2nd birthday
Age 7 years and older (Pertussis is not required) Td, DT, or DTP, DtaP or any combination of these	<b>4 doses</b> at any age, but...3 doses meet requirements for ages 7-17 years if at least one was on or after the 2nd birthday. If last dose was given before the 2nd birthday, one more (Td) dose is required
<b>Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)</b> Kindergarten 7th grade Grades 1-6 and 8-12	<b>2 doses*</b> both on or after 1st birthday <b>2 doses*</b> both on or after 2nd birthday <b>1 dose</b> must be on or after 1st birthday

\*Two doses of measles-containing vaccine required. One dose of mumps and rubella-containing vaccine required; mumps vaccine is not required for children 7 years of age and older.  
 \*\*Two doses of the 2-dose formulation given at age 11-15 years along with provider documentation that the 2-dose formulation was used for both doses will also fulfill this requirement.  
 \*\*\*On September 29, 2010, a new law (AB 354) was passed changing California immunization requirements for students entering 7th-12th grades in public and private schools. The law requires all students registering for the upcoming school year (2011-2012), to have proof of an adolescent whooping cough booster shot called “Tdap” before starting school.

### Information for Use in Emergencies

For the protection of your child's health and welfare, we ask that each year you fill out and return the provided Emergency Information Card. [E.C. §49408] Should your emergency information change at any time during the school year, please immediately contact the office with the revised information so that we may update our records.

The law allows (a) parents/guardians to choose exemptions from immunization requirements based on their personal beliefs, and (b) physicians of children to elect medical exemptions. The law does not allow parents/guardians to elect an exemption simply because of inconvenience (a record is lost or incomplete and it is too much trouble to go to a physician or clinic to correct a problem). See the back of the blue California School Immunization Record (PM286) for instructions and the affidavit to be signed by parent/guardians electing the personal beliefs exemption. For children with medical exemptions, the physicians written statement will be stapled to the CSIR form.

If an outbreak of communicable disease occurs, the non-immunized student will be excluded from activities for his/her own safety until health officials give a clear signal.

### Medical and Hospital Services

Valley Oaks Charter School does not provide insurance on individual students. However, you may purchase accident insurance through the district for medical and hospital services covering your child. The insurance provides coverage for your child while on school grounds or in school buildings during the time your child is required to be there because of his/her attendance during a regular school day of the district; or while being transported by the district to and from school or other place of instruction; or while at any other place as an incident to school-sponsored activities and while being transported to, from and between such places. [E.C. §49472] If interested in purchasing supplemental insurance, please contact Carol Ray at the SISC office 661-636-4871.

### Medications; Epinephrine; Use of Sunscreen Permitted

If your child must take medication during the course of school activities the school must receive a written statement from the physician detailing the method, amount, and time schedules by which the medication is to be taken; and the parent must submit a written statement indicating his/her desire that the school assist his/her child in taking the medication; and parents must sign a release statement. If your child is on a continuing medication regimen for a non-episodic condition, you are required to notify the school of the medication being taken, the current dosage, and the name of the supervising physician. Please contact the office for appropriate forms if any of the above apply to your student. [E.C. 49480]

State law now allows students with doctor authorization to carry and self-administer auto-injectable epinephrine or inhaled asthma medication only if the school district receives a written statement of instructions from the physician detailing the name of the medication, the method, amount, and the time schedules by which such medication is to be taken. A copy of that authorization should be given to the school for placement in your student's file. Students may also carry and use sunscreen without a doctor's note or prescription, and may also wear sun-protective clothing. [E.C. §35183.5]

### Scoliosis Screening (Curvature of the Spine)

If your child is enrolled in grades 7 through 12, and is suspected of having curvature of the spine, please notify the school office. If your child is identified at school as having this condition, you will be notified. [E.C. §49452.5]

### Sight and Hearing Test

The school district is required to provide for the testing of the sight and hearing of each student enrolled in the schools unless you submit a written denial of consent. [E.C. §49452]

### Identification Cards

Each student is issued a student identification card for Valley Oaks Charter School use. It will include a photo ID. It should be carried with the student when attending classes or meetings. The ID card has the following uses:

1. Admission into California Living Museum (The card admits the student and one accompanying adult)
2. Identification to purchase discounted tickets to Bakersfield Symphony concerts.
3. Admission for other activities throughout the year.

### Instructional Time

Home school offers some unique challenges to schooling. Experience indicates that the best way to handle schooling at home is to set up a structure that is predictable routine for the family, that teaches discipline and gives them a secure environment from which to proceed. However, almost everything that a family does can be the inspiration for great learning. Educators call these “teachable moments” when there is a real world reason to learn something. Don’t “do school” and then give your children the rest of the time off.

The number of hours spent on formal instruction in the home is grade level and developmentally specific, and therefore, will not be absolute or identical in all circumstances.

However, VOCS recommends the following guidelines: Core subjects, such as math, English, science, and history, each student should spend five to seven hours daily. This time can include field trips or other extracurricular activities. However every day the student should be reading a significant amount, doing math, and writing. *Note: If the student is finishing work in much less time, the difficulty and supplemental assignments need to be reassessed.* Parents/guardians must sit down and work with their children daily. Overseeing homework, checking answers, adding supplemental assignments and projects, and being supportive of the educational process is mandatory. Checking for understanding needs to happen daily. Students need immediate feedback on coursework completed.

### Learning Center Use

Teaching parents/guardians may use the Learning Center at 2020 K Street to make instructional materials for use in their home learning situations. At that facility, they can use die cuts, make board games and learning boards, copy instructional packets, preview computer software, and create other helpful hands-on materials. You can use the lab for materials for scout groups, church activities, etc. but those will be at your own expense. The lab can be used during regular operating hours. However, children under 12 are not permitted in the lab for safety and supervision reasons. To use the lab for your children’s lessons, pick up a payment card from the front desk or from your resource teacher. Return the card to that teacher or the front desk.

The card may be used for laminating purposes with the resource teacher’s permission. High school students will not be able to use the computer rooms without a parent or teacher present.

### **Management Plan for Asbestos-Containing Material**

A complete, updated management plan for asbestos-containing material in school buildings is available at the Kern County Superintendent of School Office.

### **Mandated Reporters**

All staff members of Valley Oaks Charter School are mandated reporters. If staff members have any suspicions about possible abuse or neglect of a child, they are required by law to report their suspicions to Child Protective Services.

### **Materials and Resources**

All materials are the property of Valley Oaks Charter School and must be returned at the end of each school year, when leaving the program during the school year, or upon termination following the probation process. Per the Master Agreement, parents agree to pay for any lost, damaged, or unreturned materials. Continuing families who do not have a cleared account will not be issued materials for the new school year until **all** checked out materials have been returned and/or paid for and the account is cleared.

### **Media Release and School Photos**

During the course of the school year, you or your student may be photographed, video taped, or interviewed for productions, performances, staff development, newspaper, website, etc. Use of your student's name, image, voice, photograph, videotape, sound recording, and/or other audio-visual electronic materials for school related purposes (school newspaper, talent show, plays, musical performances, etc.) are permissible with your consent. Parents of all new and re-enrolled students should have indicated on the enrollment form to either give or deny permission for their student's image reproduction. These release forms have been placed in the students' files and are not updated unless request is made by the parent. Please contact the office to amend your form should you change your decision at any time during the school year.

### **Museum/CALM Memberships**

Valley Oaks families have special membership at Kern County Museum and CALM. Parents are encouraged to take full educational advantage of CALM and the Kern County Museum. When you register you should sign a museum registration form so that the museum has a record of our families. Students can be admitted along with accompanying adults when they present a special membership card and their photo ID cards at the ticket booth. Be aware that some special events are not included in your free admission and some events will have a discounted admission required. If you are not sure, contact the school or the museum ticket booth.

### **No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001**

Valley Oaks complies with all federal, state, and district regulations and guidelines pertaining to the No Child Left Behind Act. For information on NCLB go to <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/>

### **Parent Club (VOPAC/VOPACT)**

Valley Oaks Charter School welcomes all parents who are interested in joining either VOPAC (Valley Oaks Parent Advisory Committee) or VOPACT (Valley Oaks Parent Advisory Committee – Tehachapi) to support their students. There will be many activities throughout the year that will be enhanced by the support and guidance from VOCS parents. Please inquire with your resource teacher, or at the front desk, if you're interested in participating.

### **Parent Participation and Rights**

Since parents are the primary providers of educational experiences, they have full access to all materials and activities that pertain to their children. In addition, parents are encouraged to observe and participate in enrichment classes and field experiences. The learning that takes place at these times can then be effectively integrated into the learning at home.

### **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**

This act covers the educational rights of children and youth in homeless situations. The school has a responsibility to identify children who are experiencing homelessness and to offer appropriate services to the family, child, or youth. If a child is defined by law as “homeless” the school will inform that child about educational/enrollment provisions of the law. If you are aware of a child who is homeless, please let the school know immediately. Contact VOCS administration for further information.

### **Williams Uniform Complaint Act**

The Education Code 35186 requires that schools provide sufficient textbooks and instructional materials to use in the class and to take home to complete work. It also requires facilities to be clean, safe, and maintained in good repair. If you have a complaint about the school regarding these issues, you can file a complaint on forms obtained in the Human Resources Department of the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office or it can be downloaded from the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office’s website at [www.kern.org](http://www.kern.org) or the California Department of Education’s web sit at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov).

### **Parental Rights: Education Empowerment Act of 1998**

The Education Empowerment Act of 1998 establishes various rights for parents, in addition to other rights identified in this Annual Notice. Your rights, as a parent or guardian, include the following:

#### **Inspection of Instructional Materials**

All primary supplemental instructional materials and assessments, including textbooks, teacher's manuals, films, tapes, and software shall be compiled and stored by the classroom instructor and made available promptly for your inspection in a reasonable time frame or in accordance with procedures determined by the governing board of the school district.

#### **Observation of School Activities**

You have the right to observe instruction and other school activities that involve your child in accordance with procedures determined by the governing board of the school district to ensure the safety of pupils and school personnel and to prevent undue interference with instruction or harassment of school personnel. Reasonable accommodation of parents and guardians shall be considered by the governing board of this school district. Upon written request by you, school officials shall arrange for your observation of the requested class or classes or activities in a reasonable time frame and in accordance with procedures determined by the governing board of this school district.

#### **Consent for Evaluations**

Your child may not be tested for a behavioral, mental, or emotional evaluation without your informed written consent. Unless you give written permission, your child will not be given any test, questionnaire, survey, or examination containing any questions about your child’s, or your personal beliefs or practices in sex, family life, morality, or religion.

### Affirmation or Disavowal of Beliefs

A pupil may not be compelled to affirm or disavow any particular personally or privately held world view, religious doctrine, or political opinion. This law does not relieve pupils of any obligation to complete regular classroom assignments.

### Health Component of Any Program or Class

Parents may exempt students from the health component of any course or class if that instruction conflicts with a parent or guardian's religious training or beliefs.

### Dissection of Animals

If your child chooses not to participate in the dissection of animals, and if the teacher believes that an adequate alternative education project is possible, then the teacher may work with him/her to develop and agree upon an alternative education project for the purpose of providing your child an alternate avenue for obtaining the information required by the class. The school will need a signed note from you indicating your child's objection. [E.C. section 32255]

### Excused from Instruction Due to Religious Belief

Whenever any part of the instruction in health or family life education conflicts with your religious training and beliefs or personal moral conviction, or those of your child, your child shall be excused from such instruction upon your written request. [E.C. section 51240]

### Other rights of parents and guardians

These rights include your right:

1. To observe in your child's classroom (upon reasonable notice).
2. To meet with your child's teacher and the school principal (upon reasonable notice).
3. To volunteer your time and resources at the school.
4. To be notified on a timely basis if your child is absent from school without permission.
5. To be notified concerning your child's classroom and standardized test performance.
6. To request a specific school and teacher and to receive a response from the school district. (This does not obligate the school district to grant the request.)
7. To have a safe learning environment for your child.
8. To examine curriculum materials of your child's class.
9. To be informed of your child's progress and appropriate school personnel to contact in the event of problems.
10. To access student records for your child.
11. To receive information concerning expectations for student learning.
12. To be informed in advance about school rules, policies, dress codes, and procedures for visiting the school.
13. To receive information about any psychological testing of your child and to deny permission for such testing.
14. To participate as a member of any school site councils or parental advisory councils at the school, in accordance with governing membership.

To question, and receive an answer regarding, items in your child's record that appear inaccurate, misleading, or that invade privacy.

### **Parent Participation**

Since parents are the primary providers of educational experiences, they have full access to all materials and activities that pertain to their children. In addition, parents are encouraged to observe and participate in enrichment classes and field experiences. The learning that takes place at these times can then be effectively integrated into the learning at home.

Parents/guardians are welcome in the classrooms and/or on campus at any time during regular school hours unless extenuating circumstances exist that would preclude them from being on school premises. Parents have the right to examine their children's records. When a student transfers to another school, those records will be sent to that district.

### **Personal Development:**

As a graduation requirement, at Valley Oaks Charter School, every student will be enrolled every semester in a one-unit (1) course entitled Personal Development. The purpose of this course is to enhance the growth and development of every student, while allowing them to experience the world around them. Using the two guiding principles that each student is different with individual and unique needs, and the entire environment of the student should be taken into account and used for their education, Personal Development aims to challenge and support students in their intellectual, physical, and personal development goals. Valley Oaks encourages every student to embrace the world around them and find activities that will enhance their educational experience. Personal Development information, and handbook, will be provided to help each student be successful with this course. **Parents may design their own personal development course. Please talk to your individual resource teacher if you wish to develop or deviate from the course.**

### **Pesticide Warnings**

The district has implemented an integrated pest management (IPM) program designed to effectively control pests using a combination of techniques. Pesticides that pose the least possible hazard and are effective in a manner that minimizes risks to people, property, and the environment may be used according to established regulations and treatment thresholds.

Pursuant to the Healthy Schools Act of 2000, the district is required to notify staff, parents, or guardians of the name of all pesticide products expected to be applied at the school facility during the upcoming year. These warnings will be visibly posted onsite. Should you choose to receive an individualized notification, please contact the office to register for pesticide application notification.

If you wish to receive notification of individual pesticide applications at the school facility, please contact the front desk for the proper form. You will receive notification at least 72 hours prior to the application. Further information regarding pesticide application may be obtained at the website for the California Department of Pesticide Regulation at [www.cdpr.ca.gov](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov).

### **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty Policy**

The Governing Board believes that academic honesty and personal integrity are fundamental components of a student's education and character development.

The Governing Board expects that students, parents, and school staff will not cheat, lie, plagiarize or commit other acts of academic dishonesty.

Students, parents/guardians, staff and administrators shall be responsible for creating and maintaining a positive school climate that encourages honesty. The school will not accept work submitted that is not the original work of the student. When a resource is being cited, care must be given to give credit to the originator of the work. That credit should be stated in a format that is appropriate to the developmental age of the student.

When parents are given teachers editions, they are to use them to plan lessons, assist students with concepts, and evaluate lessons. Teacher Editions and supplemental answer documents shall not be misused.

Students found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty shall be subject to discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion from school.

### **Probation Policy**

Parents and students are responsible for keeping all appointments with the resource teacher and submitting completed original work on or before the date due. Maximum assignment period is 4 weeks.

If students fail to meet the above criteria, then each student will be put on probation. The probation guidelines are as follows:

- ❖ If student/parent fails to meet scheduled appointments and/or turn in satisfactory work, during one assignment period, then the student will be put on probation. This probation period will be the next assignment period, or four (4) weeks.
- ❖ During this probation period, the student will be required to have weekly meetings with the resource teacher and be turning in satisfactory work. Additional responsibilities may be designed by the designee/administrator.
- ❖ Probation includes exclusion from all field trips, workshops.
- ❖ If the student attends all appointments and provides satisfactory work, during the probationary period, then the student shall be removed from probation.
- ❖ If the student fails to attend appointments and/or turn in satisfactory work, during the probationary period, then the student will be dropped from the program and referred to their home school district.

### **New Enrollees:**

Students enrolling for the first time with Valley Oaks Charter School may be put on an initial probationary period, at the discretion of the designee/administrator. This probationary period will be approximately four (4) weeks. If the student is meeting scheduled appointments and/or turn in satisfactory work, then the student will be taken off probation.

If the student fails to meet these expectations, then the student will be dropped from the program and referred on to their home school district.

**Note:** Students dropping from Valley Oaks Charter School, due to lack of performance may not re-enroll until the beginning of the next semester. When re-enrolling, students will maintain probationary status, attend weekly meetings, and provide satisfactory work.

### **P.S.A.T Testing:**

Valley Oaks Charter School is now officially a test center, for the P.S.A.T. We will be offering the Practice Scholastic Aptitude test to any interested 9<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> graders. 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students interested in taking the Scholastic Aptitude test will need to register for the SAT with the College Board at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). Test centers are located within the Kern High School District and Bakersfield College.

### **Pupil Records**

You have a right to inspect and review your child's school records; to challenge their contents; to have an administrator assist you in interpreting the records; request amendment to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of your child's privacy rights; to have a district-level hearing to appeal the decision not to change records; and to file a complaint with the state and/or United States Department of Education if the district fails to comply with state and federal law with regard to your child's records. Except for certain exceptions, pupil records are confidential and will not be disclosed without your consent. Please be aware, however, that when your child enrolls or intends to enroll in another district, we will send his or her records to that district. Your child's records may be shared with school officials and employees, and other persons connected with the school who have a legitimate educational interest and who may need them to perform his or her tasks. For example, pupil records may be used to identify and verify eligibility for certain services under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. For further information or assistance contact your site administrator or the Family Policy Compliance Office, U. S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605. [E.C. §49063 and §49070; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34 CFR Part 99]

### **Release of Directory Information**

The law allows schools to release 'directory information' to certain persons or organizations. Directory information may include a student's name, address, telephone information, e-mail, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous public or private school attended by the student. If you wish that the district withhold any of this information, contact the school principal. [E.C. §49061(c), §49070]

### **SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test)**

While high school grades are a very useful indicator of how students will perform in college, there is great variation in grading standards and course rigor within and across high schools. More than 80 years ago the College Board created the first standardized college entrance test to help colleges and universities identify students who could succeed at their institutions and to connect students with educational opportunities beyond high school.

Today, the SAT is the benchmark standardized assessment of the critical reading, mathematical reasoning, and writing skills students have developed over time and that they need to be successful in college. Each year, more than two million students take the SAT. Nearly every college in America uses the test as a common and objective scale for evaluating a student's college readiness. Currently, Valley Oaks Charter School is not a testing center for the SAT. If you are interested in information regarding the SAT, testing centers, and preparation please talk with one of our academic counselors. To register for the SAT click on the following link: <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/sat-reasoning/register>

### **School Accountability Report Card**

The School Accountability Report Card is available on request and is accessible at the following internet site: <http://www.valleyoakscharterschool.org/highschool/sarc>. This contains information about the school regarding the quality of the district's programs and its progress toward achieving stated goals.

### **School Safety Plans**

Each school site has established a Safety Plan. Notice of the plan details is available to the public through the district office on request, and copies are provided to local law enforcement.

### **Sex Offender Information: “Megan’s Law” (Penal Code §290.4)**

The Sex Offender Identification Line is a telephone service for use by the public and organizations to identify serious sex offenders. This district does not disseminate this information; however, anyone at least 18 years of age may call 900.463.0400. You will need the following information on the person you are checking on: address, birth date, driver’s license number or Social Security number. You will be charged a flat rate of \$10.00 for information on up to two individuals. You may also receive information from your local law enforcement agency or view the Attorney General’s home page at [222.caag.state.ca.us](http://222.caag.state.ca.us).

### **Smoking**

All smoking or use of tobacco products by anyone on school premises is prohibited.

### **Special Education**

VOCS is a member of the Special Education Local Plan Agency (SELPA) operated by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office. All policies and procedures of that SELPA are followed. To best serve students, it is important that we follow California Ed Code law §51746, which requires full-time independent study to be the most appropriate educational alternative for the pupil. In many instances, homeschooling is an appropriate way of delivering education for the needs of special education students. Additional one-on-one instruction, breaking up learning into smaller time blocks, removing distractions, and tailoring learning to the unique needs of the child can be done by a parent/guardian in the home. Speech therapy services are provided. If a child requires other specialized instruction that cannot be delivered by a parent/guardian at home, enrollment at Valley Oaks may not be appropriate.

### **Supervision of students**

Whenever possible, parents should accompany their children to school activities. Parents are responsible for turning over supervision of their children to a staff member. If a teacher has not arrived at an activity or class site, the parent must remain with the student until a staff member arrives.

### **Study Hall**

Valley Oaks Charter School is a small school with a limited staff. Because we do not have a large support staff, we ask that each parent help us during the Tuesday program.

Many students who are enrolled in the Tuesday program have an “open period” or no class during a particular period. We will have organized study hall that will be run by one of our teachers on staff. It is the students’ responsibility to have plenty of work to do. We ask that if students do not have a regular class period or are not involved in study hall, then they must be accompanied by their parent/guardian. This will enable the student to obtain the most from their education, while attending Tuesday classes.

### **Tutoring**

The Valley Oaks Charter School staff is committed to the education of each student we enroll. We have a tutoring system that facilitates that process. When students require extra attention on a key concept, or are having trouble with a particular assignment, our staff is available to meet that need.

A schedule will be provided of all office hours and tutoring times for students to access the teachers on staff. *Note: It is mandatory for students who do not meet the minimum standards of a specific assignment or course to sign up for tutoring.*

### **U-PLANIT**

VOCS will be utilizing a tool developed by KCSOS called U-PlanIt. U-PlanIt has been developed to help students find valuable information about different colleges, explore a variety of careers, gather information about financial aid, and develop a plan to support college and career goals. U-PlanIt can be found at <http://uplanit.org>.

### **Work Permits**

Students who wish to be employed while they attend school may do so under the conditions established by the State of California Department of Labor and Valley Oaks Charter School. The employment should never interfere with enough quality time to complete required studies. Conditions of issuing work permits include the following:

1. A student must be an enrolled student in good standing with the school and passing all classes.
2. Amount of student work shall not exceed statutory limits nor interfere with being in good standing with VOCS.
3. New students may receive a work permit as soon as a Master Agreement is signed and it is determined that they were in good standing with his/her previous school.
4. The student must be enrolled in a full schedule of coursework.

**Note:** The principal or designee will call an employer and invalidate a work permit if any of the following conditions occur:

- The student drops
- The student misses classes/appointments and/or does not turn in sufficient satisfactory work in a given period of time.
- The resource teacher determines that schoolwork is suffering because of employment

**Questions about the handbook?**

Please do not hesitate to ask questions or make suggestions. Our staff welcomes the opportunity to grow and change with you and your student. Valley Oaks Charter School is committed to bringing you the best quality education and without your suggestions and feedback we would not reach our goal.

Best wishes for a successful and productive school year!

**Bakersfield:**

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