

# Welcome VRA Students!



The following pages contain useful information to help make sure your middle school experience is enjoyable and rewarding. Please review these rules/tips and remember that every teacher, dean, administrator, and staff member is here to help whenever you need— just ask! Go Hawks!

## **Assembly Conduct**

Throughout the year, we'll schedule various assemblies to share important information with students. All Hawks are expected to behave in a mature manner during any assemblies (no food/drink, face forward, pay attention, don't talk, etc.), and to extend the proper courtesies to our performers or guests. Inappropriate behavior will result in consequences.

## **Backpacks**

Students may bring book bags/backpacks or drawstring cinch bags to assist in carrying needed supplies around school.

## **Buses**

Students are only allowed to ride their assigned bus each day. Rides on a different bus (to a friend's house, for example) are not available. Your bus driver can issue referrals for inappropriate bus behavior which could result in disciplinary action, including a bus suspension.

## **Cafeteria**

Valley Ridge Academy has the best cafeteria staff around! Our cafeteria offers great meals and a la carte snacks and drinks. Remember that food and drinks need to be enjoyed in the cafeteria. Water in a plastic bottle is okay to bring back to class—feel free to fill up bottles at the filtered water fill-up stations.

## **Cell Phones**

Students can bring cell phones to school, and they may be allowed to use them in class per teacher for educational purposes ONLY. At all other times, phones must be on silent and stored out of sight.

**Students are not permitted to make phone calls, text, email, take/share photographs, or communicate from a cell phone on campus during school hours.**

The first violation will result in the phone being confiscated until the end of the school day. The second violation will result in the phone being confiscated and your parent will be notified. The third violation, and every time after that, will be considered defiance and will result in progressive consequences and the phone will only be released to your guardian. (3<sup>rd</sup> infraction: 1 lunch detention, 4<sup>th</sup> infraction: 3 lunch detentions, 5<sup>th</sup> infraction: In-school suspension, 6<sup>th</sup> (or more): May result in out of school suspension

When there is reasonable suspicion that a student has used a cell phone in violation of the Code of Conduct or other school rules, school administration may review the phone's call log, voice messages, text messages, emails, Facebook, Instagram, photographs, and any other applications related to the investigation of the suspected violation.

Worried that someone needs to get ahold of you during the school day? Remember that in the case of an emergency, parents are asked to call the front office, **not a student's cell phone**, so keep your phone off and away and stay focused on learning and making friends with those around you!

## **Code of Conduct**

We expect all students to behave in a manner that contributes to a positive school environment. We want

you to be proud of yourself and our school. We expect you to behave on the buses, in the classrooms, in the cafeteria, in the halls, on the school grounds, and at all school functions including field trips. When students do not behave, consequences can be issued. Please understand that you are responsible for the choices you make. The St. Johns County School District Student Code of Conduct is available online at the district website. The Code of Conduct supports our goal for excellence at Valley Ridge Academy.

### **Communication**

Communication is vital between school and home. Be sure to check our school website often for information on upcoming events and other school news! Schoology is also a great source of information—plan to visit your account daily!

An electronic phone message system is used throughout the school year to convey important or emergency information to parents. If at any point during the school year your contact information changes, please notify VRA of the change so you will continue to receive all electronic communications or in the case of an emergency.

### **Computer Use**

Students are required to abide by the St. Johns County School District Internet Acceptable Use Policy. Which is available online in the district website and provided at the beginning of the school year. If you violate the policy, you may lose your Internet access privileges, and face disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action. When using school computers, you must take care of the machine. You will be charged for any damage to a machine. If you sit at a computer that is damaged in any way, inform your teacher immediately so you are not accused of the vandalism. Breaking the AUP will result in a disciplinary consequence.

### **Dances**

Dances may be held during the school year for students currently enrolled at Valley Ridge Academy. This means only VRA students can attend our dances, no guests can attend. If you are suspended or absent from school on the day of a dance, you will not be allowed to attend. Other guidelines will be provided at the time of dance ticket sales.

### **Discipline**

Every faculty and staff member are equally dedicated to making Valley Ridge Academy a safe, respectful, and

responsible campus. We encourage all students to make good choices and follow the VRA Way!

VRA employs a progressive disciplinary system which can include the following consequences

Warning, parent notification, lunch detention, after-school detention, in-school suspension (part day/class period or all day), out of school suspension, bus suspension, and for the most serious infractions referral to the alternative school.

### **Lunch detention**

Students who have lunch detention will sit in designated areas of the cafeteria or in the dean's office (depending on supervision coverage). Failure to serve lunch detention will result in additional consequences.

### **In-School Suspension**

Students who are issued In-School Suspension will not attend their classes on the designated day(s) (or period) and will instead remain in the ISS room where teachers will send work down. You will be able to purchase lunch from the cafeteria to eat in the ISS room.

### **After school detention**

Students who are given after school suspension will remain at school on Wednesday after early release of the students. They will remain with the dean and may work on schoolwork or participate in campus cleanup. After school detention is an alternative consequence to a more serious one (out of school suspension); if a student does not show up or if a parent cannot accommodate then a more serious consequence may be given.

### **Out of School Suspension**

Students who are suspended from school are not allowed to be on **any** SJCS D campus while suspended. This includes before and after school activities.

### **Gum**

Gum is not allowed at Valley Ridge Academy. Discipline for gum will be progressive and as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> offense: warning, 2<sup>nd</sup>: warning, 3<sup>rd</sup> (or more): referral to the dean for defiance.

## Dress Code

Students should be proud of the way they dress. Valley Ridge Academy enforces the Dress Code outlined in the SJCS Code of Conduct.

Our Goal at VRA is for the student to remain in class and learning. Repeated dress code infractions can result in discipline, but it is our goal for the student to remain in class.

- An attempt to provide appropriate clothing will be made or student will remain in ISS until parent can bring change of clothes.

## Hall Pass/Restroom

Students must have permission to leave class. It is expected that the student will sign out and in on the classroom log.

## Home Access Center

Student Home Access Center (HAC) is a web-based application that will allow you to view your current progress in all your classes. Your parents have a separate account as well. Be sure to check your grades regularly and reach out to your teachers for assistance in remediating standards-based activities.

Your teachers can help you look up your Student Active Directory account information/password to help you log in.

## Academic Integrity

Cheating or copying another's work or providing work for another student to use/copy is not part of the VRA Way. It does not help a student but rather prepares a student for failure, not success. Dishonesty serves to undermine the academic integrity of the school. The VRA academic integrity policy is in place to eliminate such acts.

Cheating involves one or more of the following:

1. Using someone else's work as your own
2. Copying from or providing information to another student on a test or quiz
3. Copying from or providing information to another student on classwork or homework
4. Preparing for cheating in advance—

Such action involves:

- A. Possessing a copy of a test to be given or that has been given by a teacher before you take it

- B. Possessing and using previously prepared answers to a test or quiz (this includes information written directly upon any part of the body or clothing)

- C. Unauthorized use of text or notes during a test or examination

- D. Asking for (or giving) information to another student during a test or quiz

Plagiarism means using another person's ideas, expressions, or work without giving the original author credit. Plagiarism will be dealt with by the individual teacher on an individual basis. Students found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will receive a "0" on their work with an opportunity to retake the assignment with the possibility of earning up to a 75%.

## Horseplay

Sometimes behavior toward and with another student can be misinterpreted and/or cause an injury. Even if students believe they are joking or playing around, an unfortunate situation may occur. VRA does not allow horseplay of any kind while on campus, on a school bus, at the bus stop, or on a field trip. **Horseplay that results in the injury of another student may result in an Out-of-School Suspension.**

## "Pantsing"

"Pantsing" (pulling down someone's pants/shorts) will not be tolerated at VRA. If a student participates in this behavior by pulling down another student's pants/shorts, they will be issued 1-day OSS (out of school suspension).

## Lockers

Each student will be assigned a locker for their convenience; however, lockers are school property, and the administration/designee can inspect the contents of a locker. Although the school will investigate any reports of stolen property, it cannot be held responsible for items lost or taken from a locker. **All lockers are subject to search.**

## Lost & Found

Lost & Found items may be claimed in the cafeteria. Each quarter, unclaimed items will be donated to charity. We'll remind you frequently to check the items for any lost belongings, but if you lose something, check here as soon as you realize it.

## Profanity

Profanity is not acceptable at Valley Ridge Academy. This includes slang or racial slurs. Using inappropriate language will result in disciplinary action.

## Public Displays of Affection

VRA does not allow any public displays of affection. This includes but is not limited to holding hands, hugging, and kissing. Public displays of affection may result in disciplinary action.

## PBIS

Valley Ridge Academy grades 6-8 will no longer use Hawk Bucks as a reward for positive behavior. Instead, there will be other opportunities for students to be rewarded for displaying positive behavior. At the end of each 9 weeks (pending COVID protocols) there will be a "reward day" where students can participate in fun activities throughout the day. If a student has earned In-school suspension (at least 1 full day) or Out of school suspension then they are ineligible to participate in the reward day and will remain with a teacher during the reward time and can work on academic work. Students can also earn prizes/rewards for displaying outstanding character through monthly drawings for things such as special lunches (Publix subs, Wendy's, etc.).

In the future, we hope to offer middle school students the opportunity to earn lunch privileges, such as outside seating, or special privileges like being able to use your phone, movies/music, or special seating.

## School Safety

Valley Ridge Academy is committed to having a safe, violence-free, drug-free educational environment. **It is the responsibility of every student, parent, teacher, administrator, and community member to share information that will keep our school safe.** If, at any time, you are aware of any situation that could result in the disruption of a safe, violence-free, drug-free school environment, let a school official know immediately. Names will not be shared or released when following through on the information provided. You can also anonymously report safety concerns through the Fortify Florida App or online at: <https://getfortifyfl.com>

## Student Use of Telephone

Students may request to use the telephone in the front office for the following three reasons:

1. When they are ill

2. For lunch or lunch money
3. If an after-school activity has been cancelled

**Under no circumstance are you allowed to use a personal cell phone to contact your parents during the school day.**

## Tardy to Class

It is important that students report to each class on time. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action. On the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) tardy to a specific class, the deans will issue you a lunch detention. You will receive two lunch detentions for the fifth tardy (to that same class), three lunch detentions for the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) tardy, and four lunch detentions for the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) tardy. Subsequent tardies will result in consequences at administration/designee's discretion. *Tardy counts will reset at the semester.*

## Tardy to School

Students must be at school by 8:25am. If late to school, you must check in at the front office. Failure to bring notes with an acceptable excuse will result in an unexcused tardy. An acceptable excused tardy includes illness or illness of a member of the immediate family. You will not receive an excused tardy for issues such as oversleeping, traffic, or missing the bus. Excessive unexcused tardies to school will result in a referral for truancy evaluation.

## Textbooks

Students will receive textbooks as appropriate. These books are school property and we expect you to take proper care of them and return them at the end of the year. Fines will be charged for damaged books and you will be responsible for paying for a lost or stolen book. Failure to pay for lost or stolen books may result in the delay of receiving a yearbook if you ordered one. Please take good care of all books!

## Tobacco Products

The use or possession of tobacco products, vaping devices, vaping liquid, or pods, etc. will not be tolerated at VRA. Students found with these items are subject to disciplinary action per the district code of conduct. Possession of these items is a level 3 infraction and will result in out of school suspension as well as additional consequences from the school resource officer (SJCSO) as applicable.