



Vallejo Charter School Parent/Caregiver/Family Involvement Plan

2012-2013

Introduction

The interest and energy of parents/caregivers that helped create the Vallejo Charter School (VCS) will help it thrive. Research shows that family involvement is a crucial factor in successful learning. VCS is a cooperative enterprise: our families, teachers, principal, and staff share the responsibilities and the rewards of operating our school. Parents play essential roles in and out of the classrooms. Our families experience firsthand the school environment, become advocates for their children, and enrich the school community with their ideas, interests, talents, and resources. Family involvement is a key foundation of VCS as families are essential partners in the education of our students.

The VCS Parent/Caregiver/Family Involvement Plan has two separate components which are described in detail on the following pages. The first component, Student-Focused Requirements, lists the essential requirements for supporting your student(s) at home and at school. The second component, the VCS Volunteer Policy, states the volunteer commitment required of families of each student.

VCS is committed to setting up and supporting plentiful, diverse, and broadly-defined opportunities for parents/caregivers to participate in the education of their children. We thank you for being a part of our community and we look forward to the success of all of our students.

A.

B. Student-Focused Requirements

The **student-focused requirements** are absolutely essential from every family to ensure that students are getting the support that teachers and families believe is vital for each student's success.

Required Home Support

- Read Thursday Folders promptly every week; check backpacks daily for communication from school; complete permission forms by the date requested
- Create a literate environment at home by reading to child each night or ensuring that student reads each night
- Oversee homework - assist with homework or be aware of homework and its completion
- Ensure student is prepared for school. Make sure that student has necessary clothing, supplies, etc.
- Make sure student gets at least 9-10 hours of sleep each night
- Ensure student attends school regularly
- Support the school-wide [Student Achievement Plan \(strike this--to read: PBIS Plan\) the SAP has not yet been approved by staff; VCS has been implementing RC, Origins and our work with Dr. Jeffrey Sprague](#)
- Send only healthy snacks to school

Required School Support

- Attend all parent-teacher conferences and student-led conferences, including goal-setting conferences (if indicated by student's teacher)
- Attend *Family Night* Orientations, Back-to-School Night and Learning Celebrations,
- *Participate and attend Charter Council Meetings, School Site Council and English Language Advisory Council and monthly Coffee Mornings with the Principal*
- Plan for student to participate in all field work activities

C.

D. VCS Volunteer Policy

The school requires that all families support their students in learning at home and school, while also being involved in supporting the school itself. All VCS families are required to volunteer.

The volunteer requirements are as follows:

- **All VCS Families** shall volunteer a minimum of 20 hours per school year. Any person in the student's family may perform volunteer hours at VCS. If a person outside of the family will perform volunteer hours, that person or persons must be identified by October of each school year.
- **Families with Siblings:** Families who have more than one child attending Vallejo Charter School shall volunteer an additional 10 hours for the second child, and an additional 5 hours for each additional child.
- Families must sign a new Volunteer Commitment form each school year. The form will contain this policy and, once signed, be kept in the student files.
- The timeline for volunteering is defined as starting the second Tuesday in April and ending the second Monday in April of the following year. The Charter Council recommends that families complete at least 50% of their required hours by January 15 of each school year. *(this description is not clear to me--let's re-write this section. Thank you).*
- At the beginning of each school year, a list of family involvement opportunities will be provided to each VCS family. The opportunities will include a variety of activities including some which can be done at home and some which can be done at VCS during the evenings and weekends. Refer to **Appendix A** in this policy for a list of ongoing opportunities.
- Families must make every effort to complete their hours by April. Families who have not completed their hours will be required to re-apply for the following school year if they wish to have their child/children continue to attend Vallejo Charter School. Applications to re-enroll will be considered along with all other applications with no priority for enrollment.

Volunteer Hours for Siblings

| <i>Family Makeup</i> | <i>Minimum # of Required Hours per year</i> | <i>Total # of Hours per school year</i> |
|--|--|--|
| Families with two students attending VCS | 1 st student: 20 hours 2 nd student: 10 hours | 30 hours |
| Families with three students attending VCS | 1 st student: 20 hours 2 nd student: 10 hours 3 rd student: 5 hours | 35 hours |
| Families with four students attending VCS | 1 st student: 20 hours 2 nd student: 10 hours 3 rd student: 5 hours 4 th student: 5 hours | 40 hours |

C. [Donation of volunteer hours](#)

[If a family wishes to donate an excess of volunteer hours to another VCS family, it must be approved by the VCS Principal before April 1 of the current school year. No more than five \(5\) hours can be donated for this purpose.](#)

Appeals & Plans of Completion

VCS recognizes that there are many different situations and challenges and that volunteering may be difficult. VCS has a parent volunteer, called a **Family Volunteer Lead**, who is available to help families be successful and to coordinate the numerous volunteer opportunities each year. **All families are encouraged to seek out the Family Volunteer Lead if they have any questions about their volunteer requirements, or if they are experiencing special circumstances that make it difficult to complete the required hours.** It is the goal of VCS to work with all families to ensure the best success for them and their children at VCS. Please refer to **Appendix B** for the process by which volunteer hours are tracked and the timeline for each year.

[In situations where it has been impossible for a family to complete its required hours within the established time-frame, the family must submit an appeal letter and plan of completion to the VCS Principal and a committee appointed by the Charter Council in order to maintain their enrollment at VCS without re-applying.](#)

The committee shall be comprised of members of the VCS community who are not parents of students in the school. Appeals shall be considered favorably if the committee finds that 1) a family hardship existed that year which made it impossible for the family to complete its responsibilities; or 2) a family had met part of the expectations on a regular basis until an emergency occurred.

The committee may, once it determines that the family is committed to meeting the expectations for family involvement in the future, act on the appeal including but limited to one of the following ways:

1. Waive the requirement for that year for the appealing family;
2. Require that the family make up the missed hours by [the date of the lottery for the current school year](#)
3. [Add the incomplete hours to the volunteer commitment for the following school year](#)

The committee shall deny all appeals that do not provide evidence of the family's commitment to meeting the expectations for family involvement in the future.

Families that have not completed at least half of the volunteer hours by January 15, and who do not think they will be able to complete them before the April 1 deadline, [must submit an appeal letter and plan of completion](#). Appeals and plans of completion may be written, and submitted for consideration, based on the guidelines below:

- All appeals and plans of completion must be written and submitted by [March 15](#). They will be reviewed and VCS families will be notified [30 days after receipt of the letter and plan of completion](#).

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- While appeal letters will be taken into consideration, it will not ensure enrollment for the next school year. VCS Families will be notified of enrollment status within 30 days of submitting an appeal letter.
- Those families that fail to submit appeal letters by [March 15](#), or that fail to contact the school or Volunteer Lead to discuss the issue will be notified via certified [mail two weeks prior to the lottery](#) that they will be required to re-apply to the school.

Thank you in advance for all of your hard work and dedication.

Appendix A - Examples of Volunteer Opportunities

VCS offers a broad range of opportunities for families to participate - during the school day and on evenings/weekends. This allows family members to support the school in ways that are convenient and that capitalize on each person's special talents and pursuits.

Listed below are many suggestions for fulfilling the volunteer requirement. **These lists are not exhaustive and VCS welcomes community suggestions for additions to the lists.** In addition, families should check with their student's teacher for ideas. The teachers have many ideas for volunteering - the list below is just the beginning! In addition, the Family Volunteer Lead announces volunteer opportunities as they arise during the year.

Options for family involvement in student or classroom-specific activities:

- Be a Room Parent - includes organizing snack and coordinating class tasks
- [Prep work and other tasks depending on teacher needs](#)
- Help in the classroom
- Plan fieldwork, help with expedition research for fieldwork
- Go on fieldwork
- Complete book orders
- [Fill Thursday Folder](#) weekly
- Assist with classroom maintenance
- Assist with classroom preparation during the summer
- Assist with classroom clean up as needed
- Assist the teacher with research or computer work

Options for family involvement in school community:

- **[Highly Recommended:](#)** Attend meetings (PTO, [Arts Council](#), Charter Council)
- Be a Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) committee chair or active committee member
- [Serve as a VCS Charter Council member](#)
- Serve on a sub-committee of the Charter Council
- Provide child care for meetings
- Help in the VCS library
- Help with Celebration of Learning or other events
- Plan Extracurricular social events
- Lead after-school clubs
- Help in the lunchroom
- Assist with recess
- Lead or Join a VCS Crew

Options for family involvement off site:

- Plan fieldwork, help with expedition research for fieldwork
- Go on fieldwork
- Provide snacks for staff meetings
- Correct papers for teacher at home
- Prep work and other tasks depending on teacher needs at home
- Assist the teacher with research or computer work
- Provide donations (Maximum 5 hours for time spent, not donation value)
- Make phone calls from home for VCS staff or crews
- Research grants and fundraising opportunities

Appendix B - Notification Process for Incomplete Hours

[Grade level binders](#) are kept in the school office for families to log their volunteer hours. The Family Volunteer Lead is charged with tracking the hours and calculating the progress of families as they complete their volunteer commitment. Families may contact the Volunteer Lead to verify hours any time during the school year.

The process for Notification of Incomplete Hours is:

- In the Thursday Folders on the [first Thursday](#) after Winter Break, a **general reminder notice** will be given to all families to take a look at their hours to date and to note that the volunteer hours must be completed by [the second Monday in April](#). All families will be encouraged to seek out the Volunteer Lead if there are any questions or concerns about fulfilling the commitment.
- By the [third Thursday](#) after Winter Break - after the general reminder to the whole school - **notices to families with 10 or fewer hours** – along with an accounting of the actual total – [will be distributed](#). These families will be asked to sign and return an acknowledgment of receipt of this notice. The Volunteer Lead will track the responses and will follow up with families that do not return the acknowledgement.
- If families feel they cannot meet the requirement by April, they have until [March 15](#) to submit a letter of appeal and plan of completion to the Principal in order to address the issue and identify any difficulties that may have arisen that prevent them from meeting the commitment and the family's proposed resolution. The principal will acknowledge receipt of the letter with a phone call.
- The Charter Council will convene a committee to read the letters and determine a response to the appeals. Families will be notified [within 30 days of receipt](#) of the result of their request. Those families that fail to submit appeal letters by [March 15](#), or that fail to contact the school or Volunteer Lead to resolve any difficulties will be notified by **certified mail by April 20** that they will be required to re-apply to the school. Information about the deadline for submitting applications for enrollment for the following year and the lottery process will be included in this letter. No further notification or contact will be made.

Annual Timeline - Summary

- [Second Tuesday in April until Second Monday in April](#): Time frame for completing hours for each school year.
- January [15](#): Date by which at least half of the volunteer hours should be completed.
- [Third Thursday](#) after Winter Break –families with fewer than 10 hours will be [notified of the total number of hours completed](#), with a requirement to sign and return an acknowledgement of receipt.
 - o Volunteer Lead follows up with non-responders
- [March 15](#) – Appeal letters and plans of completion due to VCS Principal.
 - o [Principal shares results of the request within 30 days after receipt](#).
- Two weeks prior to the lottery – Certified letters sent to those families who will be required to re-apply due to failure to complete required volunteer hour commitment.
- 1 week before the lottery - Application deadline for enrollment for next school year with the specific date to be determined by November 1 each school year.

PARENT/CAREGIVER ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
2011-2012 School Year

I/We have read and understand the Vallejo Charter School Parent/Caregiver/Family Involvement Plan.

I/We agree to abide by the terms of the Plan.

Parent Name (please print)

Parent Name (please print)

Signature

Signature

Email address: _____

Student(s) Name(s) (please print):

Grade Level:

