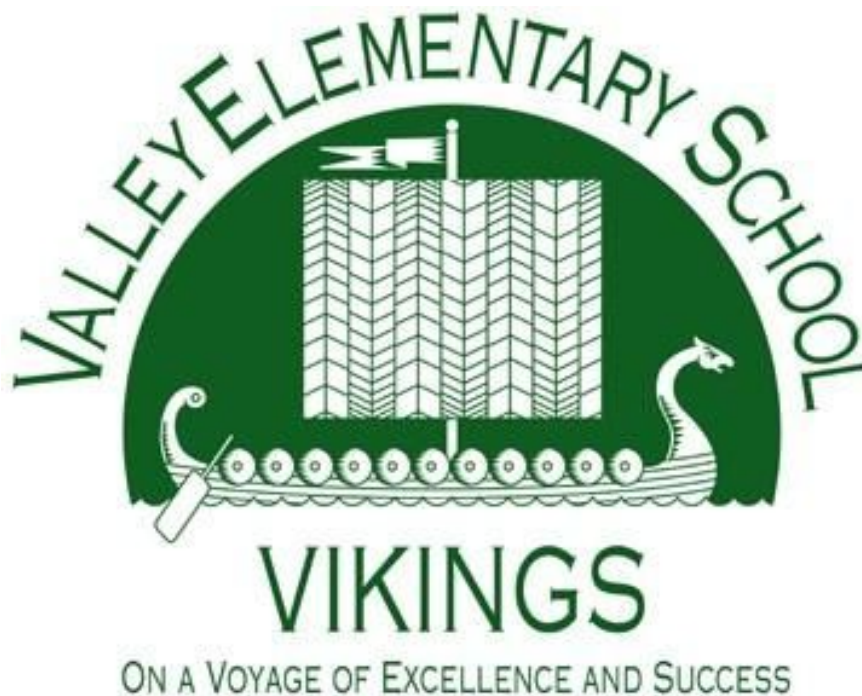


VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
On a Voyage of Excellence and Success

3519 Jefferson Pike
Jefferson MD 21755
240-236-3000
240-236-3001 - fax



2019-20

Mrs. Tracy Poquette, Principal: Tracy.Poquette@fcps.org
Mr. John Ewald, Assistant Principal: John.Ewald@fcps.org
School Mascot: Viking
School Colors: Green and White

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter	4
VES Vision and Mission Statement/ Fact Sheet	5
VES PTA Officers	5
FCPS Mission and Vision Statement	6
Valley Staff	7
SECTION 1: It's Academic	8
Curriculum	8
Grouping	8
Organizing for Instruction	8
Homework	9
Homework Suggestions for Families	9
Assessments	9
Technology	9
Leadership Team	9
SECTION 2: At Your Service	10
Before- and Afterschool Programs	10
Birthday Celebrations	10
Child Care	10
Cultural Arts Programs	10
Health Program	10
Medications	11
Dispensing Medication	11
Health Screening	11
Emergency Situations	11
Special Health Situations	11
Lost and Found	11
Lunch Program and Prices	11 & 12
Parties	12
Peer Mentors.....	12
Recess	12
School Pictures	13
School Store	13
Student Accident Insurance	13
Volunteers	13
SECTION 3: THE VALLEY WAY!	14
Arrival and Dismissal	14
Arrival	14
Dismissal	14
Special Situations	14 & 15
Attendance	15
Written Excuses	15
Vacations	15
Notification of Excessive Absences	15

Dress Code	16
Emergency Closings and Delays	16
<u>SECTION 4: Can We Talk?</u>	17
In General	17
Conferences	17
Electronic Communication	17
Newsletters, Planners, and Thursdays	17
Reporting Systems	17
Student Information Card	18
<u>SECTION 5: Safe & Sound</u>	19
<i>Character Counts!</i>	19
Evacuation Drills	19
Items Not Permitted in School	19
School Security Issues	19
You Can Help at Home	20
VES Standards and Consequences	20
Discipline for Off-Campus Activities	20
Visiting the School	20
Infants and Toddlers.....	20

Dear Valley Friends and Families,

Greetings! Welcome to a new school year! I am very excited to begin a year of working together to provide a safe and engaging environment for your child. I am thrilled to be working with such a talented staff and dedicated families. I am committed to ensuring our students work to achieve their best so when they leave VES, they will be on their way to being college and career-ready. Our mission statement of **On a Voyage of Excellence and Success** supports this endeavor.

We continue to hold our VES students to the high standards of character that include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. We have school-wide consistent behavioral expectations. We are not an official PBIS School, but we combine some positive behavior initiatives with 7 Habits of Highly Effective Students. Our students learn the pillars of character through instruction and guidance provided by our staff and each of you. Thank you for the continued support, guidance and modeling of these important character traits.

Throughout the school year, there will be various opportunities for two way communication to occur between the school, families and community members. Students in grades 2-5 will be provided with a **VES agenda**. In addition, all students in PK-5 will be provided with a VES **Thursday folder**. This folder will come home every Thursday with important information, as well as graded assignments. Please work with your student to check his/her folder every Thursday evening. The **Valley Viking newsletter** will be sent out electronically every other week. It will include important dates and current school and county news. Families may also access information at the **VES PTA website**: <https://valleyelementaryschoolpta.weebly.com/>. You can also sign up for "**Remind**" to receive last minute reminders and announcements that come directly to your phone as a text message. You can join by: <https://remind.com/join/1718ve>

As you read through this handbook and the FCPS Calendar handbook, you will see that many important issues and questions are addressed. If you need additional information, please contact the school office.

We look forward to an exciting and productive year.

Tracy Poquette
Principal

Valley Elementary School

Vision

By providing opportunities for academic excellence, we, the Valley learning community, will inspire students to become motivated lifelong learners. As a school community, we support a friendly and safe school where nurturing relationships and acceptance of diversity are valued.

Mission

On a Voyage of Excellence and Success

Fact Sheet

Valley Elementary is located in Jefferson, MD. Built in 1968, Valley has modern amenities and technological capabilities. Our school has a rich history and tradition of developing model citizens, and we are an integral part of an economically diverse community.

Valley has a strong network of supportive and involved parents, community and business partners and a dedicated staff. A variety of community groups use our facility to provide services to students and families. Partnerships with Hood College, the Jefferson Ruritan, local churches and YMCA provide extended-learning opportunities along with before- and after-school care. On any given school day, visitors can observe our students collaboratively working to accomplish our vision of every child meeting with success and excellence.

We are very proud of our students' academic achievements, and we work continuously to add to them. Valley staff participates in strategic professional-development opportunities aligned with special programs and academic interventions to meet individual student needs.

We have made great strides in developing an environment that fosters good character. Our students demonstrate pride in themselves and their school every day as they prepare to be productive members of the 21st century.

The Valley PTA officers for the 2019-20 school year are:

- ◆ **Melissa Orndorff** (ValleyVikingsPTA@gmail.com) **President**
- ◆ **Tom Robinson** (thelastmanout1972@gmail.com) **Vice President**
- ◆ **Melanie Mills** (mamills02@gmail.com) **Treasurer**
- ◆ **Melissa Orndorff** (usckappa2001@aol.com) **Secretary**

FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mission and Vision

FULFILLING THE PROMISE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Public education is at the heart of our community. It shapes who we are. In Frederick County, our promise is to empower our young people no matter who they are, no matter their backgrounds or circumstances. We want them to be prepared to succeed in college and careers.

Therefore, our mission is to:

Reach our students with exceptional teaching and caring support,
Challenge them to achieve their potential, and
Prepare them for success in a global society.

Frederick County depends on the opportunities that our schools guarantee. Public education keeps our community moving forward. It prepares our future community leaders, our business leaders, and our workforces.

The children we educate today will be the adults caring for our community's health, homes, businesses, and neighborhoods tomorrow. Frederick County's investment in public education is an investment in our future. It's time for us to come together to build Frederick's future. It's time for us to protect the promise of public education.

Valley Elementary School Staff

Principal	Tracy Poquette		Media Specialist	Brittany Nuse
Asst. Principal	John Ewald		Music Teachers	Marisa Bruce (Tue)
12 Mo. Secretary	Caroline Hendy			Jean Johnson
10 Mo. Secretary	Jody Gust		Art Teachers	Katie Jacobs (Wed)
School Counselor	Ginger Hart			Lori Rossio (Mon-Wed)
Literacy Specialist	Jill Barnes			Victoria Barron (Wed-Fri)
Math Specialist	Andrea Smith		PE Teachers	Jackie Finley
EL Teacher	Pam Chastain			Shane Boyd (Mon)
Reading Intervention	Holly Miller		Special Ed Teachers	Lauren O'Neill
Math Intervention	Erin McCullough (AM)			Jess Sparacino
PK Teacher	Jennifer Mitchell			Angie Worrell
K Teachers	Jolissa Gue		Speech Lang Path.	Mina Greenfield
	Cindy Newmeyer		Sp. Ed. Program Asst.	Suzanne EnEarl
	Jen Ward		Psychologist	Wesley Allen
Grade 1 Teachers	Julia Baldwin		Sp. Ed. In. Asst.	Jody Berry (K)
	Monica Grisez			Leslie Walsh (2)
	Amy Stone			Allison McHenry (3,4,5)
Grade 2 Teachers	Holly Brashears		Instructional Asst.	Cindy Kerns (K & PK)
	Denise Prosnick			Aimee Keeney-Fisher (K)
	Sadie Wiles			Susan Miller (user support)
Grade 3 Teachers	Jaime Chevalier		Instrumental Music	Dan Cheston (Thur)
	Heather DeGrange			Andy Jones (Thur)
	Amy Temporado		Custodians	Mike Wolford (lead)
Grade 4 Teachers	Mary Cooley			Victor Gomez
	Lisa Giacco			Paul Green
	Courtney Hicks			Steve Yingling
	Courtney Souders		Health Tech	Michelle McAtee
Grade 5 Teachers	Ashley Philemon		Nurse	Colleen Cook
	Melissa Proctor		Cafeteria	Gina Lidie
	Christine Pullen			
	Annette Stover			

SECTION I: It's Academic!



Curriculum

The Valley Elementary School staff is committed to teaching for quality learning for all of our students. We hold our students accountable for learning a set of essential standards for each content area. These standards target important skills that children will need in real life and determine what is taught in the classroom. You may access the curriculum at www.fcps.org.

Grouping

In elementary schools, students are placed in heterogeneous (mixed-ability) settings for most of the day. Within these settings, children have the opportunity to work and mix in various grouping structures for a variety of purposes. Our goal is for students to receive a healthy balance of classroom groupings that are appropriate to the task. These can include total-class, cooperative, heterogeneous, homogeneous (same-ability), and individual groupings.

Teachers have the flexibility to accomplish essential objectives using the combination of grouping structures that best helps students master the essential curriculum. When making grouping determinations for reading and math, teachers consider the following:

- ❑ Classroom performance
- ❑ Performance on FCPS-developed assessments
- ❑ State assessment results
- ❑ Parental information
- ❑ Social interactions
- ❑ Work habits
- ❑ Emotional factors

Organizing for Instruction

Classroom teachers are responsible for content-area instruction with supplemental assistance from other professionals, including instructional assistants, the media specialist, literacy specialist, math specialist, speech therapist, special education, and learning language support.

Art, along with vocal and instrumental music, will provide fine arts experiences, which will expand upon various concepts being introduced in the classroom. Physical education is scheduled regularly. Activities are provided that help develop strong, healthy bodies and a sense of fair play as well as to increase levels of physical fitness.

Teachers deliver instruction, considering the learning potential, rate, style, and setting for each individual student. To meet students' different needs, teachers will use a variety of techniques and methods so that all children will experience success. Students are assigned to homerooms in a heterogeneous (mixed-ability) grouping and receive language arts and math instruction in a variety of flexible-grouping situations. Staff consistently monitors and periodically reevaluates students' performance to guide instruction and to provide placement information.



Homework

Homework provides opportunities for:

Practice- The student refines and strengthens skills taught in class through drill of simple applications in reading, math and writing.



Preparation- Completion of this type of assignment makes the next day's lesson more meaningful and easier to master. Reading and familiarization with facts and ideas characterize this type of homework.

Extension- Application of skills and concepts to more-complicated situations is the purpose of this type of homework, as it requires using higher-level thinking skills, problem solving, and abstract ideas. Short essays and reports are examples.

Integration- Successful completion of the assignment requires coordinating and combining several skills and concepts. This requires more time and a greater variety of resources. Research and projects are examples.

The frequency and duration of homework for elementary students are as follows (FCPS Regulation 500-15):

Grades 1 and 2 - generally a maximum of 15 minutes per night, Mon. -Thursday

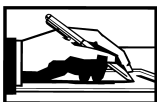
Grade 3- generally a maximum of 30 minutes per night, Mon. - Thursday

Grades 4 and 5 - generally a maximum of 45 minutes per night, Mon. -Thursday

Homework Suggestions for Families

- ❑ Set and maintain a daily homework time.
- ❑ Provide the space, time, and materials needed to complete assignments.
- ❑ Monitor assignments through the Agenda.
- ❑ We welcome responses to homework. Communicate this through the agendas.

Assessments



During the school year, regular assessments are given in all subject areas in order to provide feedback and guidance for instruction. We consistently monitor and observe our children as they master FCPS-identified curricular standards appropriate to their level.

The Maryland State Department of Education monitors the progress of school systems through several state-mandated assessments. Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 take the MCAP assessment, which measures progress in reading and mathematics.

Additionally, 5th graders take the Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA).

Technology

Valley students will have the opportunity to experience the power of technology, as a tool appropriately used to enhance their learning.

Valley has wireless Internet access. A multimedia center, consisting of a computer, Promethian Board, and an LCD projector with camera, is at the hub of each classroom. All Classrooms will have chromebooks to be used as a rotation during

independent work time. Our school-based User Support Specialist will provide technical and instructional guidance and assistance with our technology components.

Valley Elementary sponsors an annual Tech Trot to raise funds for technology in classrooms! All money raised are used to purchase chromebooks for Valley's students to use. Our goal is to become one-to-one at Valley.



SECTION 2: At Your Service!

Before and Afterschool Programs

Each year several before- and afterschool activities and programs are planned. Many are in collaboration with the Valley PTA, and they may vary from year to year. In the past, such activities have included the STEAM club, chorus, chess club and academically focused family events.

Birthday Celebrations - Some students have life-threatening allergies to certain foods. As a result, Valley does not permit families to bring edible snacks for birthdays. Consider bringing stickers, pencils, erasers and other non-edible items. We (and our students) truly appreciate your support with this matter.

Along this same line, STUDENTS SHOULD NOT DISTRIBUTE INVITATIONS TO PRIVATE PARTIES AT SCHOOL unless they are inviting every child in the class. These should be mailed directly from home. Student addresses are not available through the office or classroom teacher. Student addresses may be obtained through the school directory that the PTA creates and provides to PTA members.

Child Care

The Frederick County YMCA will operate a before and after school daycare center at Valley Elementary. For information call 301-663-5131. Additional childcare information is available by calling Locate Childcare MD at 877-261-0060.

Cultural Arts Programs

Please join us for any or all of the performances that the PTA plans and coordinates. Careful attention is given to all grade levels and areas of interest when planning these programs. Programs are selected to coordinate with and support FCPS initiatives. Advance notice of programs will be sent home during the year.

Health Program

Valley's Health Technician is in our school every day, working under the direction of a Frederick County Health Department registered nurse. S/he will provide the following services:

- Administer medication
- Provide health care and monitor the health room
- Chart each student's visits
- Monitor immunization records
- Perform head checks for Pediculosis control

Care in the health room is limited to cleaning with soap and water and applying a bandage. In the event your child has a serious injury, a persistent illness, or an elevated temperature at school, you will be contacted by telephone. Families are considered to have primary responsibility for their child's health. ***In view of this, it is imperative that we always have your current, correct address and phone number, and an emergency name and number in the event you cannot be reached. PLEASE KEEP THIS CURRENT and notify us of any changes in address and/or phone number. We hold unlisted numbers in strict confidence.***

Usually when children are sick enough to stay home, they are not able to do school work. However, if you desire work for your child, please request work by calling the school and leaving a message for the classroom teacher to gather materials for you to pick up. Generally, a 24-hour turnaround time is required. Reading with your child and reviewing math facts are appropriate activities to do with your ill child as well.

Medications (prescribed and over the counter): To dispense these at school, we must have



- ✓ WRITTEN PARENTAL CONSENT (Part I/Authorization to Administer Prescribed Medication Form)
- ✓ PHYSICIAN'S STATEMENT (Part II/Authorization to Administer Prescribed Medication Form)
- ✓ PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE with LABEL or original over-the-counter container

All medication must be brought to the health room by an adult. **Children should never have any drug in their possession on a school bus or on school grounds.**

Any dosage changes must have written notification from the attending healthcare provider. Authorization to Administer Prescribed Medication forms are available in the health room and at www.fcps.org. Most Frederick County physicians also keep these forms in their offices. It is a good idea to have your healthcare provider complete one of these forms when s/he prescribes the medication. We request that you administer the first day's dosage of any new medication in case there are any side effects.

Dispensing Medication: Classroom teachers are prohibited from dispensing medication.

Health Screening: Students in kindergarten will receive hearing and vision screenings as mandated by Maryland law. Notices will be sent to you prior to the screening. If further medical examinations are indicated by the screening, you will be notified immediately.

Emergency Situations: In the event of an emergency that requires immediate medical attention beyond what we can do at the school level, you will be notified immediately, and we will make arrangements to transport your child to Frederick Memorial Hospital's Emergency Room. If you have not arrived at the school prior to transportation of your child to the hospital, an administrator or designee will accompany your youngster to the Emergency Room and wait with him/her until your arrival.

Special Health Situations: If your child has any special health conditions (asthma, diabetes, allergic reactions, etc.), please contact our Health Technician with specific details and treatment directions. This information will be shared with the appropriate staff by the Health Technician.

Lost and Found

To help alleviate the problem of lost articles, please put your child's name on lunch boxes, book bags, clothing, and outerwear. If your child loses something, we'll have him/her check the Lost and Found outside the cafeteria. If items are not claimed within a reasonable amount of time, we donate them to a charity organization.

Lunch Program and Prices

All children should either bring lunch from home or buy lunch from the cafeteria. The cost for a student breakfast is \$1.45, and the Reduced-Price Breakfast is \$0.30. The cost for a student lunch is \$2.35, and the Reduced-Price Lunch is \$0.40.

If children do not wish to buy lunch, they may bring their own from home.

FCPS uses the Heartland School Solutions MySchoolBucks program, one of the most widely used and secure online payment solutions available today. Visa and other trusted third parties have certified MySchoolBucks at the highest levels of Payment Card Industry-Data Security Standard security.

A few of the MySchoolBucks benefits include:

- Up to 90 days of purchase history
- Automated low-balance emails
- Scheduled payments allow parents to pay weekly, biweekly or monthly if desired
- Low-balance payments can automatically add money when an account runs low
- Families can download a mobile app for smartphones

If you do not want your child to use prepaid lunch money for snacks, simply indicate this when you send in your check or cash to the cafeteria. IF YOUR CHILD HAS FOOD ALLERGIES, PLEASE LET THE SCHOOL KNOW. Because of allergies, students are asked to not share lunches or food.

Children, on occasion, may need to charge a lunch. They may do so for one lunch, and a charge slip will be sent home that day. Please pay this charge as soon as possible. If a student needs to make a second charge without the first charge being paid, s/he will receive a sandwich and drink.

Menus are available on www.fcps.org, and each day's school menu is on channel 18 as well.

Parties

Two parties are held each year. Valley typically holds a Fall Festival party and Valentine's Day party. The leadership team will determine when these will be, and this information will come home in September. Volunteers, in cooperation with the

classroom teacher, will plan and coordinate snacks as well as several games and/or crafts.

Peer Mentors

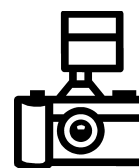
Selected 5th grade students will be able to participate in our Peer Mentor program. These students are trained and supervised to promote and monitor hall and building safety. Additionally, they may provide support in primary classrooms, and they run the morning announcements. Another job they do is assisting with afternoon dismissal. We look at this as a real opportunity to demonstrate Leadership and the *Character Counts!* traits.

Recess

If the temperature falls below 20 degrees, including the wind-chill factor, recess is held indoors. Please be aware of the day's weather forecast and see that your child(ren) come to school wearing appropriate clothing for cold-weather activities.

School Pictures

During the school year, Valley contracts with a professional photographer to take both group and individual pictures. Individual pictures are taken in the fall. Group pictures are in the spring. The school receives a percentage of income from the sales. We use this money for a variety of needed materials for students. Purchase of pictures is optional.



School Store

Our school store is open Monday, Wednesday and Fridays from 8:30-8:55 a.m. and is run by the Peer Mentors (with Mrs. Hart's assistance). All school store items can be purchased with Viking tickets.

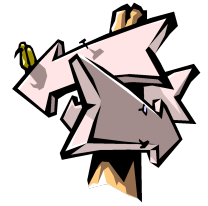
Student Accident Insurance

For a small premium, a family may enroll a child in an accident insurance plan. This plan covers the student to and from school, while school is in session, and during any school activity. We will send an application form with complete information home with each child the first week of school.

Volunteers

We invite volunteers to work with our teachers and students in many ways. Some may want to work in the classrooms, do clerical tasks, tutor students, help in the media center, or work at home. Volunteering is a fantastic way to make a difference in a student's life, so please consider this opportunity! We will send home a form for you to complete if you're interested in becoming a volunteer. **The school will set up a special orientation session in September that all volunteers will need to attend prior to beginning work in the school or chaperoning a field trip.** Parents are required to attend a face-to-face training every other year. At that time we will provide information regarding curriculum, managing children, simple reading and math activities to use, and school and volunteer procedures. We gratefully accept any time you can offer and look forward to seeing you at school!

SECTION 3: The Valley Way!



Arrival and Dismissal

Classes begin promptly at 8:55 a.m. Students should arrive no earlier than 8:30 a.m. and no later than 8:55 a.m. Please do not bring children before 8:30, as there is no adult supervision available before this time. **Dismissal will start at 3:30 p.m.**

ARRIVAL:

CAR RIDERS:

- Please stay in a single file line while dropping off your child in the back of the school. **You will enter the parking lot through the Horine Rd. entrance**, make an immediate right and proceed straight through to the blacktop area. This is for all car riders in grade Pre-Kindergarten through 5.
- Please do not park your car in this lane, get out of your car, or pull alongside another vehicle. This is a "kiss and ride" zone. If you need to come into the school, please park your car in the front parking lot.
- When dropping off, please move forward toward the gym entrance and someone will open the door for your child. Thank you in advance for making drop off smooth and safe for all involved.
- **Please do not park or drive in the bus lane between the hours of 8:30 and 9:00.**

BUS RIDERS: Bus riders are dropped off in the morning in the front of the building. A staff member is on duty there to greet and monitor our students.

WALKERS: We will have a staff member on duty outside the color pillar entrance to watch for and greet our walkers and bike riders.

LATE ARRIVALS: Drop off children who arrive after 8:55 am. at the front entrance, as they need to report to the office to get a Late Pass before going to class.

DISMISSAL:

CAR RIDERS:

- Please stay in a single file line while picking up your child in the back of the school. You will enter the parking lot through the Rt. 180 (Jefferson Pike) entrance, turn right into the second entrance of the parking lot and proceed through the parking lot to the blacktop area behind the school. This is for all car riders in grade Pre-Kindergarten through 5. (The Horine Rd. entrance is only to be used for busses entering the school between the hours of 3:15 and 4:00.)
- All afternoon car riders will be issued a "car rider number" to connect parents and students. You can register for a car rider number at Back to School night or during the first week of school. If you do not have a car rider number, you will be asked to show a picture ID.
- Please do not park or drive in the bus lane between the hours of 3:15 and 4:00.

The front of the building is reserved for students riding home on school buses.

WALKERS: Walkers will be dismissed out of the color pillar door. A staff member will walk the walkers to the bottom of the sidewalk near Jefferson Pike. Students will

walk up the sidewalk and cross where the crosswalk and crossing guard are located.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS:

- ❑ If you need to make a last minute change to the way your child normally comes home you may call the front office. Otherwise send this information to school with your child in the morning to ensure that the classroom teacher and the front office staff are aware of the change. Any changes after 3:00 may or may not be met.
- ❑ If students are to go home with someone other than a parent/guardian, we must have a note stating this. No child is allowed to leave school with anyone other than a parent or guardian unless **written permission** is presented to the office. The individual with whom the child leaves must sign the child out in the office. Because we have your child's safety as a priority, we may ask for picture identification from individuals we don't recognize. If written permission and/or identification are not provided, we may refuse to allow a child to leave with the person. Again, this is for the child's safety.
- ❑ If a student is going to another student's home after school, we must have a note from BOTH families involved. Make arrangements with your child before he or she leaves for school about what to do at dismissal. A note to the teacher helps eliminate confusion.
- ❑ If you need to pick up your child during the school day, you must report to the office. No child will be dismissed directly from the classroom. Please do not call the school and ask to have your child waiting in the office for pick up during the school day. We will call your child to the office when you arrive.
- ❑ Make sure your child knows the "game plan" to use in the event school closes early.

Please do not call teachers to hold a phone conference or stop in to talk about an issue from 8:30 - 8:55 a.m. This time is for teachers to greet students and to provide a little extra time to work with youngsters as needed. Instead, in order to give you the time and attention warranted, please schedule a time to chat. All staff have voicemail and email, so feel free to leave messages using either of these.

Attendance

School law requires all children to be in school each day. The school year consists of 180 regularly scheduled school days (see *the Calendar Handbook*). **The school day is from 8:55 a.m. to 3:25 p.m.**

Regular attendance is vital for a successful school experience. Statistics show that student achievement is directly related to attendance. Encourage your child to take pride in good attendance. If your child is reluctant to attend, please contact the school's guidance counselor so we can address any problems together.

Please call the school each day when your child is absent. If your child has contracted a communicable disease, such as chicken pox or measles, please notify the Health Room at 240-236-2985.

Written Excuses: Maryland law requires a written excuse when a child is absent from school, late to school, or leaves school early. A note stating the reason for the absence or lateness is required within **two days** of the child's return to school and must contain the date and reason of absence, and the parent's/guardian's signature. Without this information, the absence is classified as unlawful (unexcused). A written excuse from the physician is required when a child is unable to participate in physical education class. A written note is needed from the family when a child is unable to go outside for recess.

Vacations: The Board of Education realizes that occasionally families may need to take a trip with their children during school. Students who take a trip with their families will be excused **no more than twice during a year for a maximum of five days. Administrative approval is required prior to the vacation.**

Notification of Excessive Absences: Families of students accumulating excessive absences are notified by letter. With continued absences, a doctor's verification may be required for additional days accrued.

Dress Code

Students have the responsibility to dress and groom themselves in a manner that is safe, healthy, non-disruptive, and appropriate to elementary classroom and school procedures. Clothing should not depict activities or situations of violence, advertise alcoholic beverages or drugs, and should provide adequate covering (2-finger rule for shirt straps). If a student wears an article of clothing that is inappropriate, s/he may be asked to turn his/her shirt inside out, to wear a shirt/shorts provided by the school, and/or call home for a change of clothing. Students will be asked to hang all outerwear in their cubby. Hats and scarves are not to be worn in the building except on special, announced occasions.

Emergency Closings and Delays

Occasionally, inclement weather or other safety or health conditions require us to delay or close all or some schools. This decision involves careful evaluation of a variety of factors in a compressed time period. Decisions are generally made by 5:30 a.m. for morning closings and delays and, whenever possible, by 11:30 a.m. for early closings. FCPS notifies over 30 local and regional TV and radio stations in these situations. For the fastest, most reliable information, check the following:



- ❑ "Like us" on Facebook: FCPS Maryland and Twitter @FCPSMaryland
- ❑ TV:Cable Channel 18
- ❑ Radio: WAFY 103.1 FM, WFMD 930 AM, WFRE 99.9 FM, WTHU 1450 AM
- ❑ Internet: www.fcps.org
- ❑ Subscribe to Find Out First text messaging and email

For safety reasons, pre-arrange emergency back-up care for your child in the event schools close unexpectedly. Teach your child what to do in case you are not at home when school closes, and note the name and number of someone nearby who is usually available when you're not at home on the Emergency Card.

SECTION 4: Can We Talk?



We are committed to maintaining open lines of communication. We encourage families to contact teachers and staff to discuss any concerns. Teachers are on duty from 8:30 until 4:00 each day, but their times of availability differ. **Please keep in mind that during arrival and dismissal times, teachers are actively involved with students and lesson preparations.** In addition, teachers are directly engaged in instruction throughout the day. Consequently, we ask that you not interrupt the teachers or the students during the school day. Instead, call, send a note, or email, and teachers will be glad to get in touch with you!

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are held to discuss your child's progress in achieving the essential curriculum in each subject. Other items of interest and concern may be discussed as well. During the conference, you will have an opportunity to examine samples of work to determine your youngster's strengths and needs. You may provide input and ask questions concerning your child's program, too. Please refer to the FCPS Calendar Handbook for dates.

Additional conferences with your child's teachers are held at the request of either the family or the teacher at any time to discuss any concerns that directly affect your child's school performance. Please contact the school to arrange such a conference. If an interpreter is required for conferences, please notify the school at least one week prior to the conference so we can make the appropriate arrangements. Active involvement in your child's education will lead to school success!

Electronic Communication

Each of our staff has voicemail and email at school. Please feel free to access these avenues of communication if they are viable for you! Access our school profile and web site at www.fcps.org

Newsletters, Planners, and Thursdays



Thursdays are "Take-Home Day" when we send home all printed information, flyers, and newsletters. Make sure you check those backpacks EVERY night but especially on Thursdays! We send information electronically on Thursdays or as appropriate. In grades 2 through 5, we send home agendas every night, as students' assignments and other notes from the teacher are written in these. Do make a habit of asking to see the agenda every night to help your student get started on any homework. Feel free to write any questions or items in the agenda, as the teacher is to check these each day as well and can respond to your comments

right there in the agenda. Monthly newsletters from each grade/teacher will come home to keep you informed of units of study and other important classroom events and activities. We send home pertinent information and calendar updates monthly.

Reporting Systems

We send report cards home at the end of the four grading periods, which are in November, February, April, and June. Your child's teacher may also send home an interim report between the report card dates. These interims indicate areas of strength and/or weakness, need for improvement, or unsatisfactory work issues. Parents/guardians are asked to sign the interim and return it to the teacher.

Student Information Card

Your child will bring home one Student Information Card for you to review, correct as needed, and return to Valley. **BE SURE WE HAVE CURRENT**

INFORMATION INCLUDING WORK ADDRESSES, PHONE NUMBERS, AND THREE EMERGENCY NUMBERS IN CASE WE CANNOT REACH YOU. PLEASE KEEP US UPDATED ON THIS INFORMATION THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!

If your child is in day care, be sure to indicate that information on the card. If you move or change jobs, please notify the office. If there are any custody arrangements, the school will need a copy of any pertinent court documents.



FCPS students are sometimes asked to be photographed or videotaped, to have their name released for electronic communication, or to display their work for community or promotional purposes. The Information Card has an area for you to deny or give your permission for your child to participate in these activities. Note that FCPS cannot control media activities at events that are open to the public.

SECTION 5: Safe and Sound Character Counts!

Character Counts! is a nationally recognized program to help children make ethical decisions guided by respect for others and personal responsibility. It is about character development---how you behave when no one is looking! Valley joins other Frederick County schools in emphasizing the Character Counts! Pillars of **trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship**. Hence the Character Counts! Pillars painted at the front of the building down at the bus area.



Evacuation Drills

To prepare the children for evacuation of the building in case of fire or other emergency situations, a minimum of 16 drills will be held each year.

Two bus evacuation drills are held each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. In addition, FCPS and VES have developed emergency guidelines, and we have provided staff development to the VES staff on these. A variety of other drills may occur throughout the school year.

Items Not Permitted In School

1. Valuable personal possessions
2. Portable video and audio equipment
3. Chewing gum
4. Toys
5. Tobacco products--Smoking is not allowed at ANY time on school property.
6. Alcohol is prohibited on all school property.
7. Weapons or look-alike weapons are prohibited on all school property.
8. Drugs are prohibited on all school property.

Some personal possessions may be brought to school with prior permission of school staff.

School Security Issues

As previously stated, for the safety of your child, our policy will be to release a child only to a parent, guardian, or other authorized person listed on your Emergency Card. We may ask for picture identification before releasing youngsters in order to ensure your child's safety. The principal must approve exceptions to this policy. We ask that you use the sign-out register when you check your child out early.

After 8:55 AM, all doors to the building will be locked. Entrance to the building will be possible by using the doorbell near the front entrance and visitors will be "buzzed" in. This and other specific school security and safety procedures are addressed in both the Frederick County handbook containing school security and safety procedures and in the Valley Emergency Plan. Please know that even though certain procedures may seem annoying and/or time consuming, they are in place only for the sole purpose of establishing as safe an environment as we can for your child!



You Can Help At Home

Teach your child to be safe by following these guidelines:

- o Be sure your child knows and can tell his/her full name, address, phone number, and parents' names.
- o Choose the safest route to and from the bus stop. Walk the route together several times.
- o Discuss appropriate behavior while walking to the bus stop and/or on the bus.
- o Make sure your child knows the "game plan" in case schools close unexpectedly or you are unable to pick your child up on time. Let the school know this plan.
- o Teach your child to never talk to someone s/he doesn't know well.

VES Standards and Consequences

One goal of our Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) is to provide a safe and orderly environment for teaching and learning. Valley has consistent behavioral expectations, rewards and consequences throughout the building.

It is expected that students follow certain standards and show respect to all of the Valley community--staff, visitors, and each other. The staff has adopted the following **Valley School Expectations**, and you will see posters displayed throughout the building. We will work with our youngsters to foster understanding and internalization of these as well as the *Character Counts!* Pillars to build caring, responsible youngsters.

**Build a caring community by . . .
showing respect, responsibility and giving others the right to learn.**

In situations where a student's inappropriate behavior is infringing on the rights of others by creating an unsafe learning environment, an Office Referral may be written. An administrator will investigate the situation and determine the appropriate action. (See the FCPS Discipline Regulation 400-8 for details.) The family will be contacted and a copy of the office referral will be sent home and must be returned.

Discipline for Off-Campus Activities: Students can be disciplined for off-campus activities when there is a reasonable belief that the health and/or safety of others in school could be in danger or that school operations or activities may be disrupted.

Visiting the School

As you know, the need for security has become more essential over the past decade. All staff members at Valley wear identification badges. So that all adults are clearly identified, you are asked to report to the office before going through the school. At that time, you'll be asked to swipe your drivers license in order to receive an identification badge through the FCPS Raptor system. Again, because our teachers are responsible for your students' safety and instruction from 8:55 to 3:25, they will be unable to have you visit or conference with you without prearranging this. We ask that you contact your child's teacher to set up a mutually convenient time to visit or conference.

Infants and Toddlers: While we love and welcome toddlers and infants, there are some situations and events when it is best to leave the little ones at home for safety and instructional reasons. Volunteering, helping with classroom events, meetings and certain cultural arts programs would be times when you will want to leave your toddler or infant at home. In addition, please do not allow your toddler or infant to participate in recess with school-aged children on the playground or blacktop area.