



Santa Ynez Valley Charter School

Student/Family Handbook

Approved at the August 8, 2001 Meeting of the Board of Directors
Revised February 2012, August 2014
Santa Ynez Valley Charter School

Introduction

Welcome to Santa Ynez Valley Charter School!

The information included within this Student/Family Handbook should help to provide an overview of the SYVCS school programs and expectations for student success. With a great partnership between students, families, staff, the SYVCS Board, PTSO, and Santa Ynez Valley Education Foundation, our school and students continue to grow and develop.

In addition to the information contained here, additional information can also be found on our school website at www.syvcs.org as well as by contacting the school office at 805-686-7360.

Thank you for being a valuable part of our school community.

Mission Statement

Santa Ynez Valley Charter School (SYVCS) is founded to work collaboratively to create a supportive, innovative, and academically challenging educational environment that nurtures its students and prepares them for high school and beyond through strong curricular articulation. Santa Ynez Valley Charter School will also emphasize preparation of its students for a successful and rewarding future by developing both academic and nonacademic skills.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Mission Statement.....	2
Arrival and Dismissal Times	4
Car Line	4
Parking	4
Early Release.....	5
Extended Day.....	5
Morning Announcements/Flag Salute	5
Lunch Program	5
Buddy Program.....	5
Field Trips.....	5
Communication.....	6
Email Groups	6
School Directory	6
Tuesday Folder.....	6
Online Gradebook	6
Volunteering	7
Logging Hours	7
Monthly Statements	7
Cash in Lieu of Hours	7
Community Service	7
Board.....	8
PTSO.....	8
Foundation	8
Expectations for Student Conduct.....	9
Tardy and Attendance Policy.....	11
Definition	11
Parents / Students	11
Absence Verifications	11
Tardiness	12
Absences	13
School Attendance Review Board (SARB).....	14
Independent Study.....	14
Dress Code.....	15
Elementary School (K-5)	15
Middle School (6th, 7th, 8th Grades).....	16
Cell Phones and Other Electrical Devices.....	16
Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation.....	17
Good Citizenship Notices	17
Computer Use Policy	18
Bullying	20
Definition	20
Prevention	20
Recognition	20
Actions Upon Recognition.....	21
Disciplinary Actions.....	21
Consequence of Misconduct.....	22
Level 1 Disciplinary Notices.....	22
Serious Violations.....	24
Suspension (CA Education Code 48900-48926).....	24
Expulsion (CA Education Code 48900-48926).....	24
Additional School Policies.....	25
Classroom Food Policy	25
Graduation Requirements.....	25
Complaint Process.....	26
Acknowledgement of Student/Family Handbook	26

Arrival and Dismissal Times

Students should arrive on campus no earlier than 7:45am. Morning announcements and the flag salute begin at 7:55am and all students are expected to arrive at school no later than 8am.

Kindergarten students are released at 1:30pm Monday through Thursday.

Students in Grades 1-5 are released at 2:30pm Monday through Thursday.

Students in Grades 6-8 are released at 3:00pm Monday through Thursday.

All students are released at 1pm on Fridays. Friday early release is used for teacher professional development.

Students should be picked up or should walk home from school no later than 3:15pm Monday through Thursday and 1:30pm on Fridays, unless they are participating in after school activities.

Students arriving early may place their backpacks at their classroom and should line up with their class near the flag pole. Students may also be in a classroom with a teacher before school, if the teacher has their classroom open, until 7:55am, when they will join the school for morning announcements and the flag salute.

Students should not play on the playground before or after school, unless they have been given specific permission and are supervised by a staff member. After school, students will sit at the lunch tables to wait for their parents to arrive to pick them up. Students whose parents arrive in the car line will be called by a staff member to come to their car. Students whose parents park and get out of their car to pick their children up, should find their child at the lunch tables.

Car Line

The Car Line is used to pick-up or drop off students and pick-up students. To help ensure student safety and efficient traffic flow, please slow down and use extreme caution when driving in the school zone.

The right lane should be used to pick-up or drop off students, and the left lane for thru traffic. Please pull all the way forward when dropping off or picking-up your child(ren).

In the afternoon, a staff member will help facilitate student pick-up. Please use the right lane, roll your window down, and identify the child(ren) you are picking up to the staff member. Pull all the way forward when waiting for your child(ren), and work to get your child in, seated and strapped in the car, as safely and quickly as possible.

Please do not leave your car unattended in the Car Line, as this is not a parking area at any time during the day.

Parking

Marked parking spaces and gravel parking along Tyndall Street should be used when getting out of your car to come on campus. Please be aware of the County Posted “No Parking” sign at the North-West end of Tyndall. The VIP Parking spot is a reserved space and should only be used with permission from the winning bidder at the auction each year.

When parking on the street within the neighborhood, please help us be good neighbors by ensuring that driveways and walkways are not blocked so that homeowners can access their home.

Please do not leave your car unattended in the Car Line, as this is not a parking area at any time during the day.

Early Release

Students are released at 1pm for Early Release Days. In addition to Friday Early Release, the school calendar notes early release days throughout the year for a variety of reasons including but not limited to provide teachers time to assess students, conference weeks, or Valleywide conferences.

Extended Day

Teachers in grades 2-4 will organize extended day learning each school year. Extended day will be used for skills-based instruction based upon student's assessed instructional needs. To fulfill the mission of SYVCS, Extended Day learning will be used to challenge students academically at or above their current grade level, as well as support development to increase student achievement to grade level expectations. Students may be invited to participate in extended day learning based upon individual student needs.

Morning Announcements/Flag Salute

Each morning begins with the entire school gathering for the morning announcements and flag salute. Students should line up with their class by 7:55am. Morning announcements begin at 7:55am so that all students will be in class at 8am. Parents and families are encouraged to stay and join our school community for the morning announcements and flag salute.

Lunch Program

SYVCS seeks to provide families with the option to purchase snack and/or lunch made daily in our kitchen. The goal is to provide students with meals that are mostly made from scratch. The kitchen is operated nut free, with other dietary needs supported so that all students may access school meals. Lunches and snack cards can be purchased monthly with payments collected in the office.

Buddy Program

The SYVCS Buddy Program helps to build a strong and healthy school community, where students learn academic, social-emotional, and interpersonal skills through cross-grade level academic activities.

All grade levels will participate in the Buddy Program, with specific buddy classes, times, and activities determined by collaboration between teachers.

Examples of the Buddy Program include:

All Grades Reading Buddies

Kindergarten-2nd Grade Calendar Counts Mathematics Program

5th Grade-2nd Grade Language Arts Buddies

It is encouraged that you ask your child about the Buddy Program and about their buddies. Students enjoy seeing their buddies out in the community.

Field Trips

Field trips allow teachers to extend valuable learning experiences to students outside the walls of the classroom. Each teacher works to identify field trip opportunities that are appropriate for their grade level students and curriculum. Middle School Students have the opportunity to go on one overnight field trip each year, which range from 3 to 4 nights. The cost of field trips is partially supported by fundraising through PTSO, each class often fundraises to defer the cost of field trips, with parents asked to make donations to cover the remaining costs of all field trip opportunities.

Communication

Open communication is essential to the success of each child. In addition to face-to-face communication, informal and formal conferences, the following are some of the ways that we communicate with parents about student programs.

Email Groups

Email communication is a frequent way that parents and families receive information about school activities and events. SYVCS creates and maintains class email groups for official school communication. Parent email addresses are not visible to others through these email groups, and only SYVCS staff and room parents can post to these group emails.

School Directory

A school directory is published each year in paper format. As part of the back-to-school paperwork, parents have the choice to indicate whether they would like their information to be published in the school directory. The directory is published following the return of all back-to-school paperwork. If you would like a copy of the school directory, please request one from the office. Out of respect for families, please reserve the use of the directory for personal communication and not for business solicitation.

Tuesday Folder

The Tuesday Folder is a weekly newsletter that is emailed to all parents and posted on the SYVCS website. The Tuesday Folder contains a calendar of current school activities, and information about school and community events. Please look for and review the Tuesday Folder each week, as it contains important information about school activities and often contains time-sensitive information. You can access archived copies of the Tuesday Folder on the school website at any time.

Online Gradebook

Students and families in grades 5-8 have access to an online gradebook where teachers will post updated grades. Families are provided one log-in that students and parents can share to access information online. It is recommended that students and parents check grades weekly and contact individual teachers with questions about grades.

Volunteering

An integral part of our school foundation is parent participation; it is one of the assets that make our school so unique. The volunteer commitment was written into our charter because the founding parents strongly believed that parents who are actively involved in their child's education enhance the likelihood that their child will succeed in school. As part of our school culture, families now contribute a minimum of 3 hours of volunteer time per child per month (5 hours per month if you have multiple children attending), with a total of 36 hours (60 hours for multiple kids) during each school year.

Logging Hours: As we continue to transition to an online system, hours are recorded by filling out a Volunteer Log and turning it in to the office. Volunteer logs can be printed from the school website or picked up in the office.

Monthly Statements: You will receive monthly statements and reminders that will let you know your volunteer hours to date and what you have left to contribute.

Cash in Lieu of Hours: Families are welcome to donate cash in lieu of hours. For every \$25 donated you will receive credit for one hour of volunteer time. This is a great way to support the school, as the money goes directly towards the school and may be tax deductible! If you do donate cash in lieu of hours please make sure you include this on your volunteer log to get credit for the hours.

Community Service

The promotion of a life-long commitment to service begins at SYVCS. In keeping with the commitment by parents to serve the school community, students in grades 6-8 will provide 10 hours of community service each year. 8th graders will also complete two additional hours of political service to meet graduation requirements. Personal reflection is an important component to community service; students will complete a 2 page reflection essay about community service in their Language Arts class each year. Students are encouraged to select activities that serve in ways that they are passionate about, which will help them pursue future academic, professional, and personal goals.

Board

The SYVCS Board is made up of community members that represent the school community, including parents, teachers and the College School District Superintendent. The Board meets regularly, typically monthly, to oversee the operations of the school. More information about the current Board, including the current Board members, meeting agendas, and adopted budget can be found on the school website.

Board vacancies occur during most years as terms of current members expire. If you have an interest in serving on the Board, please contact the current Board Chairperson or the Executive Director.

PTSO

The Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) provides opportunities for parents, teachers and students to come together to discuss school concerns and support the school. The PTSO has focused on facilitating schoolwide communication through coordinating room parent activities, supporting teachers through providing coffee, monthly lunches, and teacher appreciations, and has established a fund to support field trips. PTSO meets regularly on campus to coordinate activities, including the annual Jog-a-Thon and Carnival. Your participation in PTSO is strongly encouraged.

Foundation

The Santa Ynez Valley Education Foundation is a private, non-profit entity organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes and whose primary function is to provide financial support to the Santa Ynez Valley Charter School; its application for 501(c)(3) tax status is pending. The Foundation exists to support, develop and maintain the school's excellent core curriculum as well as an abundance of programs, including visual arts, performing arts, foreign languages, the sciences, physical education and technology programs. The Foundation Board is comprised of community members with extensive leadership skills and a strong commitment to carrying out the mission of the Foundation.

Expectations for Student Conduct

In keeping with its mission statement, Santa Ynez Valley Charter School is committed to educate students and families about its policies, and to teach the skills necessary for each student's future success in education and beyond. The Discipline Policy establishes the Rules of Student Conduct and related codes and procedures for SYVCS students. The goal in establishing the Discipline Policy is to provide a safe environment in which students can develop responsibility, healthy self-concepts, independence, self-reliance and the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed.

In general, SYVCS students are expected to:

- Attend school and all classes punctually and regularly.
- Comply with all of the rules and regulations of the district and school.
- Obey the reasonable directions and demands of the staff, teachers, and director.
- Dress in a manner and in attire that will not disrupt school activities or compromise safety.
- Remain on the school premises during school hours; leave school grounds only by following school procedures.
- Maintain good personal health and safety standards.

More specifically, SYVCS students are expected to:

1. Students will arrive on time to school and to all classes.
2. Students will use appropriate language; profanity is not permitted.
3. Students will demonstrate respect for all persons, including their rights and feelings.
4. Students will demonstrate respect for school property and grounds, keeping the school neat, clean and safe.
5. Students will play in designated areas only.
6. Students will follow directions of all school personnel promptly and politely.
7. Students will wear clothing that conforms to the school dress code.
8. Students may use Conflict Resolution procedures to resolve conflicts other than those listed as suspendable behavior in the California Education Code 48900.
9. Students will contact a teacher or other staff member if they need adult intervention to solve a problem.
10. Students will refrain from chewing gum on campus.
11. Students will not have personal electronic devices on the school campus unless previous authorization is granted by the director.

12. In compliance with state law, helmets will be worn and fastened appropriately when bicycling to or from SYVCS and all school events. Skating, roller-blading, bicycling or skateboarding on school grounds is not allowed.
13. Students shall not bring on campus any personal items, including without limitation books, magazines, photographs, compact discs or computer files that discuss or portray inappropriate sexual themes or which promote or advocate discrimination, drug use or violence.
14. Students shall not use any school property, in particular its computers or telephone facilities, for any improper purpose or personal using, including without limitation transmitting obscene, harassing or otherwise offensive messages; accessing Internet sites with sexual or other offensive content, or displaying, downloading or distributing offensive material.
15. A student can be suspended or expelled for committing the following: (Education Code 48900)
 - 15.1 Fighting; including participating, threatening, encouraging, intimidating, and harassing
 - 15.2 Possession of dangerous objects or anything that looks like a dangerous object
 - 15.3 Using, possessing, or selling drugs or any drug paraphernalia
 - 15.4 Stealing or destroying property or possessions
 - 15.5 Consistently interrupting school or classroom activities
 - 15.6 Sexually harassing other students or name-calling
 - 15.7 Continuously displaying profanity or using vulgar language
 - 15.8 Robbery or extortion, or receiving stolen property
 - 15.9 Truancy or excessive tardiness
 - 15.10 Displaying or participating in hate violence

Such provisions, mandated by statute, shall not prevent SYVCS from suspending or expelling students for violation of other SYVCS rules where appropriate.

16. Students recognized for outstanding campus conduct will:
 - Be recognized with Good Citizenship Notices
 - Be recognized with other positive reward incentives

Tardy and Attendance Policy

Santa Ynez Valley Charter School recognizes that regular, on-time, attendance is essential to a student's success.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to see that children ages six to eighteen years old attend school. Research shows that students with excessive absences fall behind academically, perform at a lower level, and actually impact school services (attendance personnel, teachers' time, and disrupt learning) significantly more than their peers who attend regularly, regardless of whether or not their schoolwork is made up.

School funding is negatively impacted by excessive absences regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. SYVCS revenue is largely based upon average daily attendance (ADA) for a specific period of time. This ultimately affects the services, programming, staffing and supplies that can be offered on campus.

Recognizing the importance of attendance, we are asking that, as parents and guardians you make every attempt to minimize absences due to personal business and vacations when school is in session. We encourage families to plan their vacations during school vacation time, using the school calendar, and miss only those times that are necessary, returning for the remainder of the day.

Definition

All absences are classified as Excused, Preplanned, or Unexcused as defined below:

- **Excused absences** are those absences due to illness, immediate family bereavement, or doctor appointments that cannot be scheduled during non-school hours. When a student is absent more than 3 consecutive days during the school year for illness, the school may require verification by a physician.
- **Preplanned absences** are absences that are prearranged with the office. Please report preplanned absences at least 1 week in advance and work with your child's teacher to ensure that your child completes all work assigned during the absence.
- **Unexcused absences** include all other absences not considered excused. This includes personal business and family emergencies. Students with excessive unexcused absences (more than three per trimester) are considered truant and may be referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB).

Parents / Students should:

- Schedule vacations and other non-school activities during school vacations.
- Know the school schedule and try to make appointments during non-school hours.
- If an appointment must be scheduled during school hours please be sure to come to school for at least part of the day, only missing those classes that are necessary.
- Know that excellent attendance is important to their future and personal growth.
- Inquire with the office about a temporary independent study plan at least a week in advance if your child needs to be out of school for an extended period of time.

Absence Verifications

According to State Attendance Review Board (SARB) requirements, absences from school must be verified by the student's parent or legal guardian in person, by written note, or by telephone. Please call the SYVCS office to report an absence. Any absence not reported by a parent will be considered an unexcused absence.

Tardiness

Any arrival after 8:00 a.m. is considered tardiness. Students who are late to school in the morning must report to the office for a tardy slip. All tardies will be entered into the Student Information System.

SYVCS will take the following actions to support positive student attendance and to prevent excessive tardiness.

School Actions Table-Tardiness

Unexcused Tardies Per Trimester	School Actions
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent Notification #1
3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent Notification #2• Written Warning• 15 minute Community Service or Detention (lunch or recess)
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent Notification #3• Level 1 Disciplinary Notice• 30 minute Community Service or Detention (lunch or recess)
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent Notification #4• Level 1 Disciplinary Notice• Tardiness Intervention conference with Student, Parent/Guardian, Director
7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent Notification #5• Level 1 Disciplinary Notice• Student Success Team Meeting #1 with Student, Teacher, Parent/Guardian, Director
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent Notification #6• Student referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB)
11+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent Notification #7• Student Success Team Meeting #1 with Student, Teacher, Parent/Guardian, Director

Absences

Students are required to make up work assigned during absences, regardless of the reason for absence. Students and parents will work with the teacher to determine a reasonable period of time within which to make up missed assignments. Students will make up missed assignments within the agreed time frame.

SYVCS will take the following actions to support positive student attendance and to prevent excessive absences.

School Actions Table- Absences

Unexcused Absences Per Trimester	School Actions
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Notification #1 • Written Warning • 15 minute Community Service or Detention (lunch or recess)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Notification #2 • Level 1 Disciplinary Notice • 30 minute Community Service or Detention (after school)
3+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Notification #3 • Student Success Team meeting with Student, Teacher, Parent/Guardian, Director • Student referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB)

Total Absences Per Year	School Actions
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Notification #1
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Notification #2
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Notification #3 • Absence Intervention conference with Student, Parent/Guardian, Director
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Notification #4 • Student Success Team Meeting #1 with Student, Teacher, Parent/Guardian, Director
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Notification #5 • Student Success Team Meeting #2 with Student, Teacher, Parent/Guardian, Director

School Attendance Review Board (SARB)

CA Education Code 48260. Any pupil ...who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district.

SYVCS is a member of the Santa Ynez Valley Schools Attendance Review Board (SARB). The intent of SARB is to make parents and students aware of the importance of school attendance. Students who are chronically absent, whether excused or unexcused, miss valuable days of instruction and hamper their educational experiences. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child regularly attends school. Every effort should be made by the school to notify parents when their child has accumulated excessive absences. If a student has 10 total absences a conference with the Director will be held. If the parent does not attend the conference, an immediate referral is made to SARB.

Independent Study

Students who have a planned absence of 5 or more days can request short-term independent study. Short-term independent study should be requested from the office at least one week in advance to provide the school with the opportunity to gather the work assignments for a student's absence.

The independent study agreement will outline the dates of independent study, assignments to complete, and the date the independent study agreement is to be turned in. All student work completed must be turned in with the independent study agreement. The student, parent and teacher must sign the independent study agreement.

A maximum of two (2) five (5) day independent study agreements, not to exceed ten (10) days per school year, may be completed. A student who completes the independent study agreement, as assigned, will be marked in attendance for the days of independent study.

Dress Code

The Santa Ynez Valley Charter School dress code is intended to promote a learning-centered atmosphere. Appropriate SAFETY & MODESTY is necessary at school and we ask students and parents to be mindful when purchasing/selecting school attire. All students are expected to dress in a manner that represents SYVCS in a positive manner. Studies have shown that a well maintained school dress code provides a safe environment, builds student confidence, reduces distractions, and promotes a positive academic atmosphere.

- All students must be in compliance with the dress code policy from the time they arrive on campus until they exit.
- If a student is not dressed appropriately and it cannot be corrected at school, a parent will be contacted to bring proper attire.
- Please settle all clothing issues at home to avoid any problems at school.
- In any matter concerning dress code, the principal or her designee has the final authority.
- All clothing, backpacks, book covers, etc., must not depict or reference alcohol, drugs, tobacco, weapons, nudity, gang affiliation, death, violence, vulgar or obscene language or images, and/or insults to race, religion, gender or ethnicity, or other emblems or writing that may be expected to cause a material or substantial disruption of, or interference with, normal school operations.

Elementary School (K-5)

Hats

Hats must be removed when inside of classroom.

Shirts

Shirts must be worn at an appropriate length that will not hinder normal school activities. Spaghetti straps and tank tops are allowed but modesty must be reflected.

Pants/Shorts/Skirts/Skort

Pants must not be “sagging” or “bagging” and may not be ripped or torn in an inappropriate manner. All skirts, shorts and skorts must be of a modest length. Shorts, skirts and skorts shall be no shorter than the tips of the fingers when the arms are naturally beside the body.

Footwear

Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times with safety being the main concern. Sandals are permitted ONLY if design includes a “toe covering” and a strap on the back. Girls’ heels may not exceed 1 inch. Footwear with reinforced steel, wheels or bedroom/house shoes will not be permitted unless worn for school council sanctioned events, such as Pajama Day. Proper athletic shoes must be worn at all times during P.E. classes.

Jewelry & Accessories

Earrings, necklaces, and bracelets are permitted but parents should ensure that student safety is not compromised. No dangling or hoop earrings, or necklaces that may cause injury.

Note: Primary teachers may request additional limitations to the wearing of jewelry due to distraction issues (i.e. students playing with jewelry during class time).

Middle School (6th, 7th, 8th Grades)

Hats

Hats must be removed when inside of classroom.

Shirts

Shirts must be worn at an appropriate length. The school prohibits displays on any shirt that are lewd, vulgar or obscene. Shirts must not depict tobacco products, alcohol or alcoholic beverages, drugs or any other illegal substances. Spaghetti straps, cut-out sleeves or cut-off shirts, any exposed back or midriffs, see through garments or low cut tops which expose cleavage are not permitted. Undergarments such as bra straps are not permitted to be showing.

Pants/Shorts/Skirts/Skorts/Leggings

Pants must not be “sagging” or “bagging” and may not be ripped or torn in an inappropriate area. All skirts, shorts and skorts must be of a modest length. Shorts, skirts and skorts shall be no shorter than the tips of the fingers when the arms are naturally beside the body. Leggings/Tights must be worn with a shirt that reaches tips of fingers when the arms are naturally beside the body.

Footwear

Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times with safety being the concern. Sandals are permitted but must have a back strap. Girls’ heels may not exceed 2 inches. Footwear with reinforced steel, wheels or bedroom/house shoes will not be permitted unless worn for school council sanctioned events, such as Pajama Day. Proper athletic shoes must be worn at all times during P.E. classes.

Jewelry & Accessories

Earrings, necklaces, and bracelets are permitted in Middle School but parents should ensure that student safety is not compromised. No oversized hoops or jewelry that may cause injury.

Cell Phones and Other Electrical Devices

Cellular phones and other electrical devices on campus can create a great distraction to the learning environment. All electronic devices must be turned off and placed in a student’s backpack between the hours of 7:55am and 3pm, unless otherwise authorized by school staff. If cell phones or other electrical devices are used during regular school hours, without specific permission by school staff, including recess, lunch, and passing periods, they may be confiscated. Parents may pick up these items in the office during regular school hours.

Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation

This interactive process works at school, in the home and in the workplace with adults and children alike. At SYVCS it is used on the playground and in the classroom. Students are trained in the mediation process, then help resolve conflicts erupting at school. The process involves identifying the needs and feelings of the disputants and working toward an appropriate solution. Steps in the mediation process include the following:

1. Introduction
 - Explain the purpose of mediation
 - Ask if disputants are willing to participate in the process
2. Listen
 - Disputants take turns speaking.
 - Mediator(s) uses Active Listening techniques and repeats what is said for clarification.
3. Defining the Main Issues
 - 3.1 Disputants talk to each other about their concerns. Disputants use Active Listening and “I-messages.”
 - 3.2 After listening to the disputants, the mediator makes a list of the most important points.
 - 3.3 Mediator(s) review the list with the disputants.
 - 3.4 Disputants continue dialogue if necessary.
4. Solution
 - 4.1 Ask each disputant what s/he can do to solve the problem.
 - 4.2 Ask both disputants what each could do differently if the problem arises again.
 - 4.3 Help disputants find a solution that both think is good.
 - 4.4 Write the agreement and have all participants sign it.
 - 4.5 Congratulate the disputants on their work and thank them for coming to mediation.

Good Citizenship Notices

The Santa Ynez Valley Charter School recognizes the importance of encouraging and rewarding good behavior. The seven pillars of Character Counts are emphasized in the classroom and on the playground. Students will be issued a “Good Citizenship Notice” when s/he demonstrates age appropriate outstanding academic and social behavior throughout the school day. These notices will entitle the students to participate in special drawings, attend class or school-wide parties, and/or earn prizes. Some behaviors for which a student may be given a “Good Citizenship Notice” include:

- Demonstrating helpful behavior in the classroom and/or on the playground on a regular basis.
- Consistently following school and classroom rules and demonstrating a high level of responsibility, sportsmanship, good behavior and/or citizenship.
- Demonstrating a correction of negative behavior and thereafter consistently choosing positive behavior.
- Consistently attending school each month without absences or tardies.

Computer Use Policy

The school's information technology resources, including email and Internet access, are provided for educational purposes. For the purposes of this policy, the word “computer” is used to describe any technological device used for the purposes of education at SYVCS. Adherence to the following policy is necessary for continued access to the school's technological resources:

Students must:

1. Respect and protect the privacy of others.
 - a. Use only assigned accounts.
 - b. Not view, use, or copy passwords, data, or networks to which they are not authorized.
 - c. Not distribute private information about others or themselves.
2. Respect and protect the integrity, availability, and security of all electronic resources.
 - a. Observe all network security practices, as posted.
 - b. Report security risks or violations to a teacher or network administrator.
 - c. Not destroy or damage data, networks, or other resources that do not belong to them, without clear permission of the owner.
 - d. Conserve, protect, and share these resources with other students and Internet users.
3. Respect and protect the intellectual property of others.
 - a. Not infringe copyrights (no making illegal copies of music, games, or movies!).
 - b. Not plagiarize.
4. Respect and practice the principles of community.
 - a. Communicate only in ways that are kind and respectful.
 - b. Report threatening or discomfoting materials to a teacher.
 - c. Not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that violates the school's code of conduct (such as messages that are pornographic, threatening, rude, discriminatory, or meant to harass).
 - d. Not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that is illegal (such as obscenity, stolen materials, or illegal copies of copyrighted works).
 - e. Not use the resources to further other acts that are criminal or violate the school's discipline policy.
 - f. Not send spam, chain letters, or other mass unsolicited mailings.
 - g. Not buy, sell, advertise, or otherwise conduct business, unless approved as a school project.

Students may, if in accord with the policy above:

1. Design and post web pages and other material from school resources.
2. Use direct communications such as online chat, or instant messaging with a teacher's permission.
3. Install or download software, if also in conformity with laws and licenses, and under the supervision of a teacher.
4. Use the resources for any educational purpose.

Consequences for Violation

Violations of these rules may result in disciplinary action, including the loss of a student's privileges to use the school's information technology resources.

Supervision and Monitoring

School and network administrators and their authorized employees monitor the use of information technology resources to help ensure that uses are secure and in conformity with this policy. Administrators reserve the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school's information networks in order to further the health, safety, discipline, or security of any student or other person, or to protect property. They may also use this information in disciplinary actions, and will furnish evidence of crime to law enforcement.

Bullying

Santa Ynez Valley Charter School believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The staff, students, parents and school community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

In accordance with California Education Code Sections 200, 220, 233, and 48900, the following policies are in place at Santa Ynez Valley Charter School.

Definition:

Physical, verbal, written or other means of harassment, sexual harassment, threats, intimidation, cyber-bullying, causing bodily harm or injury to or committing hate violence against any student or school personnel.

Cyber-bullying includes the transmission of harassing communications, direct threats or other harmful texts, sounds or images on the Internet, social media or other technologies such as a telephone, computer or any wireless communication device. Cyber-bullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

Prevention:

The best way to deal with bullying is prevention. All students, staff, parents, and the school community must work together to create a positive and collaborative school climate that prevents bullying from happening. The school community can take the following steps to prevent bullying at Santa Ynez Valley Charter School and all school sanctioned events:

- Be friendly, kind, and courteous in all actions and interactions
- Work to get to know each other personally
- Demonstrate through our actions that we are worthy of mutual trust
- Have the courage to speak out when any student or staff member is anything other than courteous, kind, and friendly in words or in actions
- Be a positive role model -- demonstrate through your actions that you are committed to a positive and welcoming culture for all student, staff, parents, and community members at Santa Ynez Valley Charter School
- All staff will periodically review the definition of bullying and remind students of these steps to prevent bullying. Parents and students should also review this information periodically to help prevent bullying and remind students of ways to act in a positive manner
- Santa Ynez Valley Charter School will support all students with appropriate ways to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and interact positively in social situations. This will include, but not limited to, ways to show respect for individual and cultural differences, as well as appropriate positive behavior strategies
- Be alert for any signs of bullying as outlined above in the definition of bullying and report any bullying behaviors immediately to a responsible adult

Recognition:

It is the responsibility of all students and staff to be aware of and recognize bullying behaviors.

Actions Upon Recognition:

Should any bullying behaviors be observed on campus or during any school-sanctioned activity, Santa Ynez Valley Charter School:

- Expects students and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to the appropriate staff member, school Director or designee.
- Students may submit an anonymous note to a staff member concerning bullying.
- Staff who witnesses such acts will take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so.
- The Director or designee will promptly investigate each complaint of bullying within a reasonable amount of time.
- The school will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of investigation confidential. As appropriate, the Director or designee may notify parents/guardians of victims and perpetrators as well as involve counselors, mental health professionals or law enforcement.

Disciplinary Actions:

Any student who engages in bullying on campus, during any school sanctioned activity, or off campus in a manner that causes or is likely to cause a substantial disruption of a school activity or school attendance, is in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with school policies and procedures, up to and including suspension and expulsion.

Consequence of Misconduct

Teachers and other authorities at Santa Ynez Valley Charter School (SYVCS) will make appropriate interventions when a student's behavior is disruptive or dangerous. The purpose of interventions is to help the student learn appropriate behavior. For minor violations, a student will receive an initial verbal warning. Additional violations will result in the issuance of a written Discipline Notice.

- For minor disagreements and disputes, students have the option of using Peer Mediation or speaking with a teacher. Other staff may be included to help resolve minor disputes.
- For dress code violations, students have the option of calling home for a change of clothing or may wear other clothing available at school.
- Change in location – A student may be required to go to the office or to another class for a specified period of time for various misconducts.

All Disciplinary Notices will be issued with consideration for the age of the student and the age-appropriateness of the behavior. For all but the most serious infractions, a warning may be given first. The accumulation of three written warnings per trimester may result in a Level I Disciplinary Notice. A student will begin a new trimester with a "clean slate". Nevertheless, all disciplinary notices will be entered into the Student Information System.

Level 1 Disciplinary Notices will be issued to students engaging in behavior that is unacceptable on the Santa Ynez Valley Charter School Campus. Three Level 1 Disciplinary Notices per trimester may result in a suspension. Receipt of a Level 1 Disciplinary Notice will result in detention, community service or other consequences. The following behaviors include, but are not limited to, those for which a student may be issued a Level 1 Disciplinary Notice:

1. chewing gum
2. minor classroom disruption
3. unsafe behavior on campus (running, throwing objects, etc.)
4. disrespect/defiance towards other students and adults
5. inappropriate physical contact
6. teasing/bullying/harassing
7. horseplay (pushing, wrestling, etc.)
8. inappropriate language
9. disregard for playground rules
10. misuse/abuse of school or personal property
11. using cell phones during regular school hours including lunch, recess and passing periods
12. other violations of the Rules of Student Conduct

Following the issuance of a **Level 1 Discipline Notice**, the following procedures will be followed:

- Parent Notification – Parent(s) will be notified of student misconduct beyond minor disagreements and disputes.
- Detention – The student may be assigned detention. The student's parent(s)/guardian will receive at least one day's notice, and must sign and return the notice to school acknowledging receipt.
- Community Service on School Grounds – The student may receive community service on school grounds during lunch or recess.
- Student will be restricted from all fieldtrips and/or school activities for 3 weeks following the issuance of a Level 1 Disciplinary Notice

Following the issuance of a *Suspension*, the following procedures will be followed:

- Parent Notification – Parent(s) will be notified of student misconduct beyond minor disagreements and disputes.
- Parent/Teacher/Student Conference – At the discretion of SYVCS, a conference with the student, parent(s), teacher and/or director will be scheduled to discuss the student’s progress, problem behaviors, or other issues that have not been resolved at school. The following may result from the conference:
 - Behavior Contract – Student, parent(s) and teacher will create a behavior contract in which the student, with parental consent, agrees to specified behavior.
 - Restitution – When possible, the student will be allowed to compensate anyone who has been affected by the student’s misconduct. Restitution may take the form of replacement of private property or personal service.
 - Community Service on School Grounds – The student may receive community service on school grounds during lunch, after school hours, or on Saturday.
 - Field Trip Restrictions – A student will be restricted from all fieldtrips and/or school activities for 3 weeks following a suspension.

All Disciplinary Notices will be signed by the teacher or school staff member who issues it. When a student is issued a Disciplinary Notice, the following notice distribution will result:

- A copy will be sent to the office to be logged into the Student Information System;
- A copy will be sent home with the student for parent signature and returned to the school office the following day;
- The staff member will retain a copy.

Any student who has received a Level 1 Disciplinary Notice or has been suspended, within three weeks prior to a fieldtrip, will not be able to attend that fieldtrip. There is no guarantee that reimbursement for the fieldtrip will be given.

Serious Violations

“Zero Tolerance” Policy

Santa Ynez Valley Charter School has a “Zero Tolerance” policy for weapons and drugs/alcohol. It requires the help of all students, staff and parents to maintain a safe and orderly campus/learning environment. SYVCS expects all parents to encourage their son or daughter to report weapons or drug violations to a staff member. All information will be dealt with in strict confidence. By working together as a school community, we can support a positive learning environment.

Suspension (CA Education Code 48900-48926)

Repeated serious violations of the Education Code will result in the student being suspended from school. These violations include:

1. Fighting; including participating, threatening, encouraging, intimidating, and harassing
2. Possession of dangerous objects or anything that looks like a dangerous object
3. Using, possessing, or selling drugs or any drug paraphernalia
4. Stealing or destroying property or possessions, including graffiti and/or vandalism
5. Consistently interrupting school or classroom activities
6. Sexually harassing other students or name-calling
7. Continuously displaying profanity or using vulgar language
8. Robbery or extortion, or receiving stolen property
9. Truancy or excessive tardiness
10. Displaying or participating in hate violence

When all attempts at correcting a student’s behavior have proven unsuccessful, and/or after repeated offenses resulting in student suspensions, or in cases of extreme, unsafe behavior as addressed in the California Education Code, a student may be recommended for expulsion from SYVCS.

Expulsion (CA Education Code 48900-48926)

A decision to expel shall be based on a finding of one or both of the following:

1. Other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct.
2. Due to the nature of the act, the presence of the pupil causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the pupil or others.

The administrators of Santa Ynez Valley Charter School are required by law to suspend from school, and shall recommend expulsion from the school for the following offenses:

1. Causing serious physical injury to another person, except in self-defense
2. Possession of any knife, weapon, explosive, or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the pupil
3. Unlawful possession of any controlled substance
4. Robbery or extortion
5. Assault or battery, as defined in Sections 240 and 242 of the Penal Code, upon any school employee
6. Possessing, selling, or otherwise furnishing a firearm
7. Brandishing a knife at another person. As used in this section, “knife” means any dirk, dagger, or other weapon with a fixed, sharpened blade fitted primarily for stabbing, a weapon with a blade fitted primarily for stabbing, a weapon with a blade longer than 3 1/2 inches, a folding knife with a blade that locks into place, or a razor with an unguarded blade
8. Unlawfully selling a controlled substance
9. Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault

Additional School Policies

Classroom Food Policy

Santa Ynez Valley Charter School recognizes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. SYVCS staff, students, and parents will keep all classroom food activities free of nuts. Parents will be given the option, each school year, to request that Santa Ynez Valley Charter School Staff only give their children food that has been provided by their parent. Parents can do this by notifying the office and teacher in writing of their request. As part of their request, parents will be strongly encouraged to bring non-perishable food to the classroom, where it can be kept for classroom food activities.

Graduation Requirements

Santa Ynez Valley Charter School recognizes the importance of creating an academically challenging educational environment that prepares students for high school and beyond. SYVCS also recognizes that participation in end of school activities is a privilege that students can earn. To support the school's mission and student achievement, the following graduation requirements are established.

Definition

Students must meet or exceed the following requirements to participate in the end of year activities:

- Earn a cumulative 2.0 (C) Grade Point Average for all three (3) Trimesters of 8th Grade
 - Grade Point Average will include all course where letter grades are awarded including Physical Education and Elective classes
 - Cumulative Grade Point Average will be calculated as an average of all three (3) trimester report cards.
- No F's during the 3rd Trimester
- Complete a minimum of 10 hours of community service during their 8th grade year
- Not earn a Level 1 or be suspended within the final 3 weeks of the school year
- Return all school owned materials prior to the last week of school

Students not meeting these requirements will be provided an alternative educational activity during the end of year activities.

End of the Year Activities

End of the year activities include, but are not limited to 8th Grade Class Trip, Graduation, 8th Grade Party, Staff vs. Students Games, and any other planned end of the year activity.

Students with Disabilities

Goals established within a 504 or Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be considered for students with disabilities. The 504 or IEP team will meet to consider participation in end of the year activities for any student with a disability who may not meet the established graduation requirements.

Actions by the School

SYVCS will provide students and parents with a copy of the graduation requirements during the first trimester of school. Students and parents will return a signed copy of the graduation requirements acknowledging that they have read and understand the graduation requirements.

SYVCS will notify parents in writing following each grading period where their child is not meeting the graduation requirements.

SYVCS will work with parents to create an academic support plan that will help their child meet graduation requirements.

Complaint Process

When any member of the SYVCS community, including but not limited to, students, parents, or employees/independent contractors, have a complaint about a matter of school policy or procedure, concern over the actions of another community member, or a serious misunderstanding which develops between or among parties at Santa Ynez Valley Charter School, it should be resolved through the Internal Complaint Policy.

Any complaint alleging failure to comply with state and federal laws, and/or discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying should be resolved through the Uniform Complaint Policy.

The appropriate complaint form and full description of the policy can be requested from the school office.

Acknowledgement of Student/Family Handbook

All students and parents will sign that they have read the Santa Ynez Valley Charter School's Rules of Student Conduct and Discipline Policy, Computer Use Policy, and Student/Family Handbook, and that they agree to follow the rules and procedures which it describes. The acknowledgement of the Student/Family Handbook is found on the Student Data Card that comes with the Back-to-School paperwork.