

PARENT / STUDENT HANDBOOK 2019-2020



Theme: We Are All In This Together!

**Dr. Mae McKinney
Principal**

**Dr. Johnnie Marshall
Assistant Principal**

**1605 Azalea Drive
Valdosta, Georgia 31602**

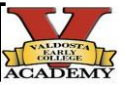


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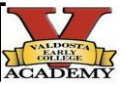
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Principal's Welcome

Dear Parents and Students,

It is my pleasure to welcome you back for another great year at Valdosta Early College Academy! I am excited to have students back in our classrooms and hallways filling them with enthusiasm and learning. It has been a wonderful privilege to serve as VECA's Principal for the past four years. I, along with the VECA Team, am delighted to have another opportunity to work with each of you as we continue to strive for excellence in all we do. As an early college initiative in partnership with Valdosta State University and Valdosta City Schools, VECA will continue to set high academic and behavioral expectations for our student body. This school year, 2019-2020, we welcome VECA's 12th sixth grade class: The Class of 2026.

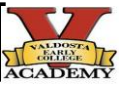
VECA is a unique learning experience for all of our students, and we are blessed to be a part of such a wonderful learning community as we move into our 12th year in existence. This academic year we will adopt the theme from Valdosta City Schools: *We Are All In This Together!* Helen Keller says it best when she says, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

Please read the handbook carefully. It will provide you with important information, dates and expectations. This handbook is provided as a reference source. It contains information that will help your child have a successful school year. It is not all inclusive. Please refer to the VCS Code of Student Conduct for additional information.

VECA's faculty and staff welcome each of you to another school year! We thank you for your continued support and partnership with us. I am sure by working together we can continue to create a culture of strong, caring relationships and academic excellence.

With Excitement,

Dr. Mae McKinney



VECA's Vision

Valdosta Early College Academy will provide the opportunity for our students to develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviors which enable them to be successful in high school, college, and the future in a global society.

VECA's Mission Statement

Valdosta Early College Academy is a student-centered learning community committed to providing engaging, rigorous academic coursework. Students are given the care and support needed to meet high expectations, succeed in high school, and be prepared for the early college experience.

VECA's Core Values

Relationships – develop a positive, caring learning community

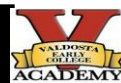
Respect- value yourself and others genuinely

Responsibility- take charge of your learning and your choices

Rigor – establish consistent, high expectations for everyone

VECA's Expectations

- ~Be Kind~
- ~Be Respectful~
- ~Be Responsible~
- ~Be Prepared~



FACULTY AND STAFF

ADMINISTRATION TEAM	
Principal	Dr. Mae McKinney
Assistant Principal	Dr. Johnnie Marshall
Administrative Secretary	Ms. Glenda Fazekas

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	
School Counselor	Mrs. Melanie Drayton
Support Teacher	Mrs. Traci Jones

6TH - 7TH GRADE TEAM

Teacher	Subject	Room
Mrs. Jennifer Sparks	English Language Arts	3
Mrs. Hope Jackson	Mathematics	2
Mrs. Lanita McDuffie	Science	4
Mr. Jordan Arnett	Social Studies	1

8TH - 9TH GRADE TEAM

Teacher	Subject	Room
Mrs. Meredith Hall	English Language Arts	5
Mr. Derrius Dawson	Mathematics	23
Mr. Rolando Canelon	Science	6
Mr. Kyle Elder	Social Studies	24

10TH - 12TH GRADE TEAM

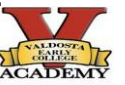
Teacher	Subject	Room
Ms. Timeka Ross	English Language Arts	38
Mrs. Shirley Lucas	Mathematics	39
Mr. Kyle Elder	Social Studies	24

ELECTIVES – 8TH -12TH

Teacher	Subject	Room
Mrs. Marcela Paredes	Spanish	36
Coach Brad Tarpley	Health/Physical Education	22/Gym
Mrs. Stephanie Thomas	Computer Science	Computer Lab

SCHOOL NURSE
Mrs. Laurie Broome

SRO
Sergeant Sabrina Smith



LUNCHROOM STAFF	
Lunchroom Manager	Mrs. Donna Sanders
Assistant	Mrs. Nivia Concepcion

CUSTODIANS
Mrs. Clare McClary
Mrs. Dorothy Owens
Mrs. Louise Proctor



ATTENDANCE

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

- 7:25 a.m. - Students begin to arrive in cafeteria
- 7:25 a.m. - Buses begin arriving – students enter cafeteria
- 7:25 a.m. - 7:40 a.m. Breakfast is served
- 7:40 a.m. - High school students transition to homeroom
- 7:45 a.m. - **All students arriving after this time are tardy and must report to the front office for a tardy pass.**
- 7:45 a.m. - Middle school students transition to homeroom
- 7:50 a.m. - Middle school homeroom
- 3:00 p.m. - Dismissal

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Bus Riders

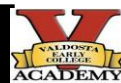
Buses will drop-off and pick-up students on the Azalea Drive side of the campus. Students who arrive by bus are to walk directly to the cafeteria. In the afternoon, bus students will be dismissed by bus number to the bus loading area. Food, drinks, gum, and any other items which are not school related are not allowed on the bus and will be confiscated. Inappropriate behavior may result in a loss of bus riding privileges for a determined amount of time and/or consequences from the student code of conduct. Students are only allowed to ride their assigned bus. In emergency situations, a pass to ride another bus must be issued by an administrator provided the administrator has been given a written note requesting a change of transportation signed by the student’s parent. The school secretary will verify this change of transportation by calling the parent.

Car Riders

Car riding students may be dropped-off and picked up on the College Street side of the campus. Parents are asked to be alert and follow directions given by duty personnel while driving on campus. Students should not be dropped off prior to 7:25 a.m. or picked up later than 3:10 p.m. unless involvement in a school sanctioned activity warrants as duty personnel are not in place prior to 7:25 a.m. or after 3:10 p.m. To ensure your child’s presence in homeroom by 7:45 a.m. for high school students and in the lunchroom at 7:45 a.m. for middle school students, please arrive early enough to allow extra time for slower traffic flow and for students to be in place by 7:45 a.m.

Student Drivers

Only licensed drivers in grades 10-12 are permitted to drive and park cars on the campus. All vehicles must be registered with the school by completing a registration form that requires make and model of the vehicle and tag number. Registration forms are located in the front office. Upon completion of the form, Ms. Fazekas will issue a parking permit. Parking permits are \$15.00. Dual Enrollment students are prohibited from driving to VSU’s campus for class unless given permission by VECA administration. Students may lose driving and parking privileges for disciplinary infractions, driving or parking illegally, or driving recklessly.



ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is the belief of Valdosta Early College Academy that regular school attendance is important to all students. Good attendance is absolutely necessary for success at Valdosta Early College Academy.

Please adhere to the following procedures:

1. Students with an absence will be allowed to make up missed assignments upon returning to school. **The student is responsible for talking with the teacher and making arrangements for time, etc., for make-up work within the grading period (current nine weeks).**
2. Students who are ill and who will be absent due to illness for **10 days or more** may be eligible for services of the hospital/homebound teacher. Parents should contact the principal.

Students are expected to be in school except in cases of emergency or for reasons explained below:

- A. Personal illness: The school may require written notification from a doctor.
- B. Illness in the family: All school work should be kept current.
- C. Quarantine in the home: The absence arising from this condition is limited to the length of quarantine as fixed by proper health officials.
- D. Death of a relative.
- E. Observance of a religious holiday: Any student of any religion shall be excused if his or her absence is for the purpose of observing a religious holiday consistent with his or her creed or belief.
- F. When conditions render school attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety (i.e. weather).
- G. Subpoena

Steps to follow when absent:

1. A parent or guardian should write an excuse giving the student's name, date, days of absence, reason for absence, and his/her signature. Another alternative is a doctor's excuse.
2. The student should present the excuse to the homeroom teacher the first day back at school.

ABSENCES WILL BE DEALT WITH ACCORDING TO BOARD POLICY WHICH IS EXPLAINED IN DETAIL IN THE "CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT" FOR VALDOSTA CITY SCHOOLS: Please refer to the Valdosta City School System *Code of Student Conduct* for a detailed explanation of the Absence Policies.

TARDIES

Both middle and high school students are tardy after 7:45 a.m. Students must sign in at the office when arriving tardy. Tardiness interferes with the instructional process and disrupts the classroom. In order to promote positive work ethic, please make sure your child is on time for school. Excused tardies are also based on the seven legal reasons as stated for absences. The consequences for unexcused tardies are spelled out in the system Code of Student Conduct.



CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

Whenever possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours. Parents must complete the proper form (supplied by school officials) indicating the name(s) of persons who are authorized to check out their child. The parent, or authorized person, must come into the front office to present identification and sign the sign-out sheet. Any person designated to check out a student must be 21 years of age or older. **A child will be released only to the parents or other adults named on the check-out form or where written documentation is provided.**

Students who are checked out for the remainder of the day before 11:30 a.m. will be counted absent. Students who check in before 11:30 a.m. will be counted present.

DISCIPLINE

Students are expected to adhere to the Valdosta City School System Code of Conduct. Consequences for discipline infractions are progressive.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

1. Follow directions the first time they are given.
2. There should be no food, drink, candy, or gum consumed or possessed by students on campus (this excludes food at lunch).
3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
4. Report any problem immediately to a teacher or administrator.
5. Use a courteous manner and tone of voice when speaking with a teacher or staff member. Disrespect is considered a severe offense and will result in immediate disciplinary action.
6. No fighting! Fighting is considered a severe offense and will result in disciplinary action.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

VECA has an established uniform dress code. We believe uniforms contribute to a strong sense of community and a consistent focus on academic performance. Also, uniforms provide a more polished image consistent with our expectations as a college preparatory academic academy. Our students are required to purchase and wear VECA polo shirts with black bottoms (for middle school) and khaki bottoms (9th and 10th grades). All students must wear a uniform type pant. Please note the uniform bottoms selected should not have any color or designs. Jeans/denim is not allowed.

Dress Code for Young Ladies (6th-10th grade)

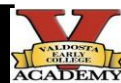
Young ladies in grades 6th-8th are required to wear a logo polo shirt with **black** pants (cropped, capri, shorts or skirt). Young ladies in grades 9th-10th are required to wear a logo polo shirt with **black or khaki** pants (cropped, capri, shorts or skirt). Skirts and shorts are required to be no shorter than fingertip length above the knee when standing. There is no specific shoe requirement. However, students are not to wear any athletic slides or flip flops.

Dress Code for Young Men (6th -10th grade)

Young men in grades 6th-8th are required to wear a logo polo shirt, tucked in at the waist, with a belt, **black** pants or shorts (Dickie style). Young men in grades 9th-10th are required to wear a logo polo shirt, tucked in at the waist, with a belt, **black or khaki** pants or shorts (Dickie style). There is no specific shoe requirement. However, students are not to wear any athletic slides or flip flops.

VECA's Special Occasions and Dress Down Days

There are special occasions and *Dress Down Fridays* in which the students in grades 6th – 10th may wear their own clothing. Administration will communicate with students and parents of these specific occasions. Valdosta City Schools' dress code will be in effect on these days.



STUDENT DRESS CODE CONTINUED

Prohibited items and practices include, but may not be limited to the following:

- Visible undergarments;
- Sagging pants below the waistline allowing for shorts/undergarments to be seen;
- Garments that expose the midriff or cleavage, see-through or mesh clothing, halter or tank tops (shirts, blouses, and dresses must cover the abdomen, cleavage, back and shoulders. Shirts or tops must cover the waistband of pants, shorts, or skirts, with no midriff or cleavage visible while standing, sitting, with arms extended above the head or while bending over);
- Hats, caps, hoods, bandanas, scarves, headwraps, or any other headgear deemed inappropriate. This includes combs/picks/curlers;
- Ripped/torn clothing;
- Skirts, dresses, or shorts should be an acceptable length (fingertip) in order to avoid any disruptions;
- Leggings, jeggings, yoga pants and any athletic wear including athletic shorts and pants;
- Athletic slides **or** bedazzled (bling) slides/flip flops;
- Garments, jewelry, body art and tattoos that communicate gang allegiance may not be worn at school, and no item may be worn in a manner that communicates gang affiliation;
- Pajamas/sleep or loungewear and bedroom shoes;
- Clothing and accessories such as jewelry, patches, backpacks, and notebooks must not display (1) racial or ethnic slurs, (2) hate speech, (3) gang affiliations or (4) vulgar, obscene, subversive, sexually explicit, implicit or suggestive language or images; nor should they promote products that students may not legally buy such as alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, etc.

On a case-by-case basis, administrators may ban items that disrupt the learning environment. The final decision of appropriate dress will be made by the principal or his/her designee.

CELL PHONES / ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students shall not activate, utilize or display electronic communication devices while at school. **Cell phones and headphones should be stored away in book bags or purses and should not be displayed or visible in outer pockets.**

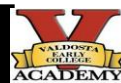
1st Offense: Device confiscated. A parent/guardian must make an appointment with the school administrator to pick up the device and sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding the policy.

2nd Offense: Device confiscated for the remainder of the year per MOU previously signed by parent/guardian.

3rd Offense: Device confiscated for the remainder of the year per MOU previously signed by parent/guardian. Students who violate this policy three (3) times will be deemed habitual offenders. Habitual offenders may be suspended from school for up to 10 days.

****Students who refuse to relinquish their electronic device will receive an immediate 3-5 days OSS.***

The Valdosta City Schools will not be responsible for lost or stolen communication devices.



ENROLLMENT

TELEPHONE / ADDRESS / TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

Please notify the school immediately if there is a change in your address, telephone number, or person to contact in an emergency. This information is very important in case your child becomes ill or injured.

Anytime a student changes their method of transportation the office should be **notified in writing**. This includes changes in transportation for extra-curricular activities. If notification is not received, your child will follow his/her regular method of getting home. Students must ride their assigned bus. Any bus changes must be approved by an administrator and will be granted for emergencies only.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM (VECA UNITED)

VECA United is a newly formed student leadership team. Students have an opportunity to serve as student ambassadors and represent their class as a Leadership Team Member.

MUSEDAY-TUESDAY

Museday-Tuesday is a fine arts club that assists students in using the arts (dance, art, drama and music) to express creativity. Students perform throughout the school year. Students meet every Tuesday at 3:30 p.m.

FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

FCA is a student-led Christian organization composed of students in grades 6-12 at VECA. Athletes as well as non-athletes participate in VECA's chapter of FCA.

ATHLETICS

VECA students are able to participate in the athletic programs through their home school, Newbern Middle, Valdosta Middle, and Valdosta High School. VECA students have participated in a variety of activities at all of these schools including, football, basketball, baseball, softball, cross country, track, wrestling, cheerleading, dance team (at middle schools), and color guard. We encourage our students to become involved in the activities at their home schools.

VCS STUDENT-ATHLETES PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETICS

CODE OF CONDUCT

- I. Valdosta City Schools offer 14 athletic programs for males and females. Students must maintain good academic and behavioral standing to participate. Athletic participation is a privilege not a right! Per the Georgia High School Association or GHSA, each student that wish to participate in inter-scholastic athletics must accumulate the following number of units to be eligible:
 - FIRST YEAR STUDENT- Automatically eligible but must accumulate at least 2.5 units by year's end.
 - SECOND YEAR STUDENT- Must accumulate at least 2.5 units the semester prior to the upcoming participation year and a total of 5 or more units.
 - THIRD YEAR STUDENT- Must accumulate at least 2.5 units the semester prior to the upcoming participation year and a total of 11 or more units.
 - FOURTH YEAR STUDENT- Must accumulate at least 2.5 units the semester prior to the upcoming participation year and a total of 17 or more units.



II. Valdosta City Schools students that are sent to the Horne Learning Center for any reason, forfeits their right to participate in extracurricular activities! NO EXCEPTIONS!!! If the students are re-enrolled into their regular middle or high school, they may re-gain their eligibility and right to participate in their school's athletic programs. However, they must satisfy the academic and behavior criteria.

III. The MS programs will abide by the VCS policies and Big 5 conference's constitution and by-laws!

IV. PARTICIPATION RULE- If any student-athlete quits or removed from a team for any reason, they must wait for that team's season to end before they can begin participation with another team and/or sport. NO EXCEPTIONS!!!

THE NEW SEASON OF PARTICIPATION FOR EVERY STUDENT-ATHLETE STARTS IN THE SUMMER. ONCE A STUDENT-ATHLETE IS SELECTED FOR A TEAM AND STARTS PARTICIPATING DURING THE SUMMER, THE PARTICIPATION RULE STARTS!!!

DISCLAIMER- GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION GOVERNS VALDOSTA CITY SCHOOLS'S HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS AND VALDOSTA CITY SCHOOLS GOVERNS OUR MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC PROGRAMS!

(Valdosta City Schools Athletic Director, Coach Reginald Mitchell)

GRADES

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Parents are encouraged to talk with teachers about their child's grades. Number grades are assigned for all academic and non-academic subjects at Valdosta Early College Academy. Below is the grading scale used by the Valdosta City School System:

- 90 - 100 = A**
- 80 - 89 = B**
- 70 - 79 = C**
- Below 70 = F**

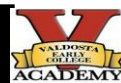
HOMEWORK

Homework is an integral part of the learning at VECA. Homework helps students master skills and reinforce in-class learning. Homework also helps students develop good work habits, responsibility, self-direction, and organizational skills. Teachers are able to assess independent work and parents have the opportunity to become informed about and involved in the child's learning. Homework may be assigned Monday-Friday which includes the weekend.

Each year students receive a Student Planner at the beginning of the school year to record daily, weekly, or long-term assignments. The Student Planner will help students manage their time and homework assignments and will serve as a communication tool for teachers and parents. Lost Student Planners must be replaced at the cost of \$5.00.

MISSING WORK

All students are held accountable for missing work. Missing work will be expected to be completed within a reasonable time frame left up to the discretion of the teacher. Students are given many opportunities to complete missing assignments throughout the school day: before school, lunch and learn, Success Academy, and Study Skills. Grade reduction is left up to the discretion of the teacher once missing assignments are completed.



REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued at the end of each nine week-grading period. If students’ grades are not satisfactory, parents are encouraged to arrange an appointment with the child's teachers, by calling the office, in order to discuss the problem(s).

Interim reports are sent home during the mid-nine-week period to alert parents of possible failure for the nine weeks. Parents are encouraged to follow through with teacher recommendations for improvement.

Interim Report Dates	Report Card Release Dates
September 6, 2019	October 17, 2019
November 13, 2019	January 10, 2020
February 7, 2020	March 24, 2020
April 23, 2020	May 22, 2020

ACADEMIC HONOR ROLL

It is the goal of Valdosta City Schools to set high expectations for all students and provide recognition for academic success. Students who meet challenging and rigorous academic achievement goals are rewarded each 9 weeks and recognized for their achievement by the school and district.

HONOR ROLL WITH DISTINCTION CRITERIA

Students in grades 6-12 are eligible for Honor Roll with Distinction with a GPA of 95 or above average in core academic subjects (including academic electives). Students must meet VECA’s Academic Performance Criteria to be eligible for Honor Roll with Distinction.

HONOR ROLL CRITERIA

Students in grades 6-12 are eligible for Honor Roll with a GPA of 85-94 average in core academic subjects (including academic electives). Students must meet VECA’s Academic Performance Criteria to be eligible for Honor Roll with Distinction.

VECA’S PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

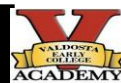
Satisfactory performance in the key areas of academics, behavior/discipline, attendance, and dress code are necessary for continued enrollment in our Early College program. Student performance in these key areas will be reviewed each year for transition to the next grade.

Students must:

Maintain a grade point average of 75 or greater in all academic subjects which include: English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and World Language.

Maintain a grade point average of 70 or greater in all elective subjects which include: AVID, Computer Science, and Health/Physical Education.

Meet the VECA promotion requirements each year. If a student does not satisfy the promotion requirement, the student will be withdrawn from the program and transition to their home school.



VECA'S PERFORMANCE CRITERIA CONTINUED

Transition to 7th grade	Maintain a grade point average of 75 or greater in all academic subjects and 70 or greater in all elective subjects with no academic, behavior, or attendance probation.
Transition to 8th grade	Maintain a grade point average of 75 or greater in all academic subjects and 70 or greater in all elective subjects with no academic, behavior, or attendance probation. Students must meet the state requirement for promotion.
Transition to 9th grade	Maintain a grade point average of 75 or greater in all academic subjects and 70 or greater in all elective subjects with no academic, behavior, or attendance probation. Earn a minimum of 6 credits in high school courses. Meet the Georgia standardized assessment standards for promotion.
Transition to 10th grade	Maintain a grade point average of 75 or greater in all academic subjects and 70 or greater in all elective subjects with no academic, behavior, or attendance probation. Earn a minimum of 12 credits in high school courses. <i>Qualify for admission to Dual Enrollment at Valdosta State University meeting minimum Accuplacer and SAT assessment requirements.</i>
Transition to 11th grade	Maintain a grade point average of 75 or greater in all academic subjects and 70 or greater in all elective subjects with no academic, behavior, or attendance probation. Earn no less than a C in VSU Dual Enrollment courses and be on track for graduation.
Transition to 12th grade	Maintain a grade point average of 75 or greater in all academic subjects and 75 or greater in all elective subjects with no academic, behavior, or attendance probation. Earn no less than a C in VSU Dual Enrollment courses and be on track for graduation.

Students must:

Meet expectations for **appropriate behavior**. Students with excessive discipline incidents will be placed on a Behavior Contract and referred to the Supporting Student Success team.

Meet expectations for **attendance**:

- o Students should accumulate **no more than** five absences per year.
- o Students should not accumulate excessive tardies to school.
- o Over five absences or excessive tardies require an Attendance conference, an Attendance Contract, and referral to the Supporting Student Success team.

Meet expectations for **uniform dress code**.



PROMOTION AND RETENTION CRITERIA

VALDOSTA CITY SCHOOLS' PROMOTION RETENTION BOARD POLICY

DESCRIPTION CODE: IHE

The Valdosta City Board of Education (“the Board”) shall require all schools governed by its authority to abide by the State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.11, which specifies how the state-adopted assessments administered in grades 3, 5, and 8 will be used in making promotion, placement and retention decisions for students.

The Board hereby authorizes the district Teaching and Learning Department to establish procedures or regulations for local promotion criteria to be used in making decisions concerning promotion, placement or retention of students in Grades 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7, (and for students in grades 3, 5, and 8 in years when, and if, reliance on state-adopted assessments has been waived). Such procedures or regulations must be approved by the Superintendent or designee(s) and shall provide for the following:

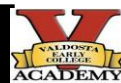
1. Each teacher shall be responsible for determining through a variety of assessments whether a student appears to be on grade level or achieving at a level which, with accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction or interventions, would allow the student to perform at grade level by the conclusion of the subsequent school year. Multiple, state approved, sources of data will be used to identify each student’s strengths and needs, determine the appropriate placement for each student, and to assist with the design of appropriate instructional program.
2. Where the teacher believes the student is not performing at such level, the teacher must implement remediation efforts as set forth in regulations or procedures.
3. A mechanism shall be established whereby a school level team will review a student’s performance prior to any decision to retain the student.
4. Prior to a student’s retention, the student’s parents must be notified of the possibility of retention and given the opportunity to attend a meeting to discuss the matter.
5. For any student receiving special education or related services, the Individual Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement committee.
6. A school level promotion and retention decision is final and subject to appeal only at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.

The following local promotion criteria will be used in the 2019-2020 school year for students:

SIXTH THROUGH EIGHTH GRADES:

Sixth through eighth grades:

1. Final grade average of 70 or above in all four academic subjects: English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.
2. A student must have an average of 70 or above in 3 out of 4 connection grading segments.
3. Mastery of a minimum reading proficiency level as determined by the district.



NINTH THROUGH TWELFTH GRADE

Students are required to pass all core academic courses and earn a minimum number of unit credits to be promoted.

Graduation Requirements

Course Requirements	
English Language Arts*	4
Mathematics*	4
Science*	4
Social Studies*	4
Health/Personal Fitness	1
Fine Arts / Modern Language*/ Career Technical	3 *(2 units in same Modern Language are required for the University System of Georgia admissions)
Additional Electives	4
Total	24

* To fulfill graduation requirements and to be considered for admission to a University System of Georgia College or University, students are required to take and pass specific courses in each academic area. Students should meet with the counselor for detailed requirements.

HONOR GRADUATES

Honor graduate status will be determined through the 3rd nine weeks of the senior year (4th year) of high school.

For the Class of 2016 and beyond students must have a 90 or above academic class rank GPA **OR** have an academic class rank GPA of at least an 85 with 6 AP/IB or Academic MOWR credits.

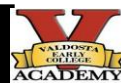
MERIT POINTS

Academic dual enrollment courses will receive an additional 10 points added to the final grade at the end of each course.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

Cumulative GPA: All final grades posted on the student’s high school transcript, regardless of credit earned or lost, will be averaged to determine a student’s cumulative GPA. High school courses taken by eighth grade students do not count toward a student’s high school GPA.

Academic GPA: All courses taken in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language and posted on the student’s high school transcript, regardless of credit earned or lost, will be averaged to determine a student’s academic grade point average. This includes those courses taken through dual enrollment that count as high school academic credit. High school courses taken by eighth grade students do not count toward a student’s high school GPA.



CLASS RANK

Class Rank will be calculated in the following manner:

1. Class rank is calculated through the 3rd nine weeks of the senior year (4th year) of high school.
2. Class rank is based on the 100-point scale academic class rank GPA. Academic courses include all math, science, social studies, language arts, and foreign language courses.
 - a. Academic transcript grades are used to determine rank in addition to the senior year academic courses through the 3rd term. Third term senior year calculations are based on current academic course averages before the addition of merit points.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Georgia Milestones End of Grade (EOG) / End of Course (EOC) Assessments

The Georgia Milestones Assessment System (Georgia Milestones) is a comprehensive summative assessment program spanning grades 3 through high school. Georgia Milestones measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students in grades 3 through 8 take an end-of-grade assessment in English Language Arts and mathematics while students in grades 5 and 8 are also assessed in science and social studies. High school students take an end-of-course assessment for each of the ten courses designated by the State Board of Education.

PSAT

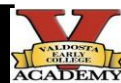
The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is a program cosponsored by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). It's a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT®. It also gives you a chance to enter NMSC scholarship programs and gain access to college and career planning tools. The PSAT/NMSQT measures: Critical reading skills, Math problem-solving skills, and Writing skills. This test doesn't require you to recall specific facts from your classes. The most common reasons for taking the PSAT/NMSQT are to: Receive feedback on your strengths and weaknesses on skills necessary for college study. You can then focus your preparation on those areas that could most benefit from additional study or practice. See how your performance on an admissions test might compare with that of others applying to college. Enter the competition for scholarships from NMSC (grade 11). Help prepare for the SAT. You can become familiar with the kinds of questions and the exact directions you will see on the SAT.

ACCUPLACER

The ACCUPLACER is a placement test for undergraduate admission. Students will be scheduled by VECA to complete the ACCUPLACER on VECA's campus. The three un-timed computer-based components of the ACCUPLACER are Writing, Reading, and Math.

ACT

The ACT is a national college admissions examination that consists of subject area tests in: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. The ACT is not an aptitude or an IQ test. The test questions on the ACT are directly related to what you have learned in your high school courses. The ACT Plus Writing includes the four subject area tests plus a 30-minute Writing Test. ACT results are accepted by all four-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—September, October, December, February, April, and June.



ACT RESIDUAL

The ACT RESIDUAL is an on-campus or "residual" testing program testing all subject areas as the ACT and is only available to ACT-participating colleges to administer the ACT to students. Scores from residual testing are reported only to VSU for admission, course placement, and advising purposes. The ACT RESIDUAL is administered to VECA students in the Spring by Valdosta State University.

SAT

The SAT and SAT Subject Tests are a suite of tools designed to assess your academic readiness for college. These exams provide a path to opportunities, financial support and scholarships, in a way that's fair to all students. The SAT and SAT Subject Tests keep pace with what colleges are looking for today, measuring the skills required for success in the 21st century. The SAT and other College Board tests are offered several times a year.

DUAL ENROLLMENT

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT

DEFINITION

Valdosta Early College Academy (VECA) is an Early College program in partnership with Valdosta State University (VSU) that allows students to enroll at VSU during their sophomore, junior and senior years. Students at VECA may earn a high school diploma with the potential to earn an Associate’s degree or up to two years of college credit towards a Bachelor’s degree.

DEADLINES

Students will begin the dual enrollment process during the second semester of the 9th grade year. Applicants must submit the application and required documents by the appropriate deadline. VECA deadlines are set by joint agreement of the VSU Office of Admissions and VECA. Students should consult the VECA administrators or counselor for applicable deadlines. VECA students do not pay an application fee.

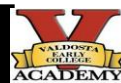
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Because of the demanding nature of college-level course work at a research institution, VECA students must have a high degree of academic potential and maturity. To be considered for admission, a student must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Have spent the entire year prior to enrollment at VECA and be currently enrolled as a freshman at VECA. Applicants must be on track to complete a high school diploma.
- Standardized Test Minimum Requirements: Students must meet one of the three Standardized Test requirements in all content areas for the following assessments:

	SAT	ACCUPLACER	ACT
Reading Test	24	237	17
Math Test	22	266	17
Writing		4	
Total	1050		20

- Academic GPA Minimum Requirement is 2.75
- Fewer than 5 unexcused absences during each of freshman, sophomore, and junior years



- No discipline referrals within the last year
- Teacher and Administrator Recommendations
- College Readiness Self-Assessment
- Parent/Guardian Permission
- VSU Immunization & Medical History Form

The VECA Transition Committee will review all scores and recommendations when making decisions about admission and course selection. Applications will be considered for the fall and spring of each year.

TIMELINE FOR ADMINISTRATION OF COLLEGE READINESS ASSESSMENTS

Students will participate in the following college readiness assessments to prepare and inform students, parents/guardians, and VECA/VSU staff of readiness for college admission at VSU. Funding for PSAT 8/9, PSAT/NMSQT and ACCUPLACER are provided by VECA/VSU. Students may be eligible for SAT and ACT Fee Waivers; the VECA counseling department will assist students in completing fee waivers.

- Fall of 8th Grade – PSAT 8/9
- Fall of 9th Grade – PSAT 8/9
- Spring of 9th Grade – ACCUPLACER and ACT RESIDUAL
- Fall of 10th Grade – PSAT / NMSQT
- Fall of 11th Grade-PSAT / NMSQT
- Fall of 11th Grade – SAT and/or ACT
- Fall of 12th Grade – SAT and/or ACT

GRADUATION

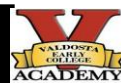
Graduation is a special time of the year when parents and families are able to celebrate the culmination of a long journey of hard work and sacrifice. As an early college program that is a part of Valdosta High School, VECA’s seniors will participate in both VECA’s Early College Ceremony **and** Valdosta High School’s graduation ceremony. All VECA students will receive a Valdosta High School diploma.

VECA’S Early College Ceremony

VECA’s Early College Ceremony is an intimate ceremony with each seniors’ family and friends. The ceremony generally takes place a week before Valdosta High School’s graduation ceremony. The ceremony is held on VSU’s campus.

Valdosta High School Graduation Ceremony

It is the policy of Valdosta High School that seniors who participate in the graduation ceremony must have completed all requirements for graduation and attend graduation practice. Students are eligible to participate in the graduation ceremony only during the school year in which coursework was completed.



SCHOLARSHIPS

Please visit www.gafutures.org for updated information that relates to the Zell Miller Scholarship Program, HOPE Scholarship and HOPE Grant.

ZELL MILLER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Zell Miller Scholarship Program is a merit-based scholarship program with specific academic and grade point average eligibility requirements. The purpose of the Zell Miller Scholarship Program is to encourage the academic achievement of Georgia’s high school students and Georgians seeking degrees from postsecondary institutions located in Georgia.

A student must have earned an academic Grade Point Average of 3.70 or higher as calculated by Georgia Student Finance Commission and received a minimum score of 1200 combined critical reading and math on a single administration of the SAT; or received a composite score of 26 on a single administration of the ACT; or having graduated high school as the Valedictorian or the Salutatorian and meet all HOPE Scholarship eligibility requirements.

HOPE SCHOLARSHIP

Georgia’s HOPE Scholarship is available to Georgia residents who have demonstrated academic achievement. The scholarship provides money to assist students with their educational costs of attending a HOPE eligible postsecondary institution located in Georgia. Students must graduate from an eligible high school or accredited high school program with a minimum 3.0 grade point average (as calculated by Georgia Student Finance Commission) and meet the academic rigor requirements.

HOPE GRANT

Georgia's HOPE Grant (a separate program from the HOPE Scholarship) is available to residents of Georgia who are attending eligible colleges or universities in Georgia to earn a certificate or diploma regardless of high school graduation date or grade point average. The HOPE Grant Award Amount will cover a portion of a student's tuition. Full-time enrollment is not required, but you must be making satisfactory academic progress to maintain eligibility.

Visit www.gafutures.org for additional information on Zell Miller Scholarship, HOPE Scholarship, HOPE Grant, as well as a list of academic rigor requirements.

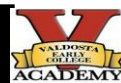
GUIDANCE

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

The school counseling program at VECA is designed to reach every student and focuses on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for an individual's successful academic achievement, career development, and personal and social growth. VECA’s counselor's time is spent maximizing the benefits of a program that serves all students. VECA’s counselor is also available to work with parents and faculty to help provide the best education for each student.

Students who want to meet with the counselor must complete a student referral form. Students will receive a pass to the guidance office when called by the counselor. Referrals can be made by the student, teacher, administrator, parent, or other personnel.

The school counselor will address topics such as self-esteem, decision making, goal-setting, character building, and other areas as needed. The school counselor will work with students in the areas of personal, social, and academics through individual counseling, small group counseling, and classroom guidance. The school counselor is available Monday – Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Parents are encouraged to contact the school whenever the need arises. Teachers may be contacted by note, telephone, or e-mail. If you call during the school day, the office will leave the teacher a note to return your call.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

If you want to have a conference with your child's teacher(s), please call ahead to make an appointment through our office. Our teachers' schedules do not allow time for drop-in conferences. Please call 229-671-8455 and Ms. Fazekas, VECA's school secretary, can assist you with scheduling a conference.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

- that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning
- that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school
- that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child

PARENT RESOURCE AREA

To provide parents with information and resources to support parent involvement, VECA has established a Resource Area available to parents in our lobby and in the front office.

PARENT PORTAL

Parent Portal is an online program that allows parents to check the grades, attendance, and transcript of their student at any time and from any location. Parents are encouraged to use the Parent Portal to monitor their student's status at VECA. Create Your Campus Parent Portal Account Online by visiting the VCS website: www.gocats.org. Click *Departments* and *Student Info System* for more information.

STUDENT PORTAL

Student Portal is an online program that allows students to check the grades, attendance, and transcript at any time and from any location. Students are encouraged to use the Student Portal to monitor their status at VECA. Students can obtain access from their homeroom teacher.

AUTOMATED PHONE CALLS

To keep parents/guardians informed, Valdosta City Schools and VECA will occasionally make announcements through automated phone calls. Please contact Ms. Fazekas in the front office if your contact information needs to be updated.

STAY CONNECTED!

VECA's Website-The VECA website serves as an information portal for students, parents, and staff. Please visit the website at veca.gocats.org to see what is going on at Valdosta Early College Academy.

Facebook- Find VECA on Facebook. Search www.facebook.com/ValdostaEarlyCollegeAcademy

Twitter-Follow us on Twitter! @vecanews



SCHOOL POLICIES

ASSEMBLIES

School assemblies contribute to the development of our school climate. The number of assemblies and the privilege of students to attend are contingent upon their ability to conduct themselves properly at all times, regardless of the type assembly being viewed. Please adhere to the following audience etiquette protocol for all assemblies:

Audience Etiquette Protocol:

1. Please enter as quickly as feasible.
2. Give the speaker/presenter(s) your undivided attention.
3. Don't talk to your neighbor during the presentation.
4. Respond appropriately throughout the presentation. Applaud for the speaker when he/she finishes. No cackling, whistling, or yelling out as if at a sporting event.
5. Remember the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you! Give the presenters the respect you would want if you were on stage.

LUNCHROOM PROCEDURES

The **lunchroom rules** are as follows:

1. Every student will go to the lunchroom at an assigned time whether or not he/she eats.
2. Get everything needed from the food lines before being seated.
3. Noise in the lunchroom must be kept minimal.
4. Once seated, you are to remain seated, unless you have permission from duty personnel. Students are not allowed to go from table to table.
5. Leave your area clean and free of litter.
6. Return trays, plates, and silverware to the designated area.
7. Put all paper and food not eaten in the garbage can.
8. Carbonated drinks or glass containers are not allowed in the lunchroom.
9. Food from outside vendors/restaurants is not allowed in the lunchroom. Snacks will not be allowed in the lunchroom (this does not apply to students bringing their own lunch).
10. Drinks brought from home must be in an unbreakable container and fit in a lunchbox or lunch bag.
10. Absolutely no talking/noise when silence is requested.
11. Food may not be taken out of the lunchroom.
12. **Administration and duty personnel will ensure that behavior is appropriate in the lunchroom by assigning seats or utilizing other steps of the school discipline plan.**

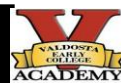
*****Students are only allowed to bring clear water bottles in the classroom-Beverages, other than water, are not allowed in the classroom*****

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Students will participate in emergency drills to be prepared for any actual emergency. They will recognize the signals and move quickly and quietly along the appropriate route to the designated area. Students remain with their teachers until teachers receive an all-clear signal.

SCHOOL LOCKDOWN

The signal for **lockdown** will be given by an intercom announcement. A Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 will be given. When all is safe, another announcement of all *clear* will be made.



FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

Fire and tornado drills are held at irregular intervals throughout the school year to ensure the safety of all involved. Misbehavior during these drills will not be tolerated and will result in a consequence to the offending student. Remember these basic rules:

1. Follow the instructions given by your teacher.
2. Remain with your class.
3. Walk quickly and quietly to designated area.
4. Return directly to class when instructed to do so.

The signals for the drills are as follows:

The signal for a **fire drill** is the fire alarm. An evacuation plan is posted in each classroom.

The signal for **severe weather** is an announcement by school administration. Students should go to the pre-designated area, kneel down with backs to the wall, and put their hands on top of their head.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS/DELIVERY OF GIFTS

Birthday celebrations are welcome at school. Parents or students wishing to share his/her birthday and bring cupcakes or cake must contact the front office to make arrangements at least 24 hours before the celebration and receive approval from administration. To protect instructional time, birthday celebrations will be limited to the last 15 minutes of the day during study skills/AVID flex time. Delivery of gifts to students, including flowers, balloons, candy, etc. is prohibited by Valdosta City Schools.

SCHOOL INSURANCE

School insurance is available to all students. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide insurance in case a student is injured in an accident at school. Parents are given the opportunity to purchase accident insurance for their student(s) by contacting **Markel** at 877-444-5014 or by visiting their website at <http://markel.sevencorners.com/>. Payment must be made by credit or debit card. Detailed brochure and claims reporting information can be found on the enrollment website.

SCHOOL LOCKERS

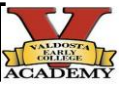
Lockers are available for dual enrollment students only. Lockers will be issued within the first week of school. Students are not allowed to share a locker. Violation of this rule will result in the immediate loss of locker privileges for all students involved. Students will only be allowed to go to their lockers during designated times during the day. The school is not responsible for items taken from lockers.

SCHOOL VISITORS

All visitors must report to the front office and sign in when they arrive. Upon checking in and stating the purpose for your visit, you will be issued a visitor's pass. Parents are always welcome at Valdosta Early College Academy. If you wish to visit your child's class, please notify the teacher or front office 24 hours prior to the date you want to visit, unless prior arrangements have been made with an administrator. Visitors during the lunch period are limited to the parents/guardians of a student due to the capacity limits of our cafeteria.

STUDENT I.D.'S

I.D.'s will be available for students. Students must have an I.D. to be admitted to some school functions such as dances, athletic events, etc.



TELEPHONE PRIVILEGES

The school telephone is for business purposes. Student use of the phone is limited to emergency situations. Please make sure that your child knows how he/she will get home from school prior to coming to school. Students will not be allowed to leave classes to make or answer personal calls. Students will not be allowed to use the phone to call for items left at home. Practice schedules are given in advance for any sport or extracurricular activity. If you do not receive one, please ask the coach or club sponsor.

TEXTBOOKS

The Valdosta City Board of Education furnishes textbooks to all students. Each student is assigned a set of books with his/her name written in by the teacher. The student is responsible for the care of the books issued. Loss or damage of these books will result in payment to the school. Parents are encouraged to periodically inspect the condition of the books and to report any unusual wear to the teacher.

VALUABLES AT SCHOOL

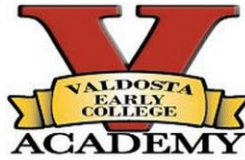
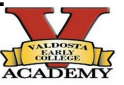
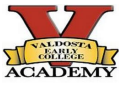
School personnel try to prevent losses, but they are not responsible for students' personal property. Large amounts of money or valuables should not be brought to school. Any valuables that are accidentally brought to school should be checked in at the front office. The student's name should be on all property and clothing. Students are not allowed to have any electronic devices on campus (see Code of Conduct).



**Parent Involvement Activities
Valdosta Early College Academy
2019-2020**

Date	Name of Activity	Location	Time
8/6/2019	Open House	VECA	1:30-3:30 p.m.
5/20/2019	10 th Grade “Success in the Making” VSU DE Orientation	VSU	6:30-7:30 p.m.
8/22/2019	Parent Information Meeting (Grades 6-12)	TLTC	6:00-7:00 p.m.
8/29/2019	Parent Academy / (D.C. Trip) (Grade 8)	TLTC	6:00-7:00 p.m.
9/5/2019	Parent Academy (Grades 6-7)	TLTC	6:00-7:00 p.m.
9/17/2019	D.C. Trip-Final Parent Meeting (Grade 8)	TLTC	6:00-7:00 p.m.
9/26/2019	Parent Academy (Grades 11/12) (Financial Aid-Georgia Student Finance Commission)	TLTC	6:00-7:00 p.m.
10/17/2019	Parent Academy (10 th Grade)	TLTC	6:00-7:00 p.m.
10/24/2019	Title I Meeting	TLTC	6:00-7:00 p.m.
11/7/2019	Thanksgiving Holiday Meal	Lunchroom	11:45-1:30 p.m.
TBD	GA Apply to College Week	VECA	All day
11/12/2019	Parent Advisory Council Meeting	VECA	4:00-5:00 p.m.
2/4/2020	Parent Advisory Council Meeting	VECA	4:00-5:00 p.m.
2/21/2020	Black History Program	VSU	1:15-2:45 p.m.
TBD	National Early College Week	VECA	All day
3/26/2020	College Signing Day	VSU	1:15-2:45 p.m.
3/26/2020	Parent Academy-Grades 6-12	TLTC	6:00-7:00 p.m.
3/27/2020	VECA Talent Show	Lunchroom	2:00-3:00 p.m.
4/9/2020	Parent Advisory Council Meeting	TLTC	4:00-5:00 p.m.
4/16/2020	Senior Parent Meeting	TLTC	6:00-7:00 p.m.
5/4/2020	Career Day	VECA	8:30-11:00 a.m.
5/7/2020	Honors Night (6-8)	VSU	6:30-7:30 p.m.
5/9/2020	Honors Night (9-12)	VSU	6:30-7:30 p.m.
5/14/2020	VECA Early College Ceremony	VSU	6:30-7:30 p.m.
5/19/2020	8 th Grade Moving Up Ceremony	VSU	1:30-3:00 p.m.
5/22/2020	Valdosta High School Graduation	TBD	TBD

****Meeting dates and times are subject to change****



**VALDOSTA EARLY COLLEGE ACADEMY
Parental Opt-Out of Club Participation**

*Please complete form and return to your child's homeroom teacher.

Student Name _____

Homeroom Teacher _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of information regarding student clubs that are scheduled to be operational at the school during the current school year. I understand that if a club for which information has not been provided is started after this information is distributed, I will be provided the club information at that time and my written permission will be required prior to my student's participation.

I wish to withhold permission for my child to participate in the student club(s) listed below:

Parent/Guardian Name _____

(Please print)

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____