



**FAMILY HANDBOOK  
2019-2020**

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## **ABOUT VERITAS COMMUNITY SCHOOL, A Challenge Foundation Academy**

### History:

VERITAS Community School, A Challenge Foundation Academy (CFA) received its North Carolina charter in January of 2015. Its founder, Katy Ridnouer, along with Founding Board members developed the vision and mission with the goal of creating a small, integrated school environment that engages all children both academically and socio-emotionally with a focus on health and wellness in a peaceful classroom. In 2015, VERITAS welcomed families of Kindergarten through third grade students. VERITAS grew to fifth grade for the 2017-2018 school year.

### Mission:

VERITAS Community School, CFA empowers the scholar and athlete in every child to excel academically through daily wellness practices within a peaceful environment.

### Vision:

VERITAS Community School, CFA inspires students to become change agents of their generation

### Three Pillars:

Targeted Academics: We drive high academic standards through differentiated, collaborative, and inquiry based instruction.

Health and Wellness: We impact student learning through daily programming that includes structured intervals throughout the day when students are out of their seats and moving to facilitate alertness and well-being.

Peaceful Classroom: We promote the use of The Peaceful People curriculum, a socio-emotional education program that promotes healthy social development, fostering positive classroom and community relationships.

### School Creed:

I am a capable and dependable student who is full of possibilities and potential. There is no limit to what I can achieve. I must start each day to prepare for my future by seizing every opportunity to learn, to exercise, and to support our school community. I work hard, use my time wisely, and practice good citizenship. I believe that the choices I make today affect who I will become and what I will be able to do in the future. I accept the challenge and promise to always do my best.

## Student Expectations:

At VERITAS, we cultivate a school community that welcomes everyone, provides an engaging and safe space to learn, and inspires good character and continuous improvement. We expect every student to BE SIGNIFICANT and to meet or exceed the following expectations:

- B Be Your Best Self:  
Make sure that you are always being the person you want to be and someone who other people want to be around.
- E Eye Contact:  
Respectful eyes are always on the speaker. If someone new begins speaking, we turn and face them. When the class is looking at a book or the board, our eyes must be there.
- S Silent Halls:  
We get in line quickly and we never cut in line. We will walk in a straight line with voices off and eyes facing forward. This is showing our school and classmates respect.
- I If It Becomes a Toy, It is Mine:  
If something becomes more interesting than my teaching, then it will be removed.
- G Grandma's Manners:  
We answer adults by saying, "Yes, ma'am" or "No, sir." When given something, we say, "Thank you" or it goes away. We always cover our mouth when we sneeze or cough and say, "Excuse me" immediately after.
- N No Negativity:  
Some things aren't worth getting upset over. Be positive. Enjoy your day. If it's a small problem, let it go and move on.
- I I am the Teacher:  
If I am handling a problem, do not get involved or watch. Come to me only after you've tried to solve the problem first, and I will support you. Once it has been solved, we will all move on.
- F Follow Directions Quickly:  
In order to enjoy every second of the day, we have to work efficiently. When a direction is given, please move quickly the first time, so our day is not interrupted.
- I Integrity at all Times:  
Always make good choices and do things for the right reasons. Be honest with yourself and honest with others.
- C Congratulate and Uplift Others:  
When someone wins or does something well, we will congratulate them. If someone is struggling, we will encourage them.
- A Accept Mistakes:  
Every single person in this room will make mistakes. We do not make fun of others. If a mistake requires a consequence, accept it and move on. You can either learn from your mistakes and grow or let them defeat you.
- N Never Ask for a Reward:  
If you ask for a reward, it will not be given. We do our best because we are trying to better ourselves.
- T Treat Others with Respect:  
Our words and bodies will show respect. We may not always agree, but there is an appropriate way to disagree. This includes proper body language. If you win, do not brag. If you lose, do not show anger.

### Family Expectations:

We expect families to support the school in all ways. This puts the wind in our sails, and as Vikings, wind is fuel! Refer also to the Family & School Communication Policy on our website.

#### Wind In Our Sails: Families

1. Let kid business be kid business. Trust the process.
2. Be on time for school in the morning and when picking up your child in the afternoon.
3. Be more focused on your child getting a good education rather than your child getting good grades or the same treatment as another child.
4. Realize that we are guaranteeing to provide your child with an education. Nothing else is promised or guaranteed, and anything extra should be seen as a wonderful bonus.
5. School will only be as important to your child as it is to you. Don't allow your child to miss school for any reason except sickness and true family emergencies. Each day missed is a lost opportunity for your child to learn.
6. Be respectful of the fact that we plan every minute of your child's day. Only pick up your child early when he or she has a doctor's appointment or has some other major event that cannot be missed. Send in a note in your child's communication folder, so we can plan to quietly remove your child from class without disrupting the lesson.
7. Allow VERITAS to push your child.
8. Take ideas to the appropriate team member before acting on them.
9. Show appreciation to the teachers and staff often.
10. Speak positively about staff members and the school in front of your child at all times.
11. Email and call when you are calm. We are on the same team; keep it positive.
12. Be respectful of our time and of our judgment, and we promise to do the same for you.
13. Realize grades aren't given; they are earned.
14. Encourage your child not to complain; tell them to "get over it" and move on.
15. Allow your child to own his or her mistakes. It is when children have to handle issues themselves that they learn to fight their own battles.
16. Read all communication from the school thoroughly and check them before phoning or emailing the school with questions.
17. Be a positive voice about everything VERITAS, and encourage positive language in your presence.
18. Contribute no more than 15% of the ideas and work to any of your child's projects or papers.
19. Avoid giving too much to your child.
20. Be positive about VERITAS everywhere: on social media, in the community, in emails, and in texts.
21. Recognize that we treat every child fairly, but they may not all be treated equally. At VERITAS, the ones who deserve it are the ones who receive the recognition, and the ones who impress us are the ones who receive the praise.
22. Realize that all children have the capacity to misbehave or tell a lie, even yours. It's developmentally normal, not okay, but normal.
23. Attend VERITAS events and cheer with wild abandon.
24. Breathe.
25. Realize that we are about your kids. We have dedicated our lives to nurturing them, supporting them, loving them, and guiding them. It is our purpose, and it is our vow to you.

### 2017-201 Board of Directors:

Board members have been selected due to their wide range of experience and expertise to ensure the successful oversight of VERITAS Community School, CFA. They serve as volunteer stewards of this school.

The VERITAS Community School, CFA Board of Directors meet monthly. Meetings are held in the school library at 7:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month. Any additional meetings of the Directors will be posted promptly, and meeting minutes will be posted online. Meetings are open to the public and are held at our school.

#### School Hours:

Monday – Thursday: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Friday: 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

#### Arrival and Dismissal:

7:30a.m.: Students may report to classroom to begin morning work

8:00a.m.: School day begins. Late arrivers need to be signed in by parents in the office

3:30 p.m. School day ends

7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. School office hours

Teachers reserve early morning for planning. Students are not permitted in the classroom before 7:30 a.m., and, since teachers are supervising and leading students, they are unable to take your phone calls in the morning. You may always contact a teacher by email, but please remember that they are with their students during the day and may not be able to respond until after the normal school day has ended. They will respond within 24 hours. In case of an emergency situation, the front office will assist you in getting in touch with your child's teacher.

Students arriving late must report to the office. Please accompany your child to the office for late sign- in. Do not take your child directly to the classroom.

#### Charter School Information:

Charter Schools are public schools that operate according to their respective charter signed by the North Carolina Charter Schools Advisory Board. They report to the State Board of Education and are accountable for complying with applicable state and federal laws and its charter. A school board identified as a private nonprofit organization governs the school's operations to ensure fidelity to the charter. The school board must report annually to the State Board of Education, and the State Board of Education conducts an evaluation of the school at least every five years.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Teachers at VERITAS Community School, CFA help students realize their academic goals through research-based and developmentally appropriate methods and best practices in education. Services for academically gifted and exceptional children are provided within the regular classroom. When a child's individual education plan warrants resource services, those are provided.

### Targeted Academics:

Based on a philosophy of teaching and learning that is consistent with current research, exemplary practices, and national standards, the Standard Course of Study is designed to support North Carolina educators in providing the most challenging education possible for the state's students, including the Common Core for Reading and Math and the North Carolina Essential Standards for Science and Social Studies. With these standards in mind, VERITAS has chosen the Core Knowledge Sequence, the Core Knowledge Language Arts Program, and Singapore Math as the curricula to teach the content standards for every grade and subject.

### Core Knowledge Sequence:

VERITAS teaches the core subjects with the Core Knowledge Sequence founded by E. D. Hirsch, Jr., which is based on the belief that each student should learn the fundamentals of science, basic principles of government, important events in history, essential concepts in mathematics, masterpieces of art and music from around the world, and stories and poems that have been passed down for generations. This curriculum challenges students beyond state standards by explicitly stating which people, places, events, and concepts students should learn and when they should learn them. The Sequence provides a clear outline of content to be learned grade by grade so that knowledge, language, and skills build cumulatively from year to year. The sequential building of knowledge helps ensure that children enter each new grade ready to learn, prevents the need for repetition at the beginning of a new school year, and deters knowledge gaps.

### Language Arts:

The Core Knowledge Language Arts program increases knowledge across subject areas with informational and literary texts that are organized coherently and in a sustained fashion to build students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. This curriculum uses a holistic approach that builds knowledge systematically, a skills strand that builds developmentally appropriate skills, and a listening and learning strand where texts are grouped into academic domains that create interactive opportunities to question, discuss, and share ideas about a particular text.

### Health and Wellness:

VERITAS delivers a unique experience for Charlotte with our focus on health and wellness as a means to academic achievement. At VERITAS, Meals and movement are as important as math and reading, for, as Dr, John Ratey explains in his book SPARK, “exercise is the single most powerful tool you have to optimize your brain function.” He found that this occurs for the three following reasons:

1. It improves alertness, attention, and motivation.
2. It prepares and encourages the brain to learn.
3. It spurs the development of new brain cells.

Students are expected to participate fully in each movement opportunity. In the occurrence of an illness or physical injuries, which limit daily physical activity, families are required to communicate the condition. In these cases, VERITAS staff and faculty shall provide appropriate accommodations to students so they can benefit from the health and wellness program. For instances requiring up to two days of limitations, families are required to communicate by completing the Injury/Illness Form. Students needing adaptations or limitations over two days shall complete and return the VERITAS Physical Education Limitation Form (See Appendix A).

### Peaceful Classroom:

VERITAS emphasizes the program’s five foundational social skills to foster positive community relationships throughout VERITAS’ environment. As students become resilient and social competent, students will maintain a healthy and solution oriented culture, including the following:

Cooperation:	Act peacefully.
Assertion:	Work through difficult situations in solution-oriented ways.
Responsibility:	Take accountability for oneself.
Empathy:	Treat everyone in the school community with kindness.
Self-Control:	Use effective communication and body language.

Every day, children gather in a morning meeting to greet each other and join in an interdisciplinary support class based on the teacher’s planned activities. These skills are related to the vision and mission of VERITAS and provide students with a focused activity to begin their day.

### Assessments:

NWEA MAP Assessments: These assessments provide growth reports and establish goals for each student. They also provide National norms based on score scores and percentiles. The program provides highly accurate data with RIT scales to inform decision making at every level. Assessment drives instruction, and MAP assessments provide entry points for students in all content areas, including math, reading, language arts, and science. The student data provides teacher with suggested skills for instruction that encourages differentiation within the classroom. The data is also used to track student growth. This helps students to take responsibility for tracking their progress and reaching their goals in collaboration with their teachers and parents.

North Carolina End-of-Grade Assessments: Students in grades 3-5 take the NC EOG assessments in Language Arts and Mathematics to establish the rate of growth for VERITAS students in a given school year.

VERITAS Support Services Plan (VSSP): VERITAS has developed a comprehensive system to engage faculty and staff in proactively identifying and addressing students who are either performing below expected levels or performing above expected levels. This plan for Support Services ensures continued progress and academic growth, as well as provide an on-going program of identification and support of struggling and Intellectually Gifted students.

When a parent/guardian is concerned for a child's performance, the parent/guardian should contact the student's teacher. Appropriate staff consults with the parent to identify and address their specific concerns by referring to the VERITAS Support Services Plan.

Grading Scale:

Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:

4 = Exceeds Grade Level Standards: Indicates that a student consistently produces high-quality work, applies concepts independently, and is self-motivated.

3 = Meets Grade Level Standards: Indicates that the student consistently meets grade level standards. The student regularly demonstrates proficiency in the majority of the standards for the current grade level. The student, with limited errors, grasps and applies key concepts, processes and skills for the current grade.

2 = Progressing Toward Grade Level Standards: Indicates that the student is approaching and occasionally meeting the standards for the current grade level. The student is beginning to grasp and apply key concepts, processes, and skills for the current grade level.

1 = Not Meeting Grade Level Standards: Indicates that the student has not yet met minimum level standards. The student needs more time, experience, and possible interventions for concepts, processes, and skills to develop.

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade and Up:

91 – 100	Excellent
81 – 90	Above Average
71 – 80	Average
61 – 70	Below Average
0 – 60	Failing

Progress Reports and Report Cards:

Students receive progress reports at the mid-point of each grading period to provide an update about each student's academic progress. At the end of each grading period, students receive report cards.

### Conferences:

Parent-Teacher conferences are held for all parents at the end of the first grading period in late October. At that time parents may discuss progress with the teacher and receive the first report card.

Parent-teacher-student conferences are held in grades 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up. These conferences allow students to present their portfolios and to set academic goals for the remainder of the year. A conference can be set up at any time by sending an email to the teacher.

Please remember that a teacher's first duty is to teach. Teachers cannot meet with parents for a "drop-in" conference in the morning or during the school day. Expecting a conference at the classroom door places the teacher in an awkward position and is unfair to the students in the class.

All conferences must be prearranged. Send your teacher an email to arrange a conference.

### Homework Policy:

Routinely, students are given homework assignments that all students are required to complete. All assignments are prepared so that students successfully understand class work given on a particular day. Parents should check with each child's teacher for specific requirements. Families are encouraged to build a home culture that inspires lifelong learning.

VERITAS Community School, CFA nurtures, educates, and supports the whole child. Children thrive when they are given regular and frequent opportunities to play in the outdoors, to read books of choice, to learn through discovery, and to spend time with loved ones. Our homework policy is written with these developmental, emotional, physical, and mental needs of children in mind. For students in early grades, homework is intended to foster positive attitudes, habits, and character traits; permit appropriate parent involvement; and reinforce learning of simple skills introduced in class. Ultimately, homework plays a direct role in fostering improved academic achievement.

Homework falls into one of three categories: practice, preparation, or extension. At the elementary school level, homework can help students develop study skills and habits and can keep families informed about their child's learning. Practicing skills that require rote memorization, such as learning math facts and spelling words, are accomplished at home to give students the necessary time to acquire the skills and to set a foundation for responsible study habits thereby creating a foundation for success.

This policy applies to all VERITAS students as it best serves their individual developmental needs. VERITAS assigns homework per grade level through scaffolding the amount of time per grade level; however, the focus is less on time and more on homework that maximizes the potential for student success by assigning purposeful homework that achieves the following: introduces new content, practices a skill or process that students can do independently but not fluently, elaborates on information that has been addressed in class to deepen students' knowledge, and provides opportunities for students to explore topics of their own interest.

Teachers design homework that maximizes the chances that students will successfully

complete it. Parents are expected to be involved in homework in appropriate ways (for example, as a sounding board to help students summarize what they learned from the homework), without requiring parents to act as teachers or to police students' homework completion.

Teachers are responsible for carefully monitoring the amount of homework assigned so that it is appropriate to students' age levels and does not take too much time away from other home activities.

These homework durations are offered as a general guideline:

Kindergarten: 5 - 10 minutes

1st grade: 10 minutes

2nd grade: 20 minutes

3rd grade: 30 minutes

4th grade: 40 minutes

5th grade: 50 minutes

#### School Events and Field Trips:

From time to time, VERITAS' educational program includes school events and educational field trips to reinforce and enhance the academic program. All special school events and outings align with the mission of VERITAS.

Field trips are an extension of concepts taught in the classroom. They are encouraged and supported; however, only children exhibiting responsible behaviors may go on field trips.

Parents are often asked to serve as chaperones and supervisors for various field trips, and their assistance is truly appreciated. The purpose of a parent volunteer on a field trip is to actively supervise students assigned to them, so siblings are not allowed. We respectfully request that parents who are not selected as chaperones to please refrain from attending the field trip.

#### Afterschool Programming:

VERITAS strives to serve the needs of our students and our families and provides afterschool programming that offers enrichment and remediation opportunities for our students. Programming is offered Monday - Thursday from 3:30 - 6 p.m. and 12 - 6 p.m. on Fridays. We make every attempt to maintain low costs for our After School programming.

#### Clubs:

A variety of afterschool clubs are offered throughout the school year in an effort to provide extracurricular activities that encourage our students to try new activities and interests. Information and sign-up forms will be sent in your child's communication folder. Students cannot attend afterschool activities if a child is absent or leaves school early on the day that the activity is scheduled.

## **Attendance**

### General Expectations and N.C. Law:

The Compulsory Attendance Law (NC General Statute 115C-378) states that students under sixteen must attend school regularly while school is in session. The school reports unlawful absences to proper authorities.

When a student misses class or parts of class, he or she does not have the benefit of discussions, demonstrations, experiments, or instruction, all of which have a tremendous bearing on learning and grades. Repeated absences and/or early dismissals defeats the purpose of school and jeopardizes the student's progress and chances of promotion. It is the responsibility of the family (parent and child) to make sure the student attends school unless the child must be absent for one of the reasons listed below:

- Illness or injury, which prevents the student from physically attending school.
- Quarantine when ordered by the local health officer or by the State Board of Health.
- Death in the immediate family.
- Medical or Dental Appointment though we strongly encourage parents to minimize the impact on student learning by scheduling such appointments before or after school or on Friday's after 12:00pm.
- Court or Administrative Proceedings when the absence results from the attendance of a student at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
- Parent deployment activities when a student whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting for the purpose of visiting said parent or legal guardian (G.S. 115c-407.5 Article V (E)).
- Religious Observance when the tenets of a religion to which a student or his/her parent adheres require or suggest observance of a religious event.

The approval of such absences is within the discretion of the Head of School, but approval should be granted unless the cumulative effect is of such duration as to interfere with the education of the student.

To receive an excused absence or tardy for one of the circumstances listed above, the student must submit to his or her teacher either a signed doctor or dentist note or a signed, written note from his or her parent or guardian. In the absence of these forms of notification, the absence/tardy is reported as unexcused. Students are responsible for checking in with teachers and making up any missed work after an absence.

Approval for any impending absences due to an educational opportunity will only be granted in the event that the opportunity aligns with the student's grade-level curriculum. This approval is granted at the discretion of the Head of School and must be approved at least 3 days prior to the first day of absence. Approval will not be granted for educational opportunity absences during the first 20 days of school.

All other absences are unexcused. Excessive absences can result in failing classes/grade level. Please remember to work with teachers and administrators when you have extenuating circumstances.

#### Make-up Work:

Students are expected to complete all work before leaving or immediately upon their return from an absence. In the case of illness or other unexpected absence, students or their families should contact their teachers as soon as they return to school to obtain their missed assignments. Make-up work is the responsibility of the student and parent.

#### School Calendar:

The school calendar generally follows that Charlotte-Mecklenburg School and is posted on our website.

Changes may be made as deemed necessary due to inclement weather and/or emergencies through written notice to parents.

#### Transportation:

Bus rules are extremely simple and easy to understand. These rules keep our children safe and secure. Please review these rules early and often with your child and also encourage your child to seek adult assistance if any problem arises. At VERITAS, we are all problem-solvers, and we want to solve problems quickly before they escalate.

#### Bus Rules for Students

- Always sit in your assigned seat. Only the bus driver or a school administrator can change a seat assignment.
- Be safety minded at all times, including at the stop and on the bus.
- Be 10 minutes early at the bus stop.
- Wait in an orderly manner to prevent injury to yourself and others.
- Obey the bus driver and cooperate with him/her.
- Always enter or leave through the front door, except in an emergency.
- Stay in your seat until the bus has come to a complete stop.
- Keep your voice low while riding.
- Let the driver know if you are ill and need to stop.
- Leave the bus only with the driver's permission.
- Cross the street in FRONT of the bus and in full view of the driver.
- Help keep your bus clean.

- Don't ask the driver to make special stops for you. He/she is not allowed to do so.
- Remain seated in your assigned seat with head, hands, and feet, inside the bus.
- No touching other students or their belongings.
- No eating or drinking on the school bus.
- No hitting, spitting, or fighting on the school bus.
- No throwing of objects on or from the school bus.

### Consequences for Infractions Against Bus Rules

Step 1 - First Offense: Student will receive a referral notice to be signed by the parent and returned the following day.

Step 2 - Second Offense: Students who receive a second referral will be removed from the bus for a specific number of days, and parents will be notified.

### CARPOOL PROCEDURES

1. If you arrive at VERITAS prior to 7:30 a.m., children must remain in the car until carpool personnel open the car doors for morning arrival.
2. The carpool unloading zone is marked by the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. When you arrive, pull forward as far as possible, avoiding big gaps between cars. This allows for more cars to unload, and moves children into classrooms more efficiently.
3. As soon as your car comes to a safe stop in the unloading zone, students should exit the right-hand side of the vehicle, where it stops. It is not possible for us to allow cars to wait to unload until they reach the front of the line. Carpool personnel are supervising children as they move from the car to the school building.
4. Please have students and their belongings ready to exit the vehicle by the time your car is in the unloading zone.

By following these procedures, we can ensure that all students are in the academic environment quickly and safely. It is the goal of carpool personnel to start your child's morning with a smile and to maximize instructional time.

### TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

Your child's safety is our first concern. To help us ensure that your child is traveling home the correct way, please assist us with the following:

- All transportation changes need to be submitted in written form to the teacher as soon as you know of the change.
- Any transportation change made via email must be submitted before the day of the change due to the fact that teachers may not have an opportunity to check their emails prior to dismissal.
- In addition, please be reminded that valuable instructional time is lost when the office has to contact the teacher regarding last minute transportation changes. Please limit transportation changes during the day to emergencies only. Last minute

transportation changes will not be accepted unless there is a true emergency. Please respect this policy and limit your requests to true, unavoidable emergencies only.

Withdrawal:

When moving, please notify the office and your child's teacher at least one week in advance of the date of your move. If possible, provide the name and address of the new school so that your child's records can be transferred. All books and materials must be returned to the school and your child(s) account must be in good standing before your departure.

## Health and Safety

### Emergency Contact Information:

All parents should ensure that the contact information on file is correct and complete so that VERITAS staff can reach you in the event your child is hurt or becomes ill. Please include cell phone and alternate emergency contact numbers. Notify the office and your student's teacher when your home, work, or cell phone numbers change.

### Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication:

Families are encouraged to give medicines at home before or after school. If a student must take medication during the school day, parents must submit a signed Medication Form by the child's physician. Parents or guardians must send medications to school in a sealed, original container labeled with the following information:

- The student's name and grade.
- The name of the medication.
- The amount of the medication to be taken.
- The time the child is to take the medication.

Authorized school staff must administer ALL medication.

### Allergies:

VERITAS is committed to cooperate with students, families, staff, and medical personnel to minimize allergenic reactions and provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all students. If a student has allergies, it is the family's responsibility to inform the school in writing. Appropriate paperwork indicating the specific safety measures their child needs based on their medical record.

VERITAS takes extreme precautions to create an allergen-free environment; however, in the case that a reaction does occur, VERITAS offers the following:

- Parents of a student with a life-threatening allergy must provide the school documentation from a licensed healthcare provider describing the specific allergenic condition.
- Once notification is received, the authorized school staff will collaborate with the family to create an emergency healthcare plan that will be implemented in the event that the identified student experiences an allergic reaction.
- Healthcare plans shall be implemented with fidelity and in a manner that protects student confidentiality. Healthcare plans should address the various ways to limit exposure to food(s) and products containing the specific allergy.
- Should an identified student indicate (verbally or non-verbally) that he or she needs assistance, trained staff will perform first aid or a life saving technique as authorized according to the student's emergency healthcare plan. VERITAS will then call 911 and the student's parent/guardian.
- VERITAS' administration will provide prevention and management materials available to staff, students, and families.

### Immunizations:

North Carolina law requires that parents or guardians submit a record of their student's current immunizations (Public School Law 130A-152 Immunizations Required) prior to the first day of school.

All records must have the following information:

- Five DPT doses (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis). If fourth dose (booster) is given on or after the fourth birthday, the fifth dose is not required.
- Four oral polio vaccines (OPV), one of which must be a booster given on or after the fourth birthday. If the third dose is given on or after the fourth birthday, the fourth dose is not required.
- Two MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) doses with the first dose on or after the first birthday and a second dose given before entering school.
- At least one dose of Haemophilus Influenzae Type b (HBOC or PRP---OMP), given on or after the first birthday and before five years of age. (Second dose is not required if first dose was given after 15 months of age.)
- Three Hepatitis B doses.
- One Varicella dose on or after age 12 months and before age of 19 months.

VERITAS staff will review the record, and if the student is in full compliance, the record will be copied and filed. Students who are exempt from immunizations and who provide State-approved exemption will be considered in compliance. If the student is in partial compliance, VERITAS will give the parent or guardian a checklist of necessary immunizations that the student must complete prior to attending class. If non-compliance persists, VERITAS will send a follow-up letter to the student's parent or guardian. If proof of immunization or exemption from vaccinations is not presented to the school within 30 days, the child will not be allowed to attend school until the immunization requirement is met.

<b>Vaccine</b>	<b>Number of Doses Required Before School Entry for Kindergarten</b>
Diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis	5 doses (last dosage must be given after age four)
Polio	4 doses
Measles	2 doses
Mumps	2 doses
Rubella	1 dose
Haemophilus Influenzae type B	4 doses (Children beyond their fifth birthday are not required to have any Hib vaccine)
Hepatitis B	3 doses
Varicella (chickenpox)	1 dose (only required if there is a lack of documented disease history.

For more information regarding N.C. Immunization Laws, visit:  
<http://www.immunize.nc.gov/schools/resourcesforschools.htm>

Illness:

If a student is ill, he or she should not attend school. Please keep a student at home if any of the symptoms below are present. Keep an ill student at home until he or she has been symptom-free for 24 hours, and/or if they any of the following symptoms: have a fever of 100 degrees or higher; are vomiting or have diarrhea; or have evidence of a severe head cold, persistent cough, sore throat, a suspicious rash, or other contagious condition (pink eye, head lice, etc...). If these symptoms develop during the school day, a school team member will call you to pick up your child.

When your child returns to school, please send in a hand-written note or an email to the Office Manager at [Contact@VERITASCommunitySchool.org](mailto:Contact@VERITASCommunitySchool.org) that clearly explains the reason for the absence.

Special note: If a student has a contagious condition such as, but not limited to, chicken pox, head lice, or pink eye, parents or guardians must notify the school.

Meningococcal Meningitis and Influenza and Their Vaccines:

VERITAS will provide parents and guardians with information about meningococcal meningitis and influenza and their vaccines at the beginning of every school year, including information pertaining to the causes, symptoms, and how meningococcal meningitis and influenza are spread and the places where parents and guardians may obtain additional information and vaccinations for their children. (N.C. G.S. 200522, s. 4(a), (b) § 115C375.5).

Security Measures:

Doors remain locked throughout the day and can only be accessed by authorized personnel. All visitors must begin their visit to the school in the front office.

Visitors To Our School:

The following rules apply to all persons other than teachers, other team members, and pupils enrolled in the school who may come to the school for any reason during the school day.

VERITAS must insure the safety of all students and staff. We strongly encourage all our visitors to register as a volunteer on our school website. This registration and subsequent approval is the first step to opening the door to becoming a member of our VERITAS volunteer family. If you have any questions, please see the front office.

All visitors must report to the front office, sign in, and receive approval to proceed to volunteer opportunity from office staff.

**ALL PARENTS AND VOLUNTEERS MUST REPORT TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE AND SIGN IN.**

Any person on school property who has not signed in during school hours is illegally on school grounds and will be asked to identify himself or herself properly or leave the premises. If the visitor refuses to leave the school grounds or creates any disturbance, the Head of School has the authority to request assistance from the police.

Parents are reminded that other than scheduled volunteer duties in the classroom or special events, classrooms do not allow visitation. At VERITAS, we intentionally protect instructional time so that all of our children can focus on learning rather than on visitors to the classroom. We appreciate your adherence to this guideline. In addition, please note that the playgrounds are off-limits for anyone other than VERITAS students at all times. Again, we appreciate your adherence to this guideline.

Visitors are asked not to bring pets into the school or on school grounds unless special permission has been granted by the office.

Parents are reminded that younger siblings are not invited to classroom functions or on school field trips. Our focus at all school activities is always the students in the classroom.

We appreciate your cooperation in implementing these safety guidelines.

Emergency Closures, Delays, and Early Dismissal Notices:

If Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools close due to inclement weather, VERITAS will also be closed.

Fire Drills:

The administration will conduct a fire drill within the first ten days of school and thereafter at least once a month. Students and school employees must participate in fire drills to ensure that everyone knows how to exit school buildings safely and efficiently. Students must be silent during a fire drill so that everyone can hear emergency instructions. A copy of the regulations prescribed by the Commissioner of Insurance, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the State Board of Education will be posted on the bulletin board in each building (G.S.115C-288,-525).

Tobacco Prohibition:

VERITAS believes that health and wellness is a means to academic success, and tobacco use has been consistently proven to be a barrier to wellness; therefore, tobacco use is prohibited on school grounds and within 500 feet of the school property.

Weapons:

VERITAS places student and team safety as a top priority and works diligently to provide a school environment where students and staff are free from the fear and danger presented by firearms and other weapons. Therefore, VERITAS prohibits any person other than authorized law enforcement or security personnel from possessing weapons, imitation firearms, or dangerous instruments of any kind in school buildings, on school grounds or buses, or at a school-related or school-sponsored activity away from school.

Asbestos:

In 1986, Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) which mandated the Asbestos-Containing Materials in School Rule, 40 CFR Part 763. It requires all primary and secondary school buildings to be inspected by AHERA accredited inspectors and to identify all asbestos-containing building materials. The rule further requires the

development of a management plan by an AHERA accredited management planner that is based on the findings of the inspection. The management plan outlines our intent in controlling the potential for exposure to asbestos fibers in our school.

Our State has adopted N.C. General Statute §130A-444 through 452 - Asbestos Hazard Management, and these rules essentially mirror the requirements of the AHERA regulations. In both cases, the rules require our school to notify parents, teachers, and employees of the presence and status of asbestos-containing material in our school buildings.

Asbestos-containing materials have been identified in our building, and we conduct periodic surveillance, necessary maintenance, and re-inspections to ensure that the asbestos-containing materials remain in good condition and do not pose a hazard to our students and staff.

An asbestos management plan was drafted based on our initial inspection and submitted to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. It outlines in detail the methods we will use to maintain the material in a safe manner. The management plan is updated regularly as asbestos is removed or conditions change.

A copy of the management plan is on file in the front office and is available for your review during our regular school hours.

Should you have any questions, please call the school at 980-677-0101.

## EXPECTATIONS

### Volunteering Requirements:

Every parent and guardian is expected to fulfill ten hours of volunteering at VERITAS each school year. This requirement may be completed in a variety of ways, including volunteering in the front office, as a reading or math tutor, as a cafeteria assistant, or as a field trip chaperone. Parents may also fulfill their ten-hour requirement through participation in campus clean-ups or preparation for the many events that VERITAS holds each school year.

Our Dean of Students will track parent participation and contact those parents with volunteer choices so that they have a variety of ways to fulfill the ten-hour requirement.

At the beginning of each school year, each parent and guardian will sign the Student-Parent-School contract in which the parent agrees to the following:

- Complete a minimum of 10 volunteer hours throughout the school year.
- Attend all mandatory meetings and conferences (at least three times per year).
- Participate in monthly family events.
- Ensure that students are at school every day and are dropped off and picked up on time.
- Ensure that students are prepared for school each day with completed homework, being well-rested, and dressed appropriately based on the weather and the school's uniform policy.
- Support and promote school programs, especially those related to health and wellness, academics, and socio-emotional health.
- Provide current contact information and update as necessary.
- Read the weekly newsletter.

### Diversity and Our Mission:

Diversity is the difference that defines each of us individually and collectively. These differences include race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, socio-economic status, religion, disability, and skill level. By recognizing, respecting, and valuing these differences, VERITAS can maximize the benefit that diversity brings to its environment. This will insure that our emphasis on conflict resolution and socio-emotional health permeates the daily life of our school.

### Student Dress Code:

VERITAS expects that members of the school community will present themselves in a manner that positively represents the school, their family, and themselves. Students are required to comply with the dress code while in school and while on field trips with the school. Students are expected to comply with the dress code policy whenever school is in session.

Shoes:

The only shoes that students are allowed to wear at school on a daily basis are tennis shoes/sneakers. If a student wears shoes other than tennis shoes/sneakers, our P.E. teacher will have the child remove his or her shoes so they can play safely and notify the parents. Wearing the wrong shoes is not an excuse for not participating in class; however, if it is unsafe for the child to participate without shoes, the child will not be allowed to participate.

Note: Shorts should be of reasonable length and fit nicely (plenty of room for movement). A good rule of thumb to use is to let both arms hang naturally by your side. The shorts should touch the end of your outstretched hand.

Dress Code Standards:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Color Choices</b>	<b>Logo Required?</b>	<b>For Whom?</b>
T-Shirt	Purple, Hunter Green, Ash Gray, or White	Yes	Girls and Boys
Short Sleeve Polo Shirt	Purple, Hunter Green, Ash Gray, or White	Yes	Girls and Boys
Long Sleeve Polo Shirt	Purple, Hunter Green, Ash Gray, or White	Yes	Girls and Boys
Peter Pan Collared Blouse	White	Yes	Girls
Chino Pants	Khaki or Black	No	Girls and Boys
Sweat Pants	Gray or Black	No	Girls and Boys
Chino Shorts	Khaki or Black	No	Girls and Boys
Skort	Khaki or Black	No	Girls
Mesh Athletic Shorts	Silver or Black	No	Girls and Boys
Hooded Pullover Sweatshirt	Purple, Hunter Green, or Ash Gray	Yes	Girls and Boys

### Food Service and Nutrition:

Our culinary program is designed to educate and excite students and families to improve the health of the entire community and establish life-long healthy eating habits. The program includes nutrition education, garden experiences, kitchen experiences, core academic content in the classroom, and freshly prepared foods served in school.

- Program Goals:
  - Make available a freshly prepared breakfast and lunch to every student every day, so students are prepared to learn to their fullest potential.
  - Encourage all students, families, and the community to make healthy food choices through the modeling of healthy habits at school.
  - Reduce the rate of obesity in the school and community and prevent future related chronic illness such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer through school food policy, community outreach programs, and healthy eating practices.
  - Provide curriculum integration to educate students on food choices including cultural influences, culinary awareness, and health considerations; for example the USDA Food Plate, “Unwise/Okay/Better/Best Food Choice Model”, Farm to Table, Roots and Shoots, Edible Schoolyard, garden experiences, and kitchen experiences.
  - Practice environmental stewardship, increase nutritional content in meals, and stimulate the local economy by sourcing fresh produce, meats, and dairy from within 50 miles of the school whenever possible.
  - Reduce food waste and overall cost of school meal program by implementing a “pre-order” meal service.
  - Encourage students to practice good citizenship through the respect for others, and assistance with setup, cleaning up and recycling.
  - Prepare students for success through teaching and practicing of good table manners and proper meal etiquette.
  - Encourage parents to participate in a Family Breakfast with their children.
  - Maximize participation in the school meal program by developing a coordinated, comprehensive outreach and promotion plan and deliver freshly prepared nutrient-dense meals that are preferred by student, staff and the community.
  - Require students who bring their lunch to comply with the school’s outside food policy which encourages “best choice” items and “waste free” environmentally-friendly lunch packs and prohibits “fast/junk food” in the schools.
  - Support students with allergies and food sensitivities through the peanut and tree nut policy and providing modified meal to students where feasible.
  - Promote “sweet free” celebrations and rewards within the school, including birthday celebrations or other holidays. We ask all personnel and parents to participate by eliminating “sweet treats” within the school. VERITAS is committed to moving away from food conditioning that creates obesity and perpetuates many of our society’s current health conditions.

- Our Lunches will:
  - Use whole, natural, cultural, local, sustainable, organic, nutritionally dense and made-from-scratch foods whenever possible.
  - Include nutrient rich foods such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables, sea vegetables and those containing Omega3's as possible. These foods will be introduced to students through education and motivation.
  - Avoid potentially harmful foods and additives such as pesticides, genetically modified foods, hormones, antibiotics, irradiation, nitrites/nitrates, high fructose corn syrup, trans fats, hydrogenated oils, artificial colors/flavors, high-sugar/fat content.
  - Eliminate pre-packaged and processed foods as possible. This includes eliminating menu items which are commercially marketed to children through the use of cartoon characters, etc.
  - Encourage students to drink water often throughout the day as a "Best Choice" beverage.

Recommendations for lunches:

- Brain Boosters—We welcome these items in lunches.
  - Water
  - Sunbutter/Soybutter
  - Apples
  - Bananas
  - Oranges
  - Kiwi
  - Melon/Cantaloupe
  - Blueberries
  - Strawberries
  - Carrots
  - Celery
  - Cauliflower
  - Broccoli
  - Any and all fruits and vegetables
  - Raisins and Craisins
  - Trail Mix (no nuts)
  - Granola Bars (no nuts)
  - Plain yogurt (low sugar, fewer than 10 grams)
  - Cheese
  - Whole grain crackers
  - Plain Animal crackers
  - Pretzels
  - Plain popcorn
  - Chicken, turkey, ham, and beef
  - Brown bread
- Brain Busters—We don't allow these items in lunches and snacks, and they will be sent home:
  - Cookies

- Pastries
- Chocolate
- Hot Dogs
- Fast Food
- Soda or tea
- Juice
- Added sugar
- Refined white flour
- Deep-fried foods
- Fruit flavored gummy snacks. (100% dried fruit and dried vegetables are OK if they have zero added sugar.)
- Lunchables
- High sodium snacks and chips, including baked chips and vegetable chips/straws
- Fruit flavored drinks or Gatorade
- Fruit cups packed in syrup (Fruit packed in water is OK.)

Guidelines for Healthy Home Lunches:

Your student's lunch should have the following items to be considered balanced. We have devised these portions from the National School Lunch Program guidelines. Thank you for guiding your child in creating healthy eating habits!

2 servings (2 oz.) of whole grains.

- Examples: whole wheat bread, brown rice, and whole grain tortilla.

1 serving (2oz.) protein.

- Examples: lean deli meat, tofu, beans, and lentils.

1 serving (1/2 c., 4oz.) fruit.

- Examples: apple, banana, grapes, and berries.

1 serving (3/4 c., 6 oz. vegetables

- Examples: carrot sticks, cucumber slices, broccoli florets, tomato slices, and red or green peppers.

Water (8 oz.) to drink

Please note: Any product containing high-fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, or sugar above 10 g, sodium above 200mg (for sides), or calories above 200 (for sides) is not allowed.

VERITAS staff members have your child's best interest in mind and reserve the right to substitute any items your child brings from home with a VERITAS alternative.

Please see our wellness commitments in the Family Handbook for further information on rationale behind our healthy, balanced lunch guidelines.

VERITAS is a "nut sensitive" school, and as such, we do not allow items containing nuts at school. If these items were allowed, students with severe allergies may come into contact with a student who consumed peanuts or tree nuts and have an allergic reaction. Please do not send in food containing nut products with your child to school at anytime. VERITAS reserves the right to deny families the ability to serve a snack if it is found to not meet the healthy snack requirements of the school.

If you have any questions about how to pack a healthier, balanced lunch, please contact us.

Forgotten Items:

In order for the VERITAS team to maintain focus on instruction throughout every school day, parents and guardians are not permitted to drop off forgotten items, including homework, lunch boxes, or water bottles, in the front office or the classroom after 8:00am each school day. At no time are parents to personally deliver items to a classroom.

Birthdays:

Parents and guardians are welcome to arrange with classroom teachers to send in a healthy treat or a short classroom activity as part of a child's birthday celebration. Healthy options include fruit, vegetables, or granola bars. Cookies, cupcakes, or cake are not permitted.

If students wish to pass out invitations to birthday parties or other special events out of school, they may do so only if they have invitations for every member of the class.

Technology Use:

Students are encouraged to use VERITAS computers, electronics, network, Internet services, and all related items, including a headphone and mouse, for educational purposes. VERITAS strives to provide sound educational opportunities via its computer network and Internet sourcing. In order to achieve this, each student must use electronic equipment in accordance with the Internet Policy for Students. The policy will enable VERITAS Community School, CFA to investigate and intercede in any potential or current cyber bullying incidents that are seen to have an adverse impact on the welfare of students, staff, families and the educational environment. It is encouraged to leave personal electronic devices at home and is prohibited to connect those devices to VERITAS Community School, CFA's secure servers and network.

Failure to comply with the policy may result in loss of computer privileges as well as other penalties. Persons who observe or are aware of any electronic violations of the policy or a problem occurring with the network/Internet must notify administration.

Communication Among Parents in the Classroom:

Parents are reminded that emails to all parents in the classroom should always be approved by the teacher before sending. The primary use of classroom emails is for the teacher to share classroom information and for the room parents to share information about upcoming classroom events. Room parents, too, have their messages approved by the teacher. The classroom email addresses should not be used for any other reason as this violates the reason for which they were gathered. Personal messages, comments or complaints should be directed to the teacher or to a school administrator.

School Newsletter:

The school newsletter is the first place for families to seek information regarding upcoming events, deadlines, and notices. In an effort to reduce our carbon footprint, VERITAS will deliver newsletters electronically via the school website and through family email addresses on file unless families notify us that they do not have access to the Internet. Refer to these newsletters prior to calling the front office or emailing the teacher with a question that might be answered

in the newsletter.

Photo and Video Release Form:

By signing the Photo and Video Release Form, the parent or guardian is granting to VERITAS and its legal representatives the irrevocable and unrestricted right to use and publish photographs of themselves and their child, or photographs in which the child may be included, for editorial, trade, advertising, and other purposes and in any manner and medium including electronic usages (websites, photo CDs, email, online stock, social media, etc...), to alter the same without restriction, and to copyright the same. The parent or guardian signature on the Family Handbook form hereby releases VERITAS and its legal representatives and assigns from all claims and liability to said photographs.

Non-Solicitation Policy:

Solicitation and distribution on VERITAS property is strictly prohibited. Solicitation is defined as the promotion or sale of products, merchandise, or services for benefit or profit. Promotion also includes, but is not limited to, the distribution on VERITAS property of advertising materials, informational materials, e-mails, postings, and telephone solicitation. Solicitation during working hours or at any time on school grounds is prohibited. Notwithstanding the foregoing, approved school organizations may solicit and collect funds or perform services to raise funds that directly benefit the school or the community.

Custody Issues:

VERITAS presumes that both parents have access to a student unless explicitly told otherwise. If a parent has been legally denied this privilege, then it is the parents' obligation to notify VERITAS in writing with copies of the legal documents attached. All mailings and student information will be directed to the custodial parent, unless another parent has educational decision making authority as indicated by documents from a court proceeding or by written consent from a custodial parent.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

### Expectations for Behavior

VERITAS provides a nurturing and safe environment to build a school culture that promotes learning and socio-emotional health. VERITAS has adopted Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools' Student Code of Conduct, which is available on CMS' website at <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/>. VERITAS has also created its own expectations for behavior within the school.

When a challenge occurs, our goal is to resolve the conflict through discussion, compassionate response, and logical consequences. To facilitate this process, VERITAS has guiding principles for teachers, administrators, parents, staff, and students.

For teachers, administrators, parents, and staff, we expect that they will:

- Treat everyone with kindness.
- Give positive attention to positive behavior.
- Model and provide language to solve problems.
- Work toward a solution in productive ways.

For students, we expect that they will:

- Be safe.
- Be respectful.
- Be ready to learn.

### Unacceptable Behaviors:

VERITAS students are expected to exhibit the behavioral expectations whenever they are on school property or on school outings. The following behaviors are not tolerated:

- Teasing or bullying.
- Aggressive verbal behavior.
- Physical abuse or physically aggressive acts.
- Disruptive behavior to include but not limited to:
  - Throwing inappropriate objects.
  - Making disruptive and/or repetitive sounds or motions.
  - Failure to respond to an adult's direction.
  - Dangerous behavior.
  - Hiding.
  - Misuse of materials.
  - Stealing or defacing property.

Teachers and administrators will use their discretion to determine the appropriate response for each situation. Some infractions will require that parents or guardians pick up their child during the school day followed by a meeting with an administrator who will use his or her discretion to determine corrective action.

Corporal Punishment:

We don't believe physical punishment is a response that contributes to the healthy development of a child's choice to misbehave; therefore, corporal punishment will never be executed at VERITAS.

Bullying:

VERITAS prohibits any and all forms of bullying by students and will not tolerate this behavior. Instances of bullying will be handled by the administration on a case-by-case basis.

Students are expected to use appropriate language and conduct at school and school functions and possess only appropriate materials. This rule applies to cursing, possessing, sending, or receiving written materials or electronic text and/or images that convey an offensive, racial, derogatory, bullying or obscene message to another person. This includes but is not limited to references to race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, and/or physical or sensory disability, physical appearance or making offensive statements or gestures.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology, including devices and equipment, such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. Examples of cyberbullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles. VERITAS will investigate and intercede when necessary in cyberbullying incidences.

Harassment:

Harassment will not be tolerated and is prohibited. This includes harassing behavior by students and any other person at a VERITAS related event, including school personnel, parents, visitors, contractors, vendors, and volunteers.

Harassment is defined as habitually repeated behavior that is serious enough to cause negativity to a student's educational, emotional or physical well-being. This includes harassment geared towards color, race, gender, national origin, religion, marital status, or ability. VERITAS harassment policy applies not only to legal categories but also activities such as bullying, stalking, cyber-bullying, name-calling, taunting, threats, intimidation, hazing, and other disruptive behaviors.

### Discipline:

The VERITAS administration is responsible for the orderly operation of VERITAS and has the authority to enforce the code of conduct.

Parents are expected to read the Code of Conduct that is outlined below to ensure that they understand the expectations and disciplinary actions. The VERITAS administration and staff will use the school-initiated consequences below as a guide to maintain a school environment that is a safe and caring place where all students and team members will thrive.

### Explanation of Disciplinary Levels:

School-Initiated Consequences: VERITAS is responsible for following the Code of Conduct and applying the appropriate Level of intervention.

- Level 1 – Conference/Verbal Warning: Staff members may conduct a conference among any combination of the following:
  - Teacher/Student.
  - Teacher/Student/Administrator.
  - Teacher/Student/Guidance Counselor.
  - Administrator/Student.
- Level 2 – Parent Contact/Conference: Staff members may conduct a conference via email, phone, or in person. All parent contact will be documented in the student's discipline record.
- Level 3 – In-School Suspension: ISS will be defined as one full or part of a school day under the supervision of a VERITAS employee. This day will be a study day separate from the general population of the school.
- Level 4 – Suspension (1-3 days): Out of School Suspension: The denial of a student's right to attend school or school sponsored activities.
- Level 5 – Suspension (4-9 days): Out of School Suspension: The denial of a student's right to attend school or school sponsored activities.
- Level 6 – Suspension (10 days or more): Out of School Suspension: The denial of a student's right to attend school or school sponsored activities.

At the discretion of the Head of School, other interventions may be assigned as deemed appropriate.

### Sample list of Interventions:

- Peer Mediation.
- Time-outs, detention, work programs.
- Meeting of school personnel and/or other professionals.
- Restricted activities, denial of school activities and extra-curricular events.
- Mental Health Programs/evaluations/testing, referrals to other professionals, and

involvement with outside agencies.

Please note that this list is not all-inclusive but only a sample of possible interventions.

#### Grievance Policy:

VERITAS encourages communication within the school community between teachers, families, and every member of the school team. If a concern arises, parents, students, and team members should address the appropriate team member. If the concern persists, an administrator will mediate a discussion involving all parties to resolve a concern.

#### Grievance Procedures:

The Grievance Procedures is a process that VERITAS parents and students may follow in order to resolve identified problems. The following procedures outline the way in which a complaint will be handled:

- Confidential: Only the individuals directly involved in the grievance or those reviewing the circumstances surrounding the issue shall have access to information about the grievance.
- Impartial: All parties involved will have the opportunity to present the facts regarding the situation. Before the complaint is reviewed, all relevant information shall be collected and considered.
- Free of Repercussions: VERITAS is committed to maintaining a school environment in which parents and students are free to raise good faith concerns and to take necessary steps to make certain that the individuals involved in a grievance will not suffer repercussions.
- Time Sensitive: VERITAS strives to deal with all grievances in a timely manner. There are time limitations for each step of the grievance process, and those limitations are outlined in the steps below.

#### Grievance Steps:

A grievance may have up to six steps outlined below:

1. Initial Action.
2. Grievance Statement.
3. Qualification for Formal Meeting.
4. Formal Meeting.
5. Appeal Process.
6. Appeal Decision.

These steps are not intended to discourage a parent or student from reporting to the appropriate individual a violation committed by a team member or another student; instead, they are intended to provide guidance in pursuing the resolution of a grievance.

The Head of School will have the discretion to refer the grievance to the Board of Directors, as he or she deems appropriate, during any step of the grievance process.

#### Step 1: Initial Action

Parents and students should always aim to raise any concerns or complaints with their assigned teacher in the informal context of their day-to-day environment. Should the

grievance be about discrimination, harassment, or bullying, this may involve the Head of School during which time the nature of the complaint will be explained to the alleged discriminator/harasser and parents.

If the matter concerns the actions of the Head of School, contact the Chairperson of the VERITAS Board of Directors.

#### Step 2: Grievance Statement

When it is not possible to resolve a conflict informally, a Grievance Notification Form that includes a Grievance Statement may be submitted.

If the Head of School is an involved party to the grievance, he or she will be precluded from listening to the grievance and participating in the decision. In this instance, the steps will remain the same with the Board of Directors conducting the proceedings.

#### Step 3: Qualification for Formal Meeting

Within fourteen calendar days of receipt of the written Grievance Notification Form, the Head of School will make a decision regarding whether or not a formal meeting will be scheduled. If a formal meeting is scheduled, it will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time and place for discussion of the complaint with all parties involved, but it will not occur later than twenty days after receipt of the written grievance and after notification to the parent.

#### Step 4: Formal Meeting

The Head of School will hold the meeting and render a decision; all decisions will be communicated in writing. The decision shall be made within seven calendar days of the completion of the formal meeting unless participating members agree to set an alternative deadline or there are exceptional circumstances, which prevent a decision being made within this timeframe. In this occurrence, additional meetings may be held and the final decision shall be provided within seven calendar days of the last consultation.

#### Step 5: Appeal Process

If the decision made is to dismiss the grievance and the parent continues to feel dissatisfied, he or she may request an individual meeting with the Head of School to appeal the decision. A request for any appeal must be submitted in writing to the Head of School within seven calendar days of the decision.

After receiving an appeal request, the Head of School shall schedule a meeting with the involved team member and the parent no later than four weeks from the date of the written request from the parent to have the grievance heard in an appeal. Any such discussions shall be conducted in a closed session, unless requested otherwise by the parent. Written notes of the result of the review shall be sent to the team member and the parent within seven calendar days.

If the Head of School cannot resolve the grievance during the appeal process, he or she will refer the appeal to the Board of Directors for their review. In this instance, the steps will remain the same with the Board of Directors conducting the appeal proceedings and making

a final decision.

#### Step 6: Appeal Decision

The three possible options at the end of the appeal process are as follows:

1. The grievance is agreed, and a resolution is decided upon.
2. The grievance is agreed in part and a resolution is determined in respect of that part of the grievance, whilst the remaining part is not considered any further.
3. The grievance is not agreed.

The Board Chairperson will, within five business days of the appeals meeting, unless there is an agreement to set an alternative deadline, notify the parent of the decision, as well as the rationale, in writing. Decisions at this stage will be considered final.

## **FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL POLICIES**

### Advocacy:

As a parent, you are your child's best education advocate. You know your child's strengths and challenges, and you can help identify the resources your child needs to succeed. Parent-Teacher communication is essential in monitoring student progress and providing necessary supports. Please contact your child's teacher if you have concerns about academic and/or social emotional progress throughout the year. Email tends to be the most convenient way of contacting teachers and parents are encouraged to check email regularly when used as a tool for communication. Please remember to update the VERITAS office and your child's teacher if your email address has changed. Parents who do not have home computers or Internet access are strongly encouraged to use free computers at the public library. Directly calling or visiting a teacher during instructional time is not permitted, but a message will be taken in the office and then passed on to the teacher. Please give 24 hours for teachers to respond to your call.

### Student Records:

Parents have the right to review their student's education records at any time by requesting an appointment with the administrator. Through a written request, parents may seek an amendment of the student's records that they believe to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. Parents may consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records except to the extent that the Act authorizes disclosure without consent. Parents may file a complaint with the Department of Public Instruction concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of this Act.

### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest.
- Other schools to which a student is transferring.
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes.
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student.
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school.
- Accrediting organizations.
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies.
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them.

Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school. For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call 1-800-437-0833.

Or you may contact us at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
 U.S. Department of Education  
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
 Washington, D.C. 20202-8520

Freedom From Harassment:

If an unauthorized individual, whether or not he is affiliated with the school, approaches a staff member for personal information concerning another staff member or student, the request will be denied, the individual will be informed that he/she is seeking private information, the person receiving the request will record the details of the incident and submit a copy of the information to the Head of School. Likewise, if a student or staff member feels threatened by another individual concerning demands that are not duty-related, he should record the incident and immediately submit the concern to the Head of School, who will take appropriate action. If it occurs again, the Head of School will investigate it, and determine whether or not harassment charges should be pursued against the individual. Parents, of course, have every right to seek and obtain private information concerning their own child/children, but not the private information concerning others.

Nondiscriminatory Policy and Equal Educational Opportunity for All Students:

VERITAS does not discriminate against students based on race, sex, religion, creed, ability, disability, or national origin. VERITAS will provide equal opportunity for school admissions, academics, and extracurricular activities. If a student or his or her parent or guardian believes that VERITAS has violated this policy by denying equal treatment, he or she may notify the Board of Directors or designee who is authorized to investigate and, where appropriate, resolve such concerns.

Services for Exceptional Children under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

VERITAS will provide a free and appropriate publicly supported education, in the least restrictive, appropriate environment, to every disabled child with special needs. VERITAS will comply with the State Board of Education's Procedures Governing Programs and Services for Children with Special Needs, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its implementing regulations.

Any child suspected of having a disability can be referred by either the school (VERITAS) or the parent for an evaluation. This referral must be in writing and must state the reason for the referral, including specific presenting concerns, and the child's strengths and needs. This referral shall be given to the Head of School, the child's teacher or other school professional. VERITAS will conduct a full and individual initial evaluation in accordance with NC 1503-2.4 through NC 1503-2.7 and only with written parental consent for the evaluation.

Evaluations will be conducted, eligibility determined, and for an eligible child, the IEP developed, and placement completed within 90 days of receipt of a written referral. Eligibility determination and development of the IEP is the responsibility of the IEP Team of which the child's parent(s) are members.

Mandatory Reporting:

All VERITAS personnel are mandated to report suspected abuse and/or neglect. Once any personnel has reasonable belief that a student may be a victim, they must:

- Notify the administration of the suspect abuse and/or neglect.
- Call Mecklenburg County DSS (330) 336-3000.
- Complete an incident report.

## APPENDICES

### FORMS:

- VERITAS Injury/Illness Form—Parents sign and return this when child’s injury or illness impacts participation for 3 days or fewer.
- VERITAS Physical Education Limitation Form—Parents and physician sign and return this when child’s injury or illness impacts participation for 4 days or more.
- VERITAS Photo and Video Release Form—Return this within the first week of school.

VERITAS Injury/Illness Form

Directions: Sign and return this when child's injury or illness impacts participation for 3 days or fewer.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Injury or Illness Description: \_\_\_\_\_.

Physical activity is restricted until \_\_\_\_\_.

In order to fulfill Physical Education requirements, student (Check the appropriate box.):

- May Participate. Please describe any physical limitations that would impact participation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- May Not Participate Physical Activity.

Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

VERITAS Physical Education Limitation Form

Directions: Parents and physician sign and return this when child's injury or illness impacts participation for 4 days or more.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Injury or Illness Description: \_\_\_\_\_.

Physical activity is restricted until \_\_\_\_\_.

In order to fulfill Physical Education requirements, student (Check the appropriate box.):

- May Participate. Please describe any physical limitations that would impact participation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- May Not Participate Physical Activity.

Physician's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Signature (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

VERITAS Photo and Video Release

I grant VERITAS Community School, CFA the unlimited right to use and/or reproduce photographs\*, likenesses or the voice of my child in any legal manner and for the internal or external promotional and informational activities of VERITAS Community School, CFA.

I also agree to allow my child to be interviewed and/or photographed\* by representatives of the external news media in relation to any and all coverage of VERITAS Community School, CFA in which he/she is involved.

I also agree to allow my child's work and/or photograph\* to be published on the VERITAS Community School, CFA Web site/Intranet Web pages or VERITAS publications.

I further understand that by signing this release, I waive any and all present or future compensation rights to the use of the above stated material(s).

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\* "Photograph" in this Release Form is intended to only refer to photos of your child alone. Group photographs (two or more children), with no additional identifying information, are considered Directory Information. Please review the FERPA information sheet provided in the Family Handbook.

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