Code of Student Conduct

An Explanation of Student Rights, Responsibilities & Services
Your Future... Our Mission.
Imagine the Possibilities!

1,298 students enrolled in CTAE (Career, Technical and Agricultural Education)

8,440 Total Enrolled (PK-12)

$7,872.58 Per child expenditure (FY 18) (General Fund)

433 VHS Class of 2018 Graduates

529 students in 6-12 enrolled in AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)

161 students enrolled in over 703 (dual enrollment) courses

268 students enrolled in over 429 seats in 15 different Advanced Placement courses

460 students enrolled in over 1,260 seats in middle school advanced content ELA and/or Math courses

84 students enrolled in 12 different International Baccalaureate courses offered during junior & senior years

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Welcome to Valdosta City Schools

The Code of Student Conduct, officially approved by the Valdosta Board of Education on June 26, 2018, contains important information about policies, procedures and programs of Valdosta City Schools. Students and parents should read the Code of Student Conduct at the start of the school year or when enrolling in Valdosta City Schools during the school year. Students and parents will be asked to sign a separate Acknowledgement Form, provided by the school at the beginning of the year or upon enrollment in VCS, related to important information outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

The policies of the Board of Education and the services of the school system are designed to protect the well-being of students and the rights of students to a quality education in Valdosta City Schools. To view a complete listing of all Board of Education policies, please visit the Valdosta City Schools website at www.gocats.org (click – Board of Education/Policies). The Valdosta City School System will abide by any policy, regulation, or legislative requirements that may arise during the school year. Please check the school system website for any updates to this Code of Student Conduct or other policies.

The Code of Student Conduct is reviewed annually between February and May for the purpose of adding, deleting and revising content. Parents, students and employees are encouraged to submit comments and suggestions regarding the Code of Student Conduct to Mrs. Scarlet Brown at scbrown@gocats.org.

Valdosta Board of Education

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Mr. Warren Lee, District 3
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Mrs. Kelly Wilson, Superward West
Dr. William “Todd” Cason, Superintendent

The Valdosta Board of Education holds public meetings on the second Tuesday of each month and work sessions on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Please contact the Superintendent’s Office or check the website for the time and location of these meetings.

2018-2019
Greetings Valdosta City Schools’ Students and Parents:

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Valdosta City Schools for what will be an exciting new school year. As you know, a new year will bring about changes – a new school for some, new teachers, and even new friends, but what will hold constant for you is the mission and vision of the system. By providing quality teaching and learning opportunities, we continue to be determined to ensure that you [students] are prepared to pursue infinite possibilities for the future. At VCS you will find an “academically excellent, developmentally appropriate, and equitably comprehensive” education at your fingertips, because VCS believes:

- in providing positive relationships, high expectations, and a safe environment for all students;
- the unique needs of all students should be met;
- students should have opportunities to be digitally literate and technologically efficient;
- all students should be motivated and engaged;
- continuous improvement in the district is fundamental; and,
- providing activities beyond core academics is critical to student success.

The Valdosta City Schools’ Code of Conduct handbook will serve as your blueprint for ensuring a successful, enlightening, safe, and productive educational experience while at school. The handbook provides you and your parents or guardians with valuable information pertaining to the policies and/or procedures for areas such as registration, attendance, promotion, programs and services, and student conduct. Because of its importance and the wealth of information it provides, I would like for you and your parents or guardians to take a few moments to read it in its entirety, paying close attention to each section. I can assure you that this will be the best school year ever if you adhere to all the rules and regulations found within the Code of Conduct.

Students, I sincerely hope your time in Valdosta City Schools supplies you with experiences that are inspiring, motivating, exciting, safe, and most of all unforgettable. You have limitless opportunities to achieve at high levels, but you must be motivated, dedicated, and determined in order to do so. I challenge you to be an enthusiastic participant in your development to becoming a life-long learner. With Wildcat Pride, never quit working to reach your goals. The choice is yours, make it a great year and a great future with VCS.

Sincerely,

Dr. William Todd Cason
Superintendent

Why you should choose Valdosta City Schools:
- Valdosta High School is one of only 32 schools in the state of Georgia to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme
- Valdosta Early College Academy - A school within Valdosta City Schools and in partnership with Valdosta State University
- AVID - Advancement Via Individual Determination - A academic support program in middle and high school to prepare students for success in advanced program and college
- Over 650 certified personnel, 66% with advanced degree
In the columns below are the top ten lists of ways that students can succeed and ways that parents and families can support that success. Thank you for being part of our Valdosta City Schools’ team and community!

The Top 10 Hints for Student Success:

1. Read, read, read!
2. Take care of yourself – it is easier to be a thoughtful parent if you reduce your stress.
3. Communicate with teachers early when you have a question or concern.
4. Talk with your child daily, about school and life in general.
5. Help your child understand that all decisions have consequences, either good or bad.
6. Set clear limits on behavior.
7. Help your child find strengths and interests.
8. Make sure your child gets to school on time.
9. Help your child get organized.
10. Limit distractions – careful with the TV, cell phones and computer!

The Top 10 Hints for Parents and Families:

1. Read to your child – then read some more!
2. Take care of yourself – it is easier to be a thoughtful parent if you reduce your stress.
3. Communicate with teachers early when you have a question or concern.
4. Talk with your child daily, about school and life in general.
5. Help your child understand that all decisions have consequences, either good or bad.
6. Set clear limits on behavior.
7. Help your child find strengths and interests.
8. Make sure your child gets to school on time.
9. Help your child get organized.
10. Limit distractions – careful with the TV, cell phones and computer!

We thank you for choosing Valdosta City Schools!
Policy Statement

The Valdosta City Schools Board of Education is committed to providing the best possible education for children who attend its schools. The commitment requires not only, rigorous courses, highly-qualified teachers, and well-equipped facilities, but also a safe, positive environment for our students, staff, parents, stakeholders, and community partners. The Board of Education expects all students to adhere to strict standards of acceptable behavior so that maximum learning can place in our schools.

The Code of Student Conduct – Student Rights and Responsibilities handbook identifies the rules of student behavior applicable to all Valdosta City School students and the procedures for imposing discipline on students who violate these rules. When punishment must be administered, the Code of Student Conduct ensures that it is fair and serves the best interests of all students in the School District.

In general, discipline is designed to correct a student’s misconduct and encourages the student to be a responsible citizen of the school community. Disciplinary actions will be administered in proportion to the severity of the unacceptable behavior, its impact on the school environment, the student’s age and grade level, the student’s previous discipline history, and other relevant factors.

Parental notification and parental involvement are essential to any effort to modify a student’s inappropriate behavior. The Code of Student Conduct handbook will only be effective if parents and guardians, teachers, and school administrators work together to improve student behavior and enhance academic performance.

The Code of Student Conduct handbook is implemented pursuant to Board Policy JCDA. The policies mentioned in this booklet can be found in the Valdosta City Schools Board of Education Policy Manual. You may access the policy by visiting www.gocats.org and clicking on the ePolicy link.

Purpose

The Code of Student Conduct handbook is intended to inform students in grades K-12 of the types of behaviors that are unacceptable. It is impossible to write a Code that addresses every conceivable variation of prohibited behavior. Consequently, students should understand they may be disciplined for any misconduct that disrupts the orderly mission of the school or that is otherwise inappropriate, whether or not it is specifically listed in the Code of Student Conduct handbook.

Individual schools and classroom teachers may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in this Code of Student Conduct handbook. These rules may be explained by the teacher, posted in classrooms, or distributed to students, and may or may not constitute violations of the Code of Student Conduct handbook.

Valdosta City Schools was awarded district accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and School Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI). This accreditation was granted by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, the parent organization of SACS CASI.

District Accreditation as conferred by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission provides Valdosta City Schools an internationally recognized mark of quality for our district and all the schools within our district. It demonstrates to our community our commitment to excellence, our openness to external review and feedback, and our desire to be the best we can be on behalf of the students we serve.

We are also accredited with quality by the Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC).
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Champions make those around them better.
Champions see every challenge as an opportunity.
Champions do what is right even when it hurts.
Champions give their all no matter the situation or score.
Champions dedicate themselves to prepare for success.
Champions live by a higher personal standard.
Champions stand firm when others around them may fall.
Champions understand winning is not the only thing.
Champions graciously deflect honor.
Champions put the success of others above individual achievement.
Champions never sacrifice what is best for something good.
Champions may fail…but they never ever give up!

GO CATS!

Believe in yourself and all that you are.
Know that there is something inside you that is greater than any obstacle.

—Christian D. Larson
ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS
A parent, guardian, kinship caregiver, or other person enrolling the student must accompany the student for registration and must be a resident of the school district. Registration for students is held during designated registration hours posted at each school. To determine your child’s school zone, enter your address on the Find Your Bus Route tab under the Parents menu at www.gocats.org.

The VCS Registration Packet is available for download on the Registration tab under the Parents menu at www.gocats.org. All forms are available on-site at each school, but downloading and completing before arrival will save time. The VCS Enrollment & Registration Checklist outlines all required documents needed to complete registration. Parents should provide all documents at the time of registration.

AGE REQUIREMENTS
To enroll in school, students entering Kindergarten must be 5 years old on or before September 1. First grade students must be 6 years old on or before September 1. Parents must provide a copy of their child’s proof of age at the time of enrollment.

Any student who has reached the age of 18, but has not reached the age of 20 by September 1, and who has dropped out of school or withdrawn from school for one semester or more after his/her 18th birthday, must apply for admission to Valdosta City Schools.

Special Education students are eligible for enrollment in appropriate education programs through the age of 22 or until they receive a high school diploma or special education diploma or the equivalent, whichever comes first.

CUSTODY
Parents shall provide to the school a certified copy of any court order(s) regarding the custody of the child. Student enrollment forms, as well as other official documents of the school, must be signed by the natural parent or legal guardian with whom the child resides. Educational and medical decisions concerning the child are reserved for the enrolling parent, although both parents can be involved in the process. If there is a disagreement between the parents, the educational/medical decision of the enrolling parent shall supersede the educational decision of the non-enrolling parent, unless otherwise specified in a court order, which may be reviewed by the school social worker. If there is a disagreement and both parents have enrolled the child, then the parent with primary physical custody shall have the educational and medical decision making authority, unless the parties have a court order that directs otherwise. If the parents have never been married, and no court order is provided, educational and medical decisions will be made by the enrolling parent.

Under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-780, It is a crime for any person to make or attempt to make a change of custody of a minor child by removing the child from school without permission of the person who enrolled the child in school, even if the person attempting to remove the child has a court order granting that person custody. Court orders that specifically authorize or direct the release of custody by the school will be followed. The school will not interject itself in custody or visitation disputes between parents. Valdosta City School District encourages all parents to discuss educational decisions with each other prior to notifying the district of educational changes regarding their student.

The school will give to non-custodial parents, upon request, all information required under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the laws of Georgia unless there is a valid court order directing the school not to divulge such information. If such an order exists, a certified copy must be presented to the principal. We are obligated to treat both parents as a legal parent with access to the child and the child’s records.
EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION
It is critical for the school to be able to contact parents at any time students are at school. The school must have the parents’ current address and home, cellular and business telephone numbers. Emergency contact persons and their telephone numbers are needed in case a parent cannot be reached. This information is required at the time of registration and whenever a change occurs with the parent’s address, telephone or emergency contact information.

IMMUNIZATION
Upon initial enrollment in a Georgia public school, parents must provide a certificate that their child has completed a Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening (Form 3300). All new students enrolling in Valdosta City Schools (K-12), and all current students rising to the 6th grade must have obtained two (2) doses of the MMR (Mumps) and Varicella (Chicken Pox) vaccines. Also, effective July 1, 2014 children born on or after January 1, 2002 who are attending 7th grade and for new entrants into Georgia school grades 8th through 12th must have received one dose of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) vaccine and one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine. Parents can obtain a Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231) from their physician or the Lowndes County Health Department

Georgia law requires immunizations be listed on the Georgia Certificate of Immunization.

Georgia law allows for two types of exemptions from the immunization requirements: medical and religious.

Medical exemptions are used only when a child has a medical condition that keeps him from being able to receive a specific vaccine(s), not all vaccines. A medical exemption must be marked on the Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231). A letter from a physician, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) or physician assistant (PA) attached to the certificate will not be accepted as a medical exemption. It must be marked on the certificate. A physician, APRN, or PA must re-evaluate the need for a medical exemption at least once each year and issue a new certificate of immunization at that time. The date of expiration on the section of the certificate marked “medical exemption” should be one year from the date of issue and never be longer than one year.

Religious exemption: There is no standard form for the affidavit of religious exemption. The parent or guardian must give the school a signed and dated notarized affidavit stating that immunizations are against the family’s religious beliefs. This affidavit of religious exemption should be filed instead of the Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231). Please keep in mind, in the event of a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak, children with medical or religious exemptions will be excluded from attending school.

CONTINUED ENROLLMENT
A student who has been enrolled in and attended a school in VCS for more than half of the school year and moves during the school year to another attendance zone within VCS may continue to be enrolled in and attend the school through the end of the school year as long as the student has no disciplinary or attendance problems. The parent must provide transportation to and from school.

TRANSFER STUDENTS
Prior to admission, the school must receive a certified copy of the student’s academic transcript and disciplinary record from the school previously attended. A student may be admitted provisionally if the name and address of the school last attended and authorization to release all academic and disciplinary records to the school administration is provided.
ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIMES

The beginning and end times for the schools are as follows:
- Elementary Schools – 7:45 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
- Middle School – 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- Valdosta Early College Academy (VECA)
  7:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Valdosta High School – 8:15 a.m. – 3:25 p.m.
- Maceo Horne Learning Center
  7:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- Maceo Horne Learning Center
  Evening Program 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
  (Monday – Thursday)

STUDENT ABSENCES

Compulsory school attendance is required of all children between the ages of six and sixteen residing within the State of Georgia. Good attendance in school promotes positive academic outcomes such as being able to read proficiently, being promoted, and graduating high school on time. It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian, or other person for ensuring regular attendance of a school age child lies with the parent, guardian, or other person with whom the child resides (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1). In an effort to improve student attendance, the Valdosta City School System has established procedures to address student absences from school. Through the combined efforts of the building level administrators, classroom teachers, parents and/or guardians, the school social workers, school resource officers, support staff, and the Lowndes County Juvenile and State Courts, the goal to improve student attendance will be achieved. It is not the desire of the Valdosta City School System that students attend school when

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

At the time of withdrawal, students must return all textbooks, library books and other school-owned items. Any such items not returned, and any other school-related expenses for which the student is responsible, must be paid for at the time of withdrawal. The school may withhold grade reports, diplomas, and/or certificates of progress until restitution is made for lost or damaged textbooks and/or media materials.

In situations where a custodial parent enrolls a child in school, that same parent must be the person who withdraws the child from school. However, the custodial parent who enrolled the child in school may give certified written permission to the school to allow a noncustodial parent to complete withdrawal procedures.

A minor who is not emancipated may not drop out of school without the written permission of his/her parent/guardian. Prior to accepting such permission, the school shall schedule a conference with the student and parent/guardian to discuss the educational options available to the student and the consequences of not earning a high school diploma.

Attendance Information

Transcripts from non-accredited schools will be considered on an individual basis. Additional information and testing may be required in order to make a determination on how much credit may be accepted from the student’s previous school. School credits for work completed under an individual tutor may not be accepted. Transfer credits will be validated by the student’s guidance counselor.

The parent must disclose at the time the transfer is sought whether the student is currently serving a suspension or expulsion from school; whether the student withdrew from the last district attended in lieu of being ordered to serve a period of suspension, expulsion or assignment to an alternative education program; and, whether the student has ever been adjudicated guilty of a felony. Any student who is currently serving and/or sentenced to a suspension or expulsion in another school system must complete and/or wait until they clear that suspension/expulsion period before any consideration will be given to their enrollment in Valdosta City Schools.
ill; however, there is a direct relationship between school attendance and academic performance. Every reasonable attempt should be made for students to attend school.

**Lawful Absence From Class/School**

As permitted under Georgia state law and Georgia State Board of Education policies, a student’s absence, tardy or early checkout may be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness or when attendance in school would endanger a student’s health or the health of others;

2. Serious illness or death of an immediate family member;

3. A mandated absence by order of governmental agencies, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces;

4. Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student’s family;

5. Conditions that render attendance impossible or hazardous to one’s health or safety;

6. Registering to vote or voting, for a period not to exceed one day; and

7. To visit with a parent serving in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard. If such parent has been called to duty or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support post, a student shall be granted excused absences, up to five (5) school days per school year, for the purpose of visiting or reuniting with his/her parent, provided the parent has submitted the appropriate request form and received approval from the superintendent. The request form is to be turned in to the School Liaison Officer at Moody AFB’s Family Readiness Center. The SLO will forward it to the superintendent for approval.

**Jessie’s Law**

A foster care student (served by DFCS) who attends court proceedings relating to the students foster care shall be credited as present by the school and shall not be counted as an absence, either excused or unexcused, for any day, portion of a day, or days missed from school.

**Absences Requiring Medical Documentation**

In the event that a student’s personal illness or attendance at school endangers a student’s health or the health of others, the school may require the student to present appropriate medical documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence. In the event that a student has excessive absences for health reasons, the school may require medical documentation, from a physician, before it can be determined whether or not to excuse an absence.

**Unexcused Student Absences**

The following procedures will be utilized in addressing unexcused student absences:

1. Students are required to provide written excuses for absences in accordance with Valdosta City Board Policy JBD. The Principal of each school will designate a person to maintain a record of students’ excused and unexcused absences. Written notes explaining the reason for the student absence are to be retained until the end of the school term.

2. Teachers must maintain timely and accurate attendance records that reflect absences as excused or unexcused. The Valdosta City School System Code of Student Conduct states:
A dated and signed note from the parent or guardian and/or physician must be given to the student’s homeroom teacher explaining the reason for the absence on the first day that the student returns to school but within three (3) days of returning to school. Otherwise, the absence will remain unexcused.

3. Upon a student’s 3rd unexcused absence: The homeroom teacher will contact the parent/guardian notifying them of the requirements of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law and parental obligation to obey the GA Attendance Law. The attendance secretary, SRO, and/or school social worker may also contact the student and/or the parent/guardian.

4. Upon a student’s 5th unexcused absence: The attendance secretary will send a system approved letter to the student’s parent/guardian regarding the student’s unexcused absences. The attendance secretary, SRO, or school social worker will provide the parent/guardian with a copy of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law and parental obligation to obey the GA Attendance Law. A VCS Attendance Agreement will be developed with the parent, student, and school attendance staff. The school’s designee will have the parent sign an acknowledgement of receipt and understanding of the Attendance Law and VCS Attendance Agreement. If the school’s designee is unable to make contact with the parent or guardian, a copy of these documents will be sent via first class mail or hand delivered. In cases with prior truancy issues, an expedited referral may be made to DFCS and/or Magistrate and/or Juvenile court. Consequences and Penalties of violating Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law: Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who violates this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine of not less than $25.00 and not greater than $100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day’s absence from school in violation of this part after the child’s school system notifies the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused days of absence for a child shall constitute a separate offense.

5. Upon a student’s 10th unexcused absence: A referral may be made to LODAC’s Truancy Intervention Program (TIP) and/or DFCS. In addition, a parent/student may be required to meet with the VCS School/District Attendance Team. The parent, guardian or student may be referred to Magistrate and/or Juvenile court for prosecution under the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law for ongoing truancy issues that are not resolved through TIP, DFCS, and/or the VCS School/District Attendance Team.

6. School days missed as a result of an out of school (OSS) and in school suspension (ISS) do not count as absences for the purpose of determining student truancy.

TOTAL ABSENCES
(includes excused and unexcused absences)

The following procedures will be utilized to address total absences:

1. Upon a student’s 10th total absence: The homeroom teacher will contact the parent/guardian notifying them of the requirements of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law and parental obligation to obey the GA Attendance Law. The attendance secretary, SRO, and/or school social worker may also contact the student and/or the parent/guardian.

2. Upon a student’s 15th total absence: The attendance secretary will send a system approved letter to the student’s parent/guardian regarding the student’s total absences. The attendance secretary, SRO, or school social worker will provide the parent/guardian with a copy of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law and parental obligation to obey the GA Attendance Law. A
VCS Attendance Agreement will be developed with the parent, student, and school attendance staff. The school’s designee will have the parent sign an acknowledgement of receipt and understanding of the Attendance Law and VCS Attendance Agreement. If the school’s designee is unable to make contact with the parent or guardian, a copy of these documents will be sent via first class mail or hand delivered. Stipulations may be put in place that require medical documentation for any additional absences.

3. Upon a student’s **16th total absence:** A referral may be made to LODAC’s Truancy Intervention Program (TIP) and/or DFCS. In addition, a parent/student may be required to meet with the VCS School/District Attendance Team. The parent, guardian or student may be referred to Magistrate and/or Juvenile court for prosecution under the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law for ongoing truancy issues that are not resolved through TIP, DFCS, and/or the VCS School/District Attendance Team. Absences for students with extenuating medical conditions will be taken into consideration based on the medical needs of the child and documented in the appropriate educational plan (IEP, 504 Plan, etc.) and/or VCS Attendance Agreement.

**CHRONIC ILLNESSES**

Parents should inform the school nurse of any chronic illness that may require medication, treatment, or frequent visits to the school nurse. Parents are responsible for providing all prescription medication, equipment, and supplies to the school that their child should need for his or her chronic illness (i.e. EpiPen for students with anaphylaxis allergies; inhalers, nebulizer kits, and asthma medication for students with asthma; emergency seizure medication for students with a seizure disorder; blood glucose monitor, strips for monitor, Insulin, Glucagon, syringes, finger stick lancets, alcohol pads, ketone strips, and SNACKS for students with diabetes; and any other type of medication, equipment, or supplies prescribed by a doctor needed for a student).

Students with chronic illnesses will be referred to the Student Support Team designee to determine appropriate services.

**TARDIES AND EARLY CHECKOUTS**

1. **At the accumulation of 10 tardies and/or early checkouts:** The homeroom teacher will make contact with the parent/guardian notifying them of the requirements of the VCS Student Code of Conduct and VCS Board Policy related to tardies/early checkouts. The attendance secretary, SRO, and/or school social worker may also contact the student and/or the parent/guardian.

2. **At the accumulation of 15 tardies and/or early checkouts:** The attendance secretary will send a system approved letter to the student’s parent/guardian regarding the student’s tardies and/or early checkouts. The attendance secretary, SRO, or school social worker will provide the parent/guardian with a copy of the VCS Student Code of Conduct and VCS Board Policy related to tardies/early checkouts. A VCS Attendance Agreement will be developed with the parent, student, and school attendance staff. The school’s
designee will have the parent sign an acknowledgement of receipt and understanding of the school policies related to tardies and/or early checkouts and VCS Attendance Agreement. If the school’s designee is unable to make contact with the parent or guardian, a copy of these documents will be sent via first class mail or hand delivered. Stipulations may be put in place that require medical documentation for any additional absences.

3. At the accumulation of **20+ tardies and/or early checkouts**: A referral may be made to DFCS. The school may impose school-level consequences. In addition, a parent/student may be required to meet with the VCS School/District Attendance Team. Tardies and/or early checkouts for students with extenuating medical conditions will be taken into consideration based on the medical needs of the child and documented in the appropriate educational plan (IEP, 504 Plan, etc.) and/or VCS Attendance Agreement.

Students will not be marked tardy if a bus is late arriving to school.

In all cases where a referral to the Lowndes Drug Action Council Truancy Intervention Program (“LODAC” or “TIP”) is needed, the following procedures shall apply to the attendance protocol:

1. If the TIP program is completed and the student continues to be absent from school, the matter may be referred to the Juvenile Court or Magistrate Court.
2. If the TIP program is not completed, the matter may be referred to DFCS for further action along with filing of a Juvenile Court truancy complaint. Referral to DFCS shall be automatic for elementary school students.
3. If the parent or guardian has previously attended TIP, a second referral to the program will be forfeited and a State Court criminal prosecution may be initiated.

Reporting and Rewarding

**REPORT CARD RELEASE DATES**

- October 17, 2018
- January 11, 2019
- March 21, 2019
- May 24, 2019

**Progress Reports** - Progress reports will be distributed to students every 4 ½ weeks.

**Students should refer to the School Handbooks for information about Exam Exemptions.**

**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**

- Students in grades K-2 are eligible for Honor Roll with Distinction with A’s in English/language arts and mathematics.
- Students in grades 3-5 are eligible for Honor Roll with Distinction with A’s in all core academic subjects.
- 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).

**HONOR ROLL**

- Students in Grades K-2 are eligible for Honor Roll with A’s and B’s in English/language arts and mathematics. The may be no lower than an 85 for the current grading term.
• Students in grades 3-5 are eligible for Honor Roll with A’s and B’s in all core academic subjects.
• Students in grades 6-12 are eligible for Honor Roll with a GPA of 85-94 average in core academic subjects (including academic electives).

**HIGH SCHOOL HONOR RECOGNITION**

**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 85 with 6 AP/IB and/or Academic Dual Enrollment credits. (Students should refer to the School Handbooks and/or school administration for additional information concerning calculation of honor graduate status)

**Merit Points** – Honors courses will receive an additional 5 points added to the final grade at the end of each course. AP, IB, and DE courses will receive an additional 10 points added to the final grade at the end of each course. Students must have a passing grade to receive the 10 points for DE courses and to earn credit for the course. **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.

3. Class rank is calculated on a 3-tiered ranking scale. Honor graduates participating in the suggested number (6 or more) of AP/IB/DE courses will be ranked first, followed by students who are Honor Graduates that have not completed the recommended number of AP/IB/DE courses, followed by the remaining students.

**Promotion and Retention Policies**

**KINDERGARTEN**

Promotion to the next grade will be determined by the following criteria:

1. Mastery of 80% of English/language arts points assigned to standards as reported in the final grading period.
2. Mastery of 80% of mathematics points assigned to standards as reported in the final grading period.
3. Mastery of a minimum reading proficiency level as determined by the district.

**FIRST AND SECOND GRADES**

Promotion to the next grade will be determined by the following criteria:

1. Final grade average of 70 or above in English/language arts and mathematics.
2. Mastery of a minimum reading proficiency level as determined by the district.

**THIRD THROUGH FIFTH GRADES**

Promotion to the next grade will be determined by the following criteria:

1. Final grade average of 70 or above in all four academic subjects: mathematics, English/language arts, science and social studies.
2. Mastery of a minimum reading proficiency level as determined by the district.
SIXTH THROUGH EIGHTH GRADES

Promotion to the next grade will be determined by the following criteria:

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 GRADES

Students are required to pass all core academic courses and earn a minimum number of unit credits to be promoted. The following documentation will be used for determining promotion based on the following number of earned units per grade:

**Freshman:** Must earn five (5) unit credits and pass all core academic courses as a 9th grader to be promoted to the 10th grade.

**Sophomore:** Must have earned a total of eleven (11) unit credits and pass all core academic courses to be promoted to the 11th grade.

**Junior:** Must have earned a total of seventeen (17) unit credits and pass all core academic courses to be promoted to the 12th grade.

**Senior:** Must have earned a total of twenty-four (24) unit credits and have met all state and local graduation requirements.

TESTING

Universal screening will occur 2-3 times per year for the purposes of assessing reading and mathematical levels of proficiency.

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 language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students in grades 3 through 8 will take an end-of-grade assessment in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Additionally, students in Grades 5 & 8 will take an end-of-grade assessment in Science and Social Studies. High school students will take an end-of-course assessment for each of the eight courses designated by the State Board of Education. Based on Georgia Board of Education policy, the EOC assessment shall count for 20% of a student’s final grade.

ACCESS for ELLs is administered, annually, to all English learners in Georgia. ACCESS for ELLs is a standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure English learners’ social and academic proficiency in English.

The Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA) is a portfolio of student work for students with significant cognitive disabilities in kindergarten, grades 3-8, and grade 11. The GAA enables the demonstration of achievement and progress relative to selected skills that are aligned to the Georgia curriculum.

The students in Kindergarten are administered the GKIDS Readiness Check and the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developmental Skills (GKIDS).

The results of each test are used to identify students’ strengths and weaknesses in academic areas and to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs. Student test reports for state assessments are provided to parents as test scores are available at the school. Questions about test scores should be directed to the principal and/or school test coordinator.

As of March 30, 2015, Georgia state law provides that students shall no longer be required to earn a passing score on any graduation tests to earn a high school diploma.
EARNING COURSE CREDIT BY TESTING-OUT

Based on state law, students have the opportunity to “test-out” of any course that has an associated End of Course Test (EOC). A unit of course credit will be awarded to students who obtain the performance level of Distinguished Learner (Level 4) with a Grade Conversion Score of 92 or above on an EOC prior to taking the course. Students have only one opportunity per course to test-out, and may only earn up to three credits by testing-out.

Students must meet the following requirements for earning course credit through testing-out:

a. Not currently or previously enrolled in the course;
b. Have earned a grade of B or better in a content area course that is the same content area of the course for which the student is attempting the EOC;
c. Received a teacher recommendation from a teacher in the same content area;
d. Received parent/guardian permission if the student is less than 18 years of age; and
e. Paid a fee of $50.00 per test as established by the Georgia Department of Education.

The EOC administration for testing-out will be conducted in an online format during specific administration windows. Students must pay a fee of $50.00 per test prior to the administration of the EOC. This fee will be refunded if a student achieves the Distinguished Learner performance level 4 (with Grade Conversion score of 92 or above) on the EOC. Students who do not reach the Distinguished Learner performance level 4 (with Grade Conversion score of 92 or above) when attempting to test-out must enroll in and complete the associated course and retake the EOC even if the student makes a passing grade on the EOC during the testing-out attempt. An EOC score of less than Distinguished Learner received during the testing-out attempt may not be “banked” and used in place of an EOC score for a course completed at a later date.

Students who are currently enrolled, or who have previously been enrolled, in a higher-level course are not allowed to earn credit by later attempting to test-out of a lower level course. For example, a student already taking AP Physics may not earn credit for Physical Science by testing-out.

Course credit earned through testing-out will be reported on the student’s transcript in the same way as course credit earned through course completion. A numerical grade for course credit earned through testing-out will not be reported on the student’s transcript. Under NCAA requirements, units of credit earned through testing-out using the EOC will not count as a core course credit for athletic aid for any student seeking NCAA Division I or II athletic scholarships.

Students and/or parents should contact the school counselor for more information or to obtain the registration packet for the EOC Testing-Out Option.

REGISTER FOR EOC TESTING-OUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Date</th>
<th>Registration Deadline</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 17 - 21, 2018</td>
<td>August 24, 2018</td>
<td>$50 per test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 18 – 22, 2019</td>
<td>February 25, 2019</td>
<td>$50 per test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 24 – 26, 2019</td>
<td>May 17, 2019</td>
<td>$50 per test</td>
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</table>
ADVANCEMENT VIA INDIVIDUAL DETERMINATION (AVID)

AVID is a proven college-readiness program designed to increase the number of students who enroll and persist in postsecondary education. AVID is implemented in the middle and high schools to prepare students who are capable of completing a college-prep curriculum, but may be falling short of their potential. The core component is the AVID elective, which supports students in 6th – 12th grades as they tackle more rigorous classes. AVID’s teaching strategies are used in many core content classrooms outside of the AVID elective to assist students. Please contact your child’s teacher, school counselor, or administrator for more information.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Valdosta City Schools offers an Alternative Education Program that seeks to modify students’ behavior to acceptable standards while providing appropriate instruction. Students in grades 6 – 12 assigned to the alternative program will attend the Maceo Horne Learning Center. All students assigned to the Maceo Horne Learning Center are required to wear uniforms. The superintendent, or his/her designee, the principal, or his/her designee and the alternative program principal will jointly make all placement decisions.

After the mandatory time has been spent in the Alternative Program, return to the regular school program is dependent on the student having good behavior, good attendance, and passing grades.

Upon the student’s completion of the assigned days, the alternative program principal will arrange a transition meeting and notify the parents of their right to attend. Other principals and school district employees who have an interest in the student’s placement will also be invited to the transition meeting. The student’s future school assignment and any additional stipulations will be determined at the transition meeting. Students entering or returning from adjudicated incarceration to Valdosta City Schools shall be processed in by a screening committee to determine the most suitable placement. The committee will include a minimum of three (3) people – the principal, or his/her designee, a central office representative, the Maceo Horne Learning Center principal, and at least one of the student’s teachers.

*The Superintendent reserves the right to determine the appropriate placement of any student enrolling in Valdosta City Schools.

ATHLETICS

Valdosta City Schools offer 13 athletic programs for males and females. Students must maintain good academic and behavioral standing to participate in athletic programs. The Georgia High School Association (GHSA) establishes the required number of units for high school students to be eligible to participate in inter-scholastic athletics:

- **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.

Any VCS student attending the Horne Learning Center forfeits their right to participate in extracurricular athletic activities. If a student re-enrolls into their regular middle or high school, they may regain their eligibility and right to participate in their school’s athletic
programs; however, they must still satisfy the academic and behavior criteria.

**PARTICIPATION RULE** - If any student athlete quits or is 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.

**DISCLAIMER: GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION GOVERNS VCS HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS AND VCS GOVERNS ALL MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS IN VCS.**

**BRIDGE ACT**
The BRIDGE (Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia’s Economy) Act was signed into law in May 2010. The BRIDGE Act provides middle- and high-school students with career counseling and regularly-scheduled advisement to choose a focused plan of study. Students in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades shall be provided counseling, advisement, career awareness, career interest inventories and information to assist them in evaluating their academic skills and career interests. Eighth grade students and their parents are to complete an Individual Graduation Plan that includes high school and postsecondary goals, career focus areas, courses required for graduation and electives that support their career goals. High School students shall be provided guidance, advisement and counseling annually that will enable them to successfully monitor progress on their Individual Graduation Plan which prepares them for a seamless transition to postsecondary study, further training or employment. Valdosta City Schools uses Infinite Campus and Georgia’s Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) to meet the requirements of the Bridge Act.

**CHARACTER EDUCATION**
In an effort to foster the development of critical thinking, ethical and lawful behavior, and responsible citizenship, a framework for the teaching of character education has been developed in all grade levels.

Using the framework, instructional staff members at each school shall provide opportunities for student growth in responsibility, independence and leadership. These opportunities shall be extended to staff members and parents. Parental input shall be used to establish the expected outcomes of this program.

Each school shall foster and maintain a safe and orderly environment that emphasizes honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, responsibility, good citizenship and self-discipline.

**CHILD FIND**
The purpose of Child Find is to identify, locate, screen, and evaluate children and youth, birth to age 21, who are suspected of, or have a disability or developmental delay. Valdosta City Schools serves children ages 3 through 21 with identified special education needs. Districts have Child Find responsibility for all children suspected of having disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. This includes:

- Children, birth through 3, who may or may not be referred to and served by the state’s early intervention program, Babies Can’t Wait;
• Preschool children, ages 3 through 5, who may not be enrolled in a Georgia-funded pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, including children who are parentally placed in private preschools or daycare centers outside the district;
• Children who are enrolled in a public school within the district, including public charter schools;
• Children who are parentally placed in private schools, including religious elementary and secondary schools;
• Children enrolled in homeschool/study programs;
• Children who are attending charter schools within the district or in the area if it is designated as an individual district;
• Highly mobile children, including migrant, homeless, and children who are wards of the state;
• Children served in community programs such as rehabilitation centers, daycare centers, etc.;
• Children, ages 18 through 21, who are incarcerated in facilities operated by the local sheriff’s office or other municipalities; and
• Any other children suspected of having disabilities.

A referral may be made by anyone who has a concern about a child’s development. All referrals are considered confidential. The parent retains the right to refuse services. Children may be referred by any of the following:
• Parents/legal guardians/foster parents
• Other family members
• Physicians/health care providers
• Preschool programs
• School system personnel
• Community agencies
• Private school personnel
• Others who are concerned about a child’s development

A child should be referred when:
• A health or medical disorder interferes with development or learning.

• A child seems to have difficulty seeing or hearing.
• A child appears to have social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties that affect his/her ability to learn.
• A child has been diagnosed with a progressive or degenerative condition that will eventually impair or impede the child’s ability to learn.
• A child seems to have difficulty understanding directions like same-age peers.
• A child’s speech is not understandable to family or friends.
• A child has difficulty with reading, math, or other school subjects.

Special Education is specially-designed instruction intended to meet the unique learning strengths and needs of individual students with disabilities from birth through age 21. A child must be evaluated and identified as having a disability to be eligible for Special Education and/or related services. Screening to determine appropriate educational strategies is not considered an evaluation. Referrals must be accompanied by documentation of scientific, research or evidence based academic or behavioral interventions that demonstrate insufficient rate of progress. Exceptions to this rule are allowed only when evaluation and/or placement is required due to a significant, apparent disability (Refer to Exceptions to the Use of the SST Process).

Programs are provided for students in all disability areas recognized by the State of Georgia. Disability categories are: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Deaf/Blind, Deaf/ Hard of Hearing, Emotional and Behavioral Disorder, Intellectual Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Significant Developmental Delay, Specific Learning Disability, Speech/Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visual Impairment.

Where can I find out more about Child Find? For preschool-aged children, with a chronological age of 3 through 5, who have or may have a developmental disability, please contact the Special Education Office at 229-333-8505. Parents of students, kindergarten through 12th grade, who suspect their child may have a disability,
should contact the teacher, principal or the chairperson of the school’s Student Support Team (SST). Annual child find notices are published in local newspapers, delivered to daycare and community settings, and also posted on the VCS Special Education website: www.gocats.org. Additionally, annual child find trainings are conducted at all schools by special education department staff.

**COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM**

The Comprehensive School Counseling Program provides all students with the opportunity to enhance academic development, explore career interests, and foster personal/social skills, thus preparing students to graduate from high school being college and career ready. Various types of counseling services are provided to students through classroom guidance, small groups, advisement, and individual counseling as needed. Parental permission is not required for students to see the counselor or to participate in classroom guidance activities. If individual students wish to speak with a counselor, they should tell their teacher. Parents should call the school or send a note to their child’s teacher, counselor or principal if they want their child to meet with a counselor.

**DRUG PREVENTION PROGRAM**

D.A.R.E. is provided for students in fifth and seventh grades. This program is a cooperative effort of the Valdosta Police Department and the Valdosta City School System to prevent drug abuse in children and youth. The program emphasis is to help students recognize and resist the many subtle pressures that influence them to experiment with alcohol and marijuana. In addition, program strategies are planned to focus on feelings relating to self-esteem, interpersonal and communication skills, decision making and positive alternatives to drug abuse behavior. A uniformed D.A.R.E. officer (Valdosta Police Department) conducts these classes.

**EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

The Early Intervention Program serves students in Kindergarten through fifth grade who are performing below grade level. This program is designed to help identified students obtain the academic skills necessary to reach grade level expectations in the shortest possible time. For more information, contact the principal or the Teaching and Learning Department.

**ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES**

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a state funded instructional program for eligible English Language Learners (ELLs) in grades K-12. Title III is a federally funded program which provides eligible Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with subgrants to provide supplemental services for ELLs. Both ESOL and Title III hold students accountable for progress in English language proficiency and evidence of attainment of English language proficiency sufficient to exit ESOL services.

The ESOL Program is a standards-based curriculum emphasizing social and academic language proficiency. The curriculum is based on the integration of the WIDA Consortium English Language Proficiency Standards with the Georgia Performance Standards. This integration will help English Language Learners (ELLs) to use English to communicate and demonstrate academic, social, and cultural proficiency. For further information contact the ESOL teacher who serves your student’s school or the Federal Programs Director at 229-671-6013.

**GIFTED EDUCATION**

Valdosta City School System provides a gifted education program for students who demonstrate the following characteristics...
a high degree of intellectual ability, outstanding creative ability(ies), an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and high achievement in specific academic fields.

A student may be nominated for consideration for gifted educational services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, and other individuals with knowledge of the student’s abilities. Services are provided for students in kindergarten (beginning second semester of their Kindergarten year) and grades 1-12. For further information contact the teacher of the gifted at your student’s school or visit our website at www.gocats.org.

**HOMELESS EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

Homeless Educational Services are designed to provide educational services with dignity and respect to students who meet the criteria for homelessness according to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Students are required by law to have access to all services, programs and activities provided by the Valdosta City School System.

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program is authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) (McKinney-Vento Act). The McKinney-Vento Act was originally authorized in 1987 and most recently reauthorized in December 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The McKinney-Vento Act is the federal law that governs the educational rights of children and youth in homeless situations.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, the term “homeless children and youths” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youths who are sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals; who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and who are migratory children who live in one of the above circumstances.

**Eligible children have the right to:**

- Receive a free, appropriate public education.
- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
- Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
- Enroll in the local school; or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is your preference. (If the school district believes that the school you select is not in the best interest of your children, then the district must provide you with a written explanation of its position and inform you of your right to appeal its decision.)
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if you request this.
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to your children’s needs.

To read the law in its entirety, you may visit: [www.naechy.org/mckinney.html](http://www.naechy.org/mckinney.html)

For questions regarding the eligibility or education of homeless students, or dispute resolutions you may contact:

**Kiwana Kiser, Case Manager for Homeless Children and Youth**  
229-671-6037  
kiwana.kiser@gocats.org

**Deanna W. Folsom, Social Services/Coordinator & Homeless Liaison**  
229-671-6067  
dfolsom@gocats.org
**HOSPITAL HOMEBOUND**

Hospital/Homebound (HHB) services are designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or hospital for students in Georgia public schools whose medical needs, either physical or psychiatric, do not allow them to attend school for a limited period of time. HHB instruction may be used to supplement the classroom program for students with health impairments whose conditions may interfere with regular school attendance (e.g., students receiving dialysis or radiation/chemotherapy or students with other serious health conditions). Students must be enrolled in a public school in Georgia (grades K-12) in order to receive HHB services.

HHB services are not intended to supplant regular school services and are by design temporary. The student must anticipate being absent from school for a minimum of ten consecutive or intermittent school days due to a medical or psychiatric condition. The student’s inability to attend school for medical or psychiatric reasons must be certified by the licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is currently treating the student for the diagnosis presented. HHB forms can be located at www.gocats.org under the “Parents” drop-down menu. If you have any additional questions regarding the HHB program please contact the District HHB Coordinator, Laura Diaz, at 229-333-8505 or ldiaz@gocats.org.

**NURSING SERVICES**

School based clinics are available at all schools to provide medical care and promote the wellbeing of our students, teachers, and staff. Our school nurses are available to provide medical care and treatment for our students in the school setting. School nurses can administer first aid to students if an accident occurs. In case of serious illness/injury, the school will telephone Emergency Medical Services (911) for immediate transportation to the closest hospital. Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, Valdosta City Schools will use CareDox for health enrollment of all students, clinic consent, consent to administer medical treatment, and for parent notification when students visit the school based clinic. Parents will be able to provide and update student medical information in CareDox. All information is stored securely and is HIPAA and FERPA compliant.

**MIGRANT EDUCATION**

Valdosta City School System provides Migrant Education Services to identified students who might need additional educational services to achieve academic success in order to meet our State’s challenging standards. Priority for services is given to students who are failing, at risk of failing, or whose education has been interrupted during the regular school year. For additional information concerning Migrant Education Services, contact the Director of Federal Programs at 229-671-6013.

**NUTRITION PROGRAM**

Valdosta City Schools participates in a meal program available to the State of Georgia called the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). All enrolled students of Valdosta City Schools are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at school.

“You can conquer your fears. When fear is holding you back, don’t give up. Even the bravest people feel afraid. Courage is not the absence of fear, but the will to go on in spite of it.” —Author Unknown
Valdosta City Schools Code of Student Conduct

at NO COST to your household each day of the 2018 – 2019 school year. Your child(ren) will be able to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee.

USDA regulations prohibit the sale of non-nutritional foods and carbonated beverages during meal times in the cafeteria at all school levels. With this in mind and in order to encourage better nutrition and develop healthy eating habits, students or their parents are not allowed to bring foods to school from outside restaurants until the last lunch period is over. Of course, lunches sent with students when they come to school in the morning in lunch boxes, pails or plain bags are allowed.

Each cafeteria has a computer program for tracking meals. ALL Valdosta City School students are assigned a computer generated identification (ID) number that serves as their meal account number. ALL students must learn their account number to use at the cashier station.

Student Breakfast and Lunch are FREE
Extra Student Meal $3.00
Extra Milk $0.50
Adult Breakfast $1.50 - Adult Lunch $3.00

Valdosta City Schools. Requests for online courses will be evaluated on an individual basis and careful consideration will be applied to ensure student success in online learning. The deadline to notify the school for fall enrollment is August 17, 2018, and December 14, 2018 for spring enrollment. All request for high school online courses should adhere to the fall enrollment deadline, unless otherwise approved by the principal. Online courses taken in lieu of a course scheduled during the regular school day will be paid for by the school. If an online course is chosen in addition to the regular school day, the parent will be responsible for paying for the course. For more information about online learning options for your child, please contact Scarlet Brown at 229-671-6005 or scbrown@gocats.org.

GEORGIA’S ONLINE CLEARINGHOUSE

The Georgia Online Clearinghouse provides students and parents with information and access to high-quality academic and career-oriented courses, aligned to state and national standards, through a variety of online providers. To access the information found in the clearinghouse go to http://www.gadoe.org/_layouts/GADOEPublic.SPApp/Clearinghouse.aspx

Please be aware online providers listed within Georgia’s Online Clearinghouse are not affiliated nor endorsed by Valdosta City Schools. Tuition fees associated with courses available within Georgia’s Online Clearinghouse will not be paid by Valdosta City Schools. This information is being provided to parents in compliance with HB 175.

ONLINE LEARNING OPTIONS

Valdosta City Schools is committed to providing our students opportunities to take online courses. While Georgia does not require an online course to graduate, our district is exploring a variety of options for providing more online learning opportunities for students. Georgia law requires school districts to make parents aware of online learning opportunities available within the school district and how to access Georgia’s Online Clearinghouse of online courses and providers, as well as guidelines for high quality online courses.

Students enrolled in Valdosta City Schools may take an online course, even if the course is offered in our district during the regular school day; however, at this time there are limited options for online courses within Valdosta City Schools. Online courses may be provided through the Georgia Virtual School and/or a partnership with a vendor online school provided within the district.

PROMISE PROGRAM

The PROMISE (Promoting Relationships through Opportunities, Mentoring, Interventions, Supports and Education) Program will provide additional intensive social and emotional interventions and supports for elementary students with ongoing, chronic behavior problems. Students will only be considered for the PROMISE Program after thorough behavior interventions and procedures have occurred.
at the student’s elementary school. Referral to the PROMISE Program will be completed by the administrator and will include close collaboration with parent(s)/guardian(s), student support services, and community agencies, as needed. For more information, contact your child’s principal.

REMEDIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Remedial Education Program (REP) is an instructional program designed for students in grades 6-12 who have identified deficiencies in reading, writing, and math. This program provides individualized basic skills instruction as mandated by Georgia Law in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. The REP Program provides a structure for additional instruction to ensure students meet grade level expectations at the middle and high school level. For more information, contact the principal or the Teaching and Learning Department.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

Valdosta City Schools utilizes Georgia’s Response to Intervention (RTI) “Pyramid of Interventions” framework to identify and address the needs of all student learners. The Georgia Pyramid of Interventions employs a problem solving approach that addresses student needs by providing rigorous instruction aligned to Georgia’s standards, evidence-based practices and interventions, and ongoing assessment practices.

The Georgia Pyramid of Interventions:

**Tier 1**- Standards-based and differentiated instruction, universal screening, and progress monitoring

**Tier 2**- Standard intervention protocol process for identifying and providing research/ evidence-based interventions and on-going progress monitoring using data to guide the decision making process

**Tier 3**- Intense formalized problem-solving model to identify student needs, use of targeted research/evidence-based interventions within small groups, and more frequent progress monitoring data to guide the decision making process (**SST is the structure and RTI is the process**)

**Tier 4**- Specially designed instruction, programs, and methodologies and greater frequency of progress monitoring to better serve the individual student and guide the decision making process

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES

School social workers build effective relations among students, parents, school personnel and community agencies. The social worker establishes communication between the school and the home when chronic problems such as excessive absenteeism or personal and behavior problems interfere with a student’s education. Referrals are made to a social worker when a problem cannot be solved within the school. For additional information, contact the Valdosta City Schools Department of Social Service.

SEX AND AIDS EDUCATION (GRADES 6-12)

Students are provided sex education and AIDS prevention instruction thought the comprehensive health program as mandated by O.C.G.A § 20-2-143 and the Georgia Department of Education. As part of the school’s health curriculum, sex education and AIDS prevention instruction will be presented to students (Grades 6-12). An abstinence-only curriculum that has been recommended by the sex education review committee and approved by the Valdosta Board of Education will be used for this course of study.

Among the age-appropriate topics to be taught are adolescent growth and development, anatomy and physiology, mental and physical changes during puberty, sexually transmitted diseases, the importance of the family, high moral values with an emphasis on abstinence, the danger of poor decision making, and self-awareness. This course will help your child understand the emotional, psychological, and physical

“Find people who will make you better.” —Michelle Obama
Students are encouraged to share information with their parents or guardians. Any parents who wish to preview the curriculum may do so by contacting your child’s school. **Please notify your child’s school in writing if you do NOT want your child to participate in this training session.**

**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAMS**

Student Support Services (SSS) are comprehensive school, community, family, and youth partnerships. SSS help students experiencing problems or those at risk for problems to succeed in school and to complete their education. Student Support Services may include prevention activities, intervention activities, educational support groups, school/district teams, policy and procedure statements, peer assistance/peer mediation, crisis management teams, training and awareness, curriculum, and evaluation. These services are available in all Valdosta City Schools (K-12). The school counselor leads the team and utilizes outside community agencies and providers (LODAC, DFCS, DJJ, BHS, Private Providers, Greenleaf, VSU, etc.) as resources and supports for addressing student needs. Counselors, teachers, administrators, school social workers, school psychologists, nurses, behavior specialists, SROs, D.A.R.E. officers, and/or outside community agencies may be members of the school/district SSS Teams. The primary goal of SSS is to respond systematically and professionally to students’ problems, as they are manifested in the school. The program offers assistance to students troubled by physical, emotional, social, legal, medical, familial, or substance abuse problems. The SSS also includes educational programs and information groups. Referrals may be made by teachers, parents, friends, or students themselves.

**STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM**

The Student Support Team (SST) is a problem-solving team made of educators, parents, and students, if appropriate, to address learning and/or behavior problems of students. The SST is part of Georgia’s Response to Intervention (RTI) framework for educational decision making with student learning and behavior problems. For more information about support provided through RTI and SST, please contact your child’s teacher or administrator.

**DISCIPLINARY JURISDICTION OVER STUDENT CONDUCT**

The Valdosta City School District has discipline authority over its students whenever the interests of the School District are involved. Therefore, the Code of Student Conduct handbook applies at the following times and places:

- On school grounds at any time;
- Off school grounds at a school bus stop or at a school activity, function, or event;
- While the student is on a school bus or School District-sponsored transportation;
- When either the alleged perpetrator or the alleged victim is in route to or from school, or to or from a school activity, function, or event;
- Off school grounds while the student is participating in or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities, such as field trips, conferences, or athletic events, or is otherwise subject to the jurisdiction of school authorities;
- Off school grounds while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of another school system in Georgia;
- Off school grounds when the behavior of the student could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student’s continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school.

**Code of Conduct**
or which disrupts the educational process (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.5(c);

- Off school grounds when the misconduct is directed at a School District employee, or volunteer and is related to the victim’s affiliation with the School District;
- Off school grounds when a student leaves school without permission of a school official; and
- Off school grounds when the misconduct adversely affects the safety and welfare of the school community or the orderly mission and function of the school.

**INVESTIGATION OF MISCONDUCT**

When a violation of school rules is reported or suspected, the principal or designee will determine whether an investigation is warranted and, if so, will conduct an investigation. The investigation should be timely and include interviews with the alleged perpetrator(s), victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s), staff members, and others who might have relevant information. Written statements should be obtained from all individuals who are interviewed. Video surveillance, if available, should be reviewed and secured. If administrators believe a request for a due process hearing will be made, he/she should attempt to preserve video surveillance of any misconduct. Any other physical and documentary evidence should be collected and preserved. School counselors, school social workers, and other support staff should be utilized for their expertise as determined by the circumstances of the matter. At an appropriate time during or after the investigation, the parent or guardian will be notified. However, if the incident involves an injury or similar situation, appropriate medical attention should be provided, and the parent or guardian should be notified immediately.

**INTERVIEW AND SEARCHES**

The principal or assistant principal of each school in the Valdosta City School System shall be responsible for conducting reasonable interviews of students in order to investigate misconduct properly. Searches are based on a reasonable suspicion of the presence of dangerous items and for other good and sufficient reasons. Lockers and student vehicles are subject to inspection, if reasonable suspicion has been established. Lockers may be rented to students by the school, but the lockers remain the sole property of the Valdosta City School System and are subject to unannounced searches by school personnel. The principal at Valdosta High School may deny a student the privilege of bringing a vehicle on campus. Use of metal detectors to search a student is permitted when there is reasonable suspicion that the student possesses a weapon of any kind or when a student exhibits predisposition to violent behavior or the use of force. *LBOE: JCAB

**Use of Drug Dogs** - The school system in cooperation with established police departments may use dogs to sniff out drugs when deemed appropriate. The use of dogs shall conform to state and federal law. Any vehicle searches based on a positive K-9 alert will be conducted by law enforcement personnel. **The superintendent is the only staff member that can authorize or schedule any use of drug dogs on school board owned property.** Notice must also...
be provided to students in the Code of Conduct and staff handbooks. *LBOE: JCAB

STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY OF PRINCIPAL
The principal is the designated leader of the school and, along with the staff, is responsible for its orderly operation. In case of discipline violations not covered by prescribed disposition in this handbook, the principal may enact corrective measures that are in the best interests of the school and student(s) involved.

NOTICE
It is unlawful for any person to carry, possess or have under control, any weapon at a school building, school function, on school property, a bus, or other transportation furnished by the school.

The term “weapon” means and includes any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any dirk, bowie knife, switch-blade knife, ballistic knife, and other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chakka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades, which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any instrument of like kind, any nonlethal air gun, and any stun gun or tasar as defined in subsection (a).

Punishment: A fine of not more than $10,000; imprisonment for not less than two nor more than ten years, or both. (O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1)

NOTICE: The Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (20 USC 7151) requires schools systems to expel students for NOT LESS THAN ONE YEAR for possession of firearm.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS
Our schools implement Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) across the district. PBIS is an evidence-based, data-driven framework for teaching and supporting positive behaviors and meeting students’ needs. The PBIS framework has been proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a school’s sense of safety, and support improved academic outcomes. PBIS schools apply a multi-tiered approach to prevention, using disciplinary data and principles of behavior analysis to develop school-wide, targeted and individualized interventions and supports to improve school climate for all students. (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports).

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES
When it is necessary to impose discipline, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior or a particular student and will take into account the student’s discipline history, the age of the student and other relevant factors.

The Code of Conduct provides a systematic process of behavioral correction in which inappropriate behaviors are followed by consequences. Disciplinary actions are designed to teach students self-discipline and to help them substitute inappropriate behaviors with those that are consistent with the character traits from Georgia’s Character Education Program.

Classroom teachers have the authority and responsibility to handle minor acts of misconduct, which interfere with orderly classroom procedures, school functions, extracurricular programs, or a student’s own learning process. Teachers and other professional staff members may use discipline management techniques appropriate for the situation,
which include, but are not limited to, detention, loss of privileges, isolation, parent conference, or assignment of the development of a written or graphic representation that reflects understanding of the specific misbehavior, the nature of the expected behavior, and/or the related character trait.

The school bus is an extension of the school and students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with classroom behavior. The bus driver is responsible for the safety of all who ride the bus, and students are expected to comply with instructions given by the bus driver. The bus driver has the authority to assign seats, either temporarily or permanently, and to establish rules for safety and proper behavior on the bus.

The following dispositions may be imposed by school administrators for any violation of this Code of Conduct:

- Warning and/or Counseling with a School Administrator or Counselor
- Notification of Parents/Guardians
- Loss of Privileges
- Isolation or Time Out
- Temporary Removal from Class or Activity
- Parent Conference
- Detention/Saturday School
- In-School Suspension
- Temporary Placement in an Alternative Education Program
- Short-term Suspension
- Referral to a Tribunal for Long-term Suspension or Expulsion
- Suspension from the School Bus
- Referral to Law Enforcement: Georgia law requires that certain acts of misconduct be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials.

Notwithstanding the recommended maximum dispositions, an administrator, acting through and with the concurrence of the superintendent or superintendent’s designee, may refer a student to a disciplinary tribunal. Upon such referral and after proper notice and hearing, appropriate action may be taken.

Federal and state laws and regulations that are in conflict with this Code or its application shall take precedence. The rules listed in this policy apply to all Valdosta City School students. The dispositions listed are recommendations. This list is not all inclusive, and a student committing an act of misconduct not covered by this policy will be subject to the discretionary authority of the administration. More severe punishment may be administered in extreme cases.

**SUSPENSION AND EXPULSIONS**

School administrators have the power and authority to suspend or recommend students for expulsion from school for violation of reasonable rules or regulations. A student, while under suspension, is not allowed to loiter on any Valdosta City Schools property or take part in any school activity.

Students suspended may not participate in or attend school sponsored activities until they have completed their suspension. According to Georgia High School Association (GHSA) guidelines, students may not participate in GHSA sponsored activities while attending alternative programs for disciplinary reasons.

**DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AND DISPOSITIONS**

**Event Code 01: ALCOHOL – State Reported**

Violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or use of intoxicating alcoholic beverages or substances represented as alcohol. This includes possession, sale, use, transmission, manufacture, purchase, or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, or possessing related paraphernalia during a school activity, function, or event on or off school grounds or while under school supervision.

Alcohol Level 1 – Unintentional possession – Discipline action will be left to the
discretion of the principal or his/her
designee

Alcohol Level 2 – Under influence without
possession – Discipline action will be left to
the discretion of the principal or his/her
designee

Alcohol Level 3 – Sale, purchase,
transportation, possession, consumption of
alcohol – (Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition: The following
will occur:

- Parent Contact
- Out of School Suspension
- Recommendation for Tribunal
  Hearing
- Contact School Resource Officer

Event Code 02: Arson – State
Reported

Unlawful and intentional damage or
attempted damage to any real or personal
property by fire or incendiary device. This
includes property belonging to, rented
by, or on loan to the school system and
property belonging to school employees or
to other students.

Arson Level 2 – Arson without property
damage – Discipline action will be left to the
discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Arson Level 3 – Arson with property damage
– (Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition: The following will
occur:

- Parent Contact
- Out of School Suspension
- Recommendation for Tribunal
  Hearing
- Contact School Resource Officer

Event Code 03: Battery – State
Reported

Actual and intentional touching or striking
of another person against his or her will
or intentionally causing bodily harm to
an individual. Includes an attack with a
weapon or one that can seriously cause
bodily harm to the victim. This code should
only be used when the attack is very
serious, serious enough to warrant calling
the police, where the intent is to do bodily
harm to someone.

Battery Level 1 – Battery with no injuries –
Discipline action will be left to the discretion
of the principal or his/her designee

Battery Level 2 – Battery with mild or
moderate injuries – Discipline action will be
left to the discretion of the principal or his/
his designee

Battery Level 3 – Battery with severe injuries;
three or more offenses in same school year
-(Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition: The following will
occur:

- Parent Contact
- Out of School Suspension
- Recommendation for Tribunal
  Hearing
- Contact School Resource Officer
Event Code 04: Breaking and Entering/Burglary – State Reported

Unlawful entry into a building or other structure with the intent to commit a crime. This applies to school buildings or activities related to a school function.

Breaking and Entering/Burglary Level 3 - Any incident involving breaking and entering/burglar (Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition: The following will occur:

- Parent Contact
- Out of School Suspension
- Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing
- Contact School Resource Officer

Event Code 06: Disorderly Conduct – State Reported

An act that substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of a school function, substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment, or poses a threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students, staff, or others.

Disorderly Conduct Level 1 – Minor disturbance – Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Disorderly Conduct Level 2 – Moderate disturbance; three or more minor disturbances in same School year – Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Disorderly Conduct Level 3 – Severe disruption; three or more moderate disturbances in same year – Discipline will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Event Code 07: Drugs, Except Alcohol and Tobacco – State Reported

Unlawful use, cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, possession, trans-portion, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance, or equipment or devices used for preparing or using drugs or narcotics. Includes being under the influence of drugs or substances represented as drugs. Code includes over-the-counter medications if abused by the student. Also includes intentionally smelling or inhaling fumes from any substances (for example: glue, solvents) for the purpose of becoming intoxicated. Code does not include tobacco or alcohol.

Drugs Level 1 – Unintentional possession – Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Drugs Level 2 – Failure to report medication to school authorities – Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Drugs Level 3 – Possession or distribution of unlawful drugs – (Maximum disposition)

Use of a drug authorized for the student by a medical prescription from a registered physician and taken by the student according to the prescribed directions shall not be considered a violation of this regulation. All prescription drugs shall be kept in the original container.

Maximum Disposition: The following will occur:

- Parent Contact
- Out of School Suspension
- Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing
- Contact School Resource Officer

Event Code 08: Fighting – State Reported

Two or more persons mutually participating in the use of force or physical violence that requires physical restraint (pushing, shoving, or minor confrontations are excluded). When clearly evident (example – witnessed by a faculty member) that one person acted only in self defense, action taken will be left to the discretion of the principal.

Fighting Level 1 – Fighting with no injuries

Fighting Level 2 – Fighting with minor or moderate injuries

Fighting Level 3 – Fighting with severe injuries; three or more fights in same school year

“Find out what your gift is and nurture it.” —Katy Perry
For grades 6 – 8
Disposition:
1st Offense: Three (3) days suspension, behavior contract, and parent conference prior to return to school
2nd Offense: Parent contact, five (5) days suspension, and Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing

For grade 9 - 12
Disposition: The following will occur:
• Parent Contact
• Out of School Suspension
• Tribunal Hearing requested with recommendation for placement in the Alternative School for the remainder of school term or 1 full, semester whichever is greater

Event Code 11: Theft/Larceny – State Reported
The unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property of another person without threat, violence, or bodily harm. This includes pocket-picking, purse or backpack – snatching if left unattended, theft from a building, theft from a motor vehicle, theft from a coin – operated machine, and all other types of larcenies. The Larceny / Theft code should be used only when theft is serious enough to warrant calling the School Resource Officer or law enforcement.

Larceny/Theft Level 1 – Unlawful taking of property with a value between $25 and $100 – Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Larceny/Theft Level 2 – Unlawful taking of property with a value between $100 and $250 - Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Larceny/Theft Level 3 – Unlawful taking of property with a value exceeding $250; three or more offenses in the same school year – (Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition: The following will occur:
• Contact School Resource Officer
• Contact Parent
• Out of School Suspension
• Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing

Event Code 12: Motor Vehicle Theft – State Reported
Theft, or attempted theft, of a motor vehicle. Code includes theft of car, truck, motorcycle, golf carts, or anything that is self-propelled.

Motor Vehicle Theft Level 3 – Theft or attempted theft of any motor vehicle (Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition: The following will occur:
• Contact School Resource Officer
• Contact Parent
• Out of School Suspension
• Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing

Event Code 13: Robbery – State Reported
Taking, or attempting to take, anything of value that is owned by another person or organization, under confrontational circumstances by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

Robbery Level 2 – Robbery without a weapon – Discipline action will be left to the discretion of of the principal or his/her designee

Robbery Level 3 – Robbery with a weapon (Maximum disposition)

Disposition: The following will occur:
• Contact School Resource Officer
• Contact Parent
• Out of School Suspension
• Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing

Event Code 14: Sexual Battery – State Reported
Unlawful sexual behavior or contact with force or threat of force or where the victim is incapable of giving consent. Age of the student should be taken into account. This code should be used only when the incident is severe enough to warrant calling the School Resource Officer or law enforcement.

Sexual Battery Level 3 – Any incident involving Sexual Battery – (Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition: The following will occur:
Event Code 15: Sexual Harassment – State Reported

Verbal or written comments of a sexual nature, pressure for sexual activity, repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications, unwelcome touching, suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats, when such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a student’s academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment. Includes any unwelcome sexually oriented communication or behavior that makes an individual feel afraid, offended, or uncomfortable.

Sexual Harassment Level 1 – Unwelcome comments not directed towards individuals – Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Sexual Harassment Level 2 – Unwelcome comments directed towards individuals – Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Sexual Harassment Level 3 – Violation of sexual harassment policy; three or more offenses in the same school year (Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition:
1st Offense: penalty at the discretion of the principal/parent conference, referral to school counselor
2nd Offense: three (3) days suspension
3rd Offense: five (5) days suspension

Other disciplinary options may be used in extreme cases

Event Code 16: Sexual Offenses – State Reported

Unlawful sexual behavior or contact without force or threat where the victim is capable of giving consent. (i.e. Engaging in consensual sexual relations of any type on campus or at school sponsored events is prohibited).

Sex Offenses Level 1 – Inappropriate sexually-based physical contact – Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Sex Offenses Level 2 – Inappropriate sexually-based behavior – Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Sex Offenses Level 3 – Consensual sexual activities; three or more offenses in the same school year (Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition: The following will occur:

- Parent Contact
- Out of School Suspension
- Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing
- Possible referral to School Resource Officer

Event Code 18: Tobacco – State Reported

Possession, use, distribution, or sale of tobacco products on school grounds, at school sponsored events, and on transportation to or from school. Students who are under school supervision (club meetings, field trips, club trips/activities, sports activities, etc.) shall not use or possess tobacco in any form.

Tobacco Level 1 – Unintentional possession of tobacco products

Tobacco Level 2 – Intentional use or possession of tobacco products

Tobacco Level 3 – Distribution or sale of tobacco products; three or more offenses in the same school year

For Grades 6 – 12 Disposition:
1st offense: Parent contact, guidance referral, and two (2) days of ISS
2nd offense: Parent conference and three (3) days of ISS
3rd offense: Parent conference and five (5) days of OSS

Code includes indecent exposure and obscenity.
Event Code 20: Vandalism – State Reported

The willful and/or malicious destruction, damage, or defacement of public or private property, real or personal, without the consent of the owner or the person having custody or control of it. A student and his/her parents/guardians will be assessed the exact amount of replacement/repair/service costs which result from damage to school property.

Vandalism Level 2 – Minor damage or defacement of property
Vandalism Level 3 – Malicious destruction or damage to property; three or more offenses in the same school year.

For Grades PreK-5 Disposition:
1st offense: Parent contact and two (2) days of ISS
2nd offense: Parent conference and three (3) days of ISS
3rd offense: Parent conference and five (5) days of ISS

For Grades 6 - 12 Disposition:
1st offense: Parent contact and three (3) days of ISS
2nd offense: Parent conference and five (5) days of ISS
3rd offense: Parent conference and two (2) days of OSS
More severe measures, including immediate out of school suspension, tribunal hearing and/or notification of the School Resource Officer, may be taken.

Event Code 22: Weapons/Knife – State Reported

The possession, use, or intention to use any type of knife, including a pocket or penknife, to inflict harm on another person, or to intimidate any person.

Weapons/knife Level 1 – Unintentional possession of a knife with no intent to harm or intimidate - Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee
Weapons/knife Level 2 – Intentional possession of a knife with no intent to harm or intimidate – Discipline action will be left
Weapons/knife Level 3 – Intentional possession or use of a knife with intent to harm or intimidate (Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition: The following will occur:
- Parent Contact
- Out of School Suspension
- Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing
- Possible referral to School Resource Officer

Event Code 23: Weapons/Other – State Reported

The possession, use, or intention to use any instrument or object to inflict harm on another person, or to intimidate any person. Included in this code are chains, pipes, razor blades, ice picks, dirks, nunchakus, brass knuckles, Chinese stars, billy clubs, tear gas guns, cap guns, bbs guns, pellet guns, electrical weapons or devices, explosives, or propellants. Firecrackers and other fireworks are also included if fire is not involved.

Weapons/Other Level 2 – Unintentional possession of a weapon (not including knife or firearm)
Weapons/Other Level 3 – Intentional possession or use of a weapon (not including knife or firearm) – Maximum disposition

Maximum Disposition: The following will occur:
- Parent Contact
- Out of School Suspension
- Possible Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing
- Possible referral to School Resource Officer

Event Code 25: Weapons/Handguns – State Reported

Possession of a firearm that has a short stock and is designed to be held and fired by the use of a single hand; and any combination of parts from which a firearm described above can be assembled.

Weapons/Handgun Level 3 – Any
You are always responsible for how you act, no matter how you feel.

incident involving a handgun (Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition: The following will occur:
- Parent Contact
- Out of School Suspension
- Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing
- Referral to School Resource Officer

Event Code 26: Weapons/Rifles/Shotgun – State Reported

The term “rifle” means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of an explosive to fire only a single projectile through a rifled bore for each single pull of the trigger. The term “shotgun” means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of an explosive to fire through a smooth bore either a number of ball shot or a single projectile for each single pull of the trigger.

Weapons/Rifle/Shotgun Level 3 – Any incident involving a rifle/shotgun – (Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition: The following will occur:
- Parent Contact
- Out of School Suspension
- Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing
- Referral to School Resource Officer

Event Code 27: Serious Bodily Injury – State Reported

Bodily injury which involves a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.

Serious Bodily Injury Level 3 – Any incident involving serious bodily injury – (Maximum disposition)

Firearms other than handguns, rifles, or shotguns as defined above. Includes any weapon (including starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of any explosive; the frame or receiver of any weapon described above; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device, which includes any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas (i.e. bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge more than 4 ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than ¼ ounce, mine, or similar device); any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than ½ inch in diameter; any combination or parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described above, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

Weapons/Other Firearms Level 3 – Any incident involving other firearms – (Maximum disposition)

Maximum Disposition: The following will occur:
- Parent Contact
- Out of School Suspension
- Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing
- Referral to School Resource Officer
Event Code 29: Bullying – State Reported

Pattern of behavior, which may include written, verbal, or physical acts, that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to have the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education, threatening the educational environment, or causing substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm.

Bullying Level 1 – First incident of bullying – Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Bullying Level 2 – Second incident of bullying – Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee

Bullying Level 3 – Three or more incidents of bullying in the same school year – (Maximum disposition for 6-12 students)

Bullying is defined as repeated willful attempts or threats to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect bodily harm; or any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate with these acts: cause substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm; substantially interfere with a student’s education; are so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student or staff member by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs) which has the effect of:

- Physically, emotionally or mentally harming a student;
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical, emotional or mental harm;
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; or
- Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student’s education.

For Grades PreK-5: Punishment at the discretion of the administrator (The student’s age/level of maturity or development should be considered in relation to the offense).

For Grades 6 – 12: Discipline for any act of bullying may range from counseling to out-of-school suspension. However, upon finding that a student has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to the alternative program.

LBOE Policy: JCDAG

Maximum Disposition:
1st offense: Parent conference, referral to the counselor, and other punishment at the discretion of administrator.
2nd offense: Three (3) days of suspension and behavior contract
3rd offense: Assignment to the alternative program

Event Code 31: Dress Code Violations – State Reported

Violation of school dress code that includes standards for appropriate school attire.

Dress Code Violation Level 1 – Non-invasive or non-suggestive clothing

Dress Code Violation Level 2 – Invasive or suggestive clothing

Dress Code Violation Level 3 – Three or more offenses in the same school year

Disposition:
1st offense: Call for a change of clothes
Conference with parents
*The Progressive discipline plan may be used for further offenses.

All Offenses – Action must be State Reported Disposition – Includes Detention, ISS, OSS, or Referral to Alternative School
The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.

— Martin Luther King, Jr.
signs, symbols, tattoos, graffiti, or attire which engage in school disruptive behavior. It includes any act or exhibition, individual or collective, which is deemed gang related by the principal or designee.

Gang related activity includes but is not limited to hand sign flashing, wearing of clothing articles in a certain way or color scheme typical of that worn by known gang members, jewelry, tattoos, graffiti on personal items in conjunction with any other code violation including but not limited to vandalism of public or private property, acts on intimidation, threat, fighting and other forms of violence.

Gang Related Level 2 – Wearing or possession of gang-related apparel; conveying personal membership or affiliation with a gang – **Discipline action will be left to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee**

Gang Related Level 3 – Gang – related solicitation, violence, threats, or defacement of property **(Maximum disposition for 6-12 students)**

**Maximum Disposition:** The following will occur:

- Parent Contact
- Out of School Suspension
- Recommendation for Tribunal Hearing
- Contact School Resource Officer

**Event Code 36: Repeated Offenses – State Reported**

Collection of offenses not previously assigned a state reportable action that occurs on a single day or across multiple school days that leads to a state reportable disciplinary action.

**Repeated Offenses Level 1** – Collection of minor incidents

**Repeated Offenses Level 2** – Collection of moderate incidents

**Repeated Offenses Level 3** – Collection of severe incidents

**Bus Misconduct**

Bus drivers have complete charge of students riding the bus and will report misbehavior to the school administration.

School administrators are responsible for disciplining students for bus misbehavior. To help maintain order on the bus, drivers have the authority to assign a special seat on the bus to any student. Video/audio recorders are equipped on school buses for the purpose of aiding supervision. Video/audio recordings may be used as evidence that misbehavior has taken place. For more information on school bus safety procedure and rules please visit [www.gocats.org/transportation](http://www.gocats.org/transportation).

Riding the school bus is a privilege for each student. If the following rules and regulations are not followed, the student may no longer be given the opportunity to ride the bus. If the privilege to ride a bus is suspended or revoked, the parent(s) will be responsible for transporting their child to and from school. Bus suspension is not an excused absence or tardy.

If a student causes damage to a school bus, parents/guardians will be required to repay the cost of any damage to the bus.

Fighting on a school bus is among the most serious offenses committed. Students who fight endanger themselves and everyone riding the bus by causing the bus driver’s attention to be diverted. Fighting on a school bus will result in immediate suspension from the bus with no prior
warning or prior disciplinary action being taken.

For the safety of all students who ride the bus, students are expected to obey the following rules:

1. Always stand a safe distance from the road (at least 12 feet).

2. Students will not be allowed to get off the bus at any place other than their usual stop unless authorized by the principal or assistant principal.

3. Students may not ride a different bus unless they present to the driver a note from the parent that has been approved by the principal or assistant principal.

4. If students must cross the road to board a bus, wait until the bus has come to a complete stop, the proper warning signs are displayed, and the driver motions for you to cross.

5. Students may not reserve seats, and must stay in their seats while the bus is in motion.

6. Students must keep the center aisle of the bus clear at all times.

7. Students must obey the directions of their bus driver.

8. Students are not allowed to consume food or drink on the bus.

9. Students may not transport balloons, flowers, glass containers, or animals (dead or alive, including insects) on the bus.

10. Band instruments are permissible only if they are small in size and can be easily carried on the lap. Band instruments cannot take up additional seats. The following instruments are considered small enough to be carried on buses without hazard and may be carried in the lap or between the legs of the student: Violin, bassoon, viola, alto sax, piccolo, cornet, flute, trumpet, oboe, English horn, soprano and alto clarinets, and cymbals in pouches. Any instrument not listed above may be too large to fit certain crowded conditions and be refused by the driver. The final decision will be made by conservation with the driver and school administrator.

11. Students must not litter the bus, throw anything out the window, or cause damage to the bus.

12. Students must obey all bus safety rules and all rules listed in the Code of Conduct. In addition, Georgia law prohibits the following acts while on a bus:


   14. Bullying.

   15. Physical assault or battery of persons on the bus.


   17. Disrespectful conduct toward bus drivers or other persons.

   18. Unruly behavior.

   19. Use of electronic devices while onboard the bus with headphones or ear buds is permitted as long as it does not interfere with the driver’s operation of the school bus.

   20. Using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the driver’s operation of the bus.

   21. Students must maintain silence at all railroad crossings until the driver has crossed and gives the all clear.

If students violate the rules for bus conduct, school administrators may take disciplinary actions, including implementing a bus behavior contract and/or suspension from

“Hard work is a two way street. You get back exactly what you put in.”
For Grades PreK-5

**Disposition:**

1*st Offense:* A documented warning (on a referral form) from the driver.

2*nd Offense:* Parent contact by the school administrator.

3*rd Offense:* Bus suspension for one (1) day.

4*th Offense:* Bus suspension for two (2) days.

5*th Offense:* Bus suspension for three (3) days. Parent conference and behavior contract developed with administrator.

6*th Offense:* Bus suspension for five (5) days.

7*th Offense:* Bus suspension for ten (10) days or disciplinary hearing.

**For Grades 6 – 12**

**Disposition:**

1*st Offense:* A documented warning (on a referral form) from the driver.

2*nd Offense:* Parent contact by the school administrator.

3*rd Offense:* Bus suspension for three (3) days.

4*th Offense:* Bus suspension for five (5) days. Parent conference and behavior contract developed with administrator.

5*th Offense:* Bus suspension for ten (10) days.

6*th Offense:* A disciplinary hearing will be called. Students are prohibited from riding the bus pending their disciplinary hearing.

The administrator may recommend to the superintendent permanent suspension from all buses depending upon the number and severity of offenses. Suspension of transportation privileges includes regular transportation to and from school. Transportation privileges for field trips, athletic events, club events, competitions, and other extracurricular activities may be suspended at the discretion of an administrator and/or superintendent.

**CELL PHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Students, without a signed BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) Agreement, shall not activate, utilize or display electronic communication devices while at school. The rules governing the use of technology on school buses will be same as the rules for the classrooms, which are stated in BYOD Agreement.

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

**Disposition:**

1*st 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 ISS.

*LBOE: EDCB, JCDAE, JCDAF

The Valdosta City Schools Board of Education, its agents and employees, shall not be responsible to any person or entity for any cost or expense whatsoever related to, arising out of, or in any way connected with any electronic communication device itself, or the confiscation thereof from any student, while acting in a good faith belief that this rule has been violated. This shall include but is not limited to any cost or expense assessed by the communication service carrier against the owner for use or possession of the device; use or not-use of the device; any unpaid charges for possession or use of the device, late charges, penalties, or interest; together with any cost or expense for loss of or damage to the device after confiscation.

Event code 248: Inappropriate Display of Affection: VCS

Disposition:
1st offense: Counseling, warning and parent contact
2nd offense: Parent conference and two (2) days ISS
3rd offense: Parent conference, four (4) days ISS and behavior contract
4th offense: Two (2) days of OSS with a mandatory parent Conference

Event code 233: Petty Theft: VCS

Taking, carrying, leading, or riding away with property of another person of value of less than $25 without threat of violence and no law enforcement notification.

For Grades PreK-5

Disposition:
1st offense: Parent contact, guidance referral, and other punishment at the discretion of administrator
2nd offense: Parent conference, three (3) days of ISS, and behavior contract
3rd offense: Parent conference and five (5) days of ISS

For Grades 6 – 12

Disposition:
1st offense: Parent contact, guidance referral, and three (3) days of ISS
2nd offense: Parent conference, five (5) days of ISS, and behavior contract
3rd offense: Parent conference and two (2) days of OSS

NON WAIVABLE OFFENSES

Engaging in or attempting to commit any of the offenses below will result in the student being assigned Out-of-School Suspension with the matter being assigned to a Disciplinary Hearing Officer. An enrolled student who is charged with one of the offenses listed below may not execute a waiver of Disciplinary Hearing.

1. Possession of a Firearm, Dangerous Weapon, Hazard Object, or Explosive Compound: It is unlawful for any person to carry or to possess or have under his/her control while within a school safety zone or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the District any dangerous weapon,
firearm, or explosive compound. Any person violating this rule will be reported to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.

- Hazardous Object: any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal thermoplastic, wood, or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any failing instrument consisting of two or more ridge parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as nunchuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any instrument of like kind, any nonlethal gun replica, air gun and any stun gun or taser.

2. **Intentional physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature or intentionally making physical contact which causes physical harm:** Any intentional act which causes physical harm to school employees.

3. **Adjudication or Conviction of a Felony (“Seven Deadly”):** The adjudication or conviction of an enrolled student or a student seeking enrollment committing an offense that involve one or more of the following violent criminal offenses:
   
   a. Murder (Georgia Code Section 16-5-1);
   
   b. Voluntary Manslaughter (Georgia Code Section 16-5-2);
   
   c. Rape (Georgia Code Section 16-6-1);
   
   d. Aggravated Sodomy (Georgia Code Section 16-6-2);
   
   e. Aggravated Child Molestation (Georgia Code Section 16-6-4);
   
   f. Aggravated Battery (Georgia Code Section 1-5-24); and
   
   g. Aggravated Armed Robbery (Georgia Code Section 16-8-41).

4. **Adjudication or Conviction of Felony (All others):** The adjudication or conviction of an enrolled student or a student seeking enrollment of an offense that is designated as a felony under the laws of the State of Georgia or a felony under the laws of the United States of America.

**DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS**

Disciplinary Hearing Officers are independent decision makers appointed by the Board of Education to hear disciplinary matters. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary here within, Disciplinary Hearing Officers have the authority to issue a short term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion of any student found to have violated the Code of Conduct. If a hearing is called, the student will be suspended from school until the hearing can be held. The hearing will be held no later than ten (10) school days after the beginning of the suspension unless the parent and school mutually agree to an extension or the conduct of the student or parent causes a delay beyond said ten-day (10) period.

Prior to the hearing, students and parents will receive a notice to include the following:

1. The rules which the student has allegedly violated.
2. A description of the student’s acts.
3. The names of the witnesses who may testify against the student (witnesses may be added prior to and during the hearing).
4. The maximum punishment that the student could receive.
5. The time and place for the hearing.
6. The student is entitled to require witnesses to be present at the hearing and the student will have the right to present evidence, examine any and all witnesses presented and have an attorney, at the parent’s expense, to represent the student. If the parents intend to be represented by counsel at the disciplinary hearing, the parents must notify the Hearing Officer twenty-four (24) hours prior to the start of the hearing so that the school district may elect to retain legal counsel to represent its interest.
The decision of the Disciplinary Hearing Officer may be appealed by submitting a written notice of appeal to the Superintendent within twenty (20) calendar days from the date the decision is made.

The Disciplinary Hearing Officer will electronically record any information orally presented at the hearing. A transcript of the hearing will not be prepared unless there is an appeal to the Board of Education. The record and documentary evidence shall be kept on file by the Superintendent or designee for a period of twenty-one (21) days after the date of the decision of the Disciplinary Hearing Officer. If no appeal is filed within twenty (20) days of the date of the decision of the Disciplinary Hearing Officer, the record and documentary evidence may be destroyed on the twenty-first (21) day. If an appeal is filed, the record and documentary evidence will be kept until thirty-one (31) days after the appeal(s) become final at which time the record and documentary evidence may be destroyed.

A student disciplinary hearing is formal, although the strict rules of evidence as applied in a court do not apply in a disciplinary hearing. The Disciplinary Hearing Officer will determine the innocence or guilt of a student accused of violating the Student Code of Conduct. Although the school has the burden of establishing guilt, the student should be prepared to present evidence and witnesses to support their innocence.

All parties shall be entitled to subpoena witnesses for the hearing. A student or parent/guardian shall submit all requests for subpoenas to the Disciplinary Hearing Officer at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the time of the disciplinary hearing. All parties shall be afforded an opportunity to present and respond to evidence and to examine and cross-examine witnesses about any matters logically relevant to the charge against the student. The Disciplinary Hearing Officer may limit unproductively long or irrelevant questioning.

All student disciplinary proceedings and hearings conducted by either the Disciplinary Hearing Officer or the Board of Education are confidential and are not subject to the open meetings law. Any written records, transcripts, exhibits or other documents assembled or used in any manner with regard to the conduct of any student discipline hearing are not public records and are not subject to public inspection.

When a hearing is appealed, the Board of Education will not hear any oral arguments as part of the appeal, nor will it consider any evidence that was not presented to the Disciplinary Hearing Officer. The Board of Education will make its decision on the appeal in “Executive Session” by reviewing the electronic transcript of the hearing. The
Board has the authority to affirm, reverse or modify in any respect the decision of the Disciplinary Hearing Officer. The Board will render a decision and notify the parents and students on the appeal within ten (10) days after the Superintendent is served with the appeal notice. Parents and students may appeal the Board’s decision to the State Board of Education by giving the Superintendent written notice within thirty (30) days of the decision of the Valdosta City Schools Board of Education.

A student who is on long-term suspension or expulsion will NOT earn grades for that complete grading period. *LBOE: JDD

**DRESS CODE**

**K-5 Mandatory Uniform Dress Policy Guidelines**

J.L. Lomax, Pinevale, Sallas Mahone, S.L. Mason and W.G. Nunn Elementary Schools will implement the K-5 Mandatory Uniform Dress policy. Valdosta City Schools requires students to wear solid white, gray, yellow or black collared shirts and khaki or black bottoms. Jeans/denim will not be allowed. Shorts, skirts/skorts, dresses/rompers are allowed, but all uniforms shall adhere to current dress code standards as it relates to length, condition, etc. Students will be allowed to have special dress down days or spirit days. These special occasions will be declared by the school’s administration. On these days, all students will be required to adhere to current dress code standards.

**Girls Uniforms**

- Solid white, gray, yellow or black tops with sleeves and a collar, tucked in at the waist (not bloused).
- Khaki or black pants, skirts/skorts, Bermuda shorts, culottes, dresses/rompers. No denim or jeans. (Belts are optional)

**Boys Uniforms**

- Solid white, gray, yellow or black tops with sleeves and a collar, tucked in at the waist.
- Khaki or black pants or shorts. No denim or jeans. (Belts are optional)

**Logos that are manufactured on apparel are permitted.** Example: SMALL Polo horse, Nike check, Under Armor, Izod, etc. The oversized Polo logos are not permitted. No monograms or any other mark/brand, including all Valdosta City Schools’ marks/brands should be embroidered or heat sealed to garments.

**Discipline Provisions:**

- No student shall be suspended from class or from school, be expelled from school, or receive a lowered grade as a result of not complying with the Uniform Dress Policy.
- No student shall be considered non-compliant with this policy in the following instances:
  1. When non-compliance derives from a financial hardship.
2. When a student wears the uniform of nationally recognized youth organization, such as Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, on regular meeting days.

- When the school’s administration authorizes a special dress day or if student wears a school spirit shirt on a special dress day.

**Appropriate Disciplinary Actions:**

- If a student is not following the Uniform Dress Policy, the classroom teacher or designee will contact the parent to ascertain the reason for the non-compliance. If the classroom teacher determines that the issue is one that warrants the involvement of an administrator, then that teacher may refer the concern to the school’s administration.

- The principal will review the policy with the parent to make sure that they clearly understand the policy expectations and give the parent the option of bringing the student the appropriate uniform attire.

- Referral to school counselor, psychologist, social worker, or other school support service personnel for case management and counseling.

- Appropriate and gradual loss of privileges in special events or dress down days.

- Participation in campus beautification projects.

- Implementation of a student behavior contract.

**Valdosta City Schools PreK – 12th Grade Dress & Grooming Code**

Clothing and accessories that materially interfere with the work of the school or impinge upon the rights of other students are prohibited. Apparel or appearance that tends to draw attention to an individual rather than to a learning situation must be avoided. The school administration is authorized to determine what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate dress for the school setting. The principal is authorized to require or allow adjustments to this code on a case-by-case basis. In matters of opinion, the judgment of the principal shall prevail. Questions regarding the dress code should be addressed with a school administrator, who may take into consideration the student purpose in wearing the item and/or the reaction of other students.

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

1. Any tattoo, hair style, hair color, clothing, inappropriately worn clothing, jewelry, or body decoration that interferes with or disrupts any legitimate function of the school;

2. Obviously oversized, over-length, or baggy clothing items (pants must be worn at the waist: no sagging allowed);

3. Garments that expose the midriff or cleavage, see-through or mesh clothing, halter or tank tops, pajamas, sleep or loungewear (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);

4. Short shorts and leggings (exceptions may be made by the principal); items of this nature may be worn under acceptable outer clothing of appropriate length as outlined in number 11 below. Any clothing that is immodest, excessively sagging or too short are not permitted. Gym/track/cheerleader shorts are NOT permitted;

5. Hats, caps, and other head apparel may not be worn inside the school building except for religious or medical purposes. This includes combs/picks/curlers;

6. Coats and jackets exceeding fingertip length may not be worn in a building;

7. Footwear is required and must be safe and appropriate for indoor and outdoor activities;
8. 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.;

9. 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;

10. Skirts, dresses, or shorts should be an acceptable length (fingertip) in order to avoid any disruption of a normal school day. The final decision of appropriate dress will be made by the principal or his/her designee;

11. Prohibited items include: shoes with wheels (“Wheelies”); large, long or heavy chains; studded or chained accessories; dog collars; baby pacifiers; sunglasses inside the building except for health purposes; skin-tight outer materials such as spandex; and garments with holes above the knee; or articles that may reasonably be considered to be a safety hazard or potential weapon or hazardous object.

**STYLES THAT ARE “POPULAR” ARE NOT NECESSARILY ACCEPTABLE FOR VALDOSTA CITY SCHOOLS**; therefore, as styles change, so may restrictions. Parents are asked to assist the school by regularly monitoring their student’s dress.
APEX

Valdosta City Schools partners with Behavioral Health Service of South GA (BHS) and Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) to provide school-based mental health services and improve student wellbeing to students at schools in our district. VCS desires to provide additional support in the school setting, beyond the comprehensive school counseling program, to students who are having possible emotional and behavioral challenges affecting their overall academic performance. As the public community behavioral health provider, BHS desires to partner with VCS in serving children, adolescents and their families who are in need of such support. This support is identified as school-based mental and behavioral health services, including but not limited to individual, family, and group counseling. A listing of additional community providers and counseling agencies for mental health services are also available from the school counselor. Parental consent is required for students to be referred for school-based mental health services.

CHILD ABUSE

Georgia law requires that school employees report to the local Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in prosecution of the employee. Once a report has been made, official representatives of DFCS have the right to come to the school to interview the child. Parental permission need not be obtained by the department or the school.

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

As required by Georgia law, schools must provide to parents a list of all clubs and organizations available for students. Schools will send this information to parents at the beginning of the school year in the Student Handbook. Included with this list will be a form parents may use to notify the school if they wish to opt-out and prohibit their child from participation in a club or organization. Please contact your child’s school if you have not received this list and opt-out notification form. If any new clubs or organizations are formed during the school year, schools will send information to parents, including a parent permission form for student participation.

CYBER SAFETY AGREEMENT

Valdosta City Schools’ computer network, Internet access facilities, computers and other school technology equipment/devices are for educational purposes appropriate to the instructional programs and school environment, and to ensure effective operation throughout the district. The overall goal of the district is to create and maintain a cyber safety culture consistent with the beliefs of the school, and legislative and professional obligations. The student and parent/guardian’s obligations, responsibilities, and the nature of possible consequences associated with cyber safety breaches which undermine the safety of the school environment are outlined below. The Cyber safety Acceptable Use Agreement for Students applies whether the technology equipment is owned or leased either partially or wholly by the school, and used on or off the school site.

As a safe and responsible user of technology I will help keep myself and other people safe by following these rules:
1. I cannot use school technology equipment/devices until my parent and I have read and signed the Cyber safety Acceptable Use Agreement for Students statement at the back of the Code of Student Conduct and returned it to school.

2. I can only use the computers and other school technology equipment/devices for my schoolwork.

3. If I have my own user name, I will log on only with that user name. I will not allow anyone else to use my user name or password.

4. I can only go online or access the Internet at school when a teacher gives permission and an adult is present.

5. While at school or a school-related activity, I will not have any involvement with any technology material or activity which might put me or anyone else at risk (e.g. bullying or harassing). I understand that I must not, at any time, use the Internet, email, or any technology equipment/devices to be mean, rude, offensive, or to bully, harass, or in any way harm anyone else connected to our school, or the school itself, even if it is meant as a ‘joke’.

6. I understand that I must not at any time use technology to upset, offend, harass or threaten anyone connected to the school or the school itself, even if it is meant as a joke.

7. I understand that I can only use the Internet at school when a teacher gives permission and there is staff supervision.

8. While at school, I will not:
   a. Access, or attempt to access, inappropriate, age restricted, or objectionable material;
   b. Download, save or distribute such material by copying, storing, printing or showing it to other people; or
   c. Make any attempt to get around or bypass security, monitoring and filtering that is in place at school.

9. If I accidentally access inappropriate material, I will:
   a. Not show others,
   b. Turn off the screen or minimize the window, and
   c. Report the incident to a teacher/administrator immediately.

10. I understand that I must not download any files such as music, videos, games or programs without the permission of a teacher. I also understand that anyone who infringes copyright may be personally liable under this law.

11. I understand that these rules apply to any privately owned technology equipment/device (such as a laptop, USB drive, etc.) I bring to school or a school-related activity. Any images or material on such equipment/devices must be appropriate to the school environment.

12. I will not connect any device (such as a USB drive or camera) to, or attempt to run any software on, school technology without a teacher’s permission. This includes all wireless technologies.

13. I will ask a teacher’s permission before giving out any personal information (including photos) online about myself or any other person. I will also get permission from any other person involved. Personal information includes name, address, email address, phone numbers, and photos.

14. I will respect all technology systems in use at school and treat all technology equipment/devices with care. This includes:
   a. Not intentionally disrupting the smooth running of any school technology systems.
b. Not attempting to hack or gain unauthorized access to any system.

c. Following all school cyber safety rules, and not joining in if other students choose to be irresponsible with technology.

d. Reporting any breakages/damage to a staff member.

15. I understand that the school may monitor traffic and material sent and received using the school’s technology network. The school may use filtering and/or monitoring software to restrict access to certain sites and data, including email.

16. I understand that the school may audit its computer network, Internet access facilities, computers and other school technology equipment/devices or commission an independent forensic audit. Auditing of the above items may include any stored content, and all aspects of their use, including email.

17. I understand that if I break these rules, the school may inform my parent(s). In serious cases the school may take disciplinary action against me. I also understand that my family may be charged for repair costs. If illegal material or activities are involved, it may be necessary for the school to inform the police.

Cyber Bullying

The National Crime Prevention Council defines cyber bullying as: “When the Internet, cell phones or other devices are used to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.”

Cyber-bullying can take many forms.

Properly identifying and preventing cyber-bullying requires an understanding of the different ways technology can be used to hurt others. In “An Educator’s Guide to Cyber bullying and Cyber threats,” Nancy Willard breaks down cyber-bullying into these categories:

1. **Flaming** - Online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar language.

2. **Harassment** - Repeatedly sending nasty, mean, and insulting messages.

3. **Denigration** - “Dissing” someone online. Sending or posting gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships.

4. **Impersonation** - Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material to get that person in trouble or damage their reputation.

5. **Outing** - Sharing someone’s secrets or embarrassing information or images online.

6. **Trickery** - Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information and then sharing it online.

7. **Exclusion** - Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone.

8. **Cyber stalking** - Repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.

**VCS Position on Cyber Bullying**

1. Students shall receive education including, but not limited to appropriate
online behavior in social networking sites, chat rooms, electronic communications, etc; the dangers inherent with the online disclosure of personally identifiable information; and, consequences of unlawful activities, including cyber bullying awareness and response, other unlawful or inappropriate online activities by students.

2. **Cyber Bullying will not be tolerated and is strictly forbidden.** (see Student Code of Conduct)

3. Engaging in cyber bullying to harm (physically or emotionally) another person will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges.

4. In some cases, cyber bullying can be a crime.

5. The user should remember that digital activities are monitored and retained.

**Report cyber bullying immediately to school personnel.**

**Examples of Responsible and Irresponsible Use**

**Responsible Use:**

1. Use technologies for school-related activities.

2. Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behavior online as offline.

3. Treat school resources carefully, and alert staff if there is any problem with their operation.

4. Encourage positive, constructive discussion when using communicative or collaborative technologies.

5. Alert school personnel of threatening, inappropriate, or harmful content online.

6. Use technologies at appropriate times, in approved places, for educational pursuits.

7. Cite sources when using online sites and resources for research.

8. Recognize that use of technology is a privilege and treat it as such.

9. Be cautious to protect the safety of everybody.

10. Help to protect the security of school resources.

**Irresponsible:**

1. Use technologies in a way that could be personally or physically harmful.

2. Attempt to find or create inappropriate images or content.

3. Engage in cyber bullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others.

4. Try to find ways to circumvent the school’s safety measures and filtering tools.

5. Use technologies to send spam or chain mail.

6. Plagiarize content found online.

7. Post personally-identifying information, about myself or others.

8. Agree to meet someone met online in real life.

9. Use of chat rooms, sites selling term papers, book reports and other forms of student work.

10. Illegal installation or transmission of copyrighted materials.

11. Use language online that would be irresponsible in the classroom.

12. Use technologies for illegal activities or to pursue information on such activities.

13. Attempt to hack or access sites, servers, or content that is inappropriate.

14. Gaining access to other student’s accounts, files, and or data.

15. Listening or viewing media labeled “Explicit.”

*This is not intended to be a complete list, just a few specific examples.*

**Limitation of Liability**

1. VCS will not be responsible for damage or harm to persons, files, data, or hardware.

2. While VCS employs CIPA compliant filtering and other safety and security mechanisms, and attempts to ensure their proper function; it makes no guarantees as to their effectiveness.

3. VCS will not be responsible, financially or otherwise, for unauthorized transactions conducted over the school network.

**Violations of the Responsible Use**

Violations of this policy may have disciplinary repercussions, including:
Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does. —William James

1. Suspension of network, technology, or computer privileges
2. Notification to parents
3. Detention or suspension from school and school-related activities
4. Legal action and/or prosecution

**Plagiarism**

1. Users are prohibited from plagiarizing (use as their own, without citing the original creator) content, including words or images, from the Internet.
2. Users should not take credit for things they didn’t create themselves, or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online.
3. Research conducted via the Internet should be appropriately cited, giving credit to the original author.
4. Users are prohibited from accessing sites that promote plagiarism. These sites should be reported to school personnel.

**Screen Care**

1. Device screens can be damaged if subjected to rough treatment. The screens are particularly sensitive to damage from excessive pressure on the screen.
2. Do not lean on the top of the device when it is closed.
3. Do not place anything near or on the device that could put pressure on the screen.
4. Do not place anything in the carrying case that will press against the cover.
5. Clean the screen with a soft, dry cloth or anti-static cloth.
6. Do not "bump" the device against lockers, walls, car doors, floors, etc. as it will eventually break the screen.

**Screen Savers/Background Photos**

1. Inappropriate media may not be used as a screensaver or background photo.
2. Presence of guns, weapons, pornographic materials, inappropriate language, alcohol, drug, gang related symbols, offensive content or other violent pictures will result in disciplinary action.

**Carrying Electronic Devices**

1. The protective cases provided with devices have sufficient padding to protect the iPad from normal treatment and provide a suitable means for carrying the device within the school.
2. The user must keep the device in the district provided protective case.

**System Owned Devices**

Users will comply at all times with the conditions outlined in the VCS Student Technology Handbook. Any failure to comply may terminate user rights of possession effective immediately.

Legal title to the property is in the District and shall at all times remain in the District. The user’s right of possession and use is limited to and conditioned upon full and complete compliance with this agreement and the VCS Student Technology Handbook policies.

**General Care of Electronic Devices**

1. Devices and cases must remain free of any writing, drawing, stickers, or labels that are not applied by VCS.
2. Use the Devices on a flat, stable surface.
3. Do not set books on the devices.
4. Do not have food or drinks around the device.
5. Wipe surfaces with a clean, dry soft cloth.
6. Avoid touching the screen with pens or pencils.
7. Do not leave the device exposed to direct sunlight or near any heat or moisture sources for extended periods of time.
8. Students should report any damage from the previous student to the teacher at the beginning of the class period.
Believe in yourself and all that you are. Know that you are greater than any obstacle.

—Christian D. Larson

No one has ever made himself great by showing how small someone else is.

—Irvin Himmel

**Sounds, Music, Games, or Programs**

1. Sound must be muted at all times unless permission is obtained from the teacher for instructional purposes.
2. Internet games are not allowed. If game apps are installed, for any purpose, they must be approved and installed by your teacher.
3. All software/Apps must be district provided.

**App Management**

The teacher/school will manage all apps on system-owned devices. All apps will be distributed through a secure mobile device management system. Students will be able to download any provisioned apps in this manner. Students are not permitted to connect their devices to any computers, and/or synchronize their devices to any personal accounts (such as iTunes or Google Play) for any purpose. Students who synchronize to another account, may have their device and mobile computing privileges revoked and have apps on the device erased.

**Circumvention of Managed Settings**

All system-owned devices are provisioned by the Technology Office for the purposes of initializing and managing all devices in a secure and organized fashion. Any attempts by students to circumvent any district management settings through software restoration or jailbreaking will result in the confiscation of the device and disciplinary action.

**Pledge for System-Owned Electronic Device Use**

1. I will take good care of my device.
2. I will never leave the device unattended.
3. I will know where my device is at all times.
4. I will charge my device’s battery daily.
5. I will keep food and beverages away from my device since they may cause damage to the device.
6. I will not disassemble any part of my device or attempt any repairs.
7. I will protect my device by only carrying it while in the case provided or other approved case.
8. I will use my device in ways that are appropriate and meet all Valdosta City Schools’ expectations.
9. I will not place decorations (such as stickers, markers, etc.) on the device. I will not deface or remove the tag numbers or tag stickers on any device.
10. I understand that my device is subject to inspection at any time without notice and remains the property of Valdosta City Schools.
11. I will follow the policies outlined in the Student Technology Handbook and the Acceptable Use Policy.
12. I will report any damage to my device immediately to my teacher.
BYOD Agreement

Special Note: We encourage you to have conversations with your student regarding the conditions below. Valdosta City Schools’ desire is to provide BYOD access to students in a safe manner. To do so, we must engage in a partnership of trust between students, parents and system. The conditions below are not intended to sound harsh or discouraging; instead they are intended to stress the importance of following carefully planned guidelines designed to keep students safe and protected while online.

The use of technology to provide educational material is a privilege Valdosta City Schools is excited to share with our students! The signed agreement (found at the end of this document) must be on file at the school before any device can be used for educational purposes at school. A student’s use of his or her laptop, cell phone or other electronic devices while at school is determined on a room-by-room and day-by-day basis. Students are permitted to use their own devices at school only at the request of their teacher. Unless directed, the device must remain silenced and put away.

Students and parents/guardians participating in BYOD must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, as well as the Internet Acceptable Use Policy (IFBG), Use of Electronic Devices by Students Policy (JCDAF), and the Cybersafety Agreement as stated in the Student Handbook. Furthermore, the student must agree to the following conditions:

1. The student takes full responsibility for his or her technology device. The school is not responsible for the security of student-owned technology.

2. The technology must be in silent mode while on school campuses and while riding school buses.

3. The student will maintain confidentiality of usernames and passwords and protect the confidentiality and safety of others when sharing work or images.

4. The student will not engage in cyber bullying.

5. The student will use his/her device to access files, apps and sites for instructional purposes at the direction of the teacher.

6. The student complies with each teacher’s instructions or any request to shutdown the device during class time.

7. The student realizes that printing from personal technology devices is not possible at school.

8. The student will only access the internet using the VCS wireless connection (Alleycatnet) where network filters can be applied to the internet connection, making the Internet safer for the student. The student will not bypass VCS filters.

9. The student understands that exposing or infecting the network with a virus, Trojan, or program designed to damage, alter, destroy, or provide access to unauthorized data or information is in violation of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy and may result in disciplinary actions.

Valdosta City Schools believes access to and the use of the Internet are vital to the educational setting. VCS is committed to providing technology access to students – both via personally-owned and system-owned devices. The protection of students while using the Internet is a district priority, as well as a legislative mandate.

Any person processing or accessing information on school property related to “hacking,” altering, or bypassing network security policies, and thus endangering the cybersafety of VCS students is in violation of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy and will result in disciplinary actions. The school has the right to collect and examine any device that is suspected of misuse or being the source of an attack or virus infection.

I understand and will abide by VCS policies and guidelines. I further understand any violation may result in the loss of my network and/or technology privileges as well as other disciplinary or legal action.
Google’s G Suite

Our goal is to equip students with the ability to use technology to interact and impact the world around them while improving the quality of learning and promoting greater academic achievement. Developing a new knowledge base and set of skills for the future global learner requires access to educational opportunities by utilizing access to technology anytime and anywhere. As technology continues to improve, the availability of web tools increases and educators everywhere are leveraging web tools to impact student achievement. The use of web tools is only for academic purposes assigned by the teacher.

Valdosta City Schools is a Google’s G Suite system. G Suite enables Valdosta City Schools to provide teachers and students with cloud-based file storage, collaboration tools, calendars, word processing and more...all free and in a safe and secure environment.

Students will be issued a Google username and password. As with any form of technology usage, the use of G Suite must be in accordance with Valdosta City Schools’ Cyber Safety and Acceptable Use Agreement.

Student E-mail (VBOE IFBG)

Students have the opportunity to have his/her own school email account for communication and/or research as well as access to homework and lessons. Valdosta City Schools selects email vendors that comply with all US privacy and safety laws, particularly those involving students and children.

A student’s school email address may be used in conjunction with other educational based programs as well. No expense is associated with obtaining an email account. School email is monitored and filtered for appropriate use. This email address is only to be used for academic and school related purposes.

Privacy (VBOE IFBG)

There should be no expectation of privacy when using VCS technologies. VCS reserves the right to record, monitor, review, and report all activities including emails or text messages. Unless protected by state or
federal laws (such as medical records or student records under FERPA), activities may be subject to an open record request. If deemed appropriate, information may be disclosed by VCS to the courts, law enforcement, authorized representatives or parents of students, or other third parties without users’ consent.

**DELIVERY OF GIFTS**

There will be no deliveries allowed at any school for students (i.e. flowers, balloons, candy).

**DISTRICTWIDE PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, Valdosta City Schools receives Title I, Part A funds and therefore must jointly develop with, agree on with, and distribute to parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy that contains information required by Section 1116(a)(2) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The policy establishes the LEA’s expectations and objectives for meaningful parent and family engagement and describes how the LEA will implement a number of specific parent and family engagement activities, and it is incorporated into the LEA’s plan submitted to the Georgia Department of Education.

Valdosta City Schools agrees to implement the following requirements as outlined by Section 1116:

- operation programs, activities, and procedures for the engagement of parents and family members in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs. These programs, activities, and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents and family members of participating children.

Consistent with Section 1116, the school district will work with its schools to ensure that the required school-level parent and family engagement policies meet the requirements of Section 1116(b) of the ESSA, and each include as a component a school-parent compact consistent with Section 1116(d) of the ESEA.

In carrying out the Title I, Part A parent engagement requirements:

- and family engagement requirements to the extent practicable, the school district and its schools will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, limited literacy, disabilities, of migratory children, who are economically disadvantaged, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background, including providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 of the ESSA in an understandable and uniform format including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.

If the LEA plan for Title I, Part A, developed under Section 1112 of the ESEA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the school district will submit any parent comments with the plan when the school district submits the plan to the state Department of Education.

The school district will be governed by the following definition of parental engagement and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition in Section 8101 of the ESSA:
Parental engagement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

A. Parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning
B. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school
C. 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
D. Other activities are carried out, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESEA

**DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE DISTRICT WILL IMPLEMENT REQUIRED LEA PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS:**

**Jointly Developed**

Valdosta City Schools will take the following actions to involve parents and family members in jointly developing its LEA plan under Section 1112, and the development of support and improvement plans under paragraphs (1) and (2) of Section 1111(d) of the ESEA:

A. Completion of the Title I Annual Parent Survey;
B. Review survey results with parents;
C. Provide opportunities for parents in understanding and submitting input for District Title I Parent and Family Engagement Plan revisions by posting the parent plan on the district and school websites and in school Parent Resource Centers;
D. Meeting notices of plans to revise district parent plan will be advertised through the local media, on district and school websites, and in school Parent Resource Centers;
E. Parent notifications to participate in the revision of the Comprehensive Local Education Planning (CLIP) and Title I Parent Advisory Meetings at the district and local school level.

Valdosta City Schools will take the following actions to involve parents in the process of school planning and improvement under section 1116 of the ESEA:

A. All Title I Parents will receive invitations to participate in planning sessions and provide input on the School Improvement Plan (SIP); Title I Schoolwide Plan (SWP); Comprehensive Local Education Agency Improvement Plan (CLIP), 1% Parent Involvement Budget, and Title I Budget.
B. Plans will be posted on the District and school websites with copies made available at the District office, in Title I Schools’ Parent Resource Centers.
C. Title I Program Evaluations will be conducted throughout the school year with opportunities for parental input on Title I Surveys, at local schools’ Annual Meetings, and workshop activities.

**Technical Assistance**

Valdosta City Schools will provide the following coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build capacity of all Title I, Part A schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance, which may include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations, or individuals with expertise in effectively engaging parents and family members in education:

A. On-going system-wide training, communication, and discussions with schools regarding effective development of school parent plan and compacts.
B. Easy and convenient access to district Title I personnel;
C. Provide support and assistance in building effective parent capacity in the school;
D. Assistance in development and annual revision of school-level parent plan, home/school compact and action
E. Provide monthly Technical Assistance to Parent Coordinators as a group and individually.

**Annual Evaluation**

Valdosta City Schools will take the following actions to conduct, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of its Title I, Part A schools. The evaluation will include identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). The evaluation will also include identifying the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers and strategies to support successful school and family interactions. The school district will use the findings of the evaluation about its parent and family engagement policy to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental engagement, and to revise, if necessary, its parent and family engagement policies.

**Reservation of Funds**

Valdosta City Schools will involve the parents and family members of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement, is spent and will ensure that not less than 90 percent of the 1 percent reserved goes directly to Title I schools

- All Title I Parents will receive invitations to participate in planning sessions and provide input on the School Improvement Plan (SIP); Title I Schoolwide Plan (SWP); Comprehensive Local Education Agency Improvement Plan (CLIP), 1% Parent Engagement Budget, and Title I Budget.
- The Annual Title I Parent Survey provides an opportunity for parents in understanding and submitting input on the 1% set aside of Title I funds.

**Coordination of Services**

Valdosta City Schools will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies with parent and family, to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children by collaborating
to develop parent programs with:

1. School counselors;
2. EL Program;
3. Migrant Program;
4. Homeless Program;
5. Family Connections of Valdosta-Lowndes;
6. The Boys and Girls Club;
7. Faith-based organizations;
8. Local Public Housing Authorities

**Building Capacity of Parents**

Valdosta City Schools will, with the assistance of its Title I schools, build parents’ capacity for strong parental engagement by providing materials and training on such topics as literacy training and using technology to help parents work with their children to improve their children’s academic achievement. Assistance will also be provided to parents in understanding the following topics:

1. the State’s academic content standards and College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI);
2. the State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments;
3. the requirements of Title I,
4. how to monitor their child’s progress, and
5. how to work with educators.

**Activities may include:**

1. Parent workshops concluded with program evaluations:
2. Curriculum-based events based on school defined academic goals such as: Understanding academic content standards, CCRPI workshops, Homework Help workshops, Family Reading Night, Curriculum Night events that may highlight state assessments;
3. English Learners (EL) Parent Orientation/Training Sessions;
4. Parent Advisory Meetings;
5. Parent/Teacher Conferences;

6. District and school-level Title I Parent Meetings, School Council, and CLIP Meetings; and
7. Explanation of testing and student results;

**Building Capacity of School Staff**

Valdosta City Schools will, with the assistance of its schools and parents, educate its teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff on how to reach the value and utility of contributions of parents by:

a. Communicating with, and working with parents as equal partners, in the development of trainings for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of those trainings
b. Coordinating and integrating parental engagement programs and activities with public preschool and other programs, and conducting other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children.

c. Ensuring that information related to the school and parent- programs, meetings, and other activities, are sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

d. Provide other reasonable support for parental engagement activities under section 1118 as parents may request.

“Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace.” —Confucius
By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.

—Benjamin Franklin

2018-2019

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR INVOLVEMENT

Districtwide Events
Valdosta City Schools Math Carnival
February 21, 2019
Title I Annual Survey
January 21, thru April 30, 2019

To build capacity for involvement, parental engagement activities will be hosted monthly at each school. Parents will be given advance notification of each event. Parents will also be given opportunities to volunteer during these events.

Adoption

This Valdosta City Schools’ Parent and Family Engagement Policy has been developed jointly and agreed on with parents and family members of children participating in Title I, Part A programs, as evidenced by agendas and sign in sheets from stakeholder meetings on July 17, 2018, and July 19, 2018.

This plan was adopted by Valdosta City Schools on July 26, 2018, and will be in effect for the period of the 2018-2019 school year. The school district will distribute this policy to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children on or before August 8, 2018.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT – PARENT NOTICE

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act, the Valdosta City Schools would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student’s teacher(s) and/ or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

1) Whether the student’s teacher
   • has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
   • is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualifications or licensing criteria have been waived; and
   • is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.

2) Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child’s teacher’s qualifications, please contact the Personnel Office at 229-671-6044.

EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOL

The superintendent, under the advisement of the Board of Education Chairman or Vice-chairman, may close, delay opening, or order early or late dismissal of schools in event of hazardous weather, epidemics, or other emergencies which threaten the safety or health of students or staff members.

The decision to close one or all schools in the system for an entire day will be made prior to 5:00 a.m. that day, so there is adequate time to notify all parties. The superintendent must decide if the closing shall apply to all facilities, all students, and all staff for certain employees or schools. Example: No one reports to work; only the administrative staff reports to work; all certified staff reports to work, etc.

Partial Day School Closing: The same procedures for all day school closing shall apply to partial day school closing, with exceptions as noted below. Any decision for partial day closing must be made so that adequate time is given for notification to all parties involved. A decision must also be made, in conjunction with the transportation supervisor, on how to handle the transportation pick-up and drop-off system in the event of any partial day closing. Procedures for communicating partial day closing are the same as for all day closing.
EMERGENCY PLANS

EMERGENCY DRILLS

The Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) reviews and approves the school system’s comprehensive School Safety Plans and each school’s Emergency Management Plan. A copy of these confidential plans are maintained by the principal and the Deputy Superintendent. An annual safe schools audit of each school in the district will be conducted in conjunction with GEMA by the Deputy Superintendent.

Fire/evacuation drills will be held on a monthly basis. Drills to severe weather, lockdown of the school and bus evacuation will be held at least once each year. Parents should remind their children that during emergency drills students must respond quietly and quickly, and must follow the directions given by their teachers and administrators. Failure to comply with instructions given during a fire/evacuation drill may result in disciplinary action.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

Confidentiality of student records shall be preserved while access is provided to parents, eligible students (those over eighteen years of age or enrolled in post-secondary educational institutions), professional educators with legitimate educational interests, and those federal or state officials whose access is authorized in connection with an adult or evaluation of federal or state supported education programs or for the enforcement or compliance with federal legal requirements related to those programs. The superintendent shall direct the publication of procedures through which parents or eligible students may request the correction of errors in student records.

The Valdosta Board of Education designates the following information as “directory information:”

1. Student’s name, address and telephone number;
2. Student’s date of birth;
3. Student’s grade level;
4. Dates of attendance in the Valdosta City School System;
5. Student’s photo for use on school related material(s), i.e. newspaper, websites, social media platforms, etc;
6. Teacher, Coach or Advisor Assignment;
7. Student’s participation in official school clubs and sports;
8. Weight and height of student if he/she is a member of an athletic team; and
9. Awards received during the time enrolled in the Valdosta City School System.

Unless a parent or eligible student makes a written request to the principal of the school where the student is enrolled, within ten (10) days of enrollment, that such information not be designated directory information on the individual student, such information will not be considered confidential and may be disclosed upon request.

Student records shall be provided to schools within or outside the school district upon request of the school where a student is enrolling in accordance with Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.14, Transfer of Student Records.

PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

Any parent whose parental rights have not been specifically revoked by court order, any guardian, or any individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian may inspect the education records of his or her child. Generally, a parent will be permitted to obtain a copy of education records of his/her child upon reasonable notice.

With the exception of directory information as defined above, personally identifiable information will not be released by the school system from an education record without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student except where authorized by federal law. These circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- Disclosures will be made to school administrators, teachers or other professionals employed or associated
by the school system who have some role in evaluating or educating the student.

- Records will be sent to a school where the student has enrolled upon request of the institution.
- Disclosures will be made in connection with financial aid applications of the student to determine the eligibility for and amount of aid as well as enforcement of the terms and conditions of financial aid.
- Disclosures will be made to comply with state law, Internal Revenue Service laws and regulations, judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas. Unless otherwise required by a judicial order or federal grand jury subpoena, a reasonable effort will be made to notify parents or students in advance of such disclosures.
- Disclosures will be made to organizations conducting studies on behalf of or by educational institutions for the purpose of developing, validating or administering predictive tests, administering student aid programs and improving instruction.
- Disclosures will be made to accrediting institutions to carry out their accrediting function.
- Disclosures will be made in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- Disclosures will be made to the Attorney General of the United States or to his or her designee in response to an ex parte order in connection with the investigation or prosecution of terrorism crimes specified in 18 U.S.C. 2332(b)(5)(B) and 2331.

Each records secretary in the school district shall maintain a record of each request for access to and each disclosure of personally identifiable information from the educational records of a student in accordance with regulations governing the Act.

A parent or eligible student who believes his record contains any error may request its correction by submitting a written explanation of the error and the basis for believing it to be in error to the principal or his or her designee, who shall investigate and determine whether or not to amend the record. If the matter cannot be resolved, a parent or eligible student may request a hearing pursuant to federal regulations at 34 C.F.R. 99, 21-99.22 as well as applicable state regulations. If the hearing results in a determination that the record contained erroneous information, it shall be corrected and the parent or eligible student shall be informed in writing of the correction; if the information contained in the record is determined not to be erroneous, the parent may place a statement in the record commenting upon the contested information and stating the basis for disagreement. The statement shall thereafter be disclosed whenever the portion to which it relates is disclosed.

Even though rights under FERPA transfer from the parents to the student at the age of 18, a school may disclose a student’s education records, without the consent of the student, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes. Neither the age of the student nor the parent’s status as a custodial parent is relevant. If the student is claimed as a dependent by either parent for tax purposes, then either parent may have access under this provision.

FINES FOR DAMAGE OR LOSS OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

The Board of Education retains the right to charge students a reasonable fee for restitution of lost, damaged, or abused school system property, including, but not limited to, textbooks, band uniforms, band instruments, NJROTC uniforms and equipment, books or media materials.

Students shall be notified in writing of any charges being assigned to them and that failure to pay those charges may result in sanctions such as withholding grade cards, diplomas or certificates of progress until restitution is made. Opportunity shall be given for the student(s) and/or parent(s) to meet with appropriate school officials to discuss any fines levied against the student(s).
If a student or parent is unable to pay the levied fees, an affidavit or written notice to that effect may be filed with the Superintendent or designee who will make arrangements for the student/parent to satisfy the obligation by rendering agreed upon services to the school system.

**Until satisfactory arrangements have been made to pay fines or fees to the school the following consequences may apply:**

1. Students will not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony.
2. Students may not be able to check out books from the Media Center if the fee is for a lost or stolen library book.
3. Classroom use only of textbooks.
4. No issuance of report cards until satisfactory arrangements have been made with the building level administrator for payment of fines.
5. Students will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities until satisfactory arrangements have been made with the building level administrator for payment of fines.

*LBOE: JS

**GEORGIA SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The Georgia Special Needs Scholarship (GSNS) Program is a school choice program available for special needs students attending Georgia public schools who are served under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Additional information regarding this program can be found at [http://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Policy/Pages/Special-Needs-Scholarship-Program.aspx](http://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Policy/Pages/Special-Needs-Scholarship-Program.aspx). Parents new to the program must read **Understanding the Program** which explains the public and private school choice options available. Parents of students continuing in the private school choice option must read **Continuing Participation** which explains how to continue a student’s eligibility.

To newly qualify for the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program for the upcoming school year a student must meet ALL the following requirements:

- Student Eligibility Criteria 1 - A student have must a parent/guardian who currently lives in Georgia and has been a resident for at least one calendar year.
- Student Eligibility Criteria 2 - A student was enrolled and completed the 2017 – 2018 school year in a Georgia public school in grades kindergarten through twelfth.
- Student Eligibility Criteria 3 - A student was reported as attending a Georgia public school by a school district(s) during mandatory student counts conducted in October 2017 and March 2018.
- Student Eligibility Criteria 4 - A student does not need to have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for the entire school year to qualify for the GSNS Program. A student must have received special education services at some point during the 2017 – 2018 school year through an IEP. A student must be reported by a school district(s) in either the October 2017 OR March 2018 student counts OR in final student record as a student receiving special education services by the end of the 2017 – 2018 school year.

At the end of the school year, school systems update student records for students served by an IEP after the March count to reflect that they are special education students. By mid-July the database for the scholarship calculator is updated to include these students.

If a student meets the eligibility criteria for the GSNS Program; a parent/guardian has the right to request a transfer from a student’s current public school to:

- Another public school within their district of residence; or
- Another public school district outside their district of residence; or
- One of the three state schools for the blind or deaf; or
- A private school authorized to participate in the GSNS Program. Funds received through the GSNS Program can only be used to pay for tuition and fees at a private school authorized by the State Board of Education to participate in the program.
Funds cannot be used to pay the costs of out of district tuition, charter schools, or other options available under public school choice. If you have any additional questions regarding this program, please contact the Valdosta City Schools Special Education Department at 229-333-8505.

**GEORGIA STUDENT HEALTH SURVEY 2.0**

State and federal legislation requires that public school systems conduct an anonymous student assessment about alcohol, drug use, and violence. This data is part of the state-wide accountability system for assessing school climate. In addition, system and school data is used to evaluate our success or failure of programs designed to teach students the health and safety value of not using alcohol and drugs, and finding non-violent solutions to problems.

To gather this information, the state of Georgia uses the Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0 in all schools for students in grades 3-12. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. The survey is administered through an online survey tool provided by the Georgia Department of Education. All data is anonymous and no personal identifying information is collected on students. A copy of the survey is available at the central office if you would like to review its content. If you prefer that your child not participate, please mark your response on the Parental Acknowledgement Form provided in the back to school information or new student registration packets.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS**

Students are entitled to a grievance procedure to deal with a claim that is allegedly caused by a misinterpretation, violation, or inequitable application of students’ rights. A student must report a grievance to the principal within five (5) days of the incident and/or suspension. The administrator will render a written decision to all parties involved within ten (10) days after receiving the grievance. A student may appeal the principal’s decision to the superintendent, then to the Board of Education. *LBOE: JCE*

**HEAD LICE**

Students may be routinely checked for lice. Parents are encouraged to check children at home weekly, if there is reason to do so. If your child is found to have head lice:
Logic will get you from A to Z; imagination will get you anywhere.  
—ALBERT EINSTEIN

• You will be called to pick up your child.
• You will be notified in writing, using a standardized letter. The letter will be mailed or given to the parents in person. The letter should include procedures for treatment and prevention of re-infection.
• For school readmission, proof of freedom from lice and nits must be presented in the form of documentation from a physician or public health agency.
• Under normal circumstances, no more than three (3) days from school should be missed due to head lice. With prompt treatment and nit removal, children should be able to return to school the next day.

HEALTH SCREENINGS
Annual health screenings for scoliosis are provided to all students in Sixth and Eighth grades. Valdosta City Schools partners with the Valdosta Junior Service League to provide annual hearing and vision screenings to all students in Third and Sixth grades. For any additional health screenings provided by the school, notification and consent for services will be provided in advance of the screening.

HOME SCHOOL
Every parent or guardian in the state of Georgia has the right to choose public school, private school or home school. Parents/guardians choosing a home study program should visit the Georgia Department of Education’s website, www.gadoe.org, to learn about registering and requirements for home school. From the DOE’s home page, look for the section for parents, then click on home schooling. Georgia’s home study law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690) requires home school parents/guardians to submit annually an Online Declaration of Intent for Home Study. Parents/guardians submit this form directly on the DOES’s Home School website. Home schooled students with disabilities may be eligible for some services through the VCS Special Education Department. Inquiries should be made at 229-333-8505.
In accordance with this 2009 state law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-2131), parents/guardians may request to transfer their child to another school within the district if adequate, permanent classroom space is available at the requested school. The application window is from May 1 – 31, 2018 for next school term. The school district will not provide transportation for students who elect to transfer under this state law. Transportation will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians. Additional information is available at www.gocats.org.

ILLNESS
If a child becomes too ill to remain in class, his/her parent will be contacted so the child may be cared for at home. Children should not return to school until fever-and/or vomit free for 24 hours. The principal should be notified, in writing, if a student has a chronic illness or disability that could require special or emergency treatment.

Communicable Illness: If a student has been identified as possibly having a contagious illness, the school system will follow the infectious disease reporting protocol including recommendations from the Health Department. The parent/guardian must provide a release to school signed by a medical doctor indicating the date the student can return to school.

MEDICATION
The following are instructions to follow when students are required to have prescription medication and/or treatments administered at schools:

• When students must take medicine at school, parents should bring medicine and related equipment to the nurse or principal. **Please do not send medicine to school by students.**

• Medication should be in the **original container** and administered in accordance with the physician's directions.

• Parents are required to complete a Medication/Treatment Consent Form for any medication and or prescribed treatment to be administered in the school setting. This form may be completed digitally via CareDox.

• The school will store the medication in a locked area that children will know is off limits.

• The nurse/designated personnel should retrieve the medication and put the dosage (noting the prescribed amount) in the child’s hand or medication cup for the child to take.

• After the child has taken the medication (under the observation of the nurse/designated personnel), the nurse/designated personnel will return the medication to the locked area.

• Students with a physician prescribed need for auto-injectable epinephrine or an asthma inhaler may possess and use the prescribed medication while in school, at a school sponsored activity, while under the supervision of school personnel or while in before-school or after-school care on school operated property provided the proper authorization form obtained from the school has been completed by the physician and parent and returned to the school.

• If the child is receiving medication regularly at school to alleviate ADHD or other similar problems, a separate record is kept to track the administration – to assure that the child is receiving the medication regularly from day to day.

• Medication and/or prescribed treatment administration will be maintained by nurses in CareDox.

NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE
The Valdosta City School System provides equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of their race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. No student shall be subjected to discrimination or harassment because of the student’s race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or
age in any of the District’s educational programs, activities, or practices. The following person(s) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Reginald Mitchell – (Title IX Coordinator)
Athletics Director
1204 Williams Street, Valdosta, GA 31602
229-671-6049 or 229-219-6398
rmitchell@gocats.org
Laura Diaz – (504 Coordinator)
Assistant Director of Special Education
1204 Williams Street, Valdosta, GA 31602
229-333-8505
ldiaz@gocats.org
Dr. Dan Altman – (Title II Coordinator)
Director of Federal Programs
1204 Williams Street, Valdosta, GA 31602
229-671-6013
daltman@gocats.org
Jack Cook (ADA Coordinator)
1204 Williams Street, Valdosta, GA 31602
229-671-6073
jcook@gocats.org

State law prohibits discrimination based on gender in athletic programs of local school systems (Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A.§ 20-2-315). Students are hereby notified that Valdosta City Schools does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. Inquiries or complaints concerning sports equity in this school system may be submitted to the Sports Equity Coordinator:

Reginald Mitchell, Athletics Director
1204 Williams Street, Valdosta, GA 31602
229-671-6049 or 229-219-6398
rmitchell@gocats.org

For additional guidance regarding the complaints procedures, refer to *LBOE: JCE.

PARENT – TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to arrange a parent-teacher conference when the parent would like more information about their child’s performance at school. Parent-teacher conferences can be an effective way of helping students improve their schoolwork. To schedule a conference, parents should contact the teacher, school counselor or an administrator. Teachers are not available for conferences during instructional time.

PARENT – TEACHER GROUPS

Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in the Parent – Teacher Association (PTA), Parent – Teacher Organization (PTO), or Parent Advisory Council (PAC) at their child’s school. These organizations provide opportunities for parents and teachers to work together for the betterment of the school and the benefit of students. Parent-teacher groups hold regular meetings in the school.

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AND RECOGNIZING EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Valdosta City Schools is committed to maintaining safe schools and getting help for students who show signs of becoming violent. But we need your cooperation. Below are some ideas that parents in other communities have tried. Please read the list carefully, and call your school’s principal if you have any questions.

TEACH YOUR CHILD

- Discuss the school’s discipline policy with your child. Show your support for the rules, and help your child understand the reasons for them.
- At home involve your child in setting rules for appropriate behavior.
- Talk with your child about the violence he or she sees on television, in video and computer games, and possibly in the neighborhood.
- Help your child understand the consequences of violence.
- Teach your child how to solve problems. Praise your child when he or
she follows through.

- Help your child find ways to express anger that do not involve orally or physically hurting others. When you get angry, use it as an opportunity to model these appropriate responses for your child and talk about it.
- Help your child understand the value of accepting individual differences.
- Teach your child about the danger of firearms and make sure your child does not have access to firearms.

**PAY ATTENTION TO WARNING SIGNS**

- Note any disturbing behavior displayed by your child. Frequent angry outbursts, excessive fighting and bullying, cruelty to animals, setting fires, frequent behavior problems at school and in the neighborhood, lack of friends, and alcohol or drug use can be signs of deep problems. Get help for your child. Talk with a trusted professional in your child’s school or in the community.
- Keep lines of communication open with your child, even when it is difficult to do so. Encourage your child to always let you know where he or she will be and with whom. Get to know your child’s friends.
- Listen to your child, if he or she shares concerns about friends who may be exhibiting troubling behavior. Share this information with a trusted professional (i.e., the school principal, school psychologist, or teacher).

**GET INVOLVED WITH SCHOOL**

- Be involved in your child’s school life by supporting and reviewing homework, talking with his or her teachers, and attending school functions (i.e., parent conferences, class programs, Open Houses, and PTO meetings).
- Work with your child’s school to make it more responsive to all students and their families. Share your ideas about how the school can welcome all families, encourage their involvement, and include them in meaningful ways in their children’s education.
- Explore the options available in your community for before- and after-school programs.
- Volunteer to work with school-based groups concerned with violence prevention. If none exist, offer to form one.
- Offer to participate in a local violence prevention group.
- Talk with the parents of your child’s friends. Discuss how you can form a team to ensure your children’s safety.
- Encourage your child to call Georgia’s Toll-free Safety Hotline at **1-877-SAY-STOP (1-877-729-7867)** to anonymously report anyone that has a weapon or threatens to bring a weapon to school.

**WHAT CAN STUDENTS DO?**

Encouraging students to call **1-877-SAY-STOP** is an effective way to detect a potentially violent act before it is committed.

The **1-877-SAY-STOP** is a toll-free hotline that is completely confidential, available 24 hours a day and sponsored by the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. Callers will NOT be asked to reveal their identities.

**HOW DOES THE HOTLINE WORK?**

Upon receiving an incident report, the safety expert will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency and school superintendent. Superintendents will be asked to notify the Georgia Department of Education regarding the subsequent actions taken in conjunction with each call, as well as the outcome of each call. The safety expert will also answer questions about school safety issues and drug-related concerns.

**1-800-SUICIDE**

(Routes caller to suicide counseling line in Columbus, GA)
SCHOOL INSURANCE
School insurance is available to all students. Information will be available for each student by visiting http://markel.sevencorners.com. If you do not have access to the web, please ask to use a computer at your child’s school. Purchase of this program is optional but is highly recommended. All students participating in extracurricular activities must have proof of insurance coverage. *LBOE: JGA

SCHOOL MESSENGER & TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT (TCPA)
The Valdosta City School System and individual schools utilize the computer automated telephone dialing program Parent Link/Blackboard in order to contact parents and stakeholders for a variety of reasons, including emergency notifications. In compliance with TCPA you will have an opportunity to decline to receive all calls except those for emergency reasons. If you wish to opt out of receiving notification calls you will be prompted to indicate that wish during the received call. If you opt out of notification calls, you will still receive emergency calls.

SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT
Valdosta City Schools and the Georgia Department of Education supports a positive approach to behavior that uses proactive strategies to create a safe school climate that promotes dignity, creates authentic student engagement, increases instructional time and improves student achievement for all students.

At times, students exhibit behaviors which place themselves or others in imminent danger. In order to protect the safety of students and staff, the Georgia State Board of Education has adopted Rule 160-5-1-.35: Seclusion and Restraint for all Students, which prohibits the use of seclusion (as defined in that rule) and limits the use of restraint to those situations in which students are a danger to themselves or others. The Valdosta Board of Education also adopted policy JGF (2): Seclusion and Restraint of Students to ensure the safety of the students of Valdosta City Schools.

Valdosta City Board Policy JGF (2): Seclusion or Restraint of Students includes, among other things, the following requirements:

- Training will be provided to appropriate staff and faculty on the use of restraint.
- Written parental notification that restraint was used on their child shall be provided within a reasonable time not to exceed one (1) school day from the use of restraint.
- Documentation of the use of physical restraint by staff or faculty participating in or supervising the restraint for each student in each instance in which the student is restrained.
- Periodic review of the use of restraint.

SECTION 504
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as “Section 504,” is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United State Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

The implementing regulations for Section 504, as set out in 34 CFR Part 104, provide students and/or parents specific rights. These rights are provided at each Section 504 meeting including the initial eligibility meeting. Parents and students are also afforded procedural safeguards under Section 504. Any student, parent, or guardian (i.e. grievant) may request an impartial hearing due to the school system’s actions or inactions regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504 for any student. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant’s failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system’s obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system’s Section 504 Coordinator. The school system’s Section 504 Coordinator
will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing. The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the grievant. If mediation does not resolve the issue, a hearing will move forth resulting in a decision by an impartial review official.

For more information regarding Section 504 student/parent rights and/or procedural safeguards, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your local system’s Section 504 Coordinator, Laura Diaz, at the following address: P.O. Box 5407, Valdosta, GA 31603, (229) 333-8505, or at ldiaz@gocats.org.

**STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM**

Valdosta City Schools is offering Infinite Campus Portal accounts for students and parents/guardians as another means of providing ongoing communication about student performance. The Infinite Campus Parent Portal allows parents and students convenient, real-time access to the calendar, attendance, grades and schedule associated with the student. The Infinite Campus Parent Portal can be accessed from www.gocats.org under the Departments/Student Information tabs. For the security of your child’s information, Valdosta City Schools advises you to take the following precautions:

1. Keep your log-in and password strictly confidential. Do not share your password with anyone,
2. Refrain from using Infinite Campus Parent Portal for any illegal activity, including violation of data privacy laws.
3. Report any potential security problems immediately to Valdosta City Schools.

**Misuse of Infinite Campus Portal will result in revoked access.**

**TEEN & ADULT DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY ACT**

Georgia’s Teenage and Adult Driver Responsibility Act (TADRA) of 1997, has been revised so that the issuance of driver’s licenses and permits to minors will be based on student enrollment rather than school attendance. The State Department of Education will forward student enrollment, suspension and expulsion information from the statewide student information system to the Department of Driver Services, which will issue licenses when it records indicate that applicants are enrolled in school and not under suspension or expulsion.

**TRANSPORTATION CHANGES**

Students may not make changes in the way they usually go home unless they have a note signed by their parent. Parents should give specific dates and instructions to explain any change to the way their child should be transported home. **The principal or assistant principal must approve the note.**

**VISITORS**

Parents are encouraged to visit the school for conferences and school activities. If parents or other family members plan to eat in the school cafeteria with their child, please notify the school office in advance, when possible, so the lunch count can be increased. **As required by Georgia law, visitors to the school must report to the school office to sign in when they arrive. Visitors must wear a visitor’s badge while at school.**

**VIDEO SURVEILLANCE**

All students, parents, and visitors are hereby advised that they will be under video surveillance upon arrival on any Valdosta City School campus. This surveillance includes all grounds and buildings. Also, be advised that all Valdosta City School buses are equipped with video and audio recording devices. Video surveillance shall only be used to promote the order, safety and security of students, staff and property. Video surveillance shall not be used in areas of heightened privacy (i.e. restrooms, gym locker rooms, and nurse’s office). *LBOE: JG (1)*
## 2018-2019 TEST SCHEDULE

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<td>Grades 9-12</td>
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</table>

Note: Test dates may change due to revisions in the state assessment calendar and/or state assessments.
“With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts.” —ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
Setting goals is the first step into turning something invisible into the visible. —Tony Robbins

Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try. —Gail Devers
CENTRAL OFFICE
Dr. Todd Cason, Superintendent
Dr. Alvin Hudson, Deputy Superintendent
Scarlet Brown, Asst. Superintendent
Dr. Shelia Garcia-Wilder, Asst. Superintendent
Phone 229-333-8500
Fax 229-333-8583

J.L. LOMAX ELEMENTARY (PreK-5)
1450 Howell Road (31601)
Phone 229-333-8520
Fax 229-245-5654
Dr. LaConya McCrae, Principal,
lmccrae@gocats.org
Tony Burgman, Assistant Principal

PINEVALE ELEMENTARY (PreK-5)
930 Lake Park Road (31601)
Phone 229-333-8535
Fax 229-245-5651
Royce Thomas, Principal,
royce.thomas@gocats.org
Dr. Ann Finney Williams, Assistant Principal

S.L. MASON ELEMENTARY (PreK-5)
821 West Gordon Street (31601)
Phone 229-333-8525
Fax 229-245-5650
Kevin Daw, Principal, kdaw@gocats.org
Oscar Lee, Assistant Principal
Beth McClellan, Assistant Principal

SALLAS-MAHONE ELEMENTARY (PreK-5)
3686 Lake Laurie Drive (31605)
Phone 229-333-8530
Fax 229-245-5652
Dr. Artrice Haugabrook, Principal
ahaugabrook@gocats.org
Russell Jackson, Assistant Principal
April Ward, Assistant Principal

W.G. NUNN ELEMENTARY (PreK-5)
1610 Lakeland Avenue (31602)
Phone 229-333-8575
Fax 229-245-5653
Wade Beale, Principal
wade.beale@gocats.org
Paul Day, Assistant Principal
Hilda Edgerton, Assistant Principal

J.L. NEWBERN MIDDLE (6-8)
2015 E. Park Avenue (31602)
Phone 229-333-8566
Fax 229-245-5655
Dr. Elena Ponder, Principal
elena.ponder@gocats.org
Debra Rutland, Assistant Principal
Valerie Smith, Assistant Principal
James White, Assistant Principal

VALDOSTA MIDDLE (6-8)
110 Burton Avenue (31602)
Phone 229-333-8555
Fax 229-245-5656
Beth DeLoach, Principal
bdeloach@gocats.org
Valica Sampson, Assistant Principal
Michael Samaras, Assistant Principal
Gene Fandel, Assistant Principal

VALDOSTA EARLY COLLEGE ACADEMY (6-12)
1605 Azalea Drive (31602)
Phone 229-671-8455
Fax 229-247-7689
Dr. Mae McKinney, Principal
mmckinney@gocats.org
Dr. Johnnie Marshall, Assistant Principal

VALDOSTA HIGH (9-12)
3101 N. Forrest Street (31602)
Phone 229-333-8540
Fax 229-333-8584
Dr. Janice Richardson, Principal
jrichardson@gocats.org
Jessica Crawford, Assistant Principal
Joyce Dean, CTAE Director/Assistant Principal
Lev Hartnup, Assistant Principal
Antonio Haynes, Assistant Principal
Betsy McTier, Assistant Principal
Kendrick Moody, Assistant Principal

MACEO HORNE LEARNING CENTER (6-12)
930 Old Statenville Road (31601)
Phone 229-333-8597
Fax 229-671-8513
Keith Hose, Director
khose@gocats.org
Dr. Virginia Crowell, Assistant Director

HORIZON ACADEMY (K-12)
3101 North Forrest Street (31602)
Phone 229-333-8500, ext. 4032
Dr. Samuel Clemons, Regional Director,
samuel.clemons@gocats.org
Sara Lazari, Coordinator

PROMISE PROGRAM (K-5)
1610 Lakeland Avenue (31602)
Phone 229-671-1637
Fax 229-671-8449
Dr. Linda Hunt, Director
lhunt@gocats.org

SCHOOL NUTRITION
Pam Boyd, Director
pboyd@gocats.org
Phone 229-333-8509

SPECIAL EDUCATION
Dr. Vakesha Mays, Director
vmay@gocats.org
Phone 229-333-8505
Fax 229-333-8598

TRANSPORTATION
Ricky Thomas, Director
ricky.thomas@gocats.org
Phone 229-245-5640