

Student & Parent Handbook

General Student Information

Schedule

School begins at 8:45 a.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m. All students are expected to report to school on time and to remain until the end of the school day. Please note that the front office closes at 4:00 each day so our staff can hold planning sessions and family conferences. Unless students are participating in after school extracurricular programs on campus, we request students not remain on campus and be picked up promptly. Once students arrive on campus they may not leave except for school-related activities.

Calendar

The school year begins the first Monday in September after Labor Day weekend. The last official day of classes is the second Friday in June. The school will close for two weeks in December for Winter Break and one week in March for Spring Break. At Thanksgiving, the school will be closed from Wednesday through Friday. The other state holidays that the school will close are Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January, President's Day in February and Veteran's Day in November.

Cancellation or Delay of School

In case of inclement weather, other unsafe weather conditions, or a power outage, The Valley School may close school or delay the start of the school day. On those mornings when it appears that snow or ice may cause travel to be unsafe please tune to your local television or radio stations for announcements.

If, while school is in session, conditions threaten to make travel unsafe, school will either be closed or students will be kept on campus. In either case, parents will be notified. We plan to follow the Medford School District's decisions on cancellations and delays.

The students will have personal cubbies for jackets and backpacks. Because we don't have lockers, for the student's protection, no valuable items should be left at school. We will provide students the opportunity to store valuable items in the school office during school hours.

Academics

Grading Scale and Expectations

Weighted grading point systems of A+ through F are not used for Montessori schools. We believe that mastery and skill-based progress reports are more beneficial to know exact skills that students have mastered. Reports that are guided by proficiency and skill mastery are more beneficial to students as they learn how to set academic goals for themselves. Our goal is to better prepare our students for their future, not turn them into test-takers.

To every possible extent, we assess students in realistic, work imbedded ways that are not disruptive or do not take time away from learning time. For example, to assess whether a student fully understand a grade-level math skill, the student would be asked to correctly solve,, explain their process and relate the skill to a real-world application. If a student can independently complete this task correctly, they have demonstrated mastery and proficiency for this skill. If the student is unable to perform this task and it is apparent that they need more instruction and/or practice, they are given the extra help and then re-assessed to assure that they can demonstrate mastery.

Therefore, our grading is aligned with the grade-level standards in all academic subject areas and students receive continual feedback on how they are progressing toward meeting and mastering all of the standards. Progress reports are given to students and parents about every 4-6 weeks as the units and projects rotate. Every 4-6 week unit is designed to meet and exceed grade level standards in the subject areas of Math, Science, Language Arts, and History/Social Studies. Throughout the year, students will cover all of the grade level standards.

Because we have multi-grade classes, we use a method of “teaching up”. We present topics and standards at the top grade level of our group and then differentiate as needed to reach students who are not yet able to work at the top grade level. Teaching in this way gives younger students exposure and opportunities to work above what is typical for their grade level.

Homework

Our goal is to have middle school students who are well-rounded, happy and healthy. We understand that the many hours that students spend at school are rigorous and challenging. Just like adults, we believe that students have enough time outside of work to participate in enrichment activities that connect with their families. We do not expect middle school students to spend more than sixty minutes outside of their school day on homework per night or weekend.

We believe that homework can build a students’ self-discipline. independence, responsibility and confidence; it prepares them for what will be expected in high school and college. Thus, our homework for The Valley School students usually centers around work students are able to do independently without the assistance of parents. Homework will include reading, writing researching or math practice.

Student Activities and Clubs

The Valley School recognizes the value of clubs and activities in the educational process. Clubs give students chances to practice leadership, collaborate, plan projects, set goals, and learn execution and follow through. We strongly encourage all students to participate in our clubs. Clubs will have time to hold meetings throughout the week during lunch, breaks, before school or during project time. The following are examples of clubs that the school plans to sponsor based on student interest. We encourage any student with interest in starting a club to meet with the school Director.

Montessori Model UN - MMUN provides students opportunity to: Learn about cultures, governments and peoples of nations throughout the world, use research skills, writing skills and written & oral communications skills, develop critical thinking skills, problem solving skills and evaluative skills, debate current global issues and world problems, practice and use leadership skills in a real life global situation, understand the need for

peace and conflict resolution throughout the world while developing their own conflict resolution and debating skills.

Student Leadership - Student Government is also designed to give leadership opportunities in the planning and running of events such as social dances and spirit weeks. In the interest of furthering student participation, students are only allowed to hold the same office twice. Student leadership opportunities can be available to any student who wants to share in our school leadership.

Brain Bowl - Middle School Brain Bowl competition involves students in grades 6 to 8 in weekly games similar to athletic competitions. Questions are designed to be more challenging as each week passes. By the end of the 6-8 week period, these teams are successfully responding to high school level challenges.

Geography Club - Learning geography cannot be a passive subject; it cannot be simply absorbed or memorized. Students get an opportunity to participate in *doing geography*. We will be reading maps, asking geographic questions, or conducting field work, learning to read the landscapes of local (or faraway) environments and identify spatial patterns observable in everyday life.

Robotics - Introduces younger students to real-world engineering challenges by building LEGO-based robots to complete tasks on a thematic playing surface. FLL teams, guided by their imaginations and adult coaches, discover exciting career possibilities and, through the process, learn to make positive contributions to society.

Math Counts - A national middle school coaching and competitive mathematics program that promotes mathematics achievement through a series of fun and engaging "bee" style contests

State of Jefferson Academic Scavenger Hunt - Join the nearly 300 local middle school students who participate in this annual fall competition. The State of Jefferson Scavenger Hunt for middle school students is a high-quality and very competitive event promoting intellectual curiosity and academic skill.

Outdoor Adventure Club - Outdoor activities are organized throughout the year contingent on interest and weather. Club meetings and additional or alternative trips are arranged as needed throughout the year. The Outdoor Club may want to take responsibility for organizing an after-school ski program, weekend hiking trips or a scuba certification course in the spring.

Community Service Committee - The Community Service Committee promotes school service learning projects, helping prepare weekly morning meetings focused on service themes and opportunities locally.

Environmental Club - This club is organized by groups of students who have as their focus, an interest in and concern for the environment. By becoming involved in projects in the school and the community, they learn the concept of working together to make the community a better place to live and have fun. Their mission is to promote environmental awareness of environmental issues and give them power to make change.

Art Club - Art club can do many different fun activities, both inside and outside the school community. Art club may wish to come up with visual art for the school that may include murals,

banners, displays, or more. We want to see what talent our student artists have here at The Valley School.

Drama Club - Seeking to provide a creative outlet for student, this program allows all students a chance to participate in auditions, rehearsals, and meetings/workshops to learn the art of stagecraft and putting on a play and a musical.

Strategy Game Club - This club's goal is to provide an environment where students can have fun learning and playing many different types of strategy games. Good sportsmanship is encouraged through helping new players, encouraging everyone, and developing new ideas. Games we like to play are Risk, Chess, Catan, Scattergories, Backgammon, etc.

Field Trips and Permission Slips

Field trips are privileges afforded to students and are not absolute rights. The school reserves the right to deny participation to students who fail to meet behavioral requirements. In order to attend a field trip, each student MUST have their parents complete and sign a permission slip or they will not be allowed to attend.

Athletics

State charter law states that charter school students are eligible to participate in sports at their neighborhood Junior High (7th & 8th grade). This decision will be made by the Medford schools and parents are encouraged to seek answers at the designated school. Students/families would be responsible for their transportation and still need to pay any activities fees required by other students.

Activity and Field Study Transportation

Participants must travel to and from field studies and events as coordinated by The Valley School and parent volunteers. All parent volunteers who transport students must complete the appropriate paperwork in advance and be registered as a parent volunteer with a background check completed before the trip.

Behavior At Community Activities

It is the goal of the The Valley School to promote respectful and appropriate behavior during all times when participating in activities in our community.

Dances/Socials and Chaperones

Student Government, along parent volunteers may choose to organize social activities at the school outside of the learning hours. The following are guidelines for students planning and attending social events:

- All socials should be well-planned and well-organized. Any committee responsible for the activity is expected to fulfill its responsibilities conscientiously. This includes arranging for adequate adult and staff supervision and satisfactory cleanup.

- Expenses for social events should be reasonable. Financial considerations include decorations, food and music. Social activities may charge participants a minimal charge to cover these costs but the record keeping for collecting moneys needs to be done through the proper forms provided by the school. These events' bookkeeping is managed through the PTO account so receipts and deposits need to align with their

process. Event organizers should budget carefully to ensure that event costs are covered and fees charged do not exclude anyone from participating.

-All school dances or socials will conclude no later than 9:00 pm.

-The volume of the music at an event must be moderate and choice of music may not be considered offensive to students or parent volunteers.

-Students who invite a guest to a dance or social MUST obtain a Social Function Permission Form in advance. This form is to be completed by the visiting student and signed by their parent. When purchasing a guest's ticket, our students will be required to supply the full name of their guest, and they may invite just one guest. A guest on campus or at a school-sponsored event is expected to follow all of our school rules, our agreed upon dress code, and it is the responsibility of the host to ensure that he or she does so.

-Clothing shall be suitable for the occasion (per the pre-agreed-upon dress code).

Attendance Policies

Signing in and out of school

Students who have an approved excuse for leaving campus during school MUST sign out and sign back in if they return that day. Furthermore, students who are being picked up by their parents/guardians must wait in the designated place. Parents/guardians then must sign their student out and back in when they return. Only adults listed on office paperwork may sign a student in or out of school, unless prior guardian permission is given.

Attendance/Absences Procedures and Notes from Parents

Regular attendance is imperative for the success of the academic program and for the students. The Valley School can't function as a community if all of its members are not present. If your child will be absent from school, please follow the procedure below:

- If a student is going to be late or absent, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to phone/email a note to the school before 9:00 a.m. on each and every day of their absence.
- If no call is received, staff will begin making calls to guardians to check student absences for that day, as per Oregon law.

Absentee Policy and Short Term Leave of Absence Form

If a student is absent more than ten days in a row, they will be dropped from school enrollment. This means that their spot will be offered to the next student on the wait list for enrollment.

Missing three or more days of school is considered a short-term leave of absence. Two weeks prior to prearranged absences, students should submit a Short Term Leave of Absence Notification form so that teachers have time to prepare school work to go with the student.

If a student has an unexcused absence (i.e. no notification from a parent/guardian), the unexcused absence will be recorded in the student's educational file.

Tardiness

The Valley School's must function as a cohesive community in order to give the best possible social and academic education. At 8:45, our morning meetings are for announcements, informing students of their daily schedule and tardies where students miss morning meeting, not only detracts from a student's performance that day, but it also disrupts the learning of others. It is very important for students to be in school, morning meeting, and class on time.

Visitors

The school is required by law to protect its students and to be aware of the presence of strangers who enter the school grounds. Permission to bring friends to visit the school anytime during school hours must be obtained from the School Director at least a day in advance. All visitors to the school MUST sign in at the office, receive and wear a visitor's pass and sign out when leaving. The Valley School has the right to refuse any visitors on campus. The campus is open to parents. However, they must sign in at the front office when visiting on campus, other than when picking-up their son or daughter from school.

Discipline Policies

Probation, Suspension, and Expulsion

All students attending The Valley Public Charter School are expected to be respectful of themselves, respectful of others and respectful towards the environment. Therefore, The Valley's School's discipline policy is as follows: When, in the judgment of the teacher and/or administration, a child's behavior is disruptive, disrespectful, cruel or unsafe to the child, others, or the environment, the staff will implement positive behavior supports and interventions.

Each teacher is expected to develop his/her individual way of effectively addressing the usual array of behavior challenges that could arise in the classroom and elsewhere on the school grounds. As a Montessori teacher, her/his interventions are expected to be formulated based on

- 1) respect for the child,
- 2) knowledge and understanding of the developmental needs and characteristics of the child, as well as the needs of the group, and
- 3) the understanding that appropriate behavior must be first carefully taught and modeled
- 4) the knowledge that behaviors are a child's way of communicating that his/her needs are not adequately being met by the teacher or the environment.

The goal of each intervention is to assist the child(ren) to develop the communication skills needed to advocate for oneself, as well as apply appropriate self-control and self-discipline. The manner in which each intervention is made will reflect a patient attitude. When and if a student demonstrates an inability to respond appropriately to ordinary, verbal requests or directives, and/or is otherwise signaling through behavior that he/she has needs that are not being met, the teacher should respond in a proactive way by meeting with the child and his/her parents to discuss concerns. At this point, the teacher might want to consult professionally with his/her colleagues and/or other qualified persons for input regarding additional or alternative approaches and interventions.

Behavior Guidelines:

Level One:

Incidents of not meeting classroom expectations that will result in an immediate and instructionally-based staff response. The teacher/staff member will meet with the student, teach and model expectations and **document the incident** using his/her own system. Examples of Level One Behaviors: Off-task, disruptive behavior, disrupting or violating others' rights to learn, inappropriate comments that make others uncomfortable, refusing directions, inappropriate computer use, littering or minor damage to the school or materials.

Level Two:

Either repeated Level One behaviors or those of a greater intensity, frequency, intent or result but are not yet at the level Three. The teacher/staff member writes/documents an **Incident Report** recommending a **consequence** and **contacts the student's parent/guardian**. The Incident Report is for teacher documentation and a copy is sent to the parent and given to administration.

Examples of Level Two Behaviors: Repeated Level One behaviors or disrespectful behavior that results in another's right to feel safe emotionally and physically (verbal provocation, directed profanity, teasing, intimidating).

Level Three - Office Referral:

Serious misconduct and behaviors that endanger the safety or well being of students and/or staff or behaviors that result in the sustained disruption of normal classroom and school function. These behaviors can also result in immediate suspension but may also be corrected with a variety of consequences. Students who engage in Level Three behaviors will be **referred to the administration for immediate corrective action. The administrator will write the referral, meet with the student, issue appropriate consequences, notify parents, and facilitate corrective action designed to help improve the student's behavior.**

Examples of Level Three: Repeated Level Two behaviors with attempts to correct with parent involvement, fighting, defiance, harassment, bullying, theft, unsafe activities, obscenities, weapon or drug possession, or serious classroom disruption. Action will be taken by the administrator and parent will be contacted.

Discipline actions may include meeting with the student, having the student spend time outside of the classroom or out of school (suspension) and requiring that the student return to school only after a conference with parent is held.

The Valley School maintains an engaging academic environment and a deep sense of community. Rules for participating in the community are clearly and regularly communicated to students and their families. Repeated violations of the rules can and will result in suspension or expulsion, as the individual situation warrants.

The Valley School will regard suspension and expulsion as a last resort. Criteria for suspension and expulsion of students shall be consistent with all applicable laws. The school has discretionary power in invoking disciplinary actions and procedures in order to maintain a climate conducive to learning and to the protection of individuals and property. The school administration shall consider the age, developmental level, disabilities and past pattern of behavior of a student in determining whether to suspend or expel that student. The Valley School will develop policies, in collaboration with parents and teachers that observe fair and lawful standards of due process hearings that will conform to the state and federal laws regarding discipline and grievances.

Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco Products, and Other Substances

Possession or use of intoxicants at any time may lead to suspension or expulsion. The same rule applies to the use or possession of drugs or any drug paraphernalia. The same criteria will be applied in determining the use of alcohol and the use of drugs. The Valley School is a tobacco-free campus. The possession or use of tobacco, matches, and/or lighters is also prohibited on school premises and at school-sponsored functions, regardless of location. Infractions will lead to disciplinary action. Any student found using, distributing, or possessing drugs, alcohol, drug paraphernalia, tobacco and tobacco products on campus or at a school-sponsored activity will face immediate disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion.

Computer and Electronics Acceptable Use Policy

Use of any of the school's computers, computer networks and Internet services is a privilege which may be restricted or revoked at any time. Anyone who uses school computers or computer services agrees to comply with school policies and regulations and the rules of any network accessed. Students who use the school's equipment or internet to access or attempt to access unauthorized sites, who procure inappropriate information or images, who use inappropriate or demeaning language, or who damage or deface computer hardware or software will lose their computer use privileges and/or be subject to disciplinary action and held responsible for financial damage, if applicable.

1. **Personal Responsibility.** Students accept personal responsibility for reporting any misuse of the network to an appropriate staff member. Misuse may come in many forms, but is commonly viewed as any message sent or received that indicates or suggests pornography, unethical or illegal solicitation, racism, sexism, inappropriate language, any form of plagiarism (not accurately crediting another author's work - including the work of other students) and other issues described below.

2. **Acceptable Use.** The use of the Internet at school must be in support of educational goals and/or research. ***Students must understand that the school computers are not to be used for recreation, games, web logging or e-commerce of any kind.*** Students must also understand that sending or receiving information in violation of any school rule, school policy, state or federal regulation or this contract is prohibited. The following materials may not be sent or received by students: obscene or pornographic material, profanity or graphic pictures that may be offensive to others in our school community, material which promotes racial, ethnic or religious hatred, copyrighted material (without expressed permission and/or without proper crediting) or threatening, harassing, demeaning, or obscene material. Students will be personally responsible for this provision at all times when using the Internet or other electronic information service. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported by school officials to law enforcement authorities.

3. **Privileges.** The use of any information system and its resources is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges as well as possible disciplinary action. Each student is to use his or her school assigned User IDs and password. ***Use of someone else's 'user account' is a violation of this contract. All parties involved will have access to the school network, computers and its resources denied; and in addition, the user will be subject to disciplinary action.***

4. **Services.** The Valley School makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The Valley School or the teachers will not be responsible for any damages suffered while on this system. These damages include loss of data as a result of delays or service interruptions caused by the system or anyone's errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the computer

information system is at your own risk. The Valley School specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy of information obtained through allowing access to the Internet.

5. Network Etiquette and Privacy. Students are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These rules include (but are not limited to) the following:

APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE: Students are expected to use appropriate and considerate language. The use of profanity or abusive or demeaning language **will result in disciplinary action.**

PRIVACY: Do not reveal any personal information, your home address, personal phone numbers or any information about other students or staff. Do not share your **USERNAME** or **PASSWORD** with anyone. You may be held liable for someone else's misconduct.

DISRUPTIONS: Do not use the network in any way that would disrupt the use of the network by others.

6. Security. Security on any computer system is a high priority because there are so many users. The Valley School reserves the right to monitor all use on these systems either electronically or by school personnel. If you identify a security problem, notify your teacher at once. Never demonstrate the problem to other users. **Never use another individual's account.** Any incidence of hardware or software damage (including viruses), any attempt to use equipment without permission or access unauthorized databases will be cause for disciplinary action, and students will be held responsible for any financial impact. Any user identified as a security risk will be denied access to the computer information system. School rules for behavior and communication shall apply to all use of school computers, networks, the Internet and the school's web pages. Students agree to comply with school policies and the rules of any network accessed. Students must follow the directions of teachers and staff. School computers may never be used for commercial purposes to include offering, providing, or procuring goods or services for personal use. Students who use equipment without permission, who access unauthorized databases, who procure inappropriate information or images, who use inappropriate or demeaning language of who damage or deface computer hardware or software will lose their computer use privileges and be subject to disciplinary action.

Cell Phones and Mobile Technology

Smart phones and handheld devices are becoming increasingly ubiquitous. In addition to facilitating communication with parents, they provide quick access to information if needed during school. However, our goal is to help students learn the appropriate times and social rules for using them. Personal electronic devices may not be used in a way that interrupts the learning environment, distracts from others or takes a student away mentally or physically from engaging in the social aspect of a community school.

Generally speaking, the use of headphones/earbuds to listen to music during class time is not permitted during the school day because it inhibits social interactions and could pose a safety risk or result in a student missing important instructions. However, teachers have the latitude to allow students to use these devices in particular situations if and when they are related to their learning or the class has come to a joint decision about appropriate limited use. Mobile phones and wireless devices are not to be used during the school day unless at designated times when they are being used for a learning activity. Students who need to use their mobile phones to communicate with parents may do so after obtaining permission from a teacher. They will then use the phone in a designated area where they are not distracting others. We ask parents and visitors to adhere to this policy also. As a society, we see that personal screens inhibit important social interactions that build relationships with each other. We like to encourage the policy: "Please disconnect in order to connect."

School Transportation

Expectations for student behavior while riding in school buses are posted in each school bus. By boarding a school bus, students agree to follow all posted regulations. Repeated violations may lead to loss of bus riding privileges and/or other disciplinary measures.

Dress Code and Personal Appearance

Students are expected to present a neat, clean appearance both physically and in attire, bearing in mind that something that is appropriate in one place may not be appropriate in another. This means that clothing which is offensive, distracting, or makes participation in the school-day activities difficult may be called into question and potentially deemed unacceptable. The overall goal of the Dress Code is to maintain a school environment that is conducive both to work and to learning. The following standards have been established regarding clothing: Clothing that is revealing, has offensive words or pictures, or that allows undergarments to show are not acceptable. Shirts and tops should at no time reveal the midriff or chest cleavage. If any midriff shows when you raise your arms above your head (without tugging or pulling at the top), then the top is too short and is unacceptable.

Pants should fit sufficiently to stay in place at the waist, and not reveal the top of the underwear at the waistband. Shorts and skirts should fit sufficiently to stay in place at the waist, and not reveal the top of the underwear at the waistband. Shorts and skirts must be at least mid-thigh in length. Skirts and shorts are appropriate length when the student is able to stand up straight with arms at his/her side and the shorts/skirt extend to the fingertips. For safety reasons, students may be required to wear closed-toe shoes in science classes and for all field study and field trips. Students may remove their shoes while they are working on the floor, carpets or rugs. Students who choose to remove their shoes need to wear clean socks at all times and shoes must be stored out of the way in the cubbies.

Insurance

The Valley School's School insurance covers all school staff and volunteers engaged in all school activities, with the exception of transportation of students in personal vehicles. In these instances, primary responsibility and liability rests with the driver. All students are covered by student accident insurance during all school activities.

Medication Policy

The Valley School must follow certain procedures with regard to medication at school. No medication of any kind may be provided by the school, and no medication may be administered by any school personnel without written direction from the physician or guardian. Any medications brought to school are to be brought to the office where they will be labeled and placed in the safe. Medications must be in their original containers or prescription bottles, including over-the-counter medication. Parent/guardians must fill out and sign a waiver on order for school staff to dispense medications. This form is available in the office.

Permission, Media Permission, & Notification Forms

Throughout the year, The Valley School publishes pictures of the activities and accomplishments of our students in a variety of ways—through our internal and external publications, our website, news releases, and, at times, on television. We would like to be able to include your child in our media coverage, but we also want to be sensitive to our students' privacy. **Please notify the school in writing if you would like to exclude your child's name or picture in the school's publications.**

Please be advised that through the course of conducting daily school business your child's name and photo may appear in *internal* publications for distribution only within the school community (such as the yearbook or student publications). Your child may be pictured in a large group photo, especially as a sports or theatre participant (without his/her name), in any of the above media. Also, please be aware that from time to time, media companies and individuals over whom we have no control take pictures of the school and our students. The school is not liable for the use or misuse of any pictures so taken. If you have questions, please contact the school's director.

Chemistry Lab Fee and Field Trip Transportation Fee:

We publish a very short list of student supplies and materials to start the year. In addition, we ask that each family contribute a \$30.00 field trip and transportation fee to pay for the bussing to and from the multiple, enriching field trips we have in store for our students. We also ask for a \$20.00 science lab fee to cover the cost of protective eye ware, glassware, disposable gloves, specimens and chemicals.

Acceptance of Student-Parent Handbook as Contract

All students, along with their parent(s)/guardian(s), explicitly accept the provisions set forth in the current Student-Parent Handbook. The Valley School reserves the right to amend the handbook. Parents and students will be notified when any changes occur. Any policy statements published during the course of the school year are considered to be an addendum to the Student-Parent Handbook.