



The Villages®
Charter School Autism Center

**PARENT/GUARDIAN AND STUDENT
HANDBOOK
2026-2027**

**The Villages Charter School
Autism Center**

420 Village Campus Circle

The Villages, Florida 32162

(352) 259-6868

<https://tvcsac.org/>

Home of the Buffalo!

The Villages Charter School Autism Center

Core Ideology

Vision

To create a compassionate environment with individualized learning that supports each learner's unique skills, interests, and ambitions to reach their fullest potential as a contributing member of the community.

Mission

To partner with families to provide a safe and caring learning environment that supports, develops, and inspires learners with autism spectrum disorder.

Core Values

Hospitality – We believe in creating a learning environment that teaches our learners to be:

- Welcoming and engaging.
- Comfortable and safe.
- Warm and friendly.
- Happy and kind.

Stewardship – We lead by example, teaching our learners to be:

- Responsible and accountable for ourselves.
- Nurturing and courteous to others.
- Caring and respectful of our environment and school resources.

Innovation and Creativity – We support individual growth by encouraging our learners to:

- Embrace unique learning styles.
- Promote self-advocacy.
- Entertain new experiences.

Hard Work – We demonstrate the value of hard work and inspire our learners to:

- Strive for progress and be proud of their best effort.
- Have a willingness to learn and continuously improve.
- Participate in school and the community.



The Villages® Charter School Autism Center

Dear Parents/Guardians and Learners,

Hello and welcome to the 2026-2027 school year at The Villages Charter School Autism Center (TVCS AC). We are **extremely excited** to welcome our new learners to a fantastic school year.

We assure all our school stakeholders that we are committed to providing a supportive, safe, and nurturing educational environment for our learners with a priority focus on learner growth and achievement. We know all learners can succeed and we are here to serve their needs.

We look forward to the opportunity to work with our learners and parents/guardians each day to ensure our learners are successful here at TVCS AC. Through the dedicated work of all stakeholders, we will achieve our school goals with ambitious instruction, collaborative teaching, and a supportive school environment.

This handbook has been created as an assistive guide to answer those questions most often asked by our parents/guardians and learners. We will use this handbook for consistency with the application of our school policies as part of our goal to provide a supportive and safe school environment for our learners. Please read this handbook carefully so that both the information and school expectations are understood.

By working together, we will maintain a productive, supportive, and safe school environment for our learners. If you have any questions, please contact your learner's teacher and/or administration to assist. We always appreciate any concerns and/or suggestions you may have about this handbook. Again, we are **extremely excited** to work with all our parents/guardians and our awesome Buffalos this year!

Together,

Corey D. Herman

Principal

Email: corey.herman@tvcsac.org

The Villages Charter School Autism Center

420 Campus Circle – The Villages, FL 32162

Main Office: (352) 259-6868, ext. 17111; Website: <https://tvcsac.org/>

#Together

Administration

Principal:	Mr. Corey D. Herman
Vice Principal:	Mrs. Amanda Laios

Behavior Team

Board Certified Behavior Analyst:	Daniel Cumba, BCBA
Board Certified Behavior Analyst:	Ashlee Cullman, BCBA

Curriculum & Instruction Team

Interventionist & Curriculum Facilitator:	Elizabeth “Liz” Worrell
Interventionist & Curriculum Facilitator:	Kim Hubbard

ESE Team

Staffing Specialist:	Shawna-Mae Warren
Speech-Language Pathologist:	Chelsea Bogart
Speech-Language Pathologist:	Nancy Boily

Office and Support Staff

School Secretary:	Katie Langham
Data Clerk:	Yomayra Tirado
Clinic Assistant:	Brenda Douglas
Receptionist:	Catherine Baldwin

School/Program Hours

Before-care drop-off time:	7:00 am to 7:25 am
Morning carline:	7:25 am to 7:55 am
Student school day:	8:00 am to 3:00 pm (2:00 pm on identified Wednesdays)
Tardy bell:	8:00 am
Student breakfast/life skills:	7:30 am to 8:00 am
Teacher day:	7:30 am to 3:30 pm
School office hours:	7:30 am to 4:00 pm
After-care hours:	3:00 pm to 6:00 pm

The following pages contain the policies, regulations, and rules that apply to The Villages Charter School Autism Center. These are in addition to, and in conjunction with, state statutes and The Villages Charter School and the Autism Center Board's rules and regulations. This handbook serves as a guide and resource for parents/guardians and students. A local school handbook is an extension of regulations to include Florida State Statutes, State Board of Education Regulations, and The Villages Charter School Autism Center Board Policies, as well as the adopted procedures for the safe, orderly, and efficient operation of the Autism Center. This handbook does not replace or supersede State Statute, Board policies, nor eliminates changes during the year out of necessity for the safe, orderly, and efficient operation of the school. This handbook is not inclusive of all applicable school procedures.

Table of Contents

Accidents/Injuries	6
Animals in Class	6
Attendance	6
Illness and Injury Guidelines	7
Alcohol, Drugs, and/or Tobacco	8
Arrival and Dismissal	8
Articles Not Allowed on Campus	9
Bullying and Harassment Prohibition	10
Cafeteria	10
Calendar and Modified Days/Times	12
Cell Phone and Earbud/Headphone Policy	12
Child Abuse and Neglect	12
Classroom/Campus Parties	13
Clinic, First Aid, and Medication	13
Communication and Conferences	14
Custody Situations	14
Discipline	15
Safety	17
Emergency Drills	17
Extended Care	17
Field Trips	17
Grade Reporting and Grading Scale	18
Homework	19
Lost and Found, Money, and Valuables	19
Parent Involvement	19
Parking	20
Physical Education	20
Pledge of Allegiance	20
Religious Holidays	20
School Resource Officer	20
Uniforms	20
Visitors and Volunteers	22

Accidents/Injuries

In the event a student has an accident or is injured at school or at a school function, staff will complete an incident report to document the incident. With students in an active environment, accidents can sometimes be unavoidable. At times, parents/guardians are not able to be reached. It is very important that the school has phone numbers for emergencies and that any updated numbers are provided to the school.

In case of a health emergency, "911" (Emergency Medical Services) will be called and the parent/guardian will be notified immediately.

Animals in Class

No live animals will be allowed in classrooms or educational settings except for educational/academic purposes with administrative approval. For the safety of our students, we will not "generally" allow anyone to bring animals on our campus unless the person or organization has adequate insurance and has been approved by the principal. If live animals are used in the classroom to enhance the curriculum and the parent/guardian has any concerns, please contact the school.

Attendance

The following attendance policy has been adopted by TVCS AC Board and can be located at: <https://tvcsac.org/resources/documents-policies/>. Florida Law requires regular attendance. A full school term in the State of Florida is 180 days for students. The nature of school choice places the responsibility for punctual attendance on each family. Therefore, students with excessive absences, including tardies and early check-outs, will be held accountable and action may be taken by the Attendance Review Committee. The makeup of the Attendance Review Committee at the direction of the principal may include the principal (or designee), the board-certified behavior analyst, the instructional lead, and/or a teacher of the student.

Absent/tardy students must submit approved documentation verifying that the absence qualified for excused status (parent's note, doctor's statement, or email from parent or doctor) by the third-class meeting after their absence; after that time, the absence will be recorded as unexcused and no documentation accepted at any point thereafter.

To receive credit for missed work due to an absence, a student must turn in assignments upon returning to school within the number of days missed plus one day except as noted under the Consequences section of the Disciplinary Policy. However, for any assignment that has a previously determined due date, that due date must be observed unless arrangements have been made with the assigning teacher. Any variation of this must be approved by the administration.

The function of the committee will be to determine what further action is warranted after reviewing the student's attendance record. A further action that may be deemed appropriate could be the initiation of an Attendance Contract, demonstration of mastery of the course material by passing the semester exam with a 75% or better, and/or other actions. The committee will be responsible for the execution of the Attendance Contract should the student fail to meet the contract requirements.

Students with a combination of 10 absences, tardies, or early check-outs (excused or unexcused) within a semester grading period are considered to be excessively truant and the Attendance Review Committee will convene and may initiate an Attendance Contract. Non-compliance with the specifications of the Attendance Contract will result in dismissal from The Villages Charter School Autism Center.

Tardiness/Early Check-outs

Criteria for an excused tardy include tardies for religious instruction or a religious function, tardiness due to sickness, injury, court appearance, or any other insurmountable condition as determined by the principal (or designee). Tardy students must bring in approved documentation verifying that the tardy qualifies for excused status (parent's note, doctor's statement, subpoena, etc.) by the school day after the tardy to school; after that time the tardy will be recorded as unexcused and no documentation will be accepted at any point thereafter. When the student arrives at school after the start of the school day, the student must report to the school office. An Admit Slip will be issued at which time the student will report to class to begin activities for the day. In middle and high school, students will be marked absent for any class in which they miss the entire class period and tardy to the class that is entered after the bell has rung.

Elementary

The school will monitor all attendance marks, including absences, tardies, and early check-outs. Upon the 8th attendance mark, the parent may be contacted for help in finding a solution for better attendance. If the issue is not corrected and attendance marks continue, then at the 10th mark, the attendance committee will meet to decide if an attendance contract needs to be initiated.

Illness and Injury Guidelines for School Attendance

In order to provide a healthy school environment for all children and staff, the following guidelines have been prepared to assist you in decisions relating to your child's health and school attendance. If your child is not feeling well and you are uncertain about sending him/her to school on any given day, It is best to keep your child home and observe him/her for worsening symptoms. If a child is too ill to attend school in the morning, it is recommended that he/she stay home all day.

When you make the decision to keep your child home, send a note by the third class meeting after their absence. The note should include your child's full name, teacher's name, date of absence, and reason for absence. All absences without a note will be considered unexcused.

Colds/Flu	Student needs to remain home if he/she has an excessive runny nose, excessive coughing, temperature at or above 100.4°F, or is too uncomfortable to function at school.
Fever	Student may return to school when he/she has been fever-free (less than 100.4°F) without fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours.
Rash	Student is to remain at home with any undiagnosed skin rash and may return when the rash is gone, or with a doctor's note stating diagnosis and clearing him/her to return to school.
Vomiting	Student is to remain at home if he/she has vomited within the past 24 hours. Should a student experience vomiting during school hours, he/she will be sent home and needs to remain home for at least 24 hours after vomiting subsides.
Diarrhea	If student has diarrhea 2 times in a day, he/she needs to remain at home until diarrhea subsides and no other existing signs of illness.

Strep Throat	Student needs to be treated with antibiotics for 48 hours before returning to school if there is a positive throat culture.
Ear Infection	Student needs to be evaluated by a physician if he/she complains of ear pain. Early treatment can help ward off permanent damage to the ear which could result in hearing loss.
Eye Infection	Redness, drainage, or watering of the eyes requires assessment to determine the cause of the conjunctivitis (pink eye) or possible eye injury. Eyes need to be clear, or student needs to be treated with prescription medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
Chicken Pox	Student may return to school after all blisters are dried and crusted over. Notify the school nurse if your child has chickenpox.
Head Lice	Student must be treated with shampoo or rinse as recommended by your doctor or pharmacy and may return to school when the hair is nit free. Notify the school nurse if your child has head lice and sign the Verification of Treatment Form when the student returns to school.
Serious Injuries and Surgeries	The school nurse is to be notified when a student has sustained a serious injury or has had surgery and a note from the physician must describe any limitations or special needs when the student is cleared to return to school. Possible modifications to school schedule, physical activity and mode of travel on the school campus should be evaluated. For the student's safety, if crutches, a wheelchair or any other assistive devices will be needed, the physician must specify this in writing.
School Injuries	The nurse, health clerk, or other school staff will assess the injury, administer first aid, and notify parents as soon as possible, by phone and/or note, as to the type and status of injury.

Alcohol, Drugs, and/or Tobacco

The possession, selling, or transmitting of alcoholic beverages, drugs, drug paraphernalia, or any other substance capable of modifying mood or behavior or the possession, selling, or transmitting of substance represented to be of said nature is a violation of the Autism Center.

Florida Statute stipulates that it is unlawful for any person under 18 years of age to knowingly possess or use any tobacco products, and 21 years of age for tobacco vape products. Any person under 18 (or 21 for vapes) years of age who violates the provisions commits a non-criminal violation which is punishable by hours of community service, a fine, or by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles withholding the person's driver's license or driving privileges.

Arrival and Dismissal

For your student's safety, students **are not to arrive at school before 7:00 am**. Staff members are not on duty until 7:00 am each day. Parents/guardians may not walk students to class.

All students are expected to be at school by 8:00 am. For security reasons, all perimeter gates will be locked. Please escort your student to the front office to sign in if he/she arrives after 8:00 am.

Parents/guardians are not permitted to walk up to the car rider area to pick up their student. **If you need to sign your student out early, you must do so before 2:30 pm.** When signing your student out early, please park in the front office parking lot. Parents/guardians will be asked to show a picture ID before the student will be escorted out of class. Parents/guardians will wait for their student in the front office and will not be allowed to go to the classroom to check out their student. For your student's safety, we will not release a student to someone who is not listed in Skyward.

If you need to change if your student is a car rider or goes to after-care, please notify the school as soon as possible. Students not picked up by 3:20 pm to 3:30 pm will be escorted to after-care, where a fee will be charged for the service.

Please visit TVCSAC.org, select the "contact" tab on the top right ribbon of the page, then "Maps & Directions" to see a visual of the drop-off and pick-up directions.

Morning Traffic Procedure

- From CR 466 on Village Campus Circle or Tatonka Terrace:
 - Enter the east side of the school front parking lot. If you drop off at before-care, park your vehicle and enter the main office.
 - If dropping off your student in Carline, pull through Carline on the north side of the Autism Center to drop off your student.
 - Exit the campus through Carline, taking a right out of the Carline parking lot onto Village Campus Circle, and then an immediate left onto Tatonka Terrace to exit east or west onto CR 466.

Afternoon Traffic Procedure

- From CR 466 on Village Campus Circle or Tatonka Terrace:
 - Enter the east side of the school front parking lot. If you pick up your student from after-care, park your vehicle and enter the main office.
 - If picking up your student in Carline, please make sure you have used the Pick My Kid app where you will pull through Carline on the north side of the Autism Center to pick up your student.
 - Exit the campus through the carline, taking a right or left out of the carline parking lot onto Village Campus Circle. Taking either direction will take you back to CR 466.

Articles Not Allowed on Campus

Items such as hanging chains, radios, skateboards, weapons, laser pointers, markers, other than highlighters, etc. should not be brought on campus at any time. All items brought on campus are subject to search by school officials. These items may be confiscated and students may be subject to disciplinary action. No sale of any private property is permitted on campus. Only items sold for school fundraising projects are permitted to be sold. In addition, no outside food/drink is permitted on campus after the tardy bell has rung, notwithstanding a student's lunch or snacks for the classroom setting in working with the teacher. ***If personal items are lost or stolen it is not the responsibility of the school.***

Bullying and Harassment Prohibition

It is the policy of the Autism Center that all students and school employees (including school volunteers) have an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The Autism Center will not tolerate bullying and/or harassment of any type. The Autism Center expects students to conduct themselves as appropriate for their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.

The Autism Center believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents/guardians, staff, and community members producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for the Autism Center and community property on the part of students and staff. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers will demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, set the example of the Core Ideology of the Autism Center, and refuse to tolerate harassment or bullying.

Bullying includes “cyberbullying” and means *systematically* and *chronically* inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation, or unreasonably interfere with the individual’s school performance or participation, and may involve, but is not limited to:

1. Unwanted teasing,
2. Threats,
3. Intimidation,
4. Stalking,
5. Physical violence,
6. Theft,
7. Sexual, religious, or racial harassment,
8. Public or private humiliation,
9. Destruction of school or victim’s property,
10. Rumors or spreading of falsehoods, and
11. Social exclusion.

Harassment means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gestures, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

1. Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s or employee’s performance, opportunities, or benefits.
3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

Cafeteria

It is our duty, our responsibility, and indeed our pleasure to serve our students. The purpose of the School Food Service Program is to provide at least 1/3 of the student’s daily nutritional requirements for each meal. Our goal

at the Autism Center is to feed each and every student in the school a wholesome and nutritious meal daily. We are trained and equipped to accommodate all of our students.

As part of our school-wide commitment to good nutrition and a healthy diet, **carbonated drinks will not be allowed in the cafeteria.**

Parents/guardians are welcome to eat lunch with their student in a designated location (i.e., outside at a picnic table or at a designated table in the cafeteria.) All parents/guardians must sign in at the front office to receive an identification sticker to be on campus, unless a special after-hours event occurs. Eating lunch with your student must be during the student's scheduled lunch time. Parents/guardians will only be allowed to eat lunch with their own student.

The cafeteria is an extension of the classroom. Our cafeteria will be utilized as a learning center where proper life skills and independence strategies are taught and practiced. For health reasons, students will not be allowed to swap or share food with others.

Life and independent skills include, but are not limited to:

- Going through the lunch line and waiting their turn,
- Remaining in area,
- Raising a hand for help,
- Walking in the cafeteria,
- Keeping hands and feet to self,
- Sitting properly,
- Cleaning their area,
- Properly disposing of all uneaten food and other paper products,
- Developing communication skills and speaking softly to their peers seated beside them at their table,
- Being respectful to follow the directions of the lunchroom staff,
- Chewing food with mouths closed, and
- Cleaning their hands and related hygiene skills.

Menus

Parents/guardians may obtain the lunch menu by visiting <https://www.tvcs.org/administration/food-service/> to view the breakfast and lunch menus for the month. It should be noted that menus may be modified with reduced options for our population and are subject to change due to conditions such as product availability, equipment failure, or schedule changes.

Breakfast and lunch may be reduced or free for the school year based on parent/guardian eligibility. Students will attend breakfast starting at 8:00 am to work on the social and independent skills curriculum. Students will attend lunch at their scheduled time. Parents/guardians will be provided with the student's schedule for informational purposes.

Special Dietary Needs

The Autism Center has students with special dietary needs. To assist, we have available in our cafeteria the ability to heat up meals for students who bring their lunch and need specialty food from home, or who require this form of accommodation because of their impairment. Please do not send glass containers to school with your student. **It is critical for students who have food allergies or low tolerance to certain foods that our staff is made aware of this for the safety of the student.**

Calendar and Modified Days/Times

Outside of the Board approved school calendar that identifies school days, holidays, and related notifications, parents/guardians will be made aware of all school extra-curricular activities and events through varied methods of communication, including, but not limited to, calls home, information sent home with the student, school website, postings, and/or in-person notifications.

Any modified schedules that impact instruction will be communicated to our families and should be identified on the adopted school calendar. Modified schedules include those needed due to weather make-up days, as well as training needs for the Autism Center staff to continue to receive and practice essential training for our students. For example, on identified Wednesdays throughout the year, the Autism Center will end the instructional school day at 2:00 pm for staff to participate in Professional Development and Learning. Parents/guardians may pick up their student at 2:00 pm, or at the traditional dismissal time of 3:00 pm, notwithstanding students who normally attend aftercare. For students who do not attend aftercare, and the parent/guardian does not or cannot pick their student up at 2:00 pm, aftercare will be provided free of charge until the traditional dismissal time at 3:00 pm.

Cell Phone and Earbud/Headphone Policy

Personal telephones and other communication devices may be brought to school with the following conditions applying:

1. ***Cell phones and devices may not be visible or activated during class time without teacher/administrator approval.***
2. ***Earbuds and Headphones may not be visible or utilized at any time during instruction and passing/lunchtime without teacher/administrator approval.***
 - a. If emergency calls to or from students are necessary, they should be placed through the school office and not to or from the student's cell phone.
 - b. Devices should be kept secure to prevent theft (vehicles, purses, backpacks, lockers, etc....).
 - c. The Autism Center accepts no responsibility for lost or stolen cellphones, earbuds, or other electronic devices.
3. Students may not use wireless communication devices during instructional time, except when expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes.

Violation of these provisions shall result in disciplinary action up to and/or including confiscation and/or suspension. The use of personal telephones or other communication devices at school events shall not be limited by this policy; however, the principal shall have full authority to promulgate rules that implement all provisions herein. If a student is found with an electronic device that reproduces, transmits, calculates, or records (e.g., a cell phone, , etc.) in his or her pocket, at his or her desk, or within his or her reach during testing, the test ***will be invalidated.***

Child Abuse and Neglect

Florida Statute defines:

- "Child" as any person under the age of 18.
- "Child abuse or neglect" as harm or threatened harm to a child's physical or mental health or welfare.

Florida law requires any adult who suspects that a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect to report that suspicion to the Child Abuse Hotline. This includes school personnel, medical personnel, health/mental health

professionals, spiritual practitioners, and law enforcement personnel. Any suspected abuse can be categorized as physical, sexual, and/or emotional.

Classroom/Campus Parties

As part of developing student independence, inclusive of social and communication skills, classroom parties will be permitted to help students further develop life skills as they engage in celebrating various milestones (e.g., academic/goal achievement, birthdays, etc.) and traditional celebrations (e.g., before winter break, Valentine's, end of the school year, etc.).

Parents/guardians providing treats/food for the classroom party (or at any time treats/food is provided for use in the classroom) must:

- Speak with the student's teacher and avoid providing any food that is more common for other students to have a food allergy (i.e., peanuts/tree nuts, eggs, milk, fish/shellfish, wheat, soybeans, and sesame).
- All treats/food must be purchased at a store that has the original and unopened packaging with the ingredients listed.
- All treats/food products must be delivered to the front office for distribution to the classroom.

For parties outside of school (i.e., private parties), invitations will only be distributed at school if every student in the class is invited, or only to the same-sex students if the party is for all boys or all girls. School staff will not give out class lists, student addresses, or phone numbers.

If parents/guardians have any exceptions keeping their student from participating and/or celebrating milestone or holiday-type parties or events, please inform the teacher and administration so that alternative arrangements can be made for the student.

Clinic, First Aid, and Medication

If a student has a medical situation that could involve an ambulance or medical help from an outside agency, parents/guardians will be notified as quickly as possible. Minor medical needs (i.e., medication distribution, etc.) will be managed by the school clinic, unless appropriate to do so in the classroom setting (e.g., minor cuts/scratches requiring band-aids, etc.).

We strongly urge parents/guardians to administer their students' medications at home whenever possible. If it is necessary for a student to take medication during school hours, the following guidelines must be followed.

- All medications, including over-the-counter medications (OTC), administered in the school clinic must be prescribed for the student by a licensed medical provider. Medications must be in the original container and have a non-expired prescription label affixed to the medication.
- Medications must be delivered to the school clinic by an adult. Students may not transport medications.
- The Medication Authorization Form must be filled out by the parent/guardian and on file in the school clinic.
- Students are only permitted to self-carry certain medications (rescue inhaler, epinephrine auto-injector, pancreatic enzymes, and diabetic supplies) if proper documentation has been filled out and the student is capable of self-administering these types of self-carry medications.

Parents/guardians can be contacted to bring in over-the-counter medication such as Tylenol, Tums, cough drops, etc. The Autism Center cannot administer any of these over-the-counter medications.

Communication and Conferences

Hospitality

A student's education happens through partnerships between the student, employee(s), parent/guardian(s), and other stakeholders. Active partnerships include sharing responsibilities, contributing to meaningful communication, and welcoming participation. These partnerships are most powerful when stakeholders work together and include respect for each other, positive communication, kindness toward others, and mutual efforts to support students and the school campus learning environment.

All stakeholders are expected to:

- Treat each other with courtesy and respect by: Listening carefully with regard to others as they express their opinions, different as they may be, and sharing our opinions and concerns with appropriate language and gestures.
- Demonstrate kindness by treating each other in positive ways using behavior/language that is not demeaning, abusive, or obscene in any communications including but not limited to class messaging, email, or social media.
- Cooperate with each other by responding in supportive ways when asked for assistance and recognizing and respecting time constraints and obligations faced by others, and notifying each other about safety, academics, or events that might impact education and contribute to our common goal of supporting students and the academic learning of our students.

Enforcement of Hospitality

- An employee will use the following communication guidelines:
 - Politely and calmly ask the speaker to communicate in a cordial way.
 - If the speaker uses verbal abuse, give notice to the speaker that the communication, conversation, or meeting may end if the abuse continues.
 - If on Autism Center property, request an administrator or authorized person to direct the speaker to immediately leave.
 - If the speaker does not immediately leave, an administrator or other authorized person shall notify law enforcement for necessary action.

Conferences – Parent/Guardian and Teacher

Parent/guardian conferences are a vital part of the communication process. Conferences can be scheduled through the lead teacher or administration by a teacher or a parent/guardian. Conferences may be scheduled when the need arises at the request of either the parent/guardian or the teacher/school. Parents desiring to schedule a conference may do so by writing a note to the teacher or by calling the school office. An appointment should be made ahead of time, at a minimum of 24 hours, so the teacher is available. Teachers are not permitted to take time away from the entire class to discuss the problems of an individual student with the parent/guardian. Please be sure to schedule your appointment with the teacher before coming to school.

Custody Situations

In order to best serve the needs of the students at our school, we use the following guidelines in dealing with divorce/separation issues. We are guided by the court documents, which outline restrictions involving the school and the student. Such documents must be signed or certified by the court/clerk of courts. Documents that

are not signed and/or certified by the court/clerk cannot be considered legal and binding. Copies of documents must be provided to the school and shall be complete (containing all pages of the decree/order).

When parents/guardians have "shared parental responsibility" the student is viewed as both parents retaining full parental responsibility with respect to their student. This might include such instances as:

- Equal access to the student's records (including report cards).
- Equal access to the student.
- Equal ability to sign out the student from school or to designate another person of their choice to pick up the student.
- Equal access to parent/guardian conferences or other educational meetings/staffings.

It is recommended that both parents/guardians complete all appropriate registration forms including the names and phone numbers of any persons approved to sign their student out of school.

In instances of "sole parental responsibility," as stipulated by the court, one parent/guardian makes decisions regarding matters of the student. Schools are limited by the specifics of the court's decree/order.

Parents/guardians bear the burden of communication between the school and each other regarding their student.

Discipline

The following disciplinary policy has been adopted by TVCS AC Board and can be located at: <https://tvcsac.org/resources/documents-policies/>. The design of the TVCS AC Disciplinary Policy enables consistent and uniform enforcement of its provisions. The Administration is responsible for determining the level of the offense as well as determining the appropriate consequence. In all disciplinary actions, the appropriate level of due process shall be observed.

The factors to consider prior to corrective measures being taken include, but are not limited to:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ➤ Exceptionality | ➤ Strength of evidence |
| ➤ Age | ➤ Seriousness of offense |
| ➤ Premeditation or impulsiveness | ➤ Disciplinary history |
| ➤ Past interventions attempted | ➤ Current interventions in place |

All students will be held accountable for their behavior during all aspects of the school day, including wrap-around services and any other school-sponsored activity. Any behavior occurring off campus requiring law enforcement action is expected to be reported to school officials so that a full circle of support and an action plan can be created. If the behavior is deemed to be of a nature as to not maintain respect for all stakeholders of TVCS AC, the student may be asked to return to their home school.

Consequences

Students are faced with a barrage of choices each day. These choices come with consequences, good or bad. In an effort to provide the best environment for learning to take place, it is anticipated that everyone will behave and abide by the expectations previously stated. When students make choices that do not follow school rules, appropriate consequences will be assigned. The consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- **Conferences** – Conferences are scheduled meetings that will serve to inform all stakeholders of behaviors and possible solutions.
- **Contracts** – An agreement between the school, the student, and the student’s family identifying the future possible dismissal of the student if specified requirements are not met. Contracts are used to improve behavioral choices as well as attendance (including tardies and early checkouts).
- **Felony Transfer** –The Villages Charter School Autism Center has the ability to deny access to our educational system based on felony charges from the Judicial System.
- **Loss of Privileges** – The Administration has the authority to exclude students from participating in school-related activities if the conduct at school or outside of school, is deemed unacceptable. The period of time is to be established by the Administration.
- **Out-of-School Suspension** – Students are not to be on school property on the day(s) assigned and this/these absences will be considered unexcused (please see attendance policy). This includes any Charter School Autism Center sporting, extra-curricular, or other after-school activity. All schoolwork missed while serving an out-of-school suspension is due to the number of days out of school plus one.
- **Restitution** – Students will restore or pay for damaged or stolen property.
- **Temporary Removal from Setting** – Students will be removed from an academic setting for a specific amount of time to be established by the Administration.

If students are referred to the office for behavioral choices, the following events will occur to ensure that they are treated fairly and that an appropriate consequence is decided upon and carried out:

- Students will be given the opportunity to review and discuss their behavior at their functioning level and preferred communication modality. The Administrator will try to identify the root of the behavior to attempt to address the issue.
- If additional information is needed, it will be obtained from the classroom team and support staff in the most efficient manner possible.
- The Administrator will evaluate the severity of the infraction and associated corrective measures outlined in the disciplinary policy.
- Parents will be notified verbally as well as provided a copy of the incident report. In order to maintain timely and efficient communication with parents, school personnel rely on the provision of current and accurate phone numbers including cell, home, and work phone numbers and email addresses. Emergency contact forms are provided at the beginning of each year and should be updated as needed throughout the course of the year.

Students’ individual needs will be considered and appropriate actions will be taken to ensure the integrity of the school and learning environment are protected. The disciplinary policy is created to address each situation as unique and to determine actions that will deter the behavior from repeating itself. The listing below is grouped into levels, with the minor levels listed first.

The level of the infraction and the corresponding and appropriate corrective measure is coded according to the Sumter County Schools Conduct Report from PP-SR-004 for Elementary and PP-SR-037 for Secondary.

Multiple behavior level 3 infractions may result in dismissal from The Villages Charter School Autism Center. The Principal of The Villages Charter School Autism Center has the authority to dismiss students for cause including, but not limited to, failure to maintain eligibility per Board policy or failure to comply with school rules and regulations that are found in the TVCS AC Disciplinary & Attendance Policy. Dismissal and re-enrollment of students who have been previously dismissed or have withdrawn from school is at the discretion

of the Principal of The Villages Charter School Autism Center. Additionally, the Principal may deny enrollment to new students based upon a review of their discipline & attendance records from their previous school using the TVCS AC Disciplinary & Attendance Policy as a guide. Any previously dismissed student, who is approved for re-enrollment will automatically be placed on a behavior and/or attendance contract. An appeal of any dismissal of a student may be made to the Board of Directors of The Villages Charter School Autism Center, LLC. by written request within ten (10) days of the dismissal date.

Sumter County School Board will be notified when the dismissal of a Sumter County student occurs as a result of discipline infractions. All appropriate discipline documentation will be forwarded to the receiving school when applicable.

Student Safety

Student safety and well-being is our top priority. We are deeply committed to providing a secure and nurturing environment where all students can learn and thrive. Our comprehensive approach to safety includes **implementing clear procedures for student supervision**, maintaining **secure facilities**, and ensuring **all staff are trained in emergency protocols**. We continuously review and update our safety measures to reflect best practices and community needs. By working together, we can ensure a safe and positive experience for every student.

Emergency Drills

Fire drills, a tornado drill, and related school safety and crisis management drills will be conducted during the school year as training sessions to prepare students for actual emergencies.

Extended Care

Wrap-around services are provided for parents/guardians before school and after for a specific fee. Before-care begins at 7:00 am and all students must be escorted into the front office to check their student in for before-care. Beginning at 7:25 am before-care stops accepting students, whereupon Carline will begin at 7:30 am for parent/guardian drop off. After-care begins upon dismissal from school at 3:00 pm and lasts until 6:00 pm. Parents/guardians must pick their student up no later than 6:00 pm. For students picked up late from after-care, the school may take action up to and including dismissal of the student from the after-care program. All disciplinary policies are applicable in extended care and while on school property. Students who require more supervision than a one-to-five ratio or have crisis response level behaviors may be denied or removed from extended care services.

Field Trips

From time to time classes will have the opportunity to go on a field trip based on the curriculum objectives of the school and the ability of the student. When field trip information is sent home, please observe deadlines for fees and permission slips. We must arrange for transportation and make reservations for students ahead of the trip.

If parents/guardians wish to volunteer to chaperone on a field trip, they must have an approved volunteer application on file, pay for any associated trip fees, and be approved to attend the trip based on chaperone needs.

Grade Reporting and Grading Scale

Premise of Grading

- Learner grades should be a direct correlation of performance on grade-level standards/benchmarks unless otherwise stated on the student's IEP or ELL status.
- Grades should reflect a learner's mastery of standards/benchmarks. Grades are a tool to communicate a learner's progress of mastery in the respective content discipline.
- Assessment will be conducted on a daily basis; this does NOT translate into a formal, paper-based assessment. Teachers will formatively assess the learner's understanding and knowledge/skills of the standards taught. Authentic performance tasks, observations, checklists, interviews, etc. can and will be utilized to assess learners' progress in the acquisition of the standards/benchmarks.
- Teachers may use informal assessments in the classroom. These do not always result in official grades.
- Learners will be given multiple exposures and opportunities for skill and content acquisition. Learners will not be graded on first-time exposure to content as these are considered instructional practices.
- All grade levels will receive report cards for all 4 quarters.
- English Language Learners will receive accommodations based on Florida statutes and ESE learner accommodations based on the IEP.

Students with Exceptionalities

- Learners with exceptionalities will receive the grade earned for work performance.
- Learners taking regular State Assessments will receive grades based on assignments from grade-level material with appropriate accommodation.
- Learners taking Alternate Assessment, enrolled in Access Courses, and working on the Florida Standards Access Points curriculum will receive grades appropriate for their work performance with appropriate modifications and IEP accommodations. Teacher report card comments will include "modified curriculum used" for the core academic courses.
- Additional comments may include: 1) Making progress towards annual goals (IEP) OR Not making progress towards annual goals (IEP), AND 3) Instructional and/or behavioral accommodation provided.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

- The ELL learner's date of entry into a US school will be used to determine the length of time in the ESOL program and ongoing needs.
- Learners will be assessed and graded on mastery at the learner's grade-level placement.

Report Cards and Interim Reports

Interim reports will go home with **all** students for each grading period. Parents/guardians will receive regular communication concerning academic and behavioral progress.

Conduct Reporting

Teachers will select a conduct for every student. If the teacher is giving a student an 'N' or 'U' in conduct, the teacher will also select the appropriate comment that reflects the reason for the conduct grade. Teachers will ensure conduct marking is aligned with student accommodations, specifically those with Positive Behavior Intervention Plans.

Grading Scale

Report cards are issued at the end of each nine-week grading period. Grading periods are indicated on the adopted school calendar:

Grades six to eight (6-8)

A	90 – 100	Outstanding Progress
B	80 – 89	Above Average Progress
C	70 – 79	Average Progress
D	60 – 69	Lowest Acceptable Progress
F	0 – 59	Failure

Grades kindergarten to fifth (K-5)

Level 5	Exceeding Expectations: Demonstrates exemplary success with benchmark skills.
Level 4	Proficient: Demonstrates proficient success with benchmark skills.
Level 3	On Grade Level: Demonstrates foundational level success with benchmark skills.
Level 2	Approaching: Demonstrates initial/beginning stage of benchmark skills.
Level 1	Not Yet Meeting Expectations: Not yet understanding benchmark(s).

Students shall also receive a conduct grade on the following scale:

E = Excellent S = Satisfactory N = Needs Improvement U = Unsatisfactory

Homework

Traditional homework (worksheets) will not be typical homework assignments for students. Students will have access to online programming for additional at-home practice. Homework will be more aligned and focused on developing students' social skills, communication skills, and skills that will lead to greater independence.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Completing multi-step directions (making a meal together, completing steps to do laundry...).
- Engaging in dialogue over a particular prompt (short passage read, a particular event of the day...).
- Social skills (role-playing, sharing, games/game etiquette...).
- Soft skills (introducing self to others, using manners, customer service interaction...).
- Life skills (organizing, planning, personal care...).

Lost and Found, Money, and Valuables

Lost and Found is located in the front office. The school will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items or money. Please use good judgment and do not allow your students to bring expensive or prohibited items on campus.

Parent Involvement

Information on Parent Involvement (PI) for completing the required PI hours, both informational hours and volunteer hours, can be found in the PI manual on The Villages Charter School website:

<https://www.tvcs.org/parents/parental-involvement/>

Parking

Parents/guardians are asked to park in front of the school in a designated parking spot while visiting campus, not along the carline path or carline parking spaces.

Physical Education

If a student has a medical problem or needs to be excused from physical education (PE) or related physical activities, a signed note from the parent/guardian must be sent to the school. Should a student need to be excused from these activities for more than three consecutive days, a physician's note needs to be provided. PE is a state-required course of study all students must participate in, notwithstanding exceptions noted on a student's Individual Education Plan or physician's excuse for medical reasons. For safety reasons, sneakers or other shoes with slip-resistant soles should be worn.

Pledge of Allegiance

Florida Statute requires that the Pledge of Allegiance be recited and a moment of silence occur at the beginning of the day in every public school. Exemption from participation in the Pledge of Allegiance may be provided upon **written** request from the parent/guardian. Students who do not participate must remain silent (not disruptive) during the pledge, notwithstanding the student's needs and staff who will work with the student on these needs during this daily expectation.

Religious Holidays

The following guidelines must be followed pertaining to religious holidays:

- The day in question is a bona fide religious holiday for the student's faith.
- A student must complete an advanced absence form. A written letter or statement should accompany the request.
- Make-up work must be granted that matches classroom instruction given as closely as possible.
- The absence will not count against the students' perfect attendance.

School Resource Officer

The School Resource Officer (SRO) is a Sumter County Sheriff's Deputy assigned to TVCS AC. The SRO tries to create the image of the modern police officer as a "friend" to youth and the community rather than as an "adversary" and takes a proactive approach with the student body.

Duties of the SRO include patrolling the school and surrounding areas; interviewing complainants, victims, and those suspected of delinquent acts; teaching law-related education; engaging in counseling with students and parents/guardians; and referring students, parents/guardians, and families to public and private institutions for help as needed. The SRO's office is located in the school.

Uniforms

The following uniform policy has been adopted by TVCS AC Board and can be located at:

<https://tvcsac.org/resources/documents-policies/>. The uniform policy has been created to ensure all students have the opportunity to learn and grow in an environment conducive to learning. It is our hope that holding students accountable for these expectations will continue our success in growing your children into responsible, well-rounded individuals.

Uniform Shirts

Logo shirts are available in five different colors.

Outerwear

All outerwear must have a TVCS AC logo and must be purchased at the school store or through school programs; this includes sweatshirts. Students can wear non-TVCS AC outerwear on cold weather days (below 45 degrees) but they must comply with all uniform policies once inside the school building.

School Uniform Tops & Outerwear

School uniform tops and outerwear may be purchased at Custom Apparel's location in the Southern Trace Shopping Plaza 3451 Wedgewood Lane, The Villages, FL 32162 Phone: 352-750-1600 Hours are:

Monday - Friday: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Saturday: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Uniform-Style Bottoms

Pants, capris, jumpers, skorts, and shorts are allowed and must be in solid navy, black, grey, or beige khaki material. Embellishments such as contrast stitching, sparkles, glitter, lace and embroidery, as well as holes, cut-offs, or frayed hems are not allowed. No denim of any color is allowed.

All K-5 students wearing shorts, skorts or jumpers must follow the appropriate length guideline of no more than 2" above the knee and may be purchased from any vendor.

If a student is not following the specified length requirement; then they will be required to wear pants or capris until their school-approved items are purchased.

Shoes

Athletic shoes with closed toe and back due to the state-mandated daily PE requirement. Flip-flops, Crocs or sandals are not permitted.

To ensure that all students meet our high expectations, Administration reserves the right to determine if any part of a student's physical appearance is a distraction to the learning environment.

The following rules will be observed: Shirts will be worn tucked in at all times. Please help with this expectation by making sure your child is prepared upon exiting the family car. If a student has tolerance concerns with tucking in shirt, we will work with that student to increase tolerance through a behavior plan.

- All undershirts must be plain white or the exact color of the uniform shirt worn (no writing or graphics).
- Shorts, skorts and jumpers must be worn at no more than 2" above the knee.
- School-issued picture ID must be worn at all times while on campus, notwithstanding learner disability accommodations. If a learner has tolerance concerns with wearing the ID, we will work with that learner to increase tolerance through a behavior plan.
- Undergarments cannot be exposed while standing, sitting or bending over.
- Tights or leggings are permitted; however, leggings must be worn under the uniform bottoms and be the same color as the bottoms (only colors allowed are khaki/beige, black, grey, or navy); any length is acceptable as long as it looks like it is part of the uniform bottoms.

- Belts must be worn with all clothes having belt loops.
- Middle and high school students are required to dress out for P.E. (uniforms sold in school store).
- On special dress-up days, if a student is not dressing in appropriate “theme” clothing; they must wear their regular uniform.
- Hair must be of a color that occurs naturally in human nature. Hair should be styled in a way that is not deemed a distraction to others. Examples of unacceptable hairstyles would be Mohawks.
- Facial piercings or other body alterations/displays and tattoos that are visible are prohibited.
- Hats or hoods on outerwear may not be worn indoors during the school day.
- In all dress, professionalism and appropriateness will be expected.

Visitors and Volunteers

All visitors must go through the front office and will have to present a state-issued photo ID when signing in. Visitors will be given a sticker, which must be worn at all times while on campus. Visitors are not permitted on campus past the front office without proper authorization. Visits to the classroom may be necessary for various needs. Parents/guardians need to arrange classroom visits with the teacher and/or administration in advance. Visits to the classroom are not permitted during instructional time in order to ensure that classes are not interrupted.

All persons wanting to volunteer on campus before, during, or after school hours must fill out a volunteer form. The administration must approve the applicant before they can volunteer. This includes volunteers for any extracurricular school activities/events.

We want to encourage all parents/guardians to volunteer if time and circumstances permit. Volunteers are needed to assist teachers and students in a wide variety of ways. Any person wishing to volunteer must complete the appropriate screening process paperwork.

For your student’s safety and the safety of others, we ask that the following rules be followed:

- Parents/guardians will not be assigned to volunteer in their student’s classroom. This practice puts unnecessary stress on the student and teacher.
- Volunteers must sign in and out and wear the volunteer/visitor sticker issued by the office while on campus.