



# Valhalla Community School

*Northern Alberta's First Rural Leadership Charter School*

Box 143 Valhalla Centre, AB T0H 3M0  
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[www.valhallacommunityschool.ca](http://www.valhallacommunityschool.ca)  
[info@valhallacommunityschool.ca](mailto:info@valhallacommunityschool.ca)

**‘LEADING INTO THE FUTURE’**

*A Charter School  
Whole Group Teacher Directed Instruction  
Rural Leadership  
Second Language*

## **Valhalla Community School Student - Parent Information Handbook 2014-2015**

**Note: \*Most Current Version is Available on the Website  
Revised September 1, 2014**

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# **SECTION I: INTRODUCTION**

## **Our Vision**

The Valhalla Community School (VCS) aims to instill a readiness for leadership by equipping its rural students with both knowledge and skills that will enable them to make positive contributions at their future places of employment as well as in the communities or groups with which they choose to affiliate.

## **Charter Schools**

Charter schools are publicly funded schools which must have a unique focus. With this unique focus, charter schools impact the education system by “testing out” new innovations in education for future use in interested regular public schools. Alberta is currently the only province in Canada with charter school legislation.

Valhalla Community School operates under the stewardship of the Valhalla School Foundation, whose charter is grounded in whole-group direct instruction (also known to some as, traditional teaching) and incorporating mandatory second language and rural student leadership development.

The Valhalla School Foundation is a proud member of The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS). See <http://taapcs.ca>

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Please see the full charter documents on posted on the school's website for more details.

## **VSF Board Administration**

Superintendent	John Picard	<a href="mailto:jpocard@valhallaschool.ca">jpocard@valhallaschool.ca</a>
Secretary-Treasurer	Karen Rosvold	<a href="mailto:krosvold@valhallaschool.ca">krosvold@valhallaschool.ca</a>
Transportation Director	John Moutray	<a href="mailto:moutray@xplornet.ca">moutray@xplornet.ca</a>

## **VSF Board of Directors**

Jolene Kochendorfer	780-356-2114	<a href="mailto:jdkochendorfer@gmail.com">jdkochendorfer@gmail.com</a>
Brenda Kjemhus	780-356-3262	<a href="mailto:heavenscent.bk@hotmail.com">heavenscent.bk@hotmail.com</a>
John Moutray	780-356-2372	<a href="mailto:moutray@xplornet.ca">moutray@xplornet.ca</a>
Jennifer White	780-568-3361	<a href="mailto:kimmie.jen@hotmail.com">kimmie.jen@hotmail.com</a>
Mike Gerow	780-356-3399	<a href="mailto:waylon@gpnet.ca">waylon@gpnet.ca</a>
Tracy Campbell	780-354-2868	<a href="mailto:hoovie35@yahoo.com">hoovie35@yahoo.com</a>

## **VCS School Administration**

Principal	Steve Mumert	<a href="mailto:smumert@valhallaschool.ca">smumert@valhallaschool.ca</a>
Administrative Assistant	Anna Odd	<a href="mailto:aodd@valhallaschool.ca">aodd@valhallaschool.ca</a>

## **VCS Staff**

Kindergarten, General TA	Reanna Stockman	<a href="mailto:marvinandreannastockman@msn.com">marvinandreannastockman@msn.com</a>
Grade 1/2/Kindergarten/French	Margaret El-Tantawy	<a href="mailto:meltanta@live.ca">meltanta@live.ca</a>
Grade 3/4	Jennifer LeBlanc	<a href="mailto:mrs.jennifer.leblanc@gmail.com">mrs.jennifer.leblanc@gmail.com</a>
Grade 5/6	Vivian Fowler	<a href="mailto:vfowler@valhallaschool.ca">vfowler@valhallaschool.ca</a>
Grade 7 & German	Robert El-Tantawy	<a href="mailto:reldata@yahoo.ca">reldata@yahoo.ca</a>
Grade 8	John Heikel	<a href="mailto:jheikel@ualberta.ca">jheikel@ualberta.ca</a>
Grade 6/7/8/9	Kelli Flint	<a href="mailto:flintkelli@gmail.com">flintkelli@gmail.com</a>
General TA	Angie Tetreau	<a href="mailto:tetreauangie@gmail.com">tetreauangie@gmail.com</a>
General TA	Lorraine Gerow	<a href="mailto:lgerow44@gmail.com">lgerow44@gmail.com</a>
General TA	Cora Lee Rath	<a href="mailto:clrath@gmail.com">clrath@gmail.com</a>
General TA	Erin Flaten	<a href="mailto:erinkuz@yahoo.ca">erinkuz@yahoo.ca</a>
Custodian	Don Morton	<a href="mailto:dmorton012@gmail.com">dmorton012@gmail.com</a>

## **VCS Transportation Staff**

Transportation Director	John Moutray	<a href="mailto:moutray@xplornet.ca">moutray@xplornet.ca</a> or 780-978-1030
Bus Driver Route # 3	Jason Bratland	<a href="tel:780-814-1058">780-814-1058</a>
Bus Driver Route # 2	Janelle Trodd	<a href="tel:780-830-9943">780-830-9943</a>
Bus Driver Route # 1	Teresa Boucher	<a href="tel:780-814-4827">780-814-4827</a>
Bus Driver Route # 4	Shellie Barclay	<a href="tel:780-832-7600">780-832-7600</a>

**Junior High Bell Schedule**

<b>8:45-8:50</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
8:50-9:20	Block #1
9:20-9:45	Block #2
9:45-10:25	Block #3
<i>10:25-10:30</i>	<i>Snack/Recess</i>
10:30-11:05	Block #4
11:05-11:35	Block #5
11:35-12:05	Period #6
<i>12:05-12:20</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
<i>12:20-12:40</i>	<i>Recess</i>
<b>12:40</b>	<b>Bell</b>
<b>12:40-12:45</b>	<b>Prep for Class</b>
12:45-1:15	Block #7
1:15-1:45	Block #8
1:45-2:25	Block #9
<i>2:25 -2:30</i>	<i>Snack/Recess</i>
2:30-3:05	Block #10
3:05-3:35	Block #11
3:35-3:40	<i>Homeroom/Cleanup</i>
3:40	<b>Dismissal</b>

**Elementary Bell Schedule**

<b>8:45-8:50</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
8:50-9:20	Block #1
9:20-9:45	Block #2
9:45-10:15	Block #3
<i>10:15-10:30</i>	<i>Recess</i>
<b>10:30</b>	<b>Bell</b>
<i>10:30-10:35</i>	<i>Snack</i>
<i>10:35-10:40</i>	<i>Prep for Class</i>
10:40-11:05	Block #4
11:05-11:35	Block #5
11:35-12:05	Period #6
<i>12:05-12:20</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
<i>12:20-12:40</i>	<i>Recess</i>
<b>12:40</b>	<b>Bell</b>
<i>12:40-12:45</i>	<i>Prep for Class</i>
12:45-1:15	Block #7
1:15-1:45	Block #8
1:45-2:15	Block #9
<i>2:15 -2:30</i>	<i>Recess</i>
<b>2:30</b>	<b>Bell</b>
<i>2:30-2:35</i>	<i>Snack</i>
<i>2:35-2:40</i>	<i>Prep for Class</i>
2:40-3:05	Block #10
3:05-3:35	Block #11
3:35-3:40	<i>Homeroom/Cleanup</i>
3:40	<b>Dismissal</b>

**Early Dismissal**

The first Monday of Every Month will be Early Dismissal due to staff meetings. These days the students will be dismissed 30 minutes early, at 3:05 pm.

**Calendar 2014-2015**

The 2014/2015 Calendar – Approved by Valhalla School Foundation, March 12, 2014

**2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR**  
**VALHALLA SCHOOL FOUNDATION – Approved March 12, 2014**

<u>MONTH</u>							<u>INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS</u>	<u>STUDENT DISMISSAL DAYS</u>	<u>OPERATIONAL DAYS</u>	<u>HOLIDAYS, INSERVICE, CONVENTIONS, ETC.</u>	
<b>August 2014</b>							0	4	4	Aug. 19 Aug. 26&29 Aug. 27-28	<u>Office Opens</u> <u>Organizational Days</u> <u>School PD Days</u>
S	M	T	W	T	F	S					
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9					
1	11	12	13	14	15	16					
17	18	19	20	21	22	23					
24	25	26	27	28	29	30					
31											
<b>September 2014</b>							19	2	21	Sept. 1 Sept. 2 Sept. 12 Sept. 26	<u>Labour Day</u> <u>Students First Day(K-9)</u> <u>CSW</u> <u>CSW</u>
S	M	T	W	T	F	S					
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13					
14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
21	22	23	24	25	26	27					
28	29	30									

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## **SECTION II: VCS CHARTER & PROGRAMMING SUMMARY**

### **Valhalla School Foundation's Guiding Philosophies**

We believe:

- Rural education is not a detriment, but unique and beneficial. So, we mandate split grades.
  - Structured teaching in the classroom maximizes opportunities for all students.
  - Our students are indeed community members and future leaders. Their civic commitment and community participation is valuable.
  - We must train students to be successful in both urban and rural settings.
  - Parents and guardians play a central role in a child's life. Parents are partners with the school as everyone works toward the child's success.
- 
- Supporting our school's staff is important. We work to clearly define our goals and expectations and by provide the means to carry them out.
  - Student competence leads to self-confidence. Mastery of skills in academics and leadership is important and we work to make that a reality.
  - Memorization, mental calculation and excellent penmanship are valuable life skills. Drill and practice is a preferred way for development of automatic skills.
  - Critical thinking is an important part of child development. Still, mastering basic skills and developing a battery of knowledge comes first. This foundation sets the stage for later development of abstract reasoning, logic and a self-reliant thought processes.

### **Valhalla School Foundation's Educational Charter Goals**

The school's charter goals centre around two themes of communication and civic leadership processes.

Communication Focus:

- a) How you communicate: grammar, spelling, accuracy in oral, written and mathematical languages, reading and writing skills, etiquette, second languages (K-9 German and 4-9 French)
- b) What you communicate: extra knowledge about history, science and fine arts
- c) Where you communicate: public speaking

Civic Leadership Processes:

- a) Knowledge acquisition: learning committee roles (president, secretary, treasurer etc) and processes for action (parliamentary procedure, roles of various levels of government)
- b) Direct experience: observing real community group meetings, participating in on-campus student-run 4H groups

### **VCS PROGRAMS**

With our charter philosophies and goals in mind, the Valhalla School Foundation has assembled a selection of student programs to carry out our school's goals.

#### **Language Arts**

Google “Siegfried Engelmann” and you will find a man who developed a reading program that breaks down the skill of reading into individual steps that are mastered one at a time with continual review of past skills. The result is quick and accurate reading development. “Project Follow Through”, a 30 year research study in the US consistently found Engelmann's Direct



Instruction to be the most effective reading instruction on the market. . The material is called Reading Mastery which implements the purest form of Direct Instruction. K-2 focuses on reading skills and the older grades progress to develop skills of reading comprehension, writing and spelling.

### **Math**

Currently most VCS students study “Saxon Math”. It is a sequential program with lots of practice and review. Saxon Math provides a solid foundation with an emphasis on algebra. Students in K-2 study “Singapore Math”, from China. It focuses on mental calculation and problem solving skills. As Singapore Math is phased up to the older grades, it will teach advanced math concepts as well as geometry. Both programs teach Metric and Imperial measurement, which we believe is important given that Imperial measurement is at the heart of our road systems and many work tools.

### **Knowledge Enrichment**

Googling “E.D. Hirsch” will bring up the Core Knowledge Series. Hirsch believed there was a core set of knowledge every child should know to be considered educated in western society. The VSF has added Core Knowledge concepts to the regular Alberta curriculum for a broader scope of teaching in all subject areas. Ask your classroom teacher to see the curriculum write-ups if you're interested. Also, Emily Post's, *Etiquette*, accentuates Health classes in all grades, as we feel the rules of etiquette will assist students on their path to success.

### **Public Speaking**

Leadership roles invariably lead to public speaking. VCS gets students comfortable talking in front of people and giving them the skills to speak well in front of groups. Various opportunities will arise throughout the school year.

### **Rural Leadership**

VCS is a Leadership school! To fortify leadership and parliamentary procedure skills, students are given opportunities to observe and practice “meeting skills” and to participate in “servant leadership” as part of the school's curriculum. Our students learn to do by doing. They also observe real community groups and municipal meetings as they learn to see themselves as leaders.

### **German and French Language**

Valhalla Community School is in the process of developing Alberta curriculum for a K-12 German Second Language course. Valhalla's students learn German from K-3 and in grade 4 have the option of switching to French.

### **Enrollment & Selection Criteria**

Charter schools are schools of choice. That is, parents are able to choose to send their child to Valhalla Community School, or they may choose to send their child to the mainstream school in their area. For this reason, charter schools are obligated to develop a policy outlining who is eligible to enrol in the school.

If enrolment applications by students exceed the maximum student capacity of the school the following criteria will be used for selection purposes.

- Before the end of the school year, parents of students currently attending Valhalla Community School will be given the opportunity to register their children for the next school year.
- New students will be admitted if there are spaces available in the following order of priority:
  - Students living within the designated Valhalla Community School boundary.
  - Siblings of students already attending Valhalla Community School.
  - First come first served to all other students.
- With the exception of students whose family has relocated during the school year to a residence within the designated Valhalla Community School boundary, no new students will be accepted after September 30 of the school year.
- A 'New Student' is defined as a student who is not registered at Valhalla Community School by September 30 of the given school year.
- The Board may consider exceptional circumstances.

## **SECTION III: ROLES**

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT & VOLUNTEERING**

Valhalla Community School is a school of choice. This means that parents have the option to choose, for their child, the philosophy of this school as articulated in the Charter. VCS believes that the school's design will result in parents wanting to play a strong role in their children's education. When parents have the opportunity to choose the kind of education they prefer, they find the necessary energy, time, and resources to devote to their children's education. Valhalla Community School anticipates that parents will be directly engaged in tutoring, coaching, classroom instruction, preparing resource materials, and providing other necessary and invaluable assistance.

The family naturally provides the most influential and effective context for basic lifelong learning and teaching. For this reason, and at the discretion of the classroom teacher or principal, parents are invited to teach or assist with learning projects in all subjects, depending on their interests and expertise. Parents are also encouraged to spend time reading aloud to children at school and/or in the home, coaching them in skill development, and otherwise contributing time and talents in a variety of ways. Parents with children in a specific grade level will have opportunity to volunteer in that grade at the teacher's discretion.

#### **Parent Involvement, Observation, and Volunteering**

Valhalla Community School is a charter school. As such, there are many new ideas being implemented. The classroom itself is the context for several of these innovations. There is great emphasis on volunteers in this school. There is also a need to establish a learning environment that best serves the students. At VCS we have defined the general parameters for parents volunteering in our classrooms:

- Parent volunteers are an integral part of VCS. Parents are not only welcome, but they are crucial if we are to have high quality teaching of the entire curriculum each year. Everyone volunteering at the VCS must have a current signed volunteer application. Volunteers that work directly with students require a criminal records check and an agreement form. (volunteer forms can be downloaded off the schools website – [www.valhallacommunityschool.ca](http://www.valhallacommunityschool.ca))
- The teacher has primary responsibility for the classroom and student learning within the classroom.

- The teacher's individual teaching style sets the tone for the classroom. This includes everything from delivery of the educational program to classroom management.
- Parents who wish to be volunteering in the classroom need to learn the teaching style of the teacher they wish to assist. If the teaching style conflicts with the parent's volunteering style, the parent will need to either adjust his or her style or find a more compatible setting within VCS to volunteer.
- Any grievance or concern a parent has with a classroom or a teacher will be handled by the procedures defined in this handbook
- Under **NO CIRCUMSTANCE** is it acceptable for a parent volunteer to confront a teacher about an issue in the classroom, or any other part of the school, when students are present.

Valhalla Community School encourages every adult (parents, stepparents, grandparents, aunts and uncles) to take a special interest in the lives of its students, to act as mentors and tutors, and to instill in every student a love of learning.

Parents work in conjunction with the staff to ensure the most effective education possible for their children. To this end, parents are responsible for knowing and understanding the contents of Valhalla Community School's Charter, and are encouraged, but not required, to participate on school committees and provide other volunteer services, as they are able. The School Council is a resource for parents to find information, give input and connect with the VCS community. Monthly meetings are a great way to meet fellow parents and be involved within the VCS.

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the school, to reasonably observe and/or assist the teacher. However, any parent whose presence or actions are deemed by the teacher and principal to be a distraction, to exhibit hostility, or to interfere with the instruction or learning of the students, will be barred from the school.

Parents are welcomed to observe classroom activities. In order to create a consistent school atmosphere for learning, parents wishing to observe a class must arrive before class begins. Each class will have two teacher-provided chairs for observers. Observing parents do not participate in classroom activities unless invited to do so by the teachers, and observers must not interrupt teachers and /or students.

Observers may take a few notes, however, computers, tape recording, etc. may be a distraction to students and are not permitted

## **VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT**

Volunteers at Valhalla Community School shall:

- be on-time and reliable in fulfilling volunteer commitments.
- exercise kindness while volunteering for Valhalla Community School.
- respect and abide by the confidential nature of anything they might see or hear while volunteering.
- be prompt and dependable for the times they agree to volunteer.
- conduct themselves in a businesslike and fair manner, without partiality to individual students.
- motivate children to work and help them succeed in school.
- graciously accept direction and constructive criticism from staff members for which they are volunteering.
- acknowledge the teacher as the authority in the classroom.
- **NOT** confront a teacher regarding disagreements or differences of opinion in the presence of children.
- be respectful of the classroom by not disrupting a teacher's instructional time or student learning.

- Dress modestly and appropriately for a school environment (i.e. midriff covered, no short shorts/skirts, no spaghetti straps).
- Wear a current volunteer nametag at all times when volunteering at the school
- sign in and out at the front office when volunteering at the school.
- record all VCS volunteer hours, including those worked outside of school, on the log sheet in the front office.
- Ensure that all children (e.g. younger siblings, non-students) accompanying the volunteer on school premises are supervised at all times and must not be disrupting school activities.
- arrange for a replacement in the event the volunteer cannot meet their scheduled obligations
- call the school (780-356-2730) 24 hours in advance and inform appropriate staff of any volunteer replacements via voice mail.

## **TEACHERS AND PROFESSIONALISM**

Teachers are the center of the mind and the heart of every successful school. Without dedicated competent teachers, the best of educational practices will never actually come to fruition in the classroom. Research on effective schools reveals that after individual ability and effort, the organizational structure implemented at Valhalla Community School is most influential in determining academic achievement. Valhalla Community School's teachers are expected to implement the school's academic mission.

In the classroom, the teacher is in charge. Outside of the classroom, teachers receive professional guidance with respect to specific goals and objectives from the Board of Directors through the Superintendent and Principal.

Professionalism requires a body of knowledge and skill applied with a clear level of accountability that affords the flexibility to accomplish the defined task. All teachers have a different style of teaching the unique blend of classroom characteristics that enables them to give the very best of themselves to the education of their students. The teacher's style sets some basic parameters for the parents as well as the children. Within those parameters, and at the teacher's and/or principal's discretion, parents have all the opportunity to assist the teacher. A high level of parental involvement is actively encouraged, and teachers are expected to incorporate parental volunteer efforts in the classroom as much as is reasonably possible. Parents with children in a classroom will have the priority for volunteer opportunities in that class.

The central role of teachers in the classroom deserves respect. All teachers accept responsibility for teaching the entire curriculum, both content and skills, in a way congenial to the school's philosophy toward values and the student. This will be defined as their primary role.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The primary responsibility of the Valhalla School Foundation Board of Directors is to oversee and establish the educational and operational policies of the school consistent with the vision, philosophy, and mission of the school as defined by our Charter.

Implementation of the policies and procedures, and daily operations, are the responsibility of Valhalla Community School's administrative personnel. The Charter Board typically meets once a month to discuss school operations and hear reports. It is during these meetings that they examine operations, establish new policies, and review and change existing policies as needed. See the school's website for current dates and times.

Regular meetings of the Charter Board are open to the public and your attendance is welcome. For issues involving personnel or other sensitive matters, the Board may vote by simple majority to adjourn to in camera session. At such a time, guests would be asked to leave for the duration of the discussion and then be welcomed back when that subject was finished.

Documents regarding the governance of the school (Charter, by-laws, policies) are on our web site and are available in the office for perusal.

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

We have received much support from individuals and businesses within our local community. Community relations will continue to be important to us, and we are all goodwill ambassadors for Valhalla. We hope to continue creating partnerships with local businesses and pursue grant opportunities. Any information or expertise you can offer in this area is greatly appreciated. Valhalla Community School may recruit individuals from the community to provide supplementary educational experiences for the students. Opportunities for on-site parental volunteer assistance will be encouraged and facilitated.

Valhalla Community School aspires to provide an educational system that serves the needs of the students, parents, and the community. This provides an unprecedented opportunity for parents and the community to participate in the students' educational process.

### **STUDENT STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR & CONDUCT**

*VSF Policy I-101 August 28, 2008*

The Charter Board is committed to the establishment of a safe, caring and effective learning environment for its students, staff, volunteers and visitors. Student behavior and conduct at Valhalla Community School will reflect strong moral character and self-discipline characterized by respect, responsibility, self-discipline, compassion, integrity and good citizenship.

The Charter Board believes that parents, as partners, play a vital role in instilling and reinforcing the skills necessary for appropriate conduct.

#### **Standards of student behavior and conduct:**

##### Student Respect for Self and Others

- Respect the safety and well-being of all students and adults in the school and on the school bus.
- Use appropriate language and deportment to serve as a model for others.
- Refrain from engaging in unlawful, disrespectful, irresponsible behavior or conduct.

##### Student Work Ethic

- Diligently apply themselves to studies and work to the best of their ability.
- Complete all homework and assignments.
- Continually strive for excellence in studies and academics, behavior and character, and artistic and physical pursuits.
- Attend school and classes regularly and punctually.

### Student Respect for Authority

- Adhere to school and school bus rules.
- Cooperate fully with teachers, bus drivers and support staff.
- Respect parents.
- Account to and honestly disclose to the teacher their own behavior.
- Accept consequences for misbehavior.

### Student Respect for Property

- Respect and safely keep the property of the school.
- Respect the property of other people.

The School Act, these Standards of Behavior & Conduct and school and classroom based codes of conduct shall apply to any school or school sponsored activity whether on or off campus and during school related transportation.

### **Valhalla Community School Rules:**

Students will:

1. Attend school consistently, be on time, and take responsibility for making up work promptly when absent. Each student will bear the responsibility for his or her own conduct. Each student will respect the educational process and learning environment of others by attending class, being prepared, and arriving on time.
2. Follow directions when they are given.
3. Follow all reasonable requests made by adults on premises with a positive attitude, and show respect for others, for self, and for property. Each student is expected to cooperate with and respect staff and peers, including administrators, teachers, secretaries, bus drivers, custodians, and any other people working in the school. Students are expected to communicate in an acceptable tone of voice using an acceptable choice of words (without profanity or disrespectful tone of voice or words).
4. Follow lunch-time, playground, field trip, lab, and individual classroom rules. Each student is expected to follow school rules when participating in school-related events.
5. Refrain from using threats or intimidation against any other person.
6. Respect the health and safety of others, will follow all safety rules, and will refrain from using tobacco, alcohol, or other illegal substances.
7. Walk quietly in the halls and talk in a normal tone of voice in the school building.
9. Not litter or misuse school property.
10. Not leave school or playground without permission from the supervisor or front office.
11. Not bring electronic devices (CD players, radios, games, etc.) to school. Cell phones may be used only to contact parents after school. Cell phones are not to be used during regular school hours, and are to remain turned off in a locker or backpack and not to be visibly seen. Acceptability of other toys is at the discretion of the teachers and administration. Each student will respect the school's learning environment and will not interfere with the ability of other students to learn.
12. Obtain permission from the Principal to attend school activities (including but not limited to dances and sports events) when he or she has been absent from school on the day of the activity.

## **SECTION IV: SERVICES**

### **BUSSING**

Every effort is made to bus all of our students. Bus schedules and routes are drawn up according to safety, timeliness and cost efficiency. Everyone riding the bus must respect that the driver is in charge and the safety of all passengers is first and foremost. All passengers are expected to carry out the bus driver's directions always and immediately, with respect, consideration and cooperation.

The responsibility for the safety of passengers who are required to travel on school buses is of necessity shared by the board, its staff, bus drivers and parents. School system staff and bus operators shall exercise their responsibilities in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Board.

### **Expectations**

Parents and students are expected to follow a few basic requirements.

#### Parents:

- Parents must ensure all students are dressed appropriately for the weather at all times. All students riding on school buses during winter months shall be required to wear winter footwear and outerwear and to carry with them winter headwear and gloves or mitts from November 1 to March 31. In those cases where students are not appropriately attired for winter conditions, the bus driver shall advise the parent and Principal.
  - Students must be at their morning pick up spots at least 5 minutes before the normal pick up times. Parents who meet buses for drop off in the afternoons must ensure they are at their spot in a timely fashion to prevent delay.
  - If your child is not going to be on the bus in the morning, please contact the bus driver to prevent unnecessary delay. If your child will not be on the afternoon run, you must inform both teacher and driver. A note is appreciated.
  - For any changes to the student's regular bus routine, parents must inform the school office and the bus driver.
  - Written permission is required from a parent/teacher before a passenger can be dropped off at another stop.
  - Report any obvious and significant safety problems to the Director of Transportation. The transportation directors may ask the parent to complete a bus incident report.
- 
- Remind your child that even though all vehicles are required by law to stop when flashers are in operation on a school bus, vehicle drivers are sometimes negligent or careless and do not stop when they should, therefore, children should proceed across the road with the utmost caution.

### Students:

- Passengers must wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before boarding or leaving the seat to unload.
- Students must leave the school and board the bus as quickly as possible after class dismissal.
- On boarding the bus, students must go directly to their seat and remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- Passengers must recognize the driver is in full charge of the bus and must be obeyed at all times.
- Passengers must follow driver's instructions for safely off-loading from bus.
- Passengers will be assigned to specific seats by the bus driver.
- Lunching on the bus is at the driver's discretion.
- While on the bus, passengers must conduct themselves in a quiet and courteous manner, showing consideration for the comfort and safety of others. Quiet conversation is encouraged. Profanity and verbal abuse will not be tolerated. Scuffling and fighting will not be tolerated.
- Keep aisles clear at all times.
- Passengers must not put limbs or heads out the window while the bus is in motion.
- Passengers must not throw anything out of the windows or on the bus.
- Only curriculum related items are to be hauled on the bus: backpacks, lunch containers and books are under the care of the student. Skates must have the blades covered and be placed on the floor under the seat. Hockey sticks are to be stored under the seats too. Permission to transport anything out of the ordinary must be obtained from the Director of Transportation.
- Acts of vandalism and willful damage to the bus are strictly prohibited. Driver will complete a student misconduct report if damage occurs and give Principal a copy. If costs are to be assessed for damage, the transportation director will prepare an invoice.
  - i)one copy to parents
  - ii)one copy attached to student misconduct report
  - iii)one copy to secretary-treasurer of Valhalla School Foundation
- Alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco products, explosives, firearms and live animals are strictly prohibited.

### **Bus Discipline Process:**

In the event a student chooses to break a rule, the following processes may be applied:

- i)Student warned by driver.
- ii)Student assigned designated seat and parents are notified.
- iii)Principal, parent, student, Director of Transportation, driver conference
- iv)Suspension of bus privileges for designated period of time.

a)If in the opinion of the driver the student's behavior is sufficiently negative to warrant, the driver may immediately refer the student to the principal, in which case a misconduct report must be completed by the driver and given to the principal who will ensure a copy is given to the parents as well as the transportation director.

b) For minor incidents of a continuing nature bus drivers are encouraged to contact the parents prior to referring to the principal.



**Inclement weather:**

The Superintendent or designate shall direct the suspension of school bus operations on all days on which the temperature is equal to, or colder than -40 Celsius, as determined by temperature at local area weather stations and in consultation with drivers when required. All effort is made to have any bus cancellation announcements ready by 7:00am. Announcements are posted on the school website, [www.valhallaschool.ca](http://www.valhallaschool.ca) and on radio stations CJXX-93.1 and Sun-FM-97.7.

Should inclement weather arise during the day, students will be kept at school until their regular dismissal time if possible. In the extreme event where students are sent home early, all parents will be notified before the busses leave the school to ensure someone is home. Valhalla Community School remains open, if at all possible, during school hours whether the busses run or not.

Each bus driver has the authority to close down his/her route. The bus driver will make a reasonable attempt to run their route but if after such an attempt, they feel that road conditions are unsafe, they may cancel their route. In doing so, they will notify the Director of Transportation, so that the director can make the necessary announcements, and they will also make reasonable attempts to contact the parents of the students who ride their bus.

The Valhalla Community School leaves the final decision to the parent regarding whether their child rides a bus during times of inclement weather. Should a parent feel it is unsafe for their child to ride a bus, due to inclement weather, they are free to decide not to place their child on the bus. We would ask that should the parent make such a decision, that they contact our transportation director as soon as possible.

**Bus video cameras**

For the safety of students and drivers, video cameras may be used in school buses. Buses with cameras will have signage indicating the presence of a video camera. The Valhalla School Foundation has installed a video camera with audio on one bus and may install these on other buses as a means to deter vandalism and identify student activity that may pose a threat to passenger and driver safety. The information is collected under the authority of School Board Policy and in accordance with section 32c of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act. If you have any questions about the collection, use or disclosure of this information, please contact the Director of Transportation or the Superintendent of Valhalla School Foundation.

**Your support and cooperation is appreciated. Safety is our first priority.**

**VALHALLA COMMUNITY LIBRARY**

The Valhalla Community Library operates out of our school building and is an important asset. The Library hours are Monday 10:00am – 4:00pm, Tuesday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, Wednesday 10:00 to 8:00 pm and Thursday 10:00 to 5:00 pm. Families of students are responsible for replacement damaged or lost items. The library's email is: [librarian@valhallalibrary.ab.ca](mailto:librarian@valhallalibrary.ab.ca) and the phone number is 780-356-3834.

**HEALTH SERVICES ~ Student Health Program (SHP)**

SHP service providers continue to serve the students of the Valhalla Community School. These services include counseling, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.

## **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES (FCSS) -- Playschool**

FCSS service providers continue to serve the students of the Valhalla Community School and residents of the Valhalla area. These services include counseling and the operation of the preschool/playschool program.

## **SECTION V: SCHOOL INFO**

### **Attendance - arriving late / leaving early**

Regular attendance is an essential component of learning. When absences are unavoidable, students and parents are responsible for any make up work during the absence. Assignments that are not made up, according to the time restrictions set by the teacher and school, will be reflected in their grades. It is helpful to both student and teacher to make prior arrangements to meet that requirement.

If your child will be absent please notify the school by either phone call or written note. It is important to phone anytime before 8:30 a.m. on each day of the absence, leaving a message on the answering machine if necessary. As this is a matter of student safety, office staff will place calls daily to parents for unaccounted absentees.

**Arriving Late** Student's arriving at school late (other than bus problems) are expected to sign in at the office. Any student arriving after 8:30 am is considered late.

**Leaving Early** Anyone being picked up early, prior to 3:35 pm, must sign out at the office. If your student is being picked up by someone other than you, the parent, the office must be notified ahead of time. A note is appreciated.

### **Communication**

**Newsletter/Monthly Calendar:** The weekly newsletters, each Tuesday, are designed to keep the community up to date as the weeks unfold. The monthly Calendar: every second month an updated calendar will go home. The newsletter and calendars are also posted on the school website, <http://www.valhallacommunityschool.ca>

**Email:** Parents may use email for teacher communication. Good communication is always a two-way street.

**Telephone:** It is preferable to communicate with teachers during school hours. However, if you are unable to connect with your child/ren's teacher during school hours, it is acceptable to contact teachers at home.

**Agenda:** Each student receives an agenda – to be used as an assignment log and a communication log for parent and teacher comments. Agendas should go home every night and provide parents with a convenient method to monitor their child's work and work-study skills.

### **Dress Regulations**

All students are required to dress appropriately for school every day. Also, students and parents are advised to be aware of our area's changeable weather condition, so that students are always "dressed for the elements". Winter months require ski-pants, winter jackets, mitts and toque. Students are also encouraged to have spare clothes, especially socks & pants, available.

Dress Code:

- Clothing that is obscene, racist, sexist or promotes alcohol or drugs is not allowed.
- Clothing needs to cover underwear, cleavage, and midriff. Tube tops, halter-tops and other beachwear are not allowed. Straps on shoulders of T-shirts shall be a minimum of two finger widths wide, and skirts and shorts must be a minimum of a full arm's length.

- Hats must be removed at a main entrance and shall not be worn for the school day except during outside recess.
- Any student wearing inappropriate clothing will be required to change or cover up the offending item.
- All students are required to have a separate set of indoor footwear for everyday use in the school. This helps keep the building clean and students ready in the event of an emergency exit.
- Athletic shoes for Physical Education class are necessary.
- Junior high students are required to bring extra clothes to change for Physical Education class. Younger students need to bring a change of clothing if what they are wearing is not suitable for gymnastic or physical activity.

**Eating Procedures:** See bell schedule for lunch and snack times. If you have any questions about lunch times, please discuss them with your child's teacher. Microwaves are available in each classroom, however be aware that line-ups at the microwave greatly reduce the amount of time your child will have to eat. Please be guided by good judgment in this regard.

Snacks are allowed on the playground. Please coach your child about the importance of keeping the playground litter free by using the garbage containers available.

Hot lunch is provided by the VCS School Council for a small cost. Students are required to bring the necessary utensils to eat their hot lunch. Watch the school newsletter for details.

### **Field Trips**

*VSF policy I-301 June 8, 2010*

The Charter Board supports field trips which offer meaningful educational experiences to students, and fulfill and enrich the curriculum.

- Field trips are defined as any off site school activity (including sports events).
- Prior written parental consent must be obtained for participating students. Students without prior written consent complete school work assignments at the school during the field trip time.
- Students are expected to comply with the Student Conduct Policy (VCS Policy Manual: I-101) in order to attend field trips. All students must ride on the assigned school bus or with their own parent. Students traveling with their own parent must STILL register for field trip within the school and hand in consent form. The parent is then responsible for student's transportation throughout field trip. Upon arrival at the field trip destination, student must ~~sign~~ check in with assigned teacher or volunteer to participate in the VCS field trip.
- Students leaving the field trip before the scheduled end and accompanied by an adult must sign out with the supervisor. If leaving with a person other than a parent, prior written and signed consent is required.

**Fire Drills / Lockdown Drills / Playground Evacuation ~ SAFETY PROCEDURES:** We are required to run a number of practice drills throughout the year to ensure that all students are aware of the procedure in case of a real emergency. Please discuss the importance of wearing inside shoes at all times so your child is prepared for the event of an unexpected trip outside.

## COMMUNICATING QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS AT VALHALLA COMMUNITY SCHOOL

This document is meant to describe the way stakeholders should communicate and work together at Valhalla Community School. In essence, it is desirable that we all deal with questions, issues and concerns at the level at which they are occurring. The Board and Staff at Valhalla Community School are committed to communicate resolutions and decisions back to stakeholders.

### **In general, when making suggestions or raising questions and concerns:**

- Focus on a positive outcome – we are all in this together! Remember that resolving issues does not always mean “getting your own way.”
- Assume that everyone is acting out of good will and doing their best.
- If you have questions or concerns, communicate them directly to the person involved. If you are not satisfied with the response, speak to that person’s supervisor.
- Avoid gossip.
- Be practical and solution-oriented.

### **In particular:**

- If you have a question or concern regarding the actions/decisions of a **School Staff Member**, you should discuss the matter with the staff member directly. In the event that the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you should discuss it with the **Principal**.
- If you have a question or concern regarding the actions/decisions of a **Bus Driver**, you should discuss the matter with the bus driver directly (not when the driver is transporting students). In the event that the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you should discuss it with the **Transportation Director**.
- If you have a question or concern regarding the actions/decisions of the **Principal**, you should discuss the matter with the Principal directly. In the event that the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you should discuss it with the **Superintendent**.
- If you have a question or concern regarding the actions/decisions of the **Transportation Director**, you should discuss the matter with the Transportation Director directly. In the event that the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you should discuss it with the **Superintendent**.
- If you have a question or concern regarding the actions/decisions of the **Superintendent**, you should discuss the matter with the Superintendent directly. In the event that the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you should discuss it with the **Board Chair**.
- If you have a question or concern regarding the actions/decisions of the **Board or Board Chair**, you should discuss the matter with the Board Chair directly. In the event that the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you should discuss it with the **Superintendent and the Board Chair**.
- If you have a question or concern regarding the actions/decisions of the **School Council**, you should discuss the matter with School Council Chair directly. In the event that the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you should discuss it with the **Principal and the School Council Chair**.

*Teacher Contact Information – See Page 5 for email contact information or call the school at 780-356-2370*

**Illness at School:** Please provide a written note if your child must stay in at recess for reasons of illness. Please ensure the office has current daytime contact information in case staff must inform you of health issues that may arise during the school day.

**Money and Personal Property:** The school cannot be held responsible for loss of money or property at the school. If your student must bring money or items of value to school and loss or theft is a concern, please direct your child to submit it to their teacher or the office first thing in the morning.

### **Parent Commitment**

Parents understand that:

- Our child will be enrolling in the Valhalla Community School program, a program with distinct differences from mainstream public education.
- By making this choice, we support and subscribe to the educational philosophy, program, teaching methods and practices as outlined in the Valhalla School Foundation Charter and Policies.
- Our child will be presented with curricular expectations that include and exceed the Alberta Education Program of Studies.
- Behavioral expectations in the school and on the school bus are defined by the Valhalla Community School Student Behavior and Conduct standards to which student behavior must conform.
- Regular attendance is crucial to student success, and frequent or extended absences may jeopardize student progress.
- It is our role as parents to provide a distraction-free space to monitor and supervise our child's homework assignments.
- Our child's participation in off-campus activities and field trips is contingent on a signed parental consent form returned to the school in a timely fashion prior to the activity or field trip.

Parents agree:

- That Board policy, the Charter, and the School Act outline what behavior is expected of students at Valhalla Community School.
- To support and reinforce Valhalla Community School academic and behavioral expectations in the spirit of partnership and common purpose.
- To encourage and support daily reading as an ongoing life skill.
- To be a cooperative partner with the school by providing meaningful feedback to the teacher, responding to teacher requests, attending at least one parent-teacher interview every year, and reviewing and signing my child's agenda daily.
- To seek opportunities to actively engage with the school through the sharing of time, abilities and talents for a minimum of 20 hours per family per school year.
- To the timely payment of fees that may be charged for school supplies and school-related activities such as swimming lessons, special activities and field trips.
- To participate in implementing an improvement plan should my child be at risk of not meeting grade level or behavioral expectations.

### **Report Cards and Parent Teacher Interviews**

Formal progress reports go out to parents three times a year in November, March and June with accompanying parent-teacher interviews. Report cards are sent home with the students. Please watch the newsletter and calendars for specific dates and times.

## School Council

Everyone who has a child registered in Valhalla Community School is a member of School Council and is welcome at School Council meetings. The more parents are involved with the council and the school, the more in tune they are with their child's education.

## Student Resource Fees

As a Public Charter School, Valhalla Community School does not charge tuition fees. Like other public schools, we do charge a fee for materials provided for the student's personal use or consumption. The fees charged are on a cost-shared basis between the parent/guardian and Valhalla Community School.

Throughout the year, additional fees may be charged to cover the cost of participating in swimming lessons, special events, sports or special projects.

The Valhalla School Foundation Board has approved the following fee structure:

	<b>Resource Fee</b>	<b>Textbook Rental</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Family Total</b>
Kindergarten	\$75 per year		\$75 per year	Maximum of \$400 per family per year
Grades 1 to 9	\$100 per year	\$50 per year **	\$150 per year	

**Junior High Option Fees are \$50.00 per year. All students grade 7 to 9 will participate in option class. This fee is to cover the cost occurred by all option classes each year.**

\*\*damaged or lost textbooks are subject to a replacement fee.

Fees may be paid in installments; please contact the school to make arrangements. In cases of financial hardship, provision for a waiver may be made. Please refer to the 'Fee Waiver Form (in the Appendix).

## Text Books

There is a textbook rental for grades 1-9 of \$50 per student per school year. Text books are very important to any classroom so it is vital that students take good care of all text books, reading materials, visual aids and games that are available in their classroom. These materials are carried over from year to year and it can be a major expense if they have to be replaced.

### Textbook Replacement Fee (Grades 1 - 9)

Textbooks will be signed out to students, and if a textbook is lost or damaged so that it is unusable, a replacement fee will be charged as follows:

New book	Full replacement cost
1 year old book	80% of replacement cost
2 year old book	50% of replacement cost

**Thank you for reading this handbook carefully  
& discussing it as a family.**

**Welcome to Valhalla Community School & have a great year!**