

Valley Oaks Charter School
High School Policies and Procedures Handbook

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year at Valley Oaks Charter School. This is our tenth year of providing support services to homeschooling families and we are delighted to be part of your educational adventure. Our desire is that your high school students become lifelong learners and find success as they complete their coursework. Your daily work with your students is an extremely important part of their learning. This handbook is offered to you to help students keep track of their assignments and appointments. It is also a good way to communicate with teachers. The working partnership between you, your Resource Teacher, the content area teachers, and your students will determine the quality of the learning experience. Let's make it a great partnership throughout this school year.

Jeff VanderNoor
Assistant Principal
jevandernoor@kern.org
(661) 852-6753

As an entity chartered by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office, all the policies and regulations guiding that organization apply to Valley Oaks Charter School.

The Valley Oaks Charter School high school program is a program based on independent study home schooling practices. The high school program offers on site educational classes, on-in classes, and several classes that are done independent of the traditional classroom. Each student and parent can assist in developing the curriculum and instruction that best suits the needs of the individual.

The following procedures will assist each parent and student in the planning process of their education.

The following policies and procedures are reference only. Upon enrollment each parent will receive a handbook with the latest parent rights.

Policies and procedures are in alphabetical order!

Accelerated Student Work Load Policy

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

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

Acceptance of High School Credits Policy

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

If a student transfers from Valley Oaks Charter School to another school/district, that school/district will make its own judgment relative to acceptance of credits.

GUIDELINES (Acceptance of High School Credits Policy continued)

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

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

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

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

Recommendation for Rejection of High School Transcript:

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

Procedure:

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

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

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

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

Acceptable Use Policy

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

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

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

1. Personal Responsibility:

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

2. Acceptable Use:

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

In addition I will abide by the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Privileges

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

4. Network Etiquette and Privacy:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Security:

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

6. Vandalism:

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

Accreditation

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

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

AP/Honors Enrollment

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

Attendance

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

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

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

1. Due to illness.
2. Due to quarantine under the direction of a city or county health officer.
3. For the purpose of having medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic services rendered.

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

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

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

Complaint Procedure

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

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

In all dealings, the tone of all parties must be respectful.

Classroom Instruction

Valley Oaks Charter School has committed to teaching enrichment classes to support the needs of parents and students. The Tuesday program was developed to help parents and students engage in the learning process with a team of teachers guiding the process weekly.

Core subjects are taught every Tuesday, throughout the year. Elective and seminar courses will be offered on Fridays and by appointment.

At orientation, the student will receive a schedule with the classes he/she are enrolled in, along with all supplies necessary to meet the needs of each course.

The Tuesday program is not mandatory for each student, but is highly recommended for families that would like more support. You and your resource teacher will determine the most appropriate educational track.

Concurrent Enrollment Policy

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

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

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

11. The pupil and/or pupil's family will pay all fees
12. College/University Coursework and units are not incorporated into Valley Oaks Charter School's master agreement.

Conferences with Parents and Students

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

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

California Scholarship Federation (CSF)

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

In order to become a member, the student must submit an application each semester the student is eligible. A point system specified in the CSF State By-Laws establishes the membership requirements. To secure eligibility for CSF membership, a student must earn sufficient points from pre-approved course lists.

The majority of the required membership points must come from University of California accepted course work. Life Membership (Sealbearer) is achieved by qualifying for chapter membership for four or more semesters in the last three years of high school, and earns the CSF gold Seal on diplomas and transcripts. Each year colleges and universities throughout the United States award scholarships to CSF Life (Sealbearer) Members. These students are also eligible to be nominated by the chapter adviser for the Seymour Memorial Awards. For more details on CSF and approved course lists, see Brandi Sherman, or your resource teacher.

Closed Campus

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

College Entrance Requirements

In addition to the rights described in Education Code §51100-§51102, students and parents have the right to be informed of college entrance requirements. It is critically important to know how to assist those students who choose to pursue a college education.

Students and parents need to know the series of college preparatory classes to take in high school. The minimum requirements vary, depending on the selected college or university.

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

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

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

Discipline Policy

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

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

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

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

The discipline policy for Valley Oaks applies:

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

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

1. Dress that does not meet school standards
2. Unauthorized use of electronic or mechanical devices including CB radios, cellular phones, laser pens, boom boxes, walkmans, game boys, portable DVD players, lighters, etc.
3. Disruptive behavior

4. Insubordination (i.e. not obeying directions, refusal to work)
5. Profanity/obscenities
6. Unauthorized use of computer technology
7. Gambling
8. Fighting, threatening, physical aggression, bullying
9. Defacing/destroying school or private property
10. Theft or attempted theft
11. Possession of weapons, firearms, look-alike weapons, explosives, fireworks
12. Sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, color, sex, disability, national origin, ethnicity, or religion
13. False alarms, bomb threats, 911 calls, threats against persons, hoaxes
14. Use or possession of tobacco, tobacco products, or drugs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dress Code Policy

Valley Oaks Charter School's dress code is being modified to accommodate a K-12 shared campus in the near future. Valley Oaks is a parent choice homeschooling program. Students who choose to attend campus classes and school related activities are expected to abide by the following dress code. The dress code is provided as a means to best support student learning and safety. It is our desire to have parents be our full partners in encouraging and enforcing appropriate dress. VOCS students will wear clothing that is appropriate in nature while on school grounds and/or involved in school activities. The school staff will make the final determination of what is or is not appropriate to enforce this policy.

Valley Oaks defines “appropriate” dress as:

- Pants (not showing skin and /or undergarments, no sagging)
- Shorts-mid-thigh or longer (no inappropriate graphics or words)
- Skirt / Dress-mid-knee or longer
- Top/Shirt/Dress bodice (not revealing, collared style, tucked into pants)
- T-shirt (VOCS or school-related, appropriate words/logos)

Dress that may NOT be appropriate:

- Any type of clothing with inappropriate or vulgar graphics or words
- Hats or beanies worn indoors. Students may wear hats or protective covering during school activities that are held outdoors
- Any type of clothing that is revealing. No skin should be showing at the waistline. No part of any undergarment should be showing. This includes see-through materials, bare midriffs, spaghetti or no straps, tank or tube tops, low-cut tops, and sagged pants.
- Any clothing that is inappropriately sized
- Any clothing related to gang activity
- Any clothing that is dangerous with spikes, studs, chains, etc.
- Anything that may draw attention to the style or student and away from learning such as body-piercings (small conservative ear piercing are acceptable), visible tattoos, unnatural-colored hairstyles
- No flip-flops, beach-style, high-heel, spike-heel, or stiletto-heel shoes allowed.

If a student arrives for an activity inappropriately dressed, the staff member will have the option of the following:

- 1) Giving the student the opportunity to modify his/her appearance
- 2) Calling the parent to bring a change of clothes or sending the student home to change

Electronic Communication Devices Policy

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

Effective August 22nd, 2005, students may possess and use electronic communication devices on school district property and at school-sponsored activities subject to the following:

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

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

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

Faculty

A complete list of faculty phone numbers and emails will be made available to each student and family. The faculty list will also be located on our school website. (www.valleyoakscharterschool.org)

Field Trips

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

Fog Delays

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

Grading Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grades for achievement

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

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

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

Incompletes

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

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

Pass/Fail Grading

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

Grade Weighting for Advanced Placement/Honors Courses

Students may earn extra grade points for Advanced Placement and Honors courses. The following is a list of those advancements:

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

Grades in Sequence Courses

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

Repeating Courses

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

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

Adding/Dropping Courses

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

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

Evaluation of Transcripts

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

Graduation Policy

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

1. **Total Credits Requirement:**

- a. Students must earn two hundred and twenty (220) Semester Units.

2. **Course Requirements:**

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. English/Language Arts | 40 Semester Units |
| b. Mathematics | 30 Semester Units |
| i. Algebra - 10 | |
| c. Science | 20 Semester Units |
| i. Life Science – 10 | |
| ii. Physical Science –10 | |
| d. Social Studies: | 30 Semester Units |
| i. World History/Geography – 10 | |
| ii. U.S. History/Geography –10 | |
| iii. Government – 5 and Economics - 5 | |
| e. Fine Arts or Foreign Language | 10 Semester Units |
| f. Physical Education | 20 Semester Units |
| g. Health | 5 Semester Units |
| h. Career Education | 5 Semester Units |
| i. Technology | 5 Semester Units |
| j. Senior Seminar | 5 Semester Units |
| k. Personal Development | *8 Semester Units |
| l. Electives | Semester Units to total 220 |

***Determined by one unit per semester enrolled**

3. **Basic Proficiency Requirement:**

- a. All students must pass the California High School Exit Exam to receive a high school diploma from Valley Oaks Charter School.
- b. To receive a diploma all students designated “special education” shall have completed the necessary total credits as indicated in Section 1 of this policy and met the requirements specified in their I.E.P.’s (Individualized Education Program), including any alternative means and modes necessary for the student to complete the Valley Oaks Charter School’s prescribed course of study. The IEP Team shall declare a student ineligible for graduation if the requirements of the IEP have not been met.

4. **Certificate of Completion Requirements:**

- a. Any “regular education” student who is unable to pass the California High School Exit Exam will be eligible to receive a “Certificate of Completion if he/she meets all of the following criteria:
- Satisfies the “Total Credits Requirement” found in section 1 of this policy.
 - Satisfies all “Course Requirements” found in section 2 of this policy.
 - Satisfactorily attempts to take and pass the California High School Exit Examination, as judged by the principal or his/her designee.

- iv. Satisfactorily enrolls in remedial courses in the 11th and/or 12th grades, as judged by the principal or his/her designee.
- b. Any “special education” student who is on a non-diploma track and is receiving a functional or non-academic curriculum shall be eligible for a “Certificate of Completion” instead of a diploma. To receive a Certificate of Completion, a student shall have completed the necessary total credits as indicated in Section 1 of this policy and met the requirements specified in his/her IEP (Individualized Education Program). The IEP Team shall declare a student ineligible for a Certificate of Completion if the requirements of the IEP have not been met.

Identification Cards

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

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

Instructional Time

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

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

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

Learning Center Use

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

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

Mandated Reporters

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

Mission Statement

The mission of Valley Oaks is to provide opportunities, support, and accountability for parents in their homeschooling endeavors. In partnership, parents, credentialed teachers, and staff provide high quality curriculum, diverse resources, and learning experiences for unlimited student growth.

Museum/CALM Memberships

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

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001

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

Parent Participation

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

Parents/guardians are welcome in the classrooms and/or on campus at any time during regular school hours unless extenuating circumstances exist that would preclude them from being on school premises.

Parents have the right to examine their children's records. When a student transfers to another school, those records will be sent to that district.

Parent Club (VOPAC)

Valley Oaks Charter School welcomes all parents who are interested in joining a parent club to support their students. There will be many activities throughout the year that will need support and guidance from the teaching staff and parents. Please inquire with your resource teacher, or at the front desk, if you're interested in participating.

Parent Participation and Rights

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

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

This act covers the educational rights of children and youth in homeless situations. The school has a responsibility to identify children who are experiencing homelessness and to offer appropriate services to the family, child, or youth.

If a child is defined by law as “homeless” the school will inform that child about educational/enrollment provisions of the law. If you are aware of a child who is homeless, please let the school know immediately. Contact Dr. Scott Meier for further information.

Williams Uniform Complaint Act

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

Parental Rights: Education Empowerment Act of 1998

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

Inspection of Instructional Materials

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

Observation of School Activities

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

Consent for Evaluations

Your child may not be tested for a behavioral, mental, or emotional evaluation without your informed written consent.

Affirmation or Disavowal of Beliefs

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

Health Component of Any Program or Class

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

Dissection of Animals

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

Excused from Instruction Due to Religious Belief

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

Other rights of parents and guardians

These rights include your right:

1. To observe in your child's classroom (upon reasonable notice).
2. To meet with your child's teacher and the school principal (upon reasonable notice).
3. To volunteer your time and resources at the school.
4. To be notified on a timely basis if your child is absent from school without permission.
5. To be notified concerning your child's classroom and standardized test performance.

6. To request a specific school and teacher and to receive a response from the school district. (This does not obligate the school district to grant the request.)
7. To have a safe learning environment for your child.
8. To examine curriculum materials of your child's class.
9. To be informed of your child's progress and appropriate school personnel to contact in the event of problems.
10. To access student records for your child.
11. To receive information concerning expectations for student learning.
12. To be informed in advance about school rules, policies, dress codes, and procedures for visiting the school.
13. To receive information about any psychological testing of your child and to deny permission for such testing.

14. To participate as a member of any school site councils or parental advisory councils at the school, in accordance with governing membership.
15. To question, and receive an answer regarding, items in your child's record that appear inaccurate, misleading, or that invade privacy.

Personal Development:

As a graduation requirement at Valley Oaks Charter School, every student will be enrolled in a one-unit (1) course entitled Personal Development. The purpose of this course is to facilitate students working toward some of the goals of the school that would not be covered within the other courses. The four (4) requirements may be done in any order but must meet the deadlines listed below, with a substitute option for community service. A report on each experience must be attached to the individual assignment cover sheet. Past activities may be used for current assignments, within a three (3) month time frame of the current activity due date. Each VOCS student must complete the following requirements each semester. The four (4) activities are: (1) Attend a community performance, (2) attend an exhibit, (3) community service, and (4) complete a report on a school eslr. **Parents may design their own personal development course. Please talk to your individual resource teacher if you wish to develop or deviate from the course.**

Pesticide Warnings

The district has implemented an integrated pest management (IPM) program designed to effectively control pests using a combination of techniques.

Pesticides that pose the least possible hazard and are effective in a manner that minimizes risks to people, property, and the environment may be used according to established regulations and treatment thresholds.

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

If you wish to receive notification of individual pesticide applications at the school facility, please complete the attached registration form. You will receive notification at least 72 hours prior to the application. Further information regarding pesticide application may be obtained at the website for the California Department of Pesticide Regulation at www.cdpr.ca.gov.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty Policy

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

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

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

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

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

Probation Policy

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

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

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

New Enrollees:

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

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

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

P.S.A.T Testing:

Valley Oaks Charter School is now officially a test center, starting with the 2006-2007 school year. We will be offering the Practice Scholastic Aptitude test to any interested 9th through 11th graders. 11th and 12th grade students interested in taking the Scholastic Aptitude test will need to sign up with the college board at www.collegeboard.com.

Test centers are located within the Kern High School District and Bakersfield College. Brandi Sherman, our high school counselor, will also have testing information available.

Pupil Records

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

Release of Directory Information

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

Smoking

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

Supervision of students

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

Study Hall

Valley Oaks Charter School is a small school with a limited staff. Because we do not have a large support staff, we ask that each parent help us during the Tuesday program. Many students who are enrolled in the Tuesday program have an "open period" or no class during a particular period. We will have organized study hall that will be run by one of our teachers on staff. It is the students' responsibility to have plenty of work to do. We ask that if students do not have a regular class period or are not involved in study hall, then they must be accompanied by their parent/guardian. This will enable the student to obtain the most from their education, while attending Tuesday classes.

Tutoring

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

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

Work Permits

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

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

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

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

Questions about the handbook?

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

Best wishes for a successful and productive school year!