



2

0

2

6

VCA

VALLEY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO VCA!



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Welcome Message
- What We Believe
- Vision & Mission
- Our Story
- Programs & Curriculum
- Policies

WELCOME MESSAGE

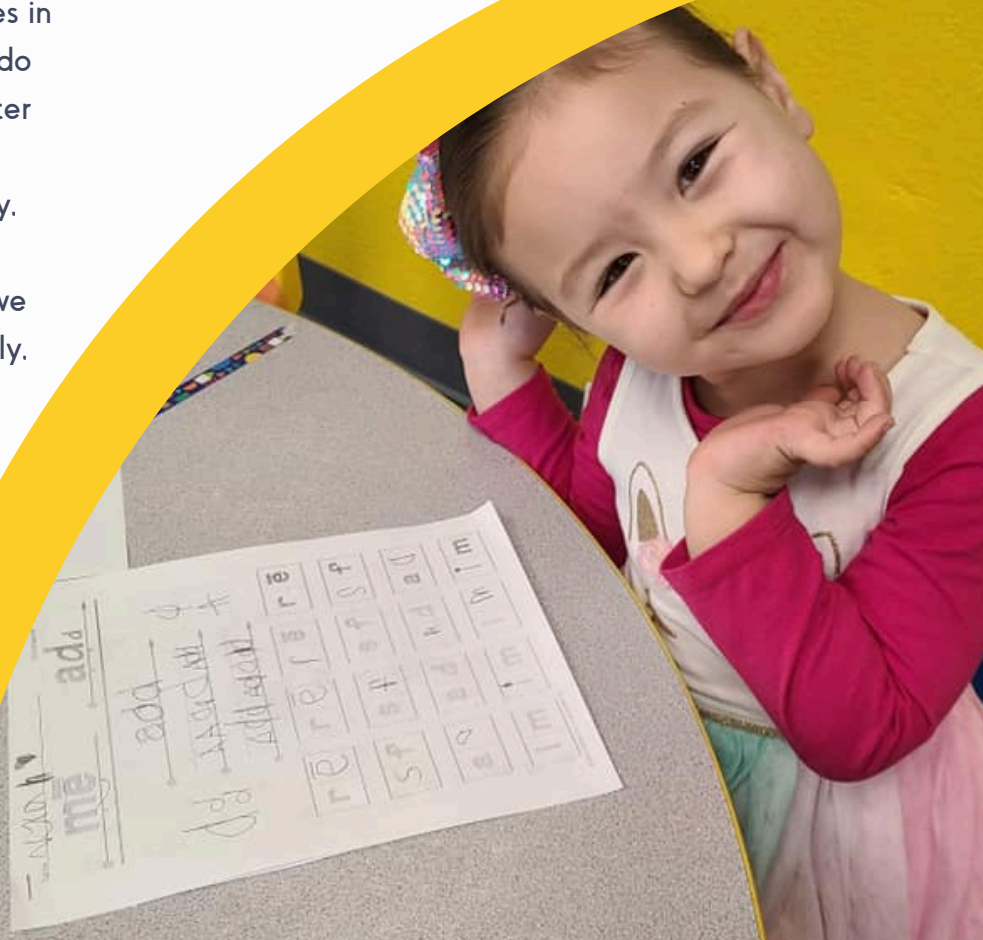
We are truly honored and grateful that you have chosen Valley Christian Academy for your child's education. We recognize that families today have many educational options-most of them secular and free. By enrolling your child at VCA, you have made a thoughtful and intentional decision to place both spiritual and academic growth at the center of these precious early years. You are investing not only in your child's education, but also in their faith and future.

Preschool and elementary school are often a child's first experiences with formal education, and we believe these years should begin with a love for learning. At Valley Christian Academy, we provide an academically rigorous, engaging, and joyful classical Christian alternative to public education-one that nurtures the whole child.

We accomplish this through Christ-centered instruction, an outstanding curriculum, and a balance of child-initiated, teacher-directed learning. What truly sets Valley Christian Academy apart is our belief that children should still be children. Our classrooms are filled with excitement, curiosity, and joy. Our teachers use positive, encouraging approaches and pour genuine love into every student, creating an environment where children feel safe, valued, and inspired to grow.

Valley Christian Academy was built in faith. We firmly believe that God called this school to serve families in Fountain and the greater Colorado Springs area. Christ is at the center of our school—guiding our teaching, shaping our community, and anchoring each day. We are honored to partner with you as we help your child grow academically, spiritually, and personally.

Renee Green
Head of School
CEO & Owner



WHAT WE BELIEVE

- The Bible
 - We believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, free from error and inaccuracies in its original form. We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of mankind and the final authority for all Christian faith and life. (2 Timothy 3:16)
- The Trinity
 - We believe in one God, Creator of all, who exists eternally in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Deuteronomy 5:7; John 10:38; John 14:11, 17–18, 20)
- Jesus Christ
 - We believe that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We believe in His sinless life, His miracles, and His death on the cross as the substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of those who believe in Him. We believe in His resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal return in power and glory. (John 3:16–19)
- Salvation and Humanity
 - We believe God created mankind, male and female, in His own image to fulfill His purpose—to glorify Him. However, Adam and Eve fell into sin, passing a sinful nature to all their descendants. We believe that we are saved and justified by faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and that salvation comes solely by God’s grace through faith alone. (Genesis 1:27; Mark 12:31)
- Resurrection and Eternal Destiny
 - We believe in the resurrection of both the just and the unjust: those who are just to the resurrection of life, and those who are unjust to the resurrection of condemnation.
- The Holy Spirit
 - We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life. (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19–20; Romans 8:13–14)
- The Church
 - We believe that the Church, composed of all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, is the Body and Bride of Christ. We believe that Christ is the Head of the Church. All believers are baptized into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit and, as members of one another, are called to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 1:22–23; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:3; Romans 8:9)





VISION & MISSION

VISION

Our vision is to provide a developmentally appropriate Christian education that inspires community involvement.

MISSION

Our mission is to provide a classical Christian education with a foundation in Character development, academics, and creativity.

PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy is to empower and inspire students to become Christian leaders by teaching core subjects, encouraging character development, and leading by example.

CORE VALUES - L.E.A.D.

Learn - Proverbs 22:6

Train the child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Empower - Philippians 3:14

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Achieve - Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!

Disciple - Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.



OUR STORY

Renee Green is the Head of School and Owner of Valley Christian Academy. She holds an associate degree and a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, a Colorado teaching license, is director-qualified, and holds both an ACSI Principal's Certificate and a Head of School Certificate. Renee brings decades of experience, leadership, and a deep passion for Christian education.

While earning her first degree, Renee worked at 5th Street College, a preschool in Berthoud, Colorado. After graduating, she moved to Colorado Springs, where she served for eight years at the U.S. Air Force Academy Daycare and Part-Day Preschool. In 1999, Renee and her husband, Paul, opened a part-day preschool called A Rainbow of Friends in their home. As enrollment grew and the program outgrew its space, Renee obtained a large preschool license in 2001, allowing her to serve more families in the community.

In 2005, the preschool expanded into a center located at Restoration Church in the Fountain Valley area. Over the next five years, the program continued to grow, and the need for additional classrooms became evident. During this time, Renee transitioned the preschool from a secular program to a non-denominational Christian preschool, aligning the school's mission with a Christ-centered foundation.

In the 2013 school year, Valley Christian Academy added its first kindergarten class, marking the beginning of its transition into a private Christian school serving elementary students. The following year, first grade and a College Toddler class were added. In 2015, the school enhanced its summer camp program, expanded its reading curriculum, and launched an after-school program to further support families. Today, Valley Christian Academy serves students from infancy through fifth grade and offers a middle school homeschool enrichment program. In 2018, the school expanded to the Friendship location, providing preschool through fifth-grade classes. In 2021, the preschool program expanded again to Living Hope Church in downtown Colorado Springs.

Through faithful leadership, intentional growth, and a commitment to Christ-centered education, Valley Christian Academy continues to serve families across the Fountain and Colorado Springs communities.

-
-
-
-
-
-



PROGRAMS

05

Room	Age	Ratio	Schedule
Infants	6 weeks - 24 months	5:1 10 Maximum	Depends on location.
College Toddlers	2 years - 3 years	8:1 16 Maximum	Morning Class: 8:30am-11:30am Afternoon Class: 12:30pm-3:00pm All Day: 8:30am-3:00pm
Preschool	3 - 4 years old	10:1 20 Maximum	Morning Class: 8:30am-11:30am Afternoon Class: 12:30pm-3:00pm All Day: 8:30am-3:00pm
Kinder Prep	4 - 5 years old	12:1 24 Maximum	Morning Class: 8:30am-11:30am Afternoon Class: 12:30pm-3:00pm All Day: 8:30am-3:00pm
Kindergarten	5-6 years old	15:1 30 Maximum	8:30am-3:00pm
Elementary	6+ years old	15:1 30 Maximum	8:30am-3:00pm

HOURS

Valley Christian Academy is open Monday-Friday from 7AM-5:30PM at all campuses:

- Morning Classes: 8:30am-11:30am (3 Hours)
- Afternoon Classes: 12:00pm-3:00pm (3 Hours)
- All Day Classes: 8:30am-3:00pm (6.5 hours)
- Elementary Classes: 8:15am-3:15pm
- Before School Care: 7:00am-8:30am
- After School Care: 3:00pm-5:30pm

SUMMER CAMP

06

At Valley Christian Academy, we believe learning continues year-round. Our licensed summer camp program is designed to provide a safe, structured, and engaging environment that supports each child's emotional, physical, social, and cognitive development. Through positive guidance, age-appropriate expectations, and caring interactions, our staff intentionally fosters self-confidence, character development, and Christ-centered values.

All summer camps follow weekly themed units and include a balance of hands-on activities, reading and literacy enrichment, outdoor play and exploration, creative projects, and journaling. Teachers plan and facilitate developmentally appropriate activities while allowing children to learn through play and exploration, in alignment with early childhood best practices and licensing standards. This approach ensures summer remains both educational and enjoyable while helping children maintain routines and readiness for the upcoming school year.

Our summer camp program serves preschool and school-age children ages 2 through 12 and is divided into three age-based programs. While each age group participates in activities designed specifically for their developmental level, all programs follow the same weekly themes to promote continuity across the campus. Camps are educational, social-emotional focused, hands-on, and child-initiated within a structured and supervised environment.

Summer camps are typically held from June through late July and operate five days a week. Families may choose from morning camps (8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.), full-day camps (8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.), or extended-day camps (7:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.). Families may enroll for as many weeks as desired.

For children ages five and older enrolled in full-day camps, daily off-campus field trips are a key part of the summer experience. These field trips are directly connected to the weekly themes and provide opportunities for enrichment, exploration, and real-world learning. All field trips are supervised by trained staff and follow state licensing requirements for transportation, ratios, and safety.



PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

The preschool curriculum at Valley Christian Academy is intentionally designed to prepare children for a successful transition into kindergarten within a nurturing, Christ-centered environment. Daily instruction is structured to support the social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and cognitive development of each child. Our curriculum is grounded in child development principles and developmentally appropriate practice, allowing instruction to meet the diverse ages, abilities, and developmental stages of our students.

Our teaching staff works collaboratively and remains informed of kindergarten readiness expectations to ensure our preschool curriculum aligns with skills needed for elementary success. Weekly Bible instruction is an integral part of the preschool program, helping children develop a foundational understanding of God's Word. Prayer is incorporated naturally into the daily routine, including at the beginning of each day and before meals, reinforcing faith as part of everyday life.

Commitment to Playful Learning

Valley Christian Academy is committed to playful learning as a developmentally appropriate approach that supports academic growth, creativity, and whole-child development. Playful learning is a context in which children learn content through free play, guided play, and structured games, with intentional teacher support.

Children learn through play by actively exploring, problem-solving, communicating, and engaging socially with peers. Through these experiences, children develop early literacy and math skills, language, self-regulation, creativity, and critical thinking.

Play is intentionally integrated into all learning experiences within our academically rich, classical Christian program. Teachers design purposeful environments and activities that combine direct instruction with hands-on exploration, including literacy, math, science, art, music, and outdoor play. This balanced approach fosters joyful learning while supporting each child's academic readiness and God-given curiosity.

Preschool at Valley Christian Academy			
	Toddlers 2-3 years old	Preschool 3-4 years old	Kinderprep 4-5 years old
Nursery Rhymes, Poetry, and Songs	Classical Core Curriculum and Core Knowledge Preschool		
Phonemic Awareness	Classical Core Curriculum (Preschool)	Heggerty Early PreK	Heggerty PreK
Literature	Classical Core Curriculum (Preschool)	Classical Core Curriculum (Junior Kindergarten)	Core Knowledge Preschool and Classical Children's Literature
Alphabet, Reading, and Writing	Classical Core Curriculum (Preschool)	Classical Core Curriculum (Junior Kindergarten)	Classical Core Curriculum and First Start Reading
Oral Language	Classical Core Curriculum (Preschool)	Classical Core Curriculum (Junior Kindergarten)	Classical Core Curriculum and Core Knowledge Preschool
Numbers/Math	Classical Core Curriculum (Preschool)	Classical Core Curriculum (Junior Kindergarten)	Saxon Math K (First 70 lessons)
History, Science, and Art	Classical Core Curriculum (Preschool)	Classical Core Curriculum (Junior Kindergarten)	Core Knowledge Preschool
Bible	Classical Core Curriculum (Preschool)	Classical Core Curriculum (Junior Kindergarten)	
Outdoor Play/ Gross Motor Skills	Classical Core Curriculum (Preschool)	Classical Core Curriculum and Core Knowledge Preschool	
Classical Core Curriculum is published by Memoria Press.			

ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

The elementary program at Valley Christian Academy is built on a strong foundation of Direct Instruction (DI), a proven, research-based teaching method that emphasizes clarity, consistency, and mastery of skills. We believe so strongly in this instructional approach that all elementary teachers receive training in Direct Instruction to ensure instructional excellence and consistency across grade levels.

Through Direct Instruction, students receive explicit, systematic instruction that supports academic success and steady progress. Our core curriculum includes Reading Mastery for literacy development, Saxon Math for mathematics instruction, and carefully selected, high-quality curricula in all subject areas. This approach allows students to build strong foundational skills, progress at an appropriate pace, and gain confidence in their learning.

While Direct Instruction is central to our academic model, we also recognize the importance of play, exploration, and experiential learning in a child's development. Elementary students are provided with age-appropriate opportunities for play, movement, social interaction, and creative experiences throughout the school day. This balanced approach supports academic growth while nurturing social-emotional development, creativity, and joy in learning.

At Valley Christian Academy, our goal is to develop well-rounded students who are academically prepared, socially confident, and grounded in Christ-centered values.

Elementary School at Valley Christian Academy							
	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade	
Literature	Core Knowledge and Classical Literature						
Bible	Purposeful Design Bible						
Reading	Heggerty, Reading Mastery	Reading Mastery				RMSE and Novel Studies	
Math	Saxon Math (CMC-A at K Friendship)						
Handwriting	SRA Cursive or Handwriting Without Tears	SRA Cursive	SRA Cursive				
Writing/ Grammar	Shurley Grammar, Terra West	Shurley Grammar					
History	Core Knowledge: History and Geography						
Science	Purposeful Design: Science						
Fine Arts							

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Children are small, tough, exasperating, interesting, and loveable. To be 'good' with children, we watch each face and listen to each voice. We observe what each child is like, how each is feeling, how each child plays and moves around. We get to know the weaknesses and strengths of each child and of the group. This is how good discipline begins.

The word 'discipline' is derived from the word 'disciple,' someone who follows the teachings of another. Discipline means learning. It does not mean punishment, tears, or humiliation. It means a chance to learn how to live in a social world. Discipline is not something adults do to children. It is something they do with children.

The goals of discipline are self-control, responsibility, and self-discipline. Children need help in controlling their behavior. Most importantly, they need to become responsible for their own behavior and develop self-control.

Establishing an environment conducive to learning is one of the most critical tasks that a classroom teacher faces. Whether it is called discipline or classroom management, the same is true: learning occurs best when the student is prepared to learn. Individual students' lives and their conformity to the standard of God's Word are focal points. Educators in a Christ-centered school are instruments to be used by God to instill in young people godly attitudes and actions that glorify the Lord. This is a task that takes a lifetime to develop. Hebrew 12:5-11 provides a foundation for discipline in the Christ-centered school classroom. The following principles are gleaned from these verses:

- Discipline is not to be regarded lightly. It is serious business. (Hebrews 12:5)
- Discipline involves instruction as well as the consequences for poor choices. (Hebrews 12:6)
- Discipline is evidence of love and belonging. (Hebrews 12:9)
- Godly discipline produces respect and honor toward one another. (Hebrews 12:9)
- Discipline should direct us to a greater awareness of God the Father. (Hebrews 12:9)
- Discipline should be purposeful. (Hebrews 12:10)
- Discipline should ultimately make us more like Christ. (Hebrews 12:10)
- Righteousness and peace are the results of being trained through discipline. (Hebrews 12:11)
- Results are not always immediate. (Hebrews 12:11)

A single thread through this passage of Scripture is the need to be habitual in the training process. In order to be successful, discipline must be regular and consistent. The specific application of the above principles in the classroom is one of the most important tasks a teacher faces. Our rules and procedures are established to help achieve the development of godly character in students.

Teachers may utilize a variety of discipline techniques to meet the needs of different situations:

- Let children make some decisions and choices - one good way to teach responsibility is to give the child as much responsibility as possible.
- Give reasons for rules - understanding the reasons for rules make it easier to remember and follow them.
- Being consistent in our language and behavioral response to children - consistent behavior by adults facilitates development of inner control through modeling.
- Remove children from situations they can't handle - if a child is too young to understand, or there is no way to change the cause, it may be possible to change the situation.
- Redirect children's behavior - often there is a way to let children do something in a better place or safer way.
- Let children learn the consequences of their actions - experience is the best teacher.

Teachers WILL NOT humiliate or demean a child in any form, verbally or physically. Such actions will be cause for immediate dismissal. No punitive action toward children will be tolerated including slapping, hitting, and/or spanking. The return of negative behavior, such as biting back, is also not acceptable. Children do not like those moments when they are out of control. They need adults, at those times, to firmly, with gentleness, exert control. Returning negative behavior deepens frustration. Firmly holding and gently verbalizing, calms, and fosters control.

SAFETY POLICIES

- The safety and well-being of our students is a top priority at Valley Christian Academy. We maintain comprehensive safety procedures to ensure children are supervised, protected, and cared for at all times.
- Children are never left alone or unsupervised. Active supervision is maintained at all times during school hours.
- A minimum of two staff members are present on campus during all hours of operation, in accordance with licensing and safety best practices.
- All employees are certified annually in CPR and First Aid.
- Fire evacuation routes and severe weather procedures are clearly posted in every area used by children.
- Fire drills are conducted monthly at varying times to ensure preparedness. Documentation of all drills is maintained in the school office.
- Tornado drills are conducted during designated tornado months.
- Lockdown drills are conducted periodically to prepare staff and students for emergency situations, using developmentally appropriate methods.
- In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation, students will be safely escorted by staff to the facility's designated evacuation area, typically the school parking lot, using walking procedures appropriate for the age group.
- Parents will be promptly notified in the event of an emergency and informed of when and where children may be picked up.
- Valley Christian Academy regularly reviews and practices safety procedures to ensure compliance with state licensing requirements and to provide a secure learning environment for all students.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Valley Christian Academy provides transportation for approved field trips and for after-school care pick-up as part of our licensed program. The safety of children during transportation is a top priority, and all transportation procedures follow Colorado state laws and licensing requirements.

- Children are transported only with a signed permission form from a parent or legal guardian on file.
- Only qualified adults who hold a valid driver's license and meet school and licensing requirements are permitted to transport children.
- All drivers comply with all applicable Colorado traffic and transportation laws.
- Cell phone use is prohibited for drivers while the vehicle is in operation.
- Children are seated in appropriate seats and secured with seat belts at all times.
- Children are never left unattended in a vehicle.
- Upon return from each trip, the vehicle is physically inspected to ensure all children have exited the vehicle.
- If a child requires a car seat or booster seat, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide the appropriate seat, in accordance with Colorado law.

Valley Christian Academy regularly reviews transportation procedures to ensure the highest level of safety and compliance during all off-campus activities.

SAFE CONDITIONS POLICY

Valley Christian Academy is committed to providing a safe, clean, and well-maintained environment for all children. The following procedures are in place to ensure safe conditions throughout the facility at all times.

Children are actively supervised at all times by the required number of qualified adults. Qualified adults are defined as staff members who have completed comprehensive background checks and all required training in accordance with state licensing requirements.

The Director is responsible for ensuring that all interior and exterior areas of the facility are maintained in a safe condition. This includes walls, floors, ceilings, playground areas, equipment, toys, and furnishings. All areas and materials are kept free from sharp points, jagged edges, splinters, protruding nails or wires, loose or broken parts, rust, and materials containing toxic or hazardous substances.

To maintain a safe and sanitary environment, Valley Christian Academy follows these procedures:

- The facility is cleaned daily.
- The facility is maintained in a sanitary condition at all times.
- Toys, furniture, and equipment used by children are cleaned and sanitized daily, weekly, and as needed when they become soiled or contaminated.
- All soiled items are washed prior to sanitization.

These practices are routinely reviewed to ensure compliance with Colorado state licensing regulations and to provide a healthy learning environment for all children.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Valley Christian Academy is a licensed child care center through the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). As a licensed program, we are required to comply with all applicable state child care licensing rules and regulations, which are designed to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of children in care.

Licensure means that Valley Christian Academy is:

- Regularly inspected by state licensing representatives
- Required to meet standards related to health and safety, supervision, staff qualifications, training, ratios, and facility conditions
- Subject to ongoing monitoring and compliance reviews
- Required to maintain documentation and policies in accordance with state regulations

Licensing representatives may conduct announced or unannounced inspections to ensure continued compliance. Any findings or concerns identified during inspections must be addressed within required timelines.

ACSI INFORMATION

Valley Christian Academy's elementary program is accredited through the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). ACSI accreditation affirms that Valley Christian Academy meets recognized standards for academic quality, Christian worldview integration, governance, instructional practices, and student support, establishing the elementary program as a legitimate private Christian school.

Accreditation through ACSI means that Valley Christian Academy:

- Meets established standards for curriculum, instruction, and academic accountability
- Employs qualified teachers who meet credentialing and training requirements
- Integrates a biblical worldview throughout instruction and school culture
- Maintains clear policies related to student assessment, discipline, and educational outcomes
- Demonstrates effective leadership, governance, and operational practices
- Engages in continuous school improvement through regular evaluation and planning

As part of the accreditation process, Valley Christian Academy participates in:

- Ongoing self-study and documentation review
- On-site accreditation visits conducted by trained evaluators
- Periodic progress reports and compliance reviews
- Continuous improvement planning to strengthen academic and spiritual outcomes

ACSI accreditation provides accountability, transparency, and assurance that Valley Christian Academy's elementary program operates as a recognized educational institution with high academic and ethical standards.

Families who have questions about the school's accreditation status or would like additional information about ACSI standards are encouraged to contact the school administration.

ASSESSMENT PLANS

Valley Christian Academy uses age-appropriate, purpose-driven assessment practices to support each child's growth, learning, and academic progress. Assessment practices vary by program level and are designed to inform instruction, guide planning, and strengthen partnerships with families—not to label or compare children.

INFANTS - KINDER PREP

For infants through Pre-K students, Valley Christian Academy uses ongoing, observation-based assessment to monitor development across all developmental domains. Teachers regularly observe children during daily routines, play experiences, classroom activities, and social interactions. Learning is documented through anecdotal notes, work samples, and other authentic evidence.

In addition to continuous observation, Valley Christian Academy uses the Brigance Screener III as a standardized developmental screening tool for infants through Pre-K students. All teaching staff are trained in the proper administration and interpretation of the Brigance Screener III.

Children are screened individually by their classroom teacher at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the school year. Screening results are used in conjunction with ongoing observations to develop a comprehensive understanding of each child's development, strengths, and areas for growth.

Assessment information is used to:

- Inform lesson planning and daily learning experiences
- Ensure instruction is developmentally appropriate and responsive
- Support classroom environment design
- Guide individualized support and instructional strategies

Developmental screening results are not used to diagnose, label, or compare children, but rather to support healthy growth and learning.

ELEMENTARY TESTING

Elementary students are assessed using academic assessments aligned with curriculum standards rather than developmental screenings. Classroom assessments are an ongoing part of daily instruction and include quizzes, tests, projects, and performance-based evaluations specific to each subject area.

In addition, students in elementary grades participate in standardized academic testing through the Iowa Assessments, administered twice per year in the fall and spring. These assessments provide insight into student achievement, academic progress, and instructional effectiveness.

Assessment results are used to:

- Monitor student growth and mastery of skills
- Inform instructional planning and intervention
- Support curriculum evaluation and program improvement

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Families are valued partners in the assessment process. Assessment results are shared with families through scheduled parent-teacher conferences and ongoing communication throughout the school year. Families are encouraged to share information about their child's strengths, interests, and experiences at home, which is considered alongside assessment data to support each child's growth.

Valley Christian Academy's assessment practices are designed to support student success, strengthen instruction, and foster collaboration between school and home.

ADMISSION, ENROLLMENT, TERMINATION

ELIGIBILITY FOR ENROLLMENT

Valley Christian Academy serves children from 6 weeks of age through 5th grade. Please refer to the Offered Programs section of this handbook for detailed information about each program.

Parents or legal guardians are responsible for completing and submitting all required enrollment forms prior to their child's attendance. Enrollment is subject to space availability, receipt of required documentation, and the school's ability to meet the individual needs of the child. Valley Christian Academy is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all children. We reserve the right to deny or discontinue services for any child whose needs cannot be met by the program or whose behavior poses a safety risk to themselves or others. Should concerns arise, parents will be notified promptly, and the school will work collaboratively with families to determine appropriate next steps. In some cases, families may be referred to additional local agencies or services that may better support the child's needs.

CARING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Valley Christian Academy complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and is committed to serving children regardless of special health care needs or disabilities, when those needs can be reasonably accommodated within the program.

Children with special needs may be accepted into our childcare and school programs in accordance with ADA guidelines. Valley Christian Academy is committed to the following principles:

- All families are treated with dignity and respect, honoring individual needs and differences.
- Confidentiality regarding a child's special needs is strictly maintained.
- Required health forms and documentation related to a child's individualized needs must be completed by the child's health care provider and/or appropriate specialists.
- Children with special needs are educated in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their needs.
- Valley Christian Academy may collaborate with outside agencies, service providers, or health care professionals to best support a child's development. No contact with outside organizations will occur without written parental consent.
- Participation of school staff in IEP (Individualized Education Program) or IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) meetings is welcomed when appropriate, to ensure the most supportive learning environment.
- Parents are responsible for keeping Valley Christian Academy informed of any changes to their child's needs, services, or accommodations.

NONDISCRIMINATION AND SPECIAL NEEDS

Valley Christian Academy affirms that we are open to all children regardless of race, religion, and sexual preference, ethnic or cultural background. We further affirm that we value diversity. We are open to all children including special needs children and physically challenged children. To ensure we can provide appropriate care, we will evaluate the child's needs and our ability to meet those needs.

The most important purpose of Valley Christian Academy is to support and encourage growth, both educationally and emotionally for your child. Thank you for choosing to bring your child to Valley Christian Academy. We look forward to watching your child grow!

ADMISSION, ENROLLMENT, TERMINATION

ENROLLMENT FORMS

Prior to admission, parents or legal guardians must complete and submit all required enrollment materials for the selected campus. Enrollment is completed online through Brightwheel at www.mybrightwheel.com

The online enrollment process includes:

- Student and parent/guardian demographic information
- Emergency authorization and emergency contacts
- Required permissions and acknowledgements

In addition, the following forms must be completed and submitted prior to a child's start date:

- Signed Tuition Agreement (Contract)
- Direct Withdrawal Authorization (optional)
- Health Form
 - Must be completed and stamped by a licensed health care provider
 - Must be submitted within 30 days of the child's start date
 - Must be less than 60 days old from the start of the current school year, in accordance with Colorado law
- Certificate of Immunization
 - Due to Colorado law, photocopies of shot records cannot be accepted
- Medication Consent Form (if applicable)
- Social Media and Photo Release
- Acknowledgement of Parent Handbook

A child may not attend until all required forms are received and approved.

WAITING LIST

When enrollment space is unavailable, children may be placed on a waiting list. There is no fee required to be added to the waitlist.

When a space becomes available:

- The first family on the waitlist will be contacted
- Families have 24 hours to submit the required enrollment deposit
- If no response is received within 24 hours, the opportunity will be offered to the next family on the list

Once a child is enrolled, the child must begin attendance within one month of enrollment. If a desired start date is more than one month away, families are encouraged to remain on the waiting list until closer to the start date.

REGISTRATION & FEES

Upon acceptance and enrollment, families are required to pay a non-refundable annual registration fee, as outlined in the current tuition and rates schedule. Registration fees must be submitted along with the completed enrollment forms and signed tuition agreement in order to secure a child's spot. Registration fees will not be accepted without all required enrollment paperwork completed and signed.

Elementary students are assessed a yearly book fee, which is due in full by August 1 or may be paid over three monthly installments, as outlined in the tuition agreement.

DISCOUNTS

Current tuition rates, fees, and payment options are outlined in the Updated Tuition Form attached to this handbook and available through Brightwheel 2026-27 Rates form FC eff Jan ...

- A 10% sibling discount is applied to the second and third child enrolled from the same household (the lesser tuition is discounted).
- Discounts do not apply to registration fees, book fees, school supplies, or drop-in care.
- Discounts are not available for students receiving UPK or BOCES
- Referral appreciation - If a family you refer enrolls and completes one full month of attendance, you will receive a \$50 tuition credit applied to a future month as our thank you.

ADMISSION, ENROLLMENT, TERMINATION

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The following types of information are considered confidential and are protected by Valley Christian Academy:

- Personal identifying information (including a child's full name, date of birth, address, and phone number)
- Enrollment records and emergency contact information
- Family information voluntarily shared with the school
- Health, developmental, educational, and behavioral information
- Assessments, screenings, incident reports, and progress documentation

How We Protect Your Information

Valley Christian Academy takes the following steps to safeguard confidential information:

- Children's files are stored in secure locations and are accessible only to authorized staff.
- Information is shared internally only on a need-to-know basis related to a child's education, health, or safety.
- Staff members receive training on confidentiality and are required to adhere to these standards as part of their professional responsibilities.
- Conversations regarding children or families are conducted privately and only in appropriate professional settings.

When Information May Be Shared

Confidential information may be shared only under the following circumstances:

- A parent or legal guardian provides written authorization, or
- Disclosure is required by law, including but not limited to:
 - Mandated reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect
 - Requests from licensing, regulatory, or legal authorities

Valley Christian Academy does not release personal or confidential information to other families, volunteers, or outside individuals without proper authorization.

Family Responsibilities

Families play an important role in maintaining a respectful and trusting community. Families are asked to:

- Respect the privacy of other children and families
- Refrain from sharing information learned about another child or family through school involvement or events

Valley Christian Academy recognizes the trust families place in us when sharing sensitive information. We honor that trust by maintaining strict confidentiality practices. Families with questions regarding how information is stored, used, or shared are encouraged to contact the school administrator.

ADMISSION, ENROLLMENT, TERMINATION

14

PAYMENT & FEES

Valley Christian Academy accepts cash, checks, money orders, and online payments through the Brightwheel Parent Portal.

Tuition Billing & Due Dates

- Tuition is due on or before the 1st of each month.
- Monthly invoices are emailed on the 20th of the prior month.
- If tuition is not received by the 5th of the month by 9:00 a.m., a \$25 late fee will be applied to the account.

Families are responsible for ensuring that contact information, including email address, is kept current to receive invoices and billing notifications.

Unpaid Bills & Debt Collection Policy

Payment Deadlines

- Monthly tuition: Due on the 1st of each month
- Camps and pre-scheduled care days: Due the day before the start of care
- Drop-in care, incidental fees, and miscellaneous charges: Due upon receipt

Late Fees

- Any balance that is 5 days past due will incur a \$25 late fee.

Notification Process

- If payment is not received within 15 days of the due date, additional notification efforts will be made to contact the family.

Collections

- Accounts that remain unpaid 45 days past due will be considered delinquent.
- Delinquent accounts may be submitted to a collections agency for further action.

All tuition and fees must be paid in full prior to graduation for a student to participate in graduation ceremonies or related activities.

Financial Hardship & Communication

We understand that emergencies and unexpected financial challenges can arise. Families are encouraged to communicate with the school as soon as possible if a payment issue occurs. When communication is proactive, we will often work with families and may waive a late fee when appropriate.

Our goal is always to partner with families and ensure that no child misses educational opportunities due to temporary financial hardship.

Returned Payments

- Returned payments will incur a \$30 NSF (Non-Sufficient Funds) fee.
- Cash payments placed in the tuition drop box must be accompanied by a cash receipt obtained from the front desk.
- All checks should be made payable to 'Valley Christian Academy' and include the child's name in the memo line.

REFUND POLICY & WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE

Students are considered enrolled for the entire school year, and staffing, budgeting, and classroom planning are based on annual enrollment commitments.

- Families withdrawing a student between August 1 and May 15 must provide written notice at least 30 days in advance.
- Failure to provide proper notice will result in responsibility for one additional month of tuition.
- Tuition and fees already paid are non-refundable, unless tuition was paid in full at the beginning of the school year.
- Approved refunds will be mailed to the address on file after payment has cleared the bank.

ADMISSION, ENROLLMENT, TERMINATION

NOTICE, REFUNDS, & PREPAID TUITION

- A 30-day written notice is required for voluntary withdrawal. Failure to provide notice will result in responsibility for one additional month of tuition.
- Families who prepaid tuition in full prior to the school year may receive a 2% prepayment discount.
- If a family withdraws before the end of the school year, any discounts applied will be forfeited.
- Refunds for prepaid tuition (excluding forfeited discounts) will be issued by mailed check within seven (7) days of the child's final day of attendance.
- No refunds will be issued if proper notice is not provided.

TERMINATION OF CARE

Valley Christian Academy is committed to partnering with families to support each child's success. In rare and extreme circumstances, it may become necessary to discontinue care. Termination of care is considered only after careful evaluation, documented interventions, and communication between the Director and the family regarding concerns, supports, and possible alternatives.

Dismissal decisions are made with the best interest of the child, other students, staff, and the school community in mind.

Behavioral Concerns & Intervention Process

If a child exhibits ongoing behavior concerns—including but not limited to biting, hitting, aggressive behavior toward peers or staff, destruction of property, or actions that compromise safety—Valley Christian Academy will follow the school's Discipline Policy and documented intervention procedures.

When concerning behaviors occur:

- Parents may be contacted to pick up their child early for the day if safety is at risk.
- "Time In" strategies may be used, allowing the child to separate briefly from the group with adult support.
- The Director may speak directly with the child, as developmentally appropriate.
- A conference will be scheduled involving the Director, parents/guardians, classroom teacher(s), and other professionals as appropriate.
- An improvement plan may be developed collaboratively with the family.

The discipline policy is designed to limit suspensions and dismissals whenever possible. However, if reasonable efforts and interventions have been implemented and behaviors persist or escalate, the school will work with the family to seek an alternative placement better suited to the child's needs.

If behaviors repeatedly endanger the health or safety of other children or staff, termination may occur immediately at the discretion of the Director.

Grounds for Termination of Care

Valley Christian Academy reserves the right to terminate care for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Failure to pay tuition or fees as outlined in the Payment & Fees Policy
- Failure to submit required enrollment or health documentation
- Lack of parental cooperation or refusal to adhere to school policies
- Repeated noncompliance with the Parent Handbook
- False or misleading information provided by a parent or guardian
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property by a child or parent that is not corrected through an agreed-upon improvement plan
- Ongoing disciplinary concerns as previously outlined
- A child exhibiting repeated behaviors that compromise the safety of others
- Parent refusal to cooperate with policies, procedures, or required interventions

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Valley Christian Academy is governed by an Advisory Board appointed by the Head of School and Owner. The Advisory Board provides guidance and support to school leadership and assists in ensuring the long-term health and mission of the school.

The Advisory Board meets quarterly to review reports and information presented by the Head of School, including but not limited to:

- Business and financial reports
- Enrollment data
- Operational updates
- Strategic planning considerations

The Advisory Board serves in an advisory capacity and assists the Head of School in areas such as policy development, budget preparation and oversight, staffing considerations, and overall facility operations.

SPECIAL HOLIDAYS

- Valley Christian Academy is closed on all federal holidays.
- Additional closures may occur throughout the year due to weather-related events or other unforeseen circumstances. Families will be notified of any additional closures as far in advance as possible through official school communication channels.
- There is no charge for tuition during special holiday closings.

SCHOOL BREAKS

Valley Christian Academy aligns school breaks with nearby public school districts:

- Restoration Campus follows Districts 3 and 8
- Friendship Campus follows District 11

During school breaks, Valley Christian Academy may offer care for part or all of the break, depending on enrollment and staffing availability. Break care options may include, but are not limited to:

- Christmas Camps
- Spring Break Camps
- Summer Camp

Families will be notified in advance regarding availability, schedules, and registration requirements for break programs.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents or guardians are responsible for transporting students to and from Valley Christian Academy using personal vehicles. The school does not provide daily transportation for preschool or elementary classes.

In some cases, the school may assist in coordinating carpools between families. However, it is the responsibility of each family to ensure that any individual transporting their child has valid insurance and a safe driving record.

Transportation is provided for after-school care for students who attend another elementary school within Districts 3, 8, or 11 and are enrolled in Valley Christian Academy's after-school care program. All transportation policies outlined in the school's Transportation Safety Policy apply.

VISITORS

To ensure the safety of all students, Valley Christian Academy maintains strict visitor procedures.

- All visitors and volunteers must sign in and out at the front desk upon arrival and departure.
- Visitors must display a visitor badge at all times while on campus.
- All visitors and volunteers must receive prior approval from the Director before entering child care or classroom areas.
- Visitors must be at least 16 years of age to be on the premises unless accompanied by staff and approved by administration.

These procedures are in place to maintain a safe, secure, and well-supervised environment for all students.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

SECURITY

Valley Christian Academy maintains a secure campus environment to protect the safety of all students, staff, and families.

- Exterior doors remain locked at all times during the school day.
- Doors are unlocked five (5) minutes prior to scheduled drop-off and are locked again ten (10) minutes after drop-off.
- Doors remain locked throughout the day and are unlocked again five (5) minutes prior to scheduled pick-up.
- Entry outside of drop-off and pick-up times requires staff assistance and approval.

These procedures help ensure that only authorized individuals have access to the building during operational hours.

NICOTINE & TOBACCO PROHIBITED

Valley Christian Academy is a tobacco- and nicotine-free campus.

- The use of tobacco or nicotine products is strictly prohibited on school property, including inside the building, playgrounds, and recreation areas.
- Tobacco products include any item containing or derived from nicotine or tobacco and intended for ingestion, inhalation, or skin application.
- This includes, but is not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, vaping devices, and electronic cigarettes.

SAFETY / FIREARMS / WEAPONS

To maintain a safe environment, the following items are not permitted on campus:

- Weapons of any kind, including firearms, knives, or explosive devices
- Balloons, fidget spinners, or items that present choking hazards
- Pets (with the exception of approved service animals)
- Tobacco or nicotine products
- Lighters or matches
- Medications (over-the-counter or prescription), unless properly authorized and stored per school policy
- Any item that poses a health or safety risk
- Items not recommended for children under the age of three

Valley Christian Academy reserves the right to prohibit any item deemed unsafe or inappropriate for the school environment.

LOST CHILD PROCEDURE

In the unlikely event that a child appears to be missing, Valley Christian Academy will take immediate action using the following procedures:

1. Staff will notify and communicate with all team members who may have knowledge of the child's whereabouts.
2. A thorough search of the facility and grounds will be conducted immediately.
3. Parents or guardians will be contacted promptly to confirm whether the child has been picked up without staff notification.
4. If the child is not located quickly, local authorities will be notified immediately.

These steps are designed to ensure swift response and child safety.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- Children with developmental, physical, or special needs are welcome at Valley Christian Academy when those needs can be reasonably supported within the program.
- Our facilities are handicap accessible.
- Families are encouraged to discuss a child's specific needs in detail with the Director, Executive Director, and classroom teacher prior to enrollment and as needs evolve.
- Staff may participate in meetings, training, or educational opportunities with school districts or outside professionals when appropriate, with parental consent, to best support the child's development.
- Our goal is to provide the most supportive and inclusive environment possible while ensuring safety and appropriate care for all children.

DIAPER CHANGING POLICY

Parents of children who wear diapers are responsible for providing at least three (3) diapers and an adequate supply of wipes each day their child attends school. Families are also asked to keep a clean change of clothing in their child's backpack at all times. Soiled clothing or cloth diapers will be placed in a sealed plastic bag without rinsing and sent home for laundering.

In accordance with Colorado state law, children who are not toilet trained will be:

- Checked for wetness or soiling at least every two hours, upon awakening from sleep, or whenever the child shows signs of discomfort or indicates a need for a change
- Changed within five (5) minutes of being found wet or soiled

Cloth Diaper Policy

Families who choose to use cloth diapers must provide a waterproof, sealable (zip-lock style) bag for storage.

- Soiled cloth diapers are immediately placed in the waterproof bag after removal
- Diapers are stored in a covered diaper pail until returned to the parent or guardian
- Cloth diapers and soiled clothing will not be rinsed by staff

Diaper Changing Procedures

All diaper changes are completed by trained staff using approved sanitation and hygiene procedures in designated diaper-changing areas. Proper handwashing and surface sanitization are followed before and after each diaper change to maintain a clean and safe environment.

TOILET TRAINING

Children who are not yet toilet trained are welcome at Valley Christian Academy. When a child shows readiness for toilet training, staff will support the toileting routine being used at home to the best of their ability.

- Families are encouraged to communicate toileting routines and expectations with teachers
- There is no additional charge for children who are not yet toilet trained

VIDEO/TELEVISION VIEWING

Video or television viewing is used sparingly and only when it supports educational objectives. Any video shown:

- Is age-appropriate
- Relates directly to the current classroom theme or learning topic
- Is rated 'G'

Video viewing rarely occurs. When it does, families will be notified & given a permission slip prior to showing.

PLEDGES

Valley Christian Academy honors both the American Flag and the Christian Flag daily following morning prayer. Students are taught respect for our country and an understanding of our faith and values.

American Flag Pledge:

- I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Christian Flag Pledge:

- I pledge allegiance to the Christian Flag and to the Savior for whose Kingdom it stands. One Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again, with life and liberty for all who believe.

ANIMAL CONTROL

To protect children from dangerous animals, all playground equipment areas at Valley Christian Academy are fully enclosed with fencing. This fencing helps ensure children remain within supervised play areas and prevents animals from entering playground spaces.

For the safety and health of all students:

- Pets are not permitted on school premises, including classrooms, playgrounds, and common areas
- Exceptions may be made only for approved service animals, in accordance with applicable laws

These measures help maintain a safe, controlled environment for outdoor and indoor activities.

COMPLAINTS

Valley Christian Academy is a licensed child care center regulated by the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care. Families have the right to file a complaint if they believe licensing regulations are not being followed.

To file a complaint, parents or guardians may contact:

Colorado Department of Human Services
Division of Child Care
1575 Sherman Street, 1st Floor
Denver, CO 80203
☎ 303-866-5958
☎ 1-800-799-5876

Families are encouraged to address concerns directly with school administration whenever possible; however, contacting licensing is always a parent's right.

CHILD ABUSE

All staff members working with children at Valley Christian Academy are designated Mandatory Reporters under Colorado law and are required to complete training on recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect.

Any staff member who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who observes circumstances that could reasonably result in abuse or neglect must immediately report the concern. Reports are made without fear of retaliation and in compliance with state law.

If suspected abuse occurs at the childcare facility, the report will be made to the appropriate county department of social services, local police department, or other law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction where the facility is located.

Reports may also be made directly to the Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline, which is available 24 hours a day:

☎ 1-844-CO-4-KIDS (1-844-264-5437)

Valley Christian Academy takes its responsibility to protect children seriously and fully cooperates with all child protection authorities.

EMERGENCY POLICIES

INCLEMENT WEATHER, DELAYS, CLOSURES

Valley Christian Academy makes every effort to remain open during inclement weather whenever it is safe to do so. For weather-related delays or closures, the school follows local public school district decisions as outlined below:

- Restoration Campus follows Districts 3 and 8
- Friendship Campus and Living Hope Campus follow District 11

If the applicable district announces a delay or closure due to weather conditions, Valley Christian Academy will follow that decision. Families will be notified of delays or closures as promptly as possible through official communication channels, including:

- Brightwheel
- ClassDojo
- Facebook

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Valley Christian Academy maintains written emergency procedures for a variety of situations, including but not limited to:

- Fire
- Medical emergencies
- Severe weather (including tornadoes)
- Lockdown situations

Emergency evacuation routes and procedures are posted in every classroom and throughout the facility. Staff members are trained on emergency procedures, and emergency drills are practiced and documented monthly to ensure preparedness and compliance with state licensing requirements.

ACCIDENTS

Valley Christian Academy takes all injuries seriously and follows established procedures to ensure appropriate care and communication.

- Parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible when an accident or injury occurs.
- The staff member who observes the incident will complete an Accident Report.
 - One copy will be kept in the child's file
 - One copy will be provided to the parent or guardian
- For non-life-threatening injuries, trained staff will administer on-site first aid.
- If a child requires additional medical attention, parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child.
- Parents are asked to notify the school if their child receives medical treatment from a physician, clinic, or hospital related to an incident at school.
- Injuries requiring treatment at a medical facility are reported to the State of Colorado in accordance with licensing regulations. Parents will receive a copy of the report submitted to the state.
- If an injury requires immediate or emergency medical attention, 911 will be called immediately, and parents will be notified as soon as possible.

ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL, & DEPARTURE

Daily Arrival Times

- Before Care: 7:00 a.m.
- Infant-Preschool: 8:30 a.m.
- Elementary (K-5th Grade): 8:15 a.m.

Children should arrive no earlier than five (5) minutes before class start time. Early arrivals disrupt classroom preparation and daily routines. If your child will arrive after 8:40 a.m., parents must notify the Location Director. Late arrivals may result in missed instructional time.

Parking & Drop-Off Procedures

Parents must park only in designated parking areas at the front of the church building.

To protect children's health and improve air quality:

- Vehicle idling is discouraged on school property, including parking and drop-off areas.
- Drivers are asked to turn off engines when parked or waiting.
- Idling is permitted only during extreme heat or cold, or in emergency situations.

Sign-In & Sign-Out Procedures

For the safety and accountability of all students:

- Parents/guardians must sign children in and out daily using the Brightwheel app.
- Only individuals authorized in writing by the parent/guardian may pick up a child.
- Authorized and denied individuals must be listed on the Emergency Information Sheet.
- Staff may request photo identification to verify identity.
- Any pickup by an unlisted individual requires advance notice to the Director and photo ID verification.
- Court-ordered custody documents affecting pickup or drop-off must be on file.

Under no circumstances will a child be released without proper authorization.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Parents must notify the Location Director if an emergency prevents timely pickup.

- A \$20 fee will be charged if a child is not picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal.
- An additional \$20 fee will be charged after 30 minutes, and emergency contacts will be called.
- If a child is not picked up within one hour of dismissal and no contact is made, staff will supervise the child until 3:00 p.m.
- After 3:00 p.m., the child will be placed into aftercare and aftercare fees will apply.
- If a child is not picked up by 5:30 p.m. and no contact can be made, local authorities will be contacted.

Reporting Absences (All Programs)

Staff plan daily operations based on expected attendance. Parents are asked to notify the Location Director as early as possible if their child will be:

- Absent
- Late
- Picked up early

Tuition is due regardless of attendance, as outlined in the Payment & Fees Policy.

Elementary attendance is tracked through Alma, in collaboration with the Valley Academy HSE program and in compliance with Colorado School Attendance Law (C.R.S. § 22-33-101 et seq.).

Colorado law places responsibility for regular attendance on both the student and parent/guardian.

Attendance Requirements & Monitoring

- Students may miss no more than 10 school days per year, excused or unexcused.
- After 10 absences, the student will be placed on an attendance contract requiring a doctor's note for all future absences.
- Parents cannot excuse absences beyond ten days.
- Parents will be notified by mail if their student is approaching the 10-day limit.
- Per BOCES requirements, students must attend a minimum of 90 hours per semester to maintain funding eligibility.
- Failure to comply with an attendance contract may result in referral to El Paso County Truancy Court.

Excused Absences

The following may be considered excused:

- Temporary illness or injury
- Documented physical, mental, or emotional disability
- Pre-arranged absences approved by administration
- School-sponsored activities
- Family emergencies (final determination made by administration)

Doctor's notes are required when absences exceed a reasonable number due to illness or for contagious conditions.

Parents must notify the school the same day of the absence or the first day of a multi-day absence.

Prearranged Absences & Vacations

Prearranged absences should be discussed with the Front Office in advance.

- Vacation absences are not encouraged, as consistent attendance is vital to student success.
- The first ten absences may be used at parent discretion unless the student is already on an attendance contract.
- Students who have reached the 10-day limit will not receive excused absences without a doctor's note.

Make-Up Work & Testing

- Students with excused absences may make up work for full credit.
- Students are given one additional day beyond the number of days absent to complete assignments.
- Teachers may grant extensions in hardship cases.
- Homework will not be provided in advance of prearranged absences.
- Make-up work requested by parents will be available within 48 hours (excluding weekends/holidays).
- Students with unexcused absences (truancy) will not receive credit for missed work but are responsible for content.
- Students suspended out-of-school may make up work following the same timeline.

Truancy

A student is considered truant if they:

- Are absent without a parent/guardian excuse
- Leave school or class without permission

A "habitually truant" student is defined as:

- 4 unexcused absences in one month, or
- 10 unexcused absences in one school year

The school will:

- Monitor attendance closely
- Attempt parent contact when absences occur
- Develop an intervention plan with family involvement when a student is at risk

Tardies

Tardies are taken as seriously as absences.

- 3 unexcused tardies = 1 full day absence
- Students are tardy if not in class at the start of instruction, even one minute late
- Discipline referrals occur when a student accumulates 3 or more tardies in one week

Field Trips & Leaving Campus

- Students absent on field trip days are responsible for assignments due upon return.
- Students may not leave campus during school hours without administrative approval and parent contact.

Students who become ill during the day must report to the Front Office, where staff will assist with parent contact and dismissal.

Only parents/guardians or listed emergency contacts may excuse or pick up students.

MEDICAL POLICIES

IMMUNIZATIONS & PHYSICAL EXAM

- In accordance with Colorado state law, every child enrolled at Valley Christian Academy must have:
- Current immunization records, and
- Verification of a physical exam (well-child check) completed within 60 days prior to the child's start of attendance
- All required documentation must be submitted prior to the child's first day of attendance. Children may not attend without completed and approved medical records on file.
- Parents are responsible for updating the school office with any new immunizations or updated physical exams throughout the year.
- Medical or religious immunization exemptions must have proper documentation on file and are subject to approval by the appropriate state consultant.

IMMUNIZATION EXEMPTION

Valley Christian Academy accepts non-medical immunization exemptions in compliance with Colorado law. To claim a non-medical exemption, parents must complete the required state training module available at:

<https://www.dcprrapps.dphe.state.co.us/storyline360/story.html>

Preschool and Child Care Students:

- Non-medical exemptions must be submitted at 2, 4, 6, 12, and 18 months of age. These exemptions expire when the next vaccines are due or when the child enrolls in kindergarten.

Kindergarten-12th Grade Students:

- Non-medical exemptions must be submitted annually. All exemptions expire on June 30 each year.

Exemptions submitted on or before June 30 are not valid for the upcoming school year unless submitted during early registration. If a child is under-immunized or exempt and a vaccine-preventable disease occurs (such as chickenpox or polio), families will be required to keep the child home until the outbreak has concluded, in accordance with public health guidelines.

MEDICATION

Medication may be administered while a child is in attendance only when all licensing requirements are met.

Prescription Medication

Prescription medication may be administered if:

- It is provided in the original, labeled pharmaceutical container, and
- Written parental consent and physician's signed instructions are on file

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medication

Over-the-counter, non-prescription medication will be administered only with written parental or guardian consent. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Diaper cream
- Lotion
- Lip balm

Diaper ointment will not be applied to broken skin without a physician's written directive.

A physician may provide a written order granting blanket permission for OTC medication; however, the order must specify the type, dosage, and administration instructions.

STORAGE & ACCESS OF EMERGENCY MEDICATION

All emergency medications (including inhalers and EpiPens) are handled with the highest priority for safety and accessibility.

- During school hours, emergency medications are kept in a first aid bag located in the child's classroom for immediate access.
- After school hours, emergency medications are locked in a secure closet or cabinet overnight.
- All medications are kept out of reach of children at all times.

If parents choose to take emergency medication home daily, it is the parent's responsibility to return the medication each school day and physically hand it to a teacher or staff member.

If emergency medication is not provided, the student may not attend school that day.

All emergency medications must have a written Health Care Plan on file, signed by the parent/guardian, physician, and school, before the child may be left in the school's care.

COMMUNICABLE & RECURRING MEDICAL CONDITIONS

If a child has a recurring medical condition (such as allergies, chronic rashes, or runny eyes), Valley Christian Academy must have written documentation from a licensed physician stating:

- The condition is not contagious, and
- The child may attend school when symptoms are present

If documentation is not provided, the condition will be treated as a potential communicable illness, and the child will be excluded from attendance until appropriate documentation is received.

Families are encouraged to refer to the Communicable Disease section of the handbook for additional guidance regarding rashes or symptoms of concern.

ILLNESS PREVENTION

Staff members are trained to recognize signs and symptoms of illness and follow proper handwashing and hygiene procedures to help prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Every reasonable effort is taken to maintain a healthy environment for children and staff.

Families are asked to keep children home if they are ill or have been ill within the past 24 hours. If a child is too ill to participate in outdoor play or regular classroom activities, they are considered too ill to attend school.

SYMPTOMS REQUIRING EXCLUSION

Parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child within 30 minutes if any of the following symptoms are observed:

- Vomiting
- Severe or persistent coughing
- Fever of 100.4°F or higher
- Diarrhea
- Suspicious or unexplained rash
- Difficulty or rapid breathing
- Lice (child may return only when deemed nit-free)
- Red, encrusted, or excessively runny eyes
- Lethargic or unusually tired behavior

While awaiting pickup, every effort will be made to separate the ill child from other children in a supervised area to reduce the spread of illness. For detailed illness timelines and return-to-school requirements, please see the Illness Policy section.

MEALS & SNACKS

Valley Christian Academy provides scheduled snack times at approximately 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

- Parents are required to send snacks daily:
 - One snack for half-day schedules
 - Two snacks for full-day schedules
- If a child arrives without a snack or lunch, the school has limited backup snack options available.

For birthday celebrations or holiday events, families may sign up to provide snacks and drinks for the class. All celebration items must meet the following requirements:

- Snacks must be peanut-free and reasonably healthy

Children attending school for more than four (4) hours will have a designated lunch period.

- Lunches must be provided by parents
- Lunches should be packed cold
- Warm foods may be sent only in stainless steel insulated containers (thermoses) that keep food at 140°F or warmer
 - Food must be heated at home prior to being placed in the container
- If parents request food to be microwaved, plastic or Styrofoam containers, bags, wraps, or plates may not be used
- Valley Christian Academy does not prepare food on campus

All staff follow Colorado Child Care Licensing Rule 7.702.63 when serving food. Expiration dates on all food brought from home are checked, and any expired food will be discarded. Water is available to children throughout the day.

If a child has a food intolerance or allergy, parents must provide a doctor's order documenting the condition.

Valley Christian Academy is a peanut-sensitive school. Peanuts and peanut butter are not permitted on campus.

NAP/REST PERIOD

Children participate in a daily rest period following lunch.

- Children are not required to sleep, but are expected to rest quietly on a cot
- After a period of rest, quiet activities will be provided for non-sleepers
- Parents should provide:
 - A small pillow
 - A blanket
 - A comfort item (such as a stuffed animal), if needed

Nap items will be sent home each Friday for washing and should be returned on Monday.

FIELD TRIPS/CAR SEATS

Field trips are offered periodically to enhance learning experiences. Participation requires advance authorization.

- A permission slip is required for each field trip
- A separate transportation permission slip is required if the school will be transporting your child
- Children without signed permission slips may not participate

When school transportation is used:

- Car seats or booster seats are required, in accordance with Colorado child passenger safety laws
- Car seats must be provided by parents
- Children must be properly secured in an age- and size-appropriate restraint and may not ride in the front seat

A cell phone will be carried by staff on all field trips for emergency communication. If a vehicle becomes disabled or stranded away from the school, additional staff support will be contacted to ensure children are safely transported back to campus.

FAMILY INFO & COMMUNICATION

Parents and guardians are responsible for keeping all child and family information current, including:

- Home and mailing addresses
- Phone numbers (home, work, and emergency contacts)
- Immunization records
- Health and emergency information

If requested information is not provided or updated in a timely manner, care may be discontinued until records are complete.

Valley Christian Academy uses Brightwheel and ClassDojo as official communication platforms. Parents are responsible for regularly checking these systems for messages, updates, and notifications.

CLOTHING & PERSONAL ITEMS

Children should be dressed in comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing suitable for active play, outdoor activities, and occasional messes.

Outdoor play is a regular part of the school day whenever weather permits.

- Please provide a complete change of seasonally appropriate clothing for your child at all times.
- Due to accidents, spills, or art activities, children may need to change clothing during the day.
- All clothing and personal items should be clearly labeled with the child's name.
- If your child is sent home in clothing belonging to Valley Christian Academy, please wash and return it promptly.

Footwear Guidelines

- Flip-flops or shoes without a heel strap are not permitted.
- Dress shoes with heels are discouraged due to safety concerns.
- Tennis shoes or closed-toe athletic shoes are strongly recommended for daily activities and outdoor play.

As seasons change, please send appropriate outerwear such as sweaters, jackets, coats, gloves, hats, and boots.

PERSONAL TOYS, POSSESSIONS, & COMFORT ITEMS

Valley Christian Academy provides a wide variety of toys and learning materials. To avoid loss or distraction:

- Personal toys from home are permitted only on designated show-and-tell days.
- Items brought on other days will be kept in the child's backpack.
- Comfort items may be allowed for children experiencing separation anxiety.
 - Teachers will work gently to redirect and phase out comfort items during the school day.
 - Pacifiers, bottles, and sippy cups are not permitted in classrooms due to health and safety concerns.

LOST & FOUND

Occasionally, items may be misplaced or placed in the wrong backpack.

- Please label all removable items (coats, sweatshirts, gloves, hats, etc.).
- If an item is missing, check with your child's teacher or the Lost & Found area.
- Valley Christian Academy is not responsible for lost or misplaced items.

CONCERNS

Open communication is important to us.

- Parents are encouraged to speak directly with their child's teacher if concerns arise.
- If concerns are not resolved, please contact the Director, and we will work together to find a solution.
- Communication between parents and teachers must occur through:
 - Brightwheel
 - ClassDojo
 - The teacher's official VCA email

Upon request, communication can be provided in a format or language that is clear and accessible to families.



ILLNESS POLICY

ILLNESS POLICY & MONITORING

Valley Christian Academy is committed to maintaining a healthy environment for all students and staff. To help prevent the spread of illness, health monitoring and illness exclusion procedures are strictly enforced.

Daily Health Monitoring

Students may have their temperature checked daily:

- Upon arrival, and
- After lunch, or sooner if a staff member observes changes in behavior, appearance, or if a child reports feeling unwell

Health checks are conducted to help identify illness early and protect the school community.

Fever Policy

Any student with a temperature of 100.4°F or higher must be excluded from school.

- Students must remain out of school for 24 hours after the fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Doctor's notes will not override the 24-hour fever-free requirement.

Respiratory Illness Policy

Students showing signs of concerning respiratory illness-including but not limited to:

- Persistent or excessive coughing
- Chest discomfort or tugging
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath

will be sent home immediately.

Return-to-school requirements for respiratory illness:

- The student must remain out of school for 7 calendar days, plus an additional 3 consecutive healthy (symptom-free) days, and
- Must be cleared in writing by a licensed medical professional

Students exhibiting both cough and fever must be evaluated by a medical professional within 24 hours and follow the same exclusion and return guidelines.

Medical Clearance Requirements

If a medical professional clears a child to return sooner than standard exclusion timelines, the written clearance must explicitly state:

'The child _____ was evaluated for _____.

The child is able to return to childcare without placing another child or adult at risk.'

The documentation must also specify:

- The diagnosis or condition
- The cause of symptoms (e.g., allergies, bronchitis, asthma, etc.)

ILLNESS POLICY

ILLNESS REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES


Parents must notify the Location Director within 24 hours if:

- Their child is diagnosed with an illness, or
- Their child is being tested for COVID-19 or another contagious illness

Open and honest communication is required. If it is discovered that illness information has been withheld, the child may be excluded from attendance. Valley Christian Academy will report to the Colorado Health Department any outbreaks and communicate guidance to parents.

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY HEALTHY

Valley Christian Academy will take every reasonable precaution to maintain a healthy environment and asks families to partner with us in these efforts.

- Enhanced cleaning and sanitation are performed throughout the day.
 - Students and staff are required to wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer frequently.
 - Families are expected to follow state and federal health guidance, including recommended social distancing practices when applicable.
 - During a declared pandemic or public health emergency, Valley Christian Academy will operate only within the limits permitted by state, federal, and local authorities, including enrollment restrictions if required.
- 

RELIGIOUS INVOLVEMENT

All Valley Christian Academy campuses are located within church facilities. From time to time, families may receive information about activities, events, or programs hosted by the churches in which our campuses are located. This communication is intended to keep families informed of opportunities within the broader church community.

Families are warmly invited to attend services or programs at Restoration Church, Friendship Assembly of God, and Living Hope Church. Each church has a pastoral staff available to serve individuals and families who may be seeking spiritual support or community.

Participation in church services or activities is entirely optional. For families who are not currently part of a church family, we extend a sincere and welcoming invitation to explore these church communities. Everyone is welcome.

Valley Christian Academy is grateful to partner with these churches as part of our mission to provide a Christ-centered educational environment.