

V I D A L I A  
HERITAGE  
★ A C A D E M Y ★

Preschool Parent Handbook  
2024-2025

Please read the Preschool Parent/Student Handbook. Once you have read the handbook in its entirety, please return the signature page in your child's red folder.

**I have read and understand all policies mentioned in the VHA Policy Handbook and agree to abide by them to the best of our ability.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (Father)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (Mother)

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

Student(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of the Preschool Parent/Student Handbook can be found on our website at  
[www.vidaliaheritage.com](http://www.vidaliaheritage.com).



Preschool Parent  
Handbook  
2024-2025

(Please be aware that this handbook is different from the one distributed to Elementary and Upper School Students.)

Dear Parents,

We are happy to welcome you to the family of Vidalia Heritage Academy. Our Faculty and Staff are dedicated to serving God and helping you as a parent to educate your children.

There is nothing more precious to a parent than the children God has given them. You and your child's needs are important to us and we look forward to the opportunity to be of service to you. Our commitment is to provide the finest Christian Education possible.

The best education is that which points our children closer to the source of all wisdom—God Himself. Each child is a precious handiwork. Each has potential, gifts and abilities placed there by God. Each deserves the type of education that will leave him/her free to develop into the individual that God intended. Christian education should treat each child as an individual, not as a cog in a social wheel.

The world of tomorrow demands leaders, and those leaders are in schools today. Therefore, with that fact in mind as well as God's commands to "train up (our children) in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," we again thank you for allowing us the privilege to join with you in raising a generation that will bring glory and honor to God.

Sincerely,

Jeff McCormick, Headmaster  
Board of Directors and Staff of Vidalia Heritage Academy

## **OUR MISSION**

It is the mission of Vidalia Heritage Academy to equip students spiritually, intellectually, and physically to love God and serve Him as Christ's ambassadors in the world.

## **OUR PURPOSE**

To provide for young people the development of character and academic excellence from a Christian perspective in a Christian environment.

## **OUR HISTORY**

Vidalia Heritage Academy began in 1997 as a vision of some to have a Christ-centered school that provided high quality Christian education as well as developing well-rounded students who would impact this world for Jesus Christ.

The VHA motto is "Soli Deo Gloria", a Latin phrase meaning: "TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY". The motto comes from Romans 11:33-36: "*Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable are His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. TO HIM BE THE GLORY FOREVER. Amen.*"

## **DOCTRINAL STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are inspired by God and inerrant in the original writing, and that they are the supreme and final authority in faith and life (II Timothy 3:16-17).

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Romans 1:7).

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man (Matthew 1:18-20).

We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned, and thereby incurred, not only physical death, but also that spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all people are born with a sinful nature (Genesis 1:7).

We believe in the Biblical teachings that man was created by a direct act of God and not from previously existing forms of life and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race (Genesis 2:7).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of his shed blood (Luke 24:1-6).

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and His present life there for us, as High Priest and Advocate (Luke 24:1-6).

We believe in that blessed hope, the personal and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11-13).

We believe that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God and are eternally secure in Him (John 3:5-8).

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting punishment of the lost (1 Corinthians 15:22-23).

### **ACCREDITATION**

Vidalia Heritage Academy holds a dual accreditation for Early Education – 12<sup>th</sup> grade that sets it apart from other schools within a 50-mile radius of the area. The school is accredited through the regional accrediting agency, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) a division of AdvancED (now known as Cognia), as well as through the global Christian accrediting agency, Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).

### **NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**

When Vidalia Heritage Academy made the decision to expand its ministry beyond the sphere of school-age children into the scope of early childhood back in 2012, we were required by state law to file for a Georgia Child Care License. After one year of licensure, we qualified to file for an exemption as a school governed as a religious organization. The Administration and Board at Vidalia Heritage Academy felt that it was in our school's best interest to take advantage of the exemption. While our pre-school still operates within state health and safety guidelines, we do have the advantage of certain freedoms as a Christian school under our exemption. The staff at VHA is committed to the ongoing process of self-monitoring to ensure that our preschool continues to operate within compliance of state regulations.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Vidalia Heritage Academy is a tuition-based school and exists on the basis of fees, donations and fundraisers. At VHA, we promote and uphold a biblical heart for giving, primarily through gifts to our Annual Fund, ticket sales to our student performances, calendar sales, and other donations.

Fundraising is vital to the mission of the school. Tuition alone does not fully cover the cost of education for our students. While tuition does cover a portion of the basic annual costs, additional funding is needed for many desirable program enhancements. The qualities we value most about a VHA education are very expensive: a dedicated, well-trained faculty; quality academic standards; excellent up-to-date curriculum; small class sizes with individual attention; a variety of extracurricular activities; and appropriate and accessible equipment. VHA must rely on tax-deductible contributions each year to close the gap between tuition income and the actual cost of operation.

Fundraisers sponsored by the school are of necessity but will be kept to a minimum number. **However, PARTICIPATION IN FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES IS MANDATORY.** Both students and parents are expected to participate in these fundraisers respectively.

## **PERFORMANCES**

Children in the K4 program may be a part of one of our major school performances. This will be a ticketed event. Students will be required to sell a minimum number of tickets to the event as a part of our fundraising efforts.

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## **ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

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Children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes. Be aware that preschool activities such as art and snack may cause clothing to become soiled. All

### **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

Vidalia Heritage Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights and privileges, programs, activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, or ethnic origin in admission of its educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school administered programs.

Vidalia Heritage Academy believes that in order to provide the best academic and spiritual training, we must make certain exclusions. We, therefore, choose not to accept for enrollment students who are not in good standing with the institution in which they are presently and/or previously enrolled or who manifest a disruptive behavior that impedes this school's philosophies or policies. We believe that the standards of Vidalia Heritage Academy are easier to maintain when the students and parents' attitudes are in agreement with school philosophies and policies. This cooperation helps to support the stands we strive to enforce.

VHA is not equipped, nor teachers trained, to facilitate children with learning disabilities or with ADD/ADHD. If such students are accepted in our school, it is up to the parents to provide extra services other than what the classroom teachers would do in the confines of the classroom.

### **REFUSAL OF ADMISSION OR DISCONTINUATION OF ENROLLMENT**

VHA's biblical role is to work in conjunction with the home to encourage and enable students to mature as

Christ-like individuals. On occasion, the atmosphere or conduct within a particular home may be counter or in opposition to the biblical lifestyle the school teaches. This includes but is not necessarily limited to sexual immorality, homosexual orientation, or inability to support the mission, values, or biblical principles of the school. In such cases, the school reserves the right, within its sole discretion, to refuse admission of an applicant or to discontinue enrollment of a student.

### **WAITING LIST POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

When new inquiry forms are received, determination is made regarding the available openings in the grade level desired. If there are no available openings in the grade level desired, parents will be notified and offered a place on our waiting list for an application fee of \$50. In the event that

a parent/legal guardian chooses to withdraw their student(s) from the waiting list, the fee will be refunded. Parents choosing to remain on the waiting list will receive pertinent information from the school. On the first day of school, the parent/legal guardian of the student(s) on the waiting list will be contacted to confirm the decision to remain on the waiting list or have the application fee refunded. After the first week of school, the application fee becomes nonrefundable.

When an opening occurs in a grade level, the parent/legal guardian of the waiting list student will be called and placement will be offered. A decision to accept the placement must be made within one business day. If a decision is not reached, or if placement has been declined by the parent/legal guardian; the parent/legal guardian of the next student on the waiting list will be called. In this case, the application fee is not refundable. Any student remaining on the waiting list throughout the year will have the opportunity to re-enroll the following school year and will not be required to submit an application fee for that year.

### **ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE**

The admissions process begins when the Preschool Director verifies an opening is available. A parent or guardian of a prospective student will then acquire and complete the application for admissions forms. Once all forms have been reviewed by the Board, an interview may be set up with the parents or guardians of the prospective student. The admission of a student to Vidalia Heritage Academy will be determined based upon the application forms, testing results, and the application interview. In all cases, a student must take a placement test to determine acceptance or placement in a certain grade level. Enrollment is final once the application has been approved, all forms are returned, and registration fees have been paid.

### **REGISTRATION FEES**

Includes textbooks, testing, and all curriculum fees

	<b><u>December – March</u></b>	<b><u>April – June</u></b>	<b><u>July and after</u></b>
<i>K-3 &amp; K-4 Students</i>	<b>\$225</b>	<b>\$275</b>	<b>\$325</b>
<i>2 year olds</i>	<b>\$85</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$150</b>

**\*Registration fees are non-refundable**

## TUITION

Includes instruction and classroom activities, field trips (excluding meals), projects, special assemblies, scrapbooks, birthdays, the class auction project, parties, program t-shirts, yearbooks, and red communication folders.

<b>Preschool Program Description</b>	Yearly	10 month plan	12 month plan
K – 4 Tuition Full Day, Monday - Friday (must be 4 years old by September 1, 2024). Students may arrive as early as 7:40 am and stay as late as 5:30 pm. The academic day begins at 8:05 am and ends at 2:45 pm.	\$5,000	N/A	\$417
K – 3 Tuition <b>Full Day</b> , Monday - Friday (Must be 3 years old by September 1, 2024). Students may arrive as early as 7:40 am and stay as late as 5:30 pm. The academic day begins at 8:05 am and ends at 2:45 pm.	\$5,000	N/A	\$417
K – 3 Tuition <b>Half Day</b> , Monday - Friday (Must be 3 years old by September 1, 2024). Students may arrive as early as 7:40 am. The academic day begins at 8:05 am and students in the program are released at 11:45 am.	\$3,600	\$360	N/A
Building Fee (per family)  <i>*Does not apply to the two year old program.</i>	\$300	\$30	\$25
K – 2 Tuition Half Day, 3 days each week, Tuesday – Thursday (must be 2 years old by September 1, 2024). This program begins at 8:00 AM and ends at 11:00 AM.	\$1,860	\$186	N/A



## **PAYMENT OPTIONS AND INFORMATION**

Tuition and Fees may be paid:

- Annually, and is due on June 1, 2024.
- On the 12-month plan, conveniently billed beginning May 25. (Full Day Programs only)
- On the 10-month plan, conveniently billed beginning July 25. (Half Day Programs only)

Important Billing Information:

- Tuition is due by the 25th of each month and is late after the 5th.
- \$50 late fee automatically applied after the 5<sup>th</sup>.
- If payment is not received within 30 days of the due date, all students must be kept at home until the payment is brought up to date.
- \$50 charge on all returned checks or drafts.
- No charge for automatic withdrawal (on the 5th each month).
- 3% fee applies to all credit card charges.

In addition, school records and report cards will not be released until all financial obligations are paid in full. These policies are necessary to insure Vidalia Heritage Academy is able to meet its financial obligations.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS/FINANCIAL AID**

Vidalia Heritage Academy provides financial aid to families based on need. This includes, but is not limited to, general scholarship awards as well as discounted tuition for families with multiple children. The funding for this is a combination of resources taken from the school's operating budget and the Georgia Education Tax Credit Program (a reallocation of state tax dollars awarded through the Alyn Scholarship Fund to VHA by families/friends that contribute to the program.)

**NOTE:** All Financial Aid is limited and is granted on a first come/first serve basis.

## **HOW TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID**

The desire of Vidalia Heritage Academy is to offer a Christian Education to as many families as possible regardless of their social or financial status. Families who want to request any of VHA's Financial Aid resources must apply annually to the VHA Scholarship Committee. With the goals of excellence and affordability in mind, each family will complete a one-page application that will accurately, thoroughly, and confidentially allow the Scholarship Committee to evaluate the financial status of any family seeking aid, and award tuition assistance accordingly. Supporting documents such as the front page of the family's most recent Federal Tax Return, disclosure of the family's Adjusted Gross Income, or other income sources may be required to complete the application.

## **FINANCIAL AID DEADLINES AND NOTIFICATIONS**

Financial aid requests should be submitted before May 15<sup>th</sup> each year to ensure an aid ward is granted prior to the first tuition payment date. Incomplete applications or applications for those not meeting the state criteria will not be considered. Aid applications received after this date will be considered as they are received.

### **AFTER-SCHOOL CARE**

The after-school program is available for the convenience of our parents for children enrolled in our K3 and K4 program. There is no additional cost for preschool children. After-school care begins immediately after carpool and ends at 5:30 for K3 and K4. A snack will be provided. There is a \$25 charge for late pick-up past 5:30. *\*Please note that the K-4 afterschool program will be in the Elementary Building.*

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## **ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION**

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### **ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHY**

We live in a world where people have difficulty thinking that God is ultimately in control of all things. Since we believe that there is only one Truth and only one Standard by which everything should be measured, a biblical worldview is central to every subject we teach, every problem we face, and every decision we make.

Christianity cannot be compartmentalized and taken out for church on Sundays. It must be central to our every thought and action. Every class at Vidalia Heritage Academy is taught from a distinctively Christian perspective by teachers committed to both the Lord and academic success. As our students learn to view everything from a coherent, biblically grounded system of thought, they are able to grow both spiritually and academically.

We live in a world where people have difficulty thinking that God is ultimately in control of all things. Since we believe that there is only one Truth and only one Standard by which everything should be measured, a biblical worldview is central to every subject we teach, every problem we face, and every decision we make. Therefore the selection of curriculum for use at Vidalia Heritage Academy falls within the following seven criteria:

1. Theological Presuppositions  
How does this material address a Biblical world/life view?
2. Moral Tone  
How is this material measured by the Ten Commandments?
3. Aesthetic Qualities  
What Characteristics contribute to this material's artistic value?
4. Developmental Propriety  
Where is the appropriate grade level for this material?
5. Public Reputation  
What place in the tradition of western civilization does this material have?
6. Private Conviction  
To what extent do concerns of individual and collective Conscience apply to the use of the material?
7. Personal Taste  
Preferences of genre, style, etc.

## **PRESCHOOL COURSE OF STUDY**

### **Bible, Phonics, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Music**

The Preschool curriculum is designed to foster the development of the whole child. Learning is a total process where children are prepared for life. Beginning with concrete development activities, your child manipulates real objects, learns through all five senses, and gains understanding necessary for future mastery of academic skills.

## **VISITING YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM**

Parents are an integral part of the education of each child, and many opportunities will be provided for parents to participate in preschool activities. However, for safety and security reasons, parents are NOT allowed to enter the classrooms without first making an appointment with the teacher and the Director. Please keep in mind that young children can become easily upset at the sight of a parent or another adult, and visits to the classroom will only be allowed on special occasions upon approval of the Director.

## **RE-ENTERING THE BUILDING AFTER SCHOOL IS DISMISSED**

For safety and security reasons students and parents are NOT allowed to re-enter the school building after 3:05 p.m. to retrieve forgotten or personal items from classrooms. Each classroom will be locked at 3:05 p.m. daily. This also includes those students and/or parents who participate in the after-school program. After 3:05 p.m. no after-school student or parent will be allowed to re-enter a classroom.

While we make every effort to accommodate all requests for conferences, “drop-in” conferences after school do not allow adequate time for our teachers to prepare to share with you all that is happening with your child. Parents who desire a conference with teachers or the Director should telephone the school office or write a note to arrange a convenient appointment. Any situation involving a teacher and student which causes parental concern should first be discussed with the respective teacher. If a satisfactory solution cannot be achieved, an appointment for a conference with that teacher and the administrator should be made. For safety and security reasons, under no circumstances should a parent seek to re-enter a classroom after 3:05 p.m. unless you have set up an appointment with the teacher. There will be 2 parent/teacher conferences per year.

## **CUSTODIAL PARENTS/NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

All parents, (both father and mother) who have students attending Vidalia Heritage Academy are considered custodial parents unless legal documentation stating otherwise is presented to the Administration. The relationship that VHA has will be with the parent/parents who have signed the contract with the school. If a dual-custody situation arises, VHA will send all correspondence to the primary parent who then will be responsible to communicate or furnish information to the secondary parent. VHA is not equipped to send duplicate information mailings, due to the large quantity of information, which goes home from various sources.

Only the parent with whom we have a contractual relationship with can request such information.

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## **GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES**

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Students who become ill during the day will be referred to the school office. The office personnel will determine whether or not the student is well enough to remain in school until the end of the day. Students are not to call home before checking in with the office for evaluation.

**The following guidelines will be followed in this determination:**

1. Elevated temperature greater than 100.0 degrees
2. Vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, sore throat
3. Discharge from any body opening
4. Sore indicating impetigo or ringworm
5. Rashes from unknown causes or of a contagious nature
6. Paleness or listlessness
7. Head lice

When one or more of the above symptoms are present, a parent/guardian will be contacted to arrange transportation for the student. Adequate contact information must be on file at the school at all times. **Students must remain at home for a minimum of 24 hours after the last episode in the following cases:**

1. Elevated temperature 100.0 degrees or higher
2. Vomiting
3. Diarrhea

### **COVID-19 POLICY**

- Parents and employees agree they will neither send a student nor enter the campus themselves if they are exhibiting any of the symptoms listed here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- Any child that exhibits a fever of 100+ will be held in an isolated sick room and parents will be notified to pick up their child/staff to be transported home. Employees will be directed to leave campus immediately.
- If a student or staff member tests positive for Covid-19 we will alert families/staff who have had close contact with the person(s) infected and encourage them to follow the guidelines listed here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- In order for a student or staff member who tested positive for COVID-19 to be allowed to return to campus they must be able to answer YES to the following questions:
  - Has it been at least **5 days** since the individual first had symptoms?
  - Has it been at least **24 hours** since the individual had a fever (without using fever-reducing medicine) and their symptoms have been improving?
  - Is the student/staff member willing to wear a mask or face covering for an additional 5 days when they return to school?

## **ILLNESS**

Students who become ill during the day will be referred to the school office. The office personnel will determine whether or not the student is well enough to remain in school until the end of the day. Students are not to call home before checking in with the office for evaluation.

**The following guidelines will be followed in this determination:**

1. Elevated temperature greater than 100 degrees
2. Vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, sore throat
3. Discharge from any body opening
4. Sore indicating impetigo or ringworm
5. Rashes from unknown causes or of a contagious nature
6. Paleness or listlessness
7. Head lice

When one or more of the above symptoms are present, a parent/guardian will be contacted to arrange transportation for the student. Adequate contact information must be on file at the school at all times.

**Students must remain at home for a minimum of 24 hours after the last episode in the following cases:**

1. Elevated temperature 100 degrees or higher
2. Vomiting
3. Diarrhea

## **MEDICATION**

No medication will be given without permission from the parents. If medication (including Tylenol and cough drops) is to be given at school, clear and precise written instructions must accompany the medicine given. If a student requires regular medication, prior arrangements must be made with a doctor's prescription. No medication will be administered by faculty or staff without doctor's orders. All prescription drugs must be kept in the office.

The school secretary cannot administer medication unless it is accompanied by a note containing the following:

- a. Name of medication
- b. Date
- c. Exact dosage
- d. Time to be administered
- e. Duration of time medication is to be given
- f. Doctor's name

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

It is the requirement of the school and the State of Georgia that the school must have on file updated shot records indicating the current status of immunization. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to keep these files updated. All students entering sixth grade are now required to have a second Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) immunization. An updated Certificate of Immunization needs to be submitted to the school office at this time. The administration has the option not to allow any student (regardless of age) to begin classes until the appropriate records are on file.

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

Any staff member and/or student who contracts any communicable disease will not be allowed to be in attendance at school during the duration of the illness. This action is taken in the best interests of the non-infected students and staff.

Such communicable diseases include, but are not limited to the following: Influenza, Pneumonia, Strep, Whooping Cough (Pertussis), Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Mumps, Measles, Chicken Pox, Diphtheria, Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye).

If a child becomes ill during the day, he/she may be excused to go home. A parent or authorized person will be notified to arrange care. Only pre-authorized persons may transport students from school.

### **LICE**

If it is determined that a student has lice, the parents will be notified immediately. After treatment, the student may return to school, but will be checked for 5 school days following his/her return. We have a "no-nit" policy, meaning that any signs of nits in the child's hair, dead or alive, will prevent us from allowing the child to return to school for at least 24 hours. Hair must be free of ALL evidence of lice.

### **SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

If a teacher or staff member suspects a child is being abused (mentally or physically), the concern will be brought to the attention of the Director or Headmaster immediately. The suspicion of abuse is enough to warrant the notification of the Department of Family and Children's Services. The Headmaster, in conjunction with the Director, teacher, or staff member, will determine the need to contact the Department of Family and Children Services. The Headmaster makes final decisions and initial contact. The Headmaster, Director, and teacher/staff member will document the incident.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field Trips will be minimal on the preschool level and mostly apply to K4 classes. On the occasion a field trip is planned, all students will **RIDE TOGETHER** in VHA approved vehicles on any VHA sponsored Field Trip. As with any other academic day, students may be checked out from the field trip by a parent or guardian and return home in a private vehicle. However, travel **TO and FOR** the duration of the instructional time of the designated Field Trip is limited to VHA approved vehicles ONLY. Labeled car seats will be required.

### **PERSONAL PROPERTY AT SCHOOL**

The school recommends that no personal property be brought to school other than items needed to function on a normal day. No toys, tape recorders, radios, knives, or anything considered to be a weapon are allowed at school. If any valuable personal property is lost, the school will not be responsible. Teachers will inform you of any opportunities which students may bring certain items to school out of the ordinary.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Lost and found articles that are turned into the preschool office will be placed in the Lost and Found. All students' clothing items that are plainly marked with names written inside will be returned to the owner (no initials please). Parents and students may schedule a time to look through the lost and found closet.

### **SUPPLY LIST**

A supply list will be provided during the summer months for each school year for basic general supplies in each class.

### **LUNCHES/SNACKS**

Full day students should bring his/her own lunch each day.

As an option, catered meals are offered on Monday – Friday each week. A calendar menu is sent home for each month. Lunches are purchased by the month. The price of the “hot lunch” includes milk for Pre-K.

Lunch will include a protein rich food, one or more vegetables and/or fruits, enriched or whole wheat grain bread products and milk.

*Please note: If a “hot lunch” day has been paid for but is missed due to absence, money/order will not be carried over to another week.*

To save on time and confusion of each child bringing his/her own snack to preschool each day, a request will be sent home once a month requesting food or drink items to share with the class as a whole. All snacks will be allergy-sensitive.

### **TUTORING**

Many of our teachers are available for private tutoring after the school day is completed. The school office will provide a list of VHA tutors as well as those in the area who are available to tutor students.

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## **ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND INFORMATION**

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Children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes. Be aware that preschool activities such as art and snack may cause clothing to become soiled. All

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

In order to obtain the maximum benefit from our academic program, students should be in class every day. The following rules are designed to help the student maintain good attendance, help parents fulfill their responsibility, and allow the student to receive all the educational benefits to which they are entitled.

### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

The following shall constitute a valid excused absence for non-attendance of part or all of a day/class for a student at school, provided satisfactory evidence is provided to the school office in writing:

- Personal illness or injury (a doctor's note may be required, see attendance policy below)
- Death, illness or injury within the immediate family
- Instances where attendance by the student would be hazardous
- Prior approval or special absences (see below)
- School-related activities
- Validated doctor appointment

We strongly encourage appointments to be made outside of normal class time.

### **PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCES**

During the course of a school year, if it becomes necessary or if families desire to take an extended trip out of town, for the student and teacher's sake, we ask for the following considerations:

- In the case of extended planned trips (1 week or more), please give a minimum two (2) week notice in writing to your student's teacher. This allows the teacher adequate time to plan and collect student's assignments for the period to be missed. For trips of less than a week, one (1) week notice will be appreciated.
- Assignments are due back to the teacher on the student's day of return to classes.

### **ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

In order for a student to participate in extracurricular activities (i.e., a school performance or sporting event), he/she must be in school on the day before the activity for rehearsal/practice, in school by 8:35 am on the day of the activity, and arrive no more than 10 minutes later than the posted time for student arrival. Exceptions may be granted by the administration for doctor's appointments, pre-arranged absences, or justifiable emergencies.

### **STUDENT ARRIVAL**

**\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DOORS TO THE PRESCHOOL BUILDING REMAIN LOCKED AT ALL TIMES. (Parents can call the preschool office through the intercom system at the front door.)**

#### **K-4 and K-3:**

Doors will open at 7:40, and drop off will end promptly at 8:05. Doors will be locked at this time. K-4 will be at the Elementary Building and K-3 will be at the Preschool Building.

#### **K-2:**

Drop-off from 7:40-8:05. Parents will walk children into the building to the double doors by the Preschool Office where a staff member will receive the child and lead to class.



### **STUDENT EARLY DISMISSAL**

If your child has to leave early from school, you or the person picking the student up must come by the office and sign the student out. (During our Health and Safety Plan for COVID-19, parents are asked to call the school before picking up.)

### **STUDENT DISMISSAL**

**K2:** Dismissal will begin at 10:45 and end at 11:00. Parents must come to the double doors by the preschool office and ask the staff member present for the child.

**K-3 and K-4 Full-Day:** Dismissal will begin at 2:45 and continue until 3:05.  
*Please note that K-4 dismisses at the Elementary Building.*

**K-3 Half-Day:** students will be dismissed at 11:45 am.

### **IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- 1) Cars will enter the center lane of the Children's Ministry Building parking lot and exit by looping around to the left.
- 2) Alternative Route: In the case of a major church function or funeral, carpool will be rerouted to the Jackson Street side of the building. Parents will be notified of any changes.
- 3) Maps will be distributed to demonstrate both routes.
- 4) All preschool-age students must be strapped into the appropriate booster/car seat before the vehicle will be allowed to pull away. **VHA staff WILL NOT put a child in a car that does not have the proper child restraints.**

### **SUBSTITUTE RIDES HOME**

If your child is to ride home with someone other than the regularly scheduled driver, please send a note to the office giving written permission for the student to leave school with that person. Please include the other person's name and make and color of the car. If at all possible, please have the school name tag attached to the mirror of the car so we can identify it.

### **LATE PICK-UPS**

Only in emergency situations should a child be left in the after-school program after 5:30. If such an occasion arises, please make every effort to call ahead to let the teacher and student know when he/she can expect to be picked up. There is a charge of \$25.00 for every 15 minutes late that a child is picked up. This fee will be added to your child's account, and payment is expected when invoices are due.

Please make sure all persons who you wish to allow to pick up your child from the after-school care program are on the authorization list. If someone else comes to pick up your child, the child will not be released to him or her without your written or verbal consent. We will ask for a Driver's License I.D. to verify their identity.

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## PRESCHOOL CLOTHING

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Children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes. Be aware that preschool activities such as art and snack may cause clothing to become soiled. All outerwear and accessories should be labeled with the child's name. Please avoid overalls, belts, and clothing with snaps or straps which can cause frustration for young children when developing toileting skills.

For safety reasons, children must wear tennis shoes or soft-soled shoes that strap to the heel. **No BALLET SHOES, FLIP-FLOPS, JELLIES, CLOGS, CROCS, OPEN-HEEL SHOES, OR BOOTS OF ANY KIND MAY BE WORN.**

Shorts or leggings should be worn underneath skirts or dresses.

All children will need to bring a change of clothes in a labeled gallon-sized storage bag to leave at school (socks and underwear included.)

**K3 and K4 students will be required to wear a Spirit Shirt on Chapel Days.** Shirts will be available for purchase through VHA.

PARENTS WILL BE CALLED TO BRING THE APPROPRIATE CLOTHING OR SHOES WHEN DRESS IS NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCHOOL POLICY.

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## PRESCHOOL TOILET TRAINING

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While parents are ultimately responsible for potty-training their children, our teachers will assist with learning toilet training for children in K-2.

Children enrolled in K-3 are required to be fully potty-trained by September 1 of the year they are attending K-3. Teachers will assist for the first few weeks of the school year and pull-ups may be worn during nap-time if needed.

A toilet-trained child should be able to do the following:

- Communicate to the teachers that he/she needs to go to the restroom before they need to go.
- Pull down his/her clothes and get them back up with limited assistance.
- Wear underwear with limited accidents.

We certainly will ask many times throughout the day and before nap-time if they need to use the restroom. A teacher will assist children as needed, but children should be able to complete toileting activities independently.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet-trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. Preschool staff are aware of this and will assist the children when necessary. We do understand that even toilet-trained children will occasionally have accidents. By definition, “accidents” are unusual incidents that should happen infrequently. In these instances, the teachers will help children to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible.

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently, therefore we will allow four weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents and reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child at such time. Please note that this policy is not in place to shame or punish a child or inconvenience parents/primary caregivers. Rather, cleaning accidents in the preschool is time consuming. When a teacher is busy changing a child’s soiled clothing, it is taking away from learning time for all students and it removes one adult from the direct supervision and interaction with the rest of the class. This policy is intended to ensure the safety and experience of children and staff at VHA.

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## **PRESCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND INFORMATION**

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Discipline is a learning process in which an individual learns self-control and recognizes his responsibility to God and man. Discipline includes living by an established standard or set of rules. It is rooted in discipleship and aims at restoration and improvements of character. Bringing glory to Christ through proper conduct is the goal of discipline.

The discipline policy of Vidalia Heritage Academy is rooted in two presuppositions concerning human nature. First, man is created in the image of God, by an act of God’s power, for the glory of God. This gives man a high degree of dignity which he would not have if he were merely a more highly developed form of animal life. Second, due to the fall, mankind is born in sin and is by nature at enmity with God, his creator. The belief that man is basically good is demonstrated by Scripture and experience to be false.

In holding to these presuppositions, two commonly held beliefs are forcefully denied: 1) that man, as a result of evolutionary process, is merely an animal and 2) that man is basically good. Therefore, discipline must be taught as an essential part of a person’s character building. It is not assumed that an individual will naturally discipline himself, but in time with proper training will become a disciplined person.

### **SPECIFIC STATEMENT OF DISCIPLINE**

Students are taught personal discipline by adhering to the classroom and school policies of Vidalia Heritage Academy. At times corrective discipline is needed in order to correct behavior. Discipline, as a God ordained method of correcting behavior and developing character, will be enforced at Vidalia Heritage Academy.

### **METHOD OF DISCIPLINE**

Discipline plans are individual to each teacher, but ultimately fall within the following structure:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Verbal Warning
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Time-out (1 minute for every year of child's age)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Child will be sent to Director's office, and parents will be notified

NOTE: Corporal punishment will not be enforced at preschool.

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## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

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Social networking can be an effective means of communication when used appropriately. Content-sharing sites like YouTube along with Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and podcasts are a few commonly used forms of social media. VHA has established rules and guidelines to protect students, parents, staff, and administration from potential liability as well as slander. Responsible use of social media can be an asset. As a result, it is very important that students, parents, staff, and administration understand network etiquette which is referred to as "Netiquette."

When using social media, students, parents, staff, and administration must remember they represent VHA, but more importantly they represent Jesus Christ. As a result, careful attention must be given to what is said or written and how it is said or written. Words are very important to our heavenly Father. He created the world with them! We must be careful to frame our world and the world of others with words that please Him. Ephesians 4:29 states, *"Let no foul or polluting language, nor evil word nor unwholesome or worthless talk [ever] come out of your mouth, but only such [speech] as is good and beneficial to the spiritual progress of others, as is fitting to the need and the occasion, that it may be a blessing and give grace (God's favor) to those who hear it."* Embracing and applying the principles of "netiquette" is one way to appropriately use social media. Listed below are simple guidelines to follow:

1. Be polite. Be kind. Use appropriate language. Swearing, vulgarities, suggestive, obscene, belligerent or threatening language is prohibited.
2. Avoid communication that may be offensive to others. Do not use, make, distribute, or redistribute jokes, stories, or other material that is based upon stereotypes or slurs relating to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.
3. Guard and protect the identities of others and their reputations. Integrity and honesty are vital. People believe what they read. The Word of God says "love covers a multitude of sin." People will always make mistakes. As a child of God, we do not need to broadcast others' faults to the world. The Golden Rule is a great guide to follow when using social media. It states, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

4. Remember Thumper's rule from the Disney movie, Bambi, "If you can't say (write) something nice, don't say (write) nothing at all."

Readers who know that you go to a Christian school will connect your personal life to your school life; so, your use of social media should be consistent with your testimony as a child of God and disciple of Jesus Christ. You are to be a reflection of Jesus in words, actions, and deed both in and out of school. The world, to whom we desire to reach for Jesus Christ, knows the standard by which we are to live. They hold us to a higher moral and ethical standard and judge us according to that standard. We want what we say, how we act, and what we do to be pleasing to the Lord and to give Him glory and honor. Therefore, be responsible, careful, polite, and kind when using social media.

### **VIOLATIONS**

VHA will investigate and respond to all reports of violations of the social media policy. Disciplinary action will follow according to the consequences in the Discipline Policy- detentions, suspension, and/or dismissal which will be determined by the content of the blog or post.

*And whatever you do [no matter what it is] in **word or deed**, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus and in [dependence upon] His Person, giving praise to God the Father through Him. Colossians 3:17.*

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

VHA is committed to maintaining an academic environment in which all individuals treat each other with honor and dignity. Sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination. VHA desires to maintain a learning environment conducive to the spiritual and academic growth and development of students enrolled. VHA prohibits any form of sexual harassment and sexual violence. It is a violation of this policy for any student, employee, or volunteer of VHA to harass a student, employee, or volunteer through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined by this policy. It is also a violation of this policy for any student, employee, or volunteer of VHA to be sexually violent to a student, employee, or volunteer.

VHA will investigate all formal and informal complaints that are either verbal or written concerning actions or statements which may constitute sexual harassment or sexual violence. Disciplinary actions will follow for any student, employee, or volunteer who sexually harasses, is sexually violent, or intimidating toward a student, employee, or volunteer of VHA. VHA also reserves the right to discipline any student, employee, or volunteer for sexually related statements or conduct that does not constitute sexual harassment or sexual violence but are still inappropriate in nature.