



Valence College Prep

Student & Family Handbook

2023-2024

(646) 854-8414

www.valencecollegeprep.org

97-29 64th Rd., Rego Park, NY 11374

Effective August 2023



Valence College Prep Student and Family Handbook

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I. Letter from our Principal

Dear families,

I am delighted to welcome you to Valence College Preparatory Charter School!! This is the beginning of a partnership between our school and your family to prepare your child to graduate from college and lead a life of opportunity.

We do not take the trust that you have placed in us lightly, and we look forward to welcoming your family into our community of dedicated teachers and staff to help your child reach their full potential.

As is the case with any community, Valence College Prep Charter School needs a set of rules and guidelines to clarify expectations and help us operate fairly, efficiently, and effectively. These guidelines support our mission of preparing all students to thrive in high school and graduate from the college of their choice. The purpose of this Student and Family Handbook is to ensure that we have consistent expectations across the school. This handbook may not answer all your questions, but it should provide examples of Valence College Prep Charter School's mission, procedures, expectations, and guiding principles.

As Valence College Prep Charter School always seeks to improve, we reserve the right to amend, modify or change the provisions of this Handbook. We will provide all students and families notice of any significant changes in the policies reflected in the following pages.

The choice of school for your child is one of the most important decisions a parent can make, and we are honored that you choose Valence College Prep to partner with you to provide the highest-quality education for your child. On behalf of the entire Valence College Prep team, welcome to our school community! We couldn't be happier to have you as part of the Valence family.

In partnership,

Nicole Kone, Principal



II. General Information

Purpose of Handbook

Welcome to Valence College Prep Charter School. This Student & Family handbook is a reference document that outlines Valence College Prep’s most important academic, discipline, and safety policies. Additionally, school notices that are sent home communicating policy updates and changes are regarded as additions to our Handbook.

Students and families must review all the topics contained in this Handbook and submit the [Letter of Acknowledgement](#) to the school. Please contact the Main Office with any specific policy questions or concerns about this material. At Valence College Prep we have a growth and strengths-based mindset, so our policies and procedures will continually evolve and be conveyed in a positive and supportive manner. This handbook is intended for our students and for their parents, guardians, or individuals with temporary or permanent custody.

School Contact Info

Address	Hours of Operation	Main Office Number
97-29 64th Road Rego Park, NY 11374	7:25am-3:35pm Monday-Thursday 7:25am-12:55pm Friday	(646) 854-8414

School Calendar

The calendar below is subject to change. Please check the Valence site (www.valencecollegeprep.org) for the updated annual calendar.

Start Date	End Date	Event
Jul 5	Jul 5	Return Date for Summer Academy Staff and Ops
Jul 6	Aug 2	Summer Academy (for only Summer Academy Staff & Scholars)
Aug 7	Aug 10	Summer PD: New Staff
Aug 14	Aug 18	Summer PD: All Staff
Aug 21	Aug 21	Student Orientations (ONLY Incoming Students)
Aug 23	Aug 23	First Day of School
Sep 4	Sep 4	Labor Day
Sep 13	Sep 13	Back to School Night (in person)
Oct 9	Oct 9	Columbus Day
Oct 10	Oct 10	Data Day (No Students)
Nov 8	Nov 9	Full Family Conferences (non-attendance based) (no family decrease schedule)
Nov 10	Nov 10	Veterans Day (Observed)
Nov 3	Nov 3	End of Quarter 1
Nov 20	Nov 24	Thanksgiving Break
Dec 21	Jan 1	Winter Break
Jan 2	Jan 2	Teacher Work Day (No Students)
Jan 15	Jan 15	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Jan 26	Jan 26	End of Quarter 2
Feb 8	Feb 9	Mock ELA State Test
Feb 19	Feb 23	Mid-Winter Break
Feb 26	Feb 26	Teacher Work Day (No Students)
Apr 18	Apr 19	Spring Family Conferences (non-attendance based) (no family decrease schedule)
Apr 5	Apr 5	End of Quarter 3
Mar 7	Mar 8	Mock Math State Test
Mar 29	Apr 1	Passover, Good Friday & Easter Recess
Apr 10	Apr 12	ELA State Testing
Apr 22	Apr 23	Spring Break
May 7	May 9	Math State Testing
Apr 15	May 24	NYSESLAT: Speaking
May 13	May 24	NYSESLAT: Listening, Reading, Writing
May 27	May 27	Memorial Day
TBD	TBD	Living Environment Regents
TBD	TBD	Algebra Regents
Jun 10	Jun 10	Juneteenth
Jun 14	Jun 16	Senior Overnight Trip
June 20	June 20	Last Day of School (Half Day)
June 21	June 21	8th Grade Graduation - No School



Mission

Valence College Prep equips all scholars in grades five through eight with the academic skills, professional habits, and strength of character to graduate from college and lead lives of opportunity.

Core Beliefs

Based on close study of high performing urban charter schools around the country, the conclusions of decades of educational research, and the continuing input of multiple community voices, Valence College Prep is built on seven core principles.

1. Excellent teaching yields strong academic performance.

Our teachers drive toward our mission every day, and the support and coaching they get is all in service of that mission for our scholars. For our scholars to succeed, our teachers need to provide them excellent classroom instruction, and we are persistent in our work to make every teacher excellent every day.

2. An intentionally structured school environment drives academic achievement.

When scholars know precisely what is expected of them, a structured environment frees capacity in scholars' minds to maximize academic achievement and develop professional habits. Our classrooms have common structures and routines to ensure a consistently safe and positive learning space. These routines and structures are adjusted by grade level to ensure that our scholars build habits to prepare them for the independence and expectations of high school and college.

3. Character underpins success in college and life.

Our scholars will build strong character to persevere through challenges and succeed in and out of school. Valence College Prep builds our scholars' character by teaching, honoring, and holding them accountable to doing the right thing. Our school's **RIGHT** values – **Respect, Integrity, Gratitude, Hard work, and Teamwork** – are our common language for teaching character, ritualizing and honoring the demonstration of that character, and holding our scholars accountable to acting ethically within the framework of these values.

4. Literacy unlocks achievement as a learner.

We believe that if you can read, you can learn anything. We also believe that reading is joyful and that every learner deserves to be a great reader in order to read what they love. Our school provides multiple opportunities every day and in every subject for our scholars to become the strongest readers.

5. Success requires skills to solve challenging problems.

We believe that among our scholars are the next generation's great engineers, scientists, policymakers, and business leaders. To truly have freedom in the path they will choose, they will need critical problem solving skills and a strong foundation in numeracy and computational thinking. Every scholar at Valence receives an education in digital literacy, computer science, and robotics.

6. Applying a growth mindset ensures a drive toward mastery.

Intelligence is developed through engagement with new information and challenging problems. Our scholars and our staff must understand and believe that your brain can be grown through hard work, and



we take risks and learn from feedback in order to grow our capabilities every day. For every individual in our school, moments of failure are opportunities to get back up and try again.

7. Family partnerships support student outcomes.

Our families are critical partners in the academic development of our scholars. We believe that our families' support with our scholars' education is a key tool to ensure that scholars are able to do their best in school and prepare to access the high schools and colleges of their choice. We believe that our families should have high expectations of our school, and in turn, we have high expectations for the partnership of our families.

At Valence College Prep, we believe that our scholars can reach the same levels of achievement as the highest performing students in New York City. Our team maintains a structured, positive learning environment in which our scholars grow into academically and professionally skilled, knowledgeable, and principled young people. We envision a future in which our scholars will graduate from the high schools, colleges, and universities of their choice and, empowered by education, choose their own paths in life.

Core Values

At Valence College Prep, we strive for our scholars and our team to do the right thing in the choices we make every day, and we reflect on those choices using our values. Our **RIGHT** values are our common language for teaching character and holding our scholars and our team accountable to acting ethically and working to be our best each day. At the end of each period, each of our classes assesses whether they exemplified each value for 100% of the class, creating multiple conversations every day about how we can grow our character each day to be our best selves.

- **Respect** is acting with regard for the feelings of others. We respect ourselves, the peers and adults in our building, and our larger community. We respect one another by speaking with kindness, by listening with intent to understand, and by accepting those who are different from us. We respect our personal and shared belongings by treating them with care. Scholars respect adults in the building as leaders of their academic environment by following directions and meeting the expectations of our spaces, and staff respect one another and the intellect and value of our scholars and families.
- **Integrity** is doing the right thing when no one is watching. We act with integrity by being honest and owning our mistakes as opportunities to grow. We assess our actions and reflect on how we can become better. Scholars demonstrate this in their academic work and social interactions, and adults demonstrate this in their interactions with students, colleagues, and coaches. Staff demonstrate this in their dedication to the needs of scholars, their honesty and openness with colleagues, and their humility to admit when they are wrong or do not know what to do.
- **Gratitude** is the willingness and act of showing thanks for the kindness or generosity of others. We express thanks for the academic help of peers, teachers, parents, or mentors. We thank the bus driver who gets us to school safely, the custodian who gives us a clean learning space, and the City and State of New York that provide our free public education. We thank our parents who provide for us, the school staff who work hard in service of education, and our siblings and friends who care about us. Staff thank scholars when they go the extra mile for their own learning or when they volunteer to help when it is not expected.
- **Hard work** is acting with urgency toward our goals. We have limited time every day and use it to work toward what we care for most – an education that puts us on a path to graduate from college and the freedom it will enable in our lives. Scholars demonstrate this value in their attitude toward



their academic work and extracurricular endeavors. Staff demonstrate it in their approach to their work, in-classroom and out-of-classroom diligence, and connections with families.

- **Teamwork** is the willingness and choice to collaborate with others. We ask and answer questions of one another to learn. We share our ideas and provide feedback on our peers' ideas. We pause to help one another to ensure that everyone in our community succeeds. Scholars demonstrate this daily in their classes and extracurricular spaces. Staff demonstrate it in their coverages for one another, live feedback, co-teaching, grade level collaboration, and professional development.

At school and in life, students work as part of teams. We encourage teamwork, positive peer pressure, and group rewards and incentives through our RIGHT Blocks system. RIGHT Blocks help students internalize the importance of working together, supporting their peers, setting short- and long-term goals, and collaboration. At the end of each class period, the teacher gives the class feedback based on how well they worked as a team to uphold core values. Right Blocks will be used to determine whole class incentives and rewards throughout the year.

III. Family Communication and Policies

Visitor Policy

Valence College Prep is a school that values our community, and so we welcome parents and local representatives to visit our campus. We are proud to showcase student learning and fellowship to everyone who visits the school. In order to ensure the safety of our students, staff, families and guests, **Valence College Prep requires that all visitors sign-in immediately at the Main Lobby upon arrival to the school and provide proper identification.** Visitors will receive a visitor pass to tour the school and this pass must be worn at all times. Upon departure, visitors must return the pass and sign-out at the Main Lobby to conclude their visit. This way safety measures are in place to track visiting times and activity on the premises at all times.

If a visitor is coming to school to drop something off for your student or to leave a message, we still require that the visitor come first to the Main Lobby to sign-in. Parents or guardians who want to deliver items to students must drop items off at the Main Lobby for distribution by a school staff member.

To schedule a meeting with the Executive Director, Principal, or member of the Leadership Team, families should contact our team by phone or email with advance notice (as much as possible). To set-up a formal conference with a teacher, please contact the teacher at least one day in advance and confirm the date and time on the day of visit.

Parents or guardians who would like to visit (without a scheduled conference) should notify a school administrator, teacher or scholar advisor one day in advance. Unscheduled visits may interfere with scheduled activities and cannot always be accommodated. There are some rules for visitors:

- Visitors may not talk to a child or a teacher during class instruction, although they may call the teacher after school to discuss what they observed and they are welcome to drop notes off in the office or ask to speak to a school administrator or a member of the Operations Team about their observation.
- Visitors are expected to follow all of the procedures described in this section and all rules of conduct regarding behavior in public that apply to students. Actions by visitors that



violate the Student Code of Conduct or that are in any way disrespectful of school employees or students, that create risks of harm to others, or that interfere with school operations are subject to the following consequences:

- . Immediate removal from the school when asked by a member of the leadership team.
- . Limited access into the school building in the future
- . Notice that future visits and that teacher conferences will be conducted by telephone
- . A report to law enforcement

Birthday Celebrations & Class Treats

Valence College Prep is excited to celebrate our students in a variety of ways. We are intentional about classroom and school-wide activities to make our students feel especially valued on these occasions. As such, and as is appropriate to the growing maturity of our students, we do not allow students to bring classroom treats from home to be shared for birthday celebrations.

School Closures

In the event of inclement weather or other extreme events, Valence College Prep will follow the NYC Department of Education's judgments to remain open or to close for any portion of the day. If NYC DOE schools are closed, or have a late start or early dismissal, Valence College Prep will have the same. Parents and families will be notified of all school closures or schedule changes as soon as possible via ParentSquare. This information will also be available on the NYC schools website, www.schools.nyc.gov.

Communication with Staff

Valence College Prep is eager to develop and maintain positive relationships with all families. Valence uses ParentSquare as our primary platform for communication, thus families are strongly encouraged to reach out to staff members via ParentSquare first. If you have any trouble accessing ParentSquare, please contact the main office.

Families can access a list of staff contact information on our website. Parents or guardians can contact any staff members from Monday-Friday, during the hours of 7am-6pm (for non-urgent matters) and can expect a response within 48 business hours. For urgent matters, please contact the school by telephone.

In-person meetings and conferences are also welcomed. Please see the Visitor Policy for more information.



Family Communication

Families of Valence College Prep students can expect consistent communication from the school regarding the academic and behavioral progress of their child, as well as information about upcoming school events. Communication includes, but is not limited to:

- Automated Calls/Texts - Families may receive automated calls/texts from the school for the following types of messages:
 - Urgent messages, i.e. school closures
 - Reminders about upcoming family events, deadlines, meetings, etc.
 - Out of Uniform reminders
 - Tardy arrival reminders
- Weekly Newsletter - Our weekly newsletter, The Narval Semanal, will be posted on ParentSquare each week. The weekly newsletter contains important information about upcoming events, information about what's been happening at school, and student and teacher spotlights.
- Weekly Progress Reports - Students receive Progress Reports during Advisory each Friday. Progress Reports contain scholars' updated grades in all classes and scholars' weekly merit and deduction counts. Progress Reports must be signed by parents each weekend and returned on Monday morning. Having the Progress Report signed is one part of weekend homework, and scholars who do not return their signed Progress Report on Mondays will receive a Major Deduction, and families will receive an automated call regarding the failure to return their Weekly Progress Report.
- Gradebook and Behavior Management Portals - Parents can log into SchoolRunner, our online grade and behavior management software, from their phones or computers at any time. If you have trouble accessing SchoolRunner, please contact the main office.
- Advisors - All students have an Advisor who is responsible for communicating with the families of all of their advisees each week. You can expect that your child's Advisor will know your child's academic and behavioral progress, and they should be your first point of contact for questions about scholar progress.

Family Engagement

Valence College Prep is a community-oriented space and we ask parents/guardians/families to be partners of our school but most importantly, in the educational journey of their children. Our community needs everyone to work together to ensure the success of our future trailblazers at Valence College Prep. We strive to cultivate productive relationships with our families and the whole school team. Special volunteer opportunities will be communicated to families in the Weekly Newsletter.

Valence College Prep family-school relationships are maintained through:

- . Conferences between students, families, and teachers
- . Cafecitos (A casual meeting of families and staff to build fellowship)
- . Community-wide events, school-wide celebrations, and quarter showcases
- . Regular advisor-family contact
- . Field Trips/Chaperoning
- . Other opportunities, as determined by teachers/staff



Community Engagement

At Valence College Prep, we strive to engage all community stakeholders and build strong relationships with our neighborhood partners. Our students will tap into the rich culture of Queens and benefit from a strong collective of leaders, entrepreneurs, and artists. Students will have select opportunities to interface with community figures, including local elected officials, as part of our own events as well as events like the annual Jackson Heights Halloween Parade. In addition, the Social Work team has cultivated a network of community resources and supports to provide families with services outside of school that will help meet student and family needs.



IV. Safety & Health Policies

Student Records Procedure

FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA gives parents and legal guardians certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students (age 18 or over or in college) to whom the rights have transferred are referred to in this policy as "eligible students."

- Parents/Guardians or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. The School is not required to provide copies of records electronically or by mail unless a parent is unable to review the records at the School.
- Parents/Guardians or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- The School will not release personally identifiable education record information to third parties without the written consent of a parent or guardian except under the following conditions (**34 CFR § 99.31**):
 - To Valence College Prep teachers or administrators or school officials with a legitimate educational interest;
 - To other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - To Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - To Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - To organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - To accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - To appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - To State and local authorities, pursuant to specific State law.

Parents who wish to review records should submit a request in writing to the Director of Operations or Principal. Parents of a student have a right to inspect, review and request photocopies of their child's educational records, including records that are maintained electronically. If a Custodial Parent (a parent or guardian who provides ongoing care for the child) requests access to records, a meeting for record review will be arranged within ten days, if a non-custodial parent requests access to records, the Director of Operations or Principal will notify the Custodial Parent of the record request. The custodial parent will then have 45 calendar days to let the School know whether a binding agreement or court order bars the school from giving the non-custodial parent access to the records. If no such document exists, the records will be made available to the non- custodial parent.

Court Orders or Subpoenas – In the case of a valid court order or lawfully issued subpoena, the school will immediately notify the parent in writing of the information that is requested (unless the



subpoena states otherwise). Police officers and other law enforcement agencies must also present valid court orders or lawfully issued subpoenas when requesting student information.

Child Protective Services – Child Protective Service workers may request to see a student's school records at any time and the school must comply.

NOTICE CONCERNING DIRECTORY INFORMATION

There are two different types of scholar records, which will be treated differently:

1. Directory Information: Directory Information is basic information about scholars such as name, address, telephone number, date of birth, participation in activities, awards received, etc. This information may be made available to others (internal or external) for specific use without the consent of the parent/guardian. For example, teachers may distribute class lists to everyone in the class so that scholars may help each other with homework or the school may provide addresses to another educational organization working on a voter registration drive. The School may disclose, without consent, "directory" information, including a student's name, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. This information will be released only to members of the School Community and, in the case of special events, honors or awards, to community organizations or publications. If you do not want the School to Release Directory Information about your child, please advise the Principal or Director of Operations by September 1st of the School year. Your request must be renewed each year.

1. Confidential Records: Confidential Records include grades, evaluations, disciplinary actions, health records, IEPs, proofs of residence, address, and identity. Confidential records will not be made available to any non-school personnel without consent by the parent/guardian, except as described in this policy.

Procedures for Secure Handling

Upon intake of student files or records containing sensitive information, the Office Manager will temporarily store these files in the designated sensitive records cabinet in the main school office, which will be locked at all times, with the exception of IEP records, which will be stored in the Special Education Manager's office in a locked cabinet.

The Office Manager will create an access-restricted digital folder with that student's name. The Office Manager will scan the documents into PDF format, and store the records in the access-restricted digital folder. Any physical copies of student files or records will then be either returned to their owner or destroyed through shredding.

All student information entered into digital platforms used to administer school records will remain digitally stored on those platforms under a password-protected account. Only the Executive Director, Principal, Director of Operations, Office Manager, Dean of Academics, and Dean of Students will have access to unlock these accounts and files, both physically and digitally.

Parents will be notified of FERPA laws each year in the Student Handbook.



Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents of elementary and secondary students certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include, but are not limited to, the right to:

- *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)-

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

- *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of* -

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others. (This does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions.)

- *Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use -

1. Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

Valence will follow this policy, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. Valence College Prep will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Valence College Prep will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation in the specific activity or survey. Valence College Prep will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the



activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this direct notification requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Medical Requirements

Checklist: This form contains records showing that the student has: 1) a report of a physical examination performed within the year prior to school entry; 2) up-to-date immunizations; and 3) permission to receive screening for vision and scoliosis.

Notification of Health Conditions: It is the parent or guardian's responsibility at the beginning of each school year to inform the school if there are medical conditions that require special procedures during the school day. If special plans or accommodations are needed, parents will be asked to participate in health plan meetings.

Health Information Form: This form provides important information about a student's emergency contacts, health care providers, and insurance. Most importantly, it gives the school permission to initiate emergency medical treatment in the event that a parent or guardian cannot be reached. We will ask for contact information for two individuals who can be reached if parents are not available. Parents are expected to update this information annually and when contact information changes.

Authorization to Dispense Medication Form: If a student requires medication while in school, the school must have on file an Authorization to Dispense Medication form, filled out by the student's physician. No student is allowed to bring medication to the school without the school's full knowledge. All medication must be presented in its original container from the pharmacy. Additionally, a parent must deliver all medication – medication should NEVER be sent with the student.

The Authorization to Dispense Medication Form must be updated annually. Also, if there are any changes to the medication (including to the dosage of the medication) a new form must be completed and submitted, including an updated physician signature. We advise families to request multiple copies of the Authorization to Dispense Medication Form to bring with them to all regularly scheduled doctor's appointments, in the event medications need to change.

The medication dispensation authorization form requirement applies to all medication, including over the counter medication (e.g., Tylenol). If a student needs to take medication during the school day, the



student must have the authorization signed by his or her physician and a parent or guardian on file, giving the school permission to administer the medication. The medication dispensation authorization form requirement also applies to asthma inhalers. Students (other than those who have been authorized to self-medicate, as described below) should go to the Main Office first to receive a pass to the Nurse for administration of medication.

Children who may need inhalers or other asthma medication on an emergency basis may be permitted to carry the inhaler if the student understands the condition and the procedures and written permission has been granted by the child's health care provider and parent. Please request a form for this approval if you believe that your child can self-administer the inhaler or other emergency medication.

Students are prohibited from carrying any over-the-counter medications, including but not limited to Tylenol, Aleve, Advil, or Benadryl.

Students should never carry or take medications outside of these procedures. Students found in possession of over the counter or prescription drugs will face disciplinary action.

Medical Records/School Health Record

In accordance with the Public Health Law, all students must have an updated Child & Adolescent Health Examination Form completed within a year before their enrollment on file with the school. Valence College Prep shall not permit students to attend for more than 14 days without being in compliance with Public Health Law.

Immunizations: Prior to enrollment Parents are expected to provide documentation of all required immunizations.

Students who have not been immunized in accordance with New York State immunization requirements may be excluded from school until they comply with requirements. Exemptions from immunization may be granted under the following circumstances:

Exemptions to Immunizations:

- A medical exemption for a valid contraindication to vaccination must be certified by a physician licensed to practice in the State of New York and must specify which immunizations are contraindicated and why.

Medical Policies and Procedures

Student absences due to illness or injury are considered excused absences with the appropriate documentation from your child's doctor.

School nurses are available on a daily basis to provide students with a general health consultation, medicine administration, and treatment of minor health issues, such as cuts and scrapes. The school nurse is not able to provide common over-the-counter medications, such as cough drops or pain relievers, such as Tylenol. As stated above, the school nurse can only dispense prescribed medications after a student's doctor has completed and signed the appropriate forms. The school nurse will determine if a child requires further medical attention, such as a doctor's visit or emergency services, and will contact families in the event that their child needs such care.



- School nurses are required by law to document the names and symptoms of all students who visit the nurse's office. These records are confidential.

Valence COVID Policies: Due to the ever-changing nature of local, state, and federal COVID guidelines, please visit the school's website for the most current policies and procedures around COVID safety at Valence.

Communicable Illness Policy: In order to protect the health of all children in the building, please keep your child at home if you notice that he/she begins to show signs of an illness or contagious disease. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Children with fever, vomiting or diarrhea should stay home until the symptoms are gone or until your child's doctor determines the child is healthy enough to return.
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) is contagious, and children with symptoms of this condition should be kept at home until they have been treated by a doctor, and the child's doctor has determined that they are no longer contagious.

Injury Policy: If your child has been severely injured, please seek medical care from your child's doctor or emergency medical attention. Scholars with rashes, deep cuts, lacerations, scrapes, or sprained/broken bones should be kept home until they have been treated by a doctor, and should not return to school until they have been cleared to safely return. The school nurse is unable to provide any type of ointment, cream, or other medication to scholars without a prescription and the appropriate forms signed by the child's doctor.

Menstruation and Cramps: Many students begin their menstrual cycles during middle school, and may require additional support from families during this time of transition in their lives. Valence provides tampons and sanitary napkins for emergencies in scholar bathrooms, but scholars should bring their own menstrual supplies to school. Families should discuss proper hygiene and self-care strategies with their scholars who are menstruating to ensure that they know how to adequately care for their bodies during their menstrual cycles. The school nurse is unable to provide over-the-counter pain relief, such as Advil or Tylenol, for students with cramps. For scholars who experience discomfort during their menstrual cycle, we recommend that scholars proactively take medication in the mornings before leaving for school.

School-based Prevention of Common Communicable Pests

Bed Bugs:

- Parents/Guardians will be notified if bed bugs are found in classrooms, and bed bug prevention literature will be provided.

Head Lice:

- Valence follows NYC Public Schools policy for head lice. Scholars are checked by the school nurse, and families are notified if their child has either nits (lice eggs) or active head lice. Students with nits are permitted to stay at school.
 - Students with active head lice must be picked up by a family member immediately. Students are excluded from school until they have been treated for lice, and will be examined by the school nurse prior to returning to classes to ensure that they are lice-free. Scholars will be checked 14 days after they return to school to ensure that they remain free of lice.



- Scholars who are found to have head lice on re-examination by the school nurse will again be excluded from school until they are lice-free.
- In the event that multiple students from one classroom are found to have active head lice, Valence may partner with an outside agency to provide additional screening.

Wellness Policy

Valence College Prep is proud to partner with Regina Foods to provide our students nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snacks during the school day. Students will have access to nutrition literature and guidelines for foods that are available on school campuses will also be posted for review. Community partners are invited to participate in developing strategies and events to model, foster and teach children to eat well and be physically active in our school.

Guidelines for Outdoor Play in Cold Weather

Children benefit from vigorous exercise and may be given the opportunity to go outside during PE. Unless it is snowing or there is ice on the playground, low temperature will not be a barrier to outside play, as long as children are appropriately dressed. The Health Department strongly encourages schools to maintain outdoor play periods on the vast majority of winter days, and Valence College Prep will follow this guideline whenever possible.

Mealtime & Water Policies

Breakfast/Lunch/Snack in School: Students may eat only in areas and during times designated by the school according to the daily schedule.

Valence College Prep participates in the Federal Free and Reduced Meal program. A form from the New York City DOE will be provided for Breakfast/Lunch/Snack. All families must complete this form. This form must be filled out each year even if your family's income has not changed. The New York State Education Department mandates the collection of this form.

Please note:

- All students are provided with breakfast, lunch, and snack each day
- School meals are listed on a monthly calendar provided by Regina Foods. The menu can be found on our school's website.

Any additional inquiries pertaining to meal eligibility and regulations should be addressed to:

Office of School of Food and Nutrition Services
 44-36 Vernon Boulevard
 Long Island City, NY 11101
 718-720-6100



Lunch from Home: Eating healthy, balanced meals is the foundation for scholar success. Scholars may bring healthy bag breakfast or lunch if they choose not to eat the school breakfast or lunch. Students may not bring any candy, soda/pop/cold drinks or other food considered unhealthy (typically food with high sugar content and/or limited nutritional value). Students with these foods will be instructed to put the food away and be given a healthy school-provided breakfast or lunch option. Failure to put away inappropriate food items will result in the confiscation of said items.

Please note: Commercial food deliveries to school will not be accepted.

Water Policy

Drinking Water in School: Valence does not allow students to drink soda, coffee, tea, energy drinks, or other such beverages during the school day. Students may bring their own fruit juice, but may only drink it during breakfast or lunch.

Scholars must bring their own clear water bottle to school each day. The water bottle must be transparent enough so that the contents are visible to staff. Scholars who do not bring their own water bottles must wait to use water fountains during bathroom breaks or between class periods.

If scholars are found to be misusing their water bottles, such as to drink restricted beverages, create mess in school spaces, or intentionally wet other scholars or school property, Valence reserves the right to restrict or revoke those scholars' water bottle privileges.

Food Allergies/Food Restrictions

Parents or guardians are expected to notify the school of any allergies, including food allergies, and provide documentation from a doctor for the student's health file. Families are also required to update the school if anything changes.

Valence College Prep serves milk at breakfast and lunch. Scholars are not required to take or drink milk during mealtimes.

Parents may also notify the school of any other food restrictions based on religion or custom. Restrictions based on religious belief will be accommodated.

CPR & First Aid

Valence College Prep staff members are trained in basic emergency procedures. The following staff will maintain current First Aid and CPR Certifications:

- . Executive Director
- . Principa
- . Director of Operations
- . Dean of Students
- . Associate Dean of Students
- . Dean(s) of Academics
- . Physical Education Teacher
- . At least one other full time teacher
- . Nurse



Fire Drills Procedure

Valence College Prep has an [emergency preparedness plan](#). We will conduct monthly inspections of the premises to observe possible fire and safety hazards. Any such hazard shall be corrected immediately.

In accordance with the Law, students must participate in regular drills to prepare and practice for an emergency. We conduct regular fire drills to instruct and train students in emergency evacuation procedures so that everyone is prepared to leave the school building in the shortest time possible and without panic in the event of an actual emergency. On hearing the fire signal, all adults and children are trained to exit the building quickly and in an orderly manner. This may mean exiting the school without coats, jackets and backpacks, but teachers will make every effort to ensure that students are not exposed to cold weather for too long.

Evacuation & Relocation

In the case of an emergency during school hours, students are evacuated from the premises and there is no re-entry to the school building until immediate threat/event has passed or necessary actions are taken to eliminate all conditions that pose a safety or health hazard. There are primary and secondary relocation sites designated to Valence College Prep, and students will be directed there with the school leadership team, as well as all teachers and support staff. Authorities and families will be notified of emergency relocation sites.

Closed Campus

At Valence College Prep, the safety and well being of all our students is a top priority. It is our expectation that students will be under competent direct supervision at all times during school hours. Students will stay on school grounds from the time they arrive in the morning until the time that school is dismissed at the end of the day, unless dismissed early by a member of the school leadership team. In the rare case of an early dismissal, parents, guardians, or an authorized person from the emergency contact list must pick-up the child from the Main Office in order for the student to leave the premises. New York City Department of Education rules mandate that students in grades K-8 be picked up by an adult if they must leave school before regular dismissal. **Valence College Prep will not independently dismiss any student during regular school hours for any reason.** Valence College Prep will not release a student to an individual who is not on a child's emergency contact list, unless explicit permission is granted by the student's parent/guardian.

Learning time is critical to students' success, and medical or dental appointments should be made during after-school hours to ensure that students spend school hours in school. Fridays are an ideal time for any necessary appointments, as students will typically be dismissed at 12:55 pm on Friday afternoons.

To provide consistency of care and supervision for each student on campus, all students are expected to stay within designated school spaces; students are not permitted to enter any office or unsupervised space in the school facility without permission or accompaniment of a teacher or staff member. Students are not allowed to stay in the building past dismissal except in the case of a late pick-up, under the circumstances described below.

Parent Responsibilities for Pick-Up

After school, students not going home using transportation services must either walk or be picked up. In the case of a late pick up, students will wait in the main lobby under the supervision of a school staff member. Any student who has not yet been picked up by 5:30pm will be brought to the local precinct for



pickup by a parent or guardian. Parents will always be notified before school officials bring a child to the Precinct.

If a student leaves campus without proper consent from a school leader, the family will be notified and the student will not be allowed to return to campus that day unless escorted by a parent or guardian. Additional consequences may be given to the student, as determined by the Dean of Students and Principal.

Please note that the Main Office closes at 5:00 pm, and students or families will not be allowed access to the school facilities after the end of the school day. Personal belongings such as homework, electronic devices, and clothing items or book bags that are left on school premises cannot be retrieved after the Main Office closes.

Transportation Services

Valence College Prep Charter School transportation services are provided by the Department of Education Office Of Pupil Transportation (OPT). Student eligibility for transportation is determined by OPT directly in accordance with Chancellor’s Regulation A-801 based on the student’s grade level and the distance between the student’s residence and school (as measured by OPT). Families must inform Valence College Prep of their transportation mode preference (walking, yellow bus, or MetroCard) upon registration. The school will submit these requests to OPT, however, final determination of transportation modes offered to each family will be made solely by OPT at their discretion.

Please note that all students in the New York City school system are required to travel independently in grades 7-12, and are not eligible for transportation on yellow buses.

Distance Eligibility Guidelines from the Office of Pupil Transportation:

Grade	Distance Code A (Less than 0.5 mile)	Distance Code B (0.5mile or more, but less than 1 mile)	Distance Code C (1 mile or more, but less than 1.5 miles)	Distance Code D (1.5 miles or more)
Grades 5 & 6	Not Eligible	Half-Fare	Full-Fare	Full-Fare

Students will not receive a MetroCard AND a yellow bus seat - they will only be provided one service.

Parents will be notified of schoolwide transportation service assignments as soon as they have been provided by OPT.

Valence will not be able to modify OPT transportation assignments, bus routes, or eligibility determinations on behalf of families. Families should call OPT directly if they wish to modify or request an appeal of their transportation assignment. **Any questions regarding transportation determinations should be directed to OPT at 718-392-8855.**

The Valence school administration will maintain a list tracking the transportation mode and/or bus route of each student.



Yellow Bus

Valence will receive a list of eligible students assigned to bus routes as well as a list of pickup/dropoff points and times, which we will also maintain at the Main Office. Families will be informed about specific routes and bus procedures as soon as they are provided by OPT.

Door to door bus service for students will not be offered. The Department of Education may, however, provide such transportation for students in temporary housing, or for students with special needs, whenever special transportation is included on the student's IEP and the charter school requests that the school district provide such special transportation. Special transportation is included in the definition of 'special education' under Education Law § 4401(1).

Parents should contact the Office of Student Transportation (OPT) directly at 718-392-8855 with any questions or issues relating to yellow bus service, including day-to-day issues.

Metrocards

Students who have been assigned MetroCards by OPT will receive special free or reduced-fare MetroCards at the beginning of the school year. It is the student's responsibility to keep their MetroCard safe. If a student loses the MetroCard (or if it is damaged, stolen, etc.) then the Main Office must be notified immediately upon which the old card will be deactivated and a new card will be assigned. A student who loses their MetroCard will also be issued a Major Deduction of -15 Merit points, and may need to wait up to two weeks to receive a replacement. In the event that a scholar needs to wait for a replacement metrocard, families are responsible for arranging transportation needs for their scholar. If a student loses their MetroCard more than once per school year, they may receive additional consequences, such as After School Reflection, Friday Reflection, or a Family Conference.

Student MetroCards are only permitted for use by the assigned student to travel between home and school. Students who violate this rule may face disciplinary action.

Car transportation

For families who choose to drive their children to school, they are encouraged to drop the child off directly in front of their designated entrance. Students in grades 5 and 6 who are dropped off will line up along the 98th Street side entrance to the school before 7:25 am. Students in grades 7 and 8 who are dropped off will line up along the 64th Road entrance to the school before 7:25 am. All late arrivals will enter the building through the main entrance on 64th Road. This is for the safety of all students. To reduce congestion, parents are encouraged to consider the school bus whenever feasible. Parents are also encouraged to arrange carpools with other families to reduce the number of vehicles traveling to school.

Walkers

Students who walk to school accompanied with a parent must follow the Valence College Prep Code of Conduct at all times. Parents will leave their children at the designated door of the school, and will not be able to enter the building with their children unless they have an urgent health emergency to address.

Notifying the School of Transportation Changes



If you need to change your child's usual dismissal plan or transportation for the day, you must do one of the following:

- **Send a written note** – Send a note to school with your child in the morning detailing the change in plans and providing a clear description of who will pick up your child.
- **Call the school** – Call the school phone number and inform the Operations team of the changes. **The school must be notified no later than 2:00pm, Monday-Thursday, and 11:00am Friday to be able to communicate a change in the dismissal and transportation procedure for your child.**

V. School Policies

School Supplies & Policies

Students will be provided with the following items by Valence College Prep:

- 1 Folder
- 1 Pencil Pouch
 - 3 Non-mechanical Pencils
 - 2 Black Pens
 - 1 Pink Eraser
- 1 Planner
- 1 Clear Water Bottle (new scholars only)
- 1 Bookbag

Other supplies may be provided during classes as needed, including some supplies that will be carried in students' pencil pouches for the duration of an assignment.

School Supply Policies

- Students are encouraged to use school supplies provided by Valence College Prep. It is the responsibility of the scholar to replace any supplies as needed. Scholars will have the opportunity to purchase supplies using their merits at "NarMall", our school store. Any outside supplies that a staff member deems disruptive to the learning environment, will be asked to put away or potentially confiscated. If a student is missing a required item (such as pencils), they may ask a peer for a loaner or ask their teacher for a temporary replacement in exchange for a deduction. If a student loses any of the items previously provided, they will be given a Major Deduction and will have the opportunity to purchase replacement items at "NarMall", our school store.
- Specific Item Rules:
 - **Homework Folder:** The only papers that should ever be in a student's homework folder are that day's homework assignments and any papers that need to go home or be signed by a parent. When homework folders come to school each morning, they should only contain completed homework and signed papers to be returned.
 - **Pencil Pouch:** All students are provided with a pencil pouch. Pencil pouches should only contain items provided by the school.



Cell Phones

Valence College Prep students may not use cell phones at school during school hours. If a family needs to contact their child during the school day, parents should contact the school via phone or email, and a staff member will deliver messages to students during breaks, lunch, electives or Advisory periods. In the case of an emergency, parents can contact the Main Office, and messages will be delivered to students immediately. In the case of unexpected events, students are allowed to use the telephone in the Main Office to contact families.

Students who choose to bring a cell phone or other electronic mobile device to school do so at their own risk and the school does not accept responsibility for damage to, or loss of, such items.

Furthermore, all mobile devices must remain off and out of sight during the school day. Students will place their cell phones in a locked cabinet for the duration of the school day. Phones will be returned before students depart. Students caught with cell phones in pockets or backpacks will have the device confiscated. Confiscated cell phones will be stored in the Dean of Students office. The first time a cell phone is confiscated, the parent will be called and the device will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. If a cell phone is confiscated again, the device must be picked up from school by a parent or guardian. Reasons for cell phone confiscation include: cell phone ringing or vibrating loudly during the school day, or cell phone visible in backpack, pocket, or desk during the school day. If a student is caught using a cell phone during the school day, it is an automatic referral to the Dean of Students and additional consequences will be issued.

The above expectations also apply to other smart electronics such as smart watches, headphones etc.

Field Trips

Field trips at Valence College Prep fall into two categories: Field Lessons and Incentive-Based Trips. Field Lessons are field trips that are planned by teachers, related to content, and provide an instructional benefit to students. All students are invited to Field Lessons; however, students may be suspended from either Field Lessons or Incentive-Based Trips in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Incentive-Based Trips are by invitation only based on specific positive behaviors and outcomes. Criteria to be invited to these trips will be set out in advance and communicated to both students and families.

Uniform Policy

Valence College Prep students are required to be in full uniform each day. Any student found not to be in uniform will be issued a Major Deduction for each missing article, and be required to wear a Valence College Prep loaner uniform, which must be returned at the end of the school day. Families will also receive an automated message from the Main Office informing them that their student was out of uniform.

Failure to comply with the uniform policy may result in various consequences, including but not limited to suspension, parent meeting etc.

The Valence College Prep Uniform policies are below, by grade.

Uniform polos, sweatshirts, and pants can be purchased from Flynn O'Hara, who can be contacted at www.flynnohara.com or by phone at (718) 326-2704.



Item	5th and 6th Grade Uniform Requirements
Shirt/Top	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Navy blue polo shirt with Valence College Prep logo ● Shirt must be tucked in at all times ● Only black, white, or gray undershirts are allowed (short or long-sleeved)
Sweatshirts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Optional navy blue Valence College Prep crewneck sweatshirt ● Optional navy blue Valence College Prep zip-up fleece jacket ● No outside sweaters or sweatshirts are allowed
Pants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dark gray uniform pants ● Solid Black or Dark Brown belt only (no studs or designs; standard buckles only)
Socks/Shoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Socks must be worn at all times ● Sneakers must be completely black (no logos, tags, stitching, or laces of any other color) ● No boots, flip flops, slippers, slip-ons or slides allowed (including Crocs, Toms, or loafers)
Accessories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Headwear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No hats, sweatbands, or head coverings/scarves (unless for cultural/religious reasons) ○ Headbands that are a solid color and sit flat on the head are permitted (headbands with patterns, images, or those that do not sit flat, like cat ear headbands, are prohibited) ● Jewelry may be worn as long as it does not provide a distraction from learning for the wearer or other students. ● Permanent/Non-Permanent Tattoos: No designs of any kind on the face or body, except those worn for a cultural/religious reason
Outerwear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students can wear any outdoor clothing of their choosing (rain boots, snow boots, scarves, sweater) to school, but all non-Valence College Prep outerwear must be stored in backpacks or on coat hooks during the school day ● Students must change into uniform sneakers upon arrival to the school building ● Upon exiting the school, students can change into rain or snow boots
Makeup/Perfume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Makeup and perfume/cologne may not be applied on school premises.



Item	7th and 8th Grade Uniform Requirements
Shirt/Top	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Light blue polo shirt with Valence College Prep logo ● Dark blue polo shirt with Valence College Prep logo ● Shirt must be tucked in at all times ● Only black, white, or gray undershirts are allowed (short or long-sleeved)
Sweatshirts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Optional navy blue Valence College Prep crewneck sweatshirt ● Optional navy blue Valence College Prep zip-up fleece jacket ● No outside sweaters or sweatshirts are allowed
Pants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Khaki uniform pants ● Solid Black or Dark Brown belt only (no studs or designs; standard buckles only)
Socks/Shoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Socks must be worn at all times ● Shoes must be completely black (no logos, tags, stitching, or laces of any other color), but may be sneakers, dress shoes, or any other closed-toed and heeled shoe ● No flip flops, slippers, slip-ons or slides allowed (including Crocs, Toms, Uggs, or loafers)
Accessories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Headwear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No hats, sweatbands, or head coverings/scarves (unless for cultural/religious reasons) ○ Headbands that are a solid color and sit flat on the head are permitted (headbands with patterns, images, or those that do not sit flat, like cat ear headbands, are prohibited) ● Jewelry may be worn as long as it does not provide a distraction from learning for the wearer or other students. ● Permanent/Non-Permanent Tattoos: No designs of any kind on the face or body, except those worn for a cultural/religious reason
Outerwear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students can wear any outdoor clothing of their choosing (rain boots, snow boots, scarves, sweater) to school, but all non- Valence College Prep outerwear must be stored in backpacks or closets during the school day ● Students must change into uniform sneakers upon arrival to the school building ● Upon exiting the school, students can change into rain or snow boots
Makeup/ Perfume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Makeup, perfume/cologne may not be applied on school premises.



Item	Gym Uniforms (All Grades)
Shirt/Top	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light blue Valence College Prep t-shirt • Shirt must be tucked in at all times • Only black, white, or gray undershirts are allowed (short or long-sleeved)
Sweatshirts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional navy blue Valence College Prep crewneck sweatshirt • Optional navy blue Valence College Prep zip-up fleece • No outside sweaters or sweatshirts are allowed
Pants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valence College Prep sweatpants
Shoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid black sneakers must be worn

Lost & Found

Valence College Prep will maintain a Lost & Found in the Lobby. In order to avoid confusion, we recommend writing your child's name in permanent marker on the tags of all school uniform items, jackets, lunch boxes, and other personal items. Items labeled with student names will be returned to students immediately. Any items without names will remain in the Lost & Found until they are picked up or until the end of the quarter. At the end of each quarter, items in the Lost & Found will be donated to a charity that collects clothing and supplies.

VI. Attendance Policies

We expect students to attend school all day, every day so they can reach their academic goals. Valence College Prep commits to communicating proactively and frequently with parents about attendance, lateness, and early dismissals.

Our doors open to students at 7:25 am each morning. All students must be in the school building by 7:45 am. Dismissal begins at 3:37 pm each afternoon Monday through Thursday, and at 12:55 pm on Fridays.

- Scholars who arrive after 7:45 am will be marked Tardy
 - Three tardy arrivals equates to one absence
 - Excessive tardies or absences may result in further consequences as outlined below.

Accommodations may be made in the event of special circumstances, including residence in temporary housing (who qualify under the McKinney-Vento Act).

Attendance Policies

Family Communication

Communication with families about attendance is essential to the academic success of our students. Families receive communication about attendance in the following ways:

- Family Orientation Sessions all include information on attendance expectations.
- Any time a student arrives late to school, his or her parent receives a message letting them know that their child was late.
- Any time a child is absent, his or her parent receives a call from the school before 10am.



- Families receive and sign Progress Reports each Friday that indicate each student's number of accumulated tardies and absences.
- Families of students with chronic absenteeism will receive communication from the Operations Team, Social Work Team, and Dean of Students team. Meetings may be arranged to review special needs that have contributed to absenteeism, and plans for improvement or accommodations may be developed.

Student Attendance Incentives

- Students receive 5 merits for coming to school on time each day.

Lateness

- If a student arrives late to school, he or she enters the building and immediately proceeds to the Main Lobby.
- In the Main Lobby, the student signs in with the Receptionist, who marks them Tardy
- Three tardies is equal to one absence. Please refer to our chronic absenteeism policy for more information on the possible outcomes of consistent tardiness.

Chronic Absenteeism

- Students are considered chronically absent if they have more than 4 absences per quarter.
- Any student that hits three or more unexcused absences in a quarter receives a phone call from Family & Outreach Manager.
- Students with more than 15 absences for the year may be retained if they have missed significant instructional time in classes in which participation is identified as an important part of the educational experience.

Families of students who are chronically absent may be referred to Administration of Child Services of New York (ACS) per city and state guidelines.

Early Dismissal

- Medical or dental appointments should be made during after-school hours to ensure that students spend school hours in school. Fridays are an ideal time for any necessary appointments, as students will typically be dismissed at 12:55 pm on Friday afternoons.
- Students may not be dismissed early from school without a parent/guardian or someone authorized by the parent/guardian.
- When the parent/guardian arrives to pick up a student, he or she checks in the Main Lobby with the Receptionist.
- The Receptionist either calls or physically goes to the classroom to get the child, ensures that the child has all of his or her homework for the day, as well as all materials he or she needs at home that evening.

Dismissal

- At 3:35 pm Monday-Thursday (12:55 pm Friday), students who walk are dismissed from Advisory by their teachers to exit the building. Students who take the yellow buses are then dismissed from Advisory. Students should not loiter near the school building or nearby businesses. Students who are



found to be loitering, engaging in unsafe or disruptive behaviors, or trespassing on private property are subject to both in-school consequences and potential involvement from law enforcement.

VII. Academic Policies

Progress Reports, Report Cards, and Report Card Afternoons

Families will receive frequent and accurate communication about their child’s academic performance and progress at school. As such, families will always be able to monitor their child’s grades in all courses in real time using our online gradebook system. Training on the online gradebook system will be provided for families at the beginning of each school year.

In addition, students receive weekly progress reports each Friday that detail their current grade and academic performance in all courses. Progress Reports must be reviewed and signed by parents and returned on Monday.

Report cards are distributed four times per year, once at the end of each quarter. Report cards must be picked up from school by parents at quarter 1 and quarter 3 Report Card Conferences. At these events, parents can pick up their child’s report card, as well as meet with teachers to discuss their child’s academic progress. Report cards for quarters 2 and 4, will be sent home with scholars, and/or mailed home.

Grading

Teachers at Valence College Prep will grade scholars on a 100-point scale, with corresponding letter grades indicated below.

Valence College Prep Grading Scale		
Points	Letter grade	Description
97-100	A+	Scholar has mastered the content standards with few or no gaps in understanding or execution.
93-96	A	
90-92	A-	
87-89	B+	Scholar has demonstrated proficiency in the content standards with only minor gaps in understanding or execution.
83-86	B	
80-82	B-	
77-79	C+	Scholar demonstrates basic competency with the content standards, but may still have minor gaps in understanding and/or execution.
73-76	C	
70-72	C-	
0-69	F	Scholar has not yet mastered the content standards and must demonstrate at least basic competency to earn credit.



Honor Roll

Scholars earning an average of 90% across all of their classes for the quarter earn Honor Roll status.

Promotion & Retention

Our mission is to provide a high-quality education to the most at-risk students and we work hard to put systems, interventions, and supports into place so the instances in which we need to retain a student are rare. We are committed to open and honest communication with the families of our students who are not meeting academic objectives.

Valence College Prep does not believe in social promotion. That means that, generally speaking, students should not be promoted to the next grade simply because they are “old enough” to be in that grade. It is our job to help all students meet promotion criteria, but there are times when a student simply needs another year to be able to achieve mastery. We do not view retention as failure. There are many cases where students, given an extra year in the same grade level, will meet higher standards. Through targeted and intensive intervention plans for any student who has been retained, we seek to avoid repeated retentions for a student.

The table below details the criteria for promotion.

Valence College Prep Promotion Criteria		
Grade Level	Core Academic Achievement	New York State Testing
5	70% mastery or greater in all core courses ¹	2 or greater in both ELA and Math
6	70% mastery or greater in all core courses	2 or greater in both ELA and Math
7	70% mastery or greater in all core courses	2 or greater in both ELA and Math
8	70% mastery or greater in all core courses	2 or greater in both ELA and Math

Barring extenuating circumstances, scholars who are below 70% mastery in three or more core courses will not be able to master the content of all courses by the end of Summer Academy and will thus be retained. **Scholars who are below 70% mastery in any subject may be invited to Summer Academy**, and scholars who are below 70% in just one or two subjects will have the opportunity and supplemental support to master the content standards that they have not yet mastered during the academic year. Scholars who did not meet their personalized reading goals may also be invited to Summer Academy. Summer Academy is a half-day program held

At the end of Summer Academy, cumulative assessments will be administered to determine if a scholar is ready for promotion to the next grade or would be better served by retention, and scholars earning a 70% or greater will be deemed prepared for promotion to the next grade. Extenuating circumstances will be considered in the application of the attendance requirement for promotion. It is unlikely that a scholar who has met a high standard of academic growth despite excessive absence will be retained.

¹ Core courses are ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.



Students with IEPs will be held to standard promotional criteria unless their IEP indicates their promotional criteria is modified. Teachers will grade students with IEPs using a standard scale, though students with IEPs may receive extended time or differentiated work, and must receive all accommodations and modifications identified in their IEP to ensure their academic needs are being met.

Promotion in Doubt Communication Systems

Strong ongoing communication between school, families, and students is essential to ensuring that students are making the necessary progress to move to the next grade. There are several systems in place at Valence College Prep to ensure that our students are making progress and that proactive communication is ongoing.

Grade Reports: Progress Reports are distributed to students in Advisory weekly on Fridays to be taken home to families. Students must return signed Progress Reports and reflections back to school each Monday. Students earn a Major Deduction for failing to turn in the signed Progress Report. Families may access the SchoolRunner website at any time from their phone or computer to check their student's progress.

Promotion-in-Doubt Meetings: The Dean of Academic Intervention and Instructional Leadership Team will formally review student grades school-wide throughout the year (progress reports and end-of-quarter) to determine those students whose promotion to the next grade is in doubt due to two or more failing grades. A member of the school's Leadership Team will communicate with families through ParentSquare, phone calls, and/or in-person meetings about the student's academic progress.

Any student in danger of not being promoted will meet with a Leadership Team Member during that quarter's Report Card Conferences. At this meeting, the Leadership Team Member will review the report card with the parent and student, review samples of student work or other data, review our promotional policies, and work with the parent to put key next steps in place to put the student on track for promotion. The Dean of Academic Intervention will send out a PID list each quarter to the full team and coordinate this meeting process for the school.

Parents will be invited to Promotion in Doubt meetings if their student falls into any of the following categories:

- Failing more than 1 course for the quarter
- Significantly below grade level in reading or math as determined by MAP testing, F&P testing, Reading/Math Intervention data, and Interim Assessments
- Significant struggles with behavior that are impacting academic performance
- Significant attendance issues that are depriving the student of classroom experience.

Homework & Reading Log

College-bound students do their homework every day and use homework as an opportunity to practice what they have learned or prepare for the next day's learning. It is important that students, with the help of their parents, create routines for when and how they complete their homework after school each day. Students will be given a total of approximately one hour of homework each night - ten minutes of practice in each of their core subjects and twenty minutes of independent reading.

Expectations and Consequences



Homework is checked by teachers each morning. Students receive a -2 deduction for each incomplete assignment and a -5 deduction for any missing assignment and are assigned to Homework Center. Homework Center is held during the Lunch period, and students are given a silent environment to efficiently eat lunch and then work on their incomplete homework. Students may earn back the points from their Homework Center deduction by earning +2 merit points for each homework assignment they successfully complete and submit during this period. Students will only earn the opportunity to enjoy a social lunch with their peers if all of their homework is completed prior to arriving at school each day.

Absentee Work

Grading Absent Scholar Work

Absences are categorized into two groups- *excused absences* and *unexcused absences*. An absence will only be considered as excused if the scholar submits proper documentation from a doctor's office or a death in the family. It is the responsibility of the scholar to ask for any make-up work needed in each class. The grading policy for make up work is listed below.

Unexcused Absences	Excused Absences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scholars with unexcused absences will receive a 0 for any missed classwork, including but not limited to exit tickets, class projects, and participation grades. ● Scholars will be given the opportunity to submit their homework one day after their return. ● Scholars will have the opportunity to make up any quizzes or tests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scholars with an excuse absence will have any classwork missed listed as "Excused" on SchoolRunner. Having an assignment listed as "excused" does not affect the scholar's overall grade. ● Scholars will be given the opportunity to submit their homework, one day after their return. ● Scholars will have the opportunity to make up any assessments.
Scholars with extended Absences (3+ Consecutive days)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scholars with extended absences will receive a 0 for any missed classwork, including but not limited to exit tickets, quizzes, and participation grades. ● Scholars will be given the opportunity to submit their homework, one week after their return. ● Scholars will have the opportunity to make up any major tests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scholars with an excused absence will have any classwork missed listed as "Excused" on SchoolRunner. Having an assignment listed as "excused" does not affect the scholar's overall grade. ● Scholars will be given the opportunity to submit their homework, one week after their return. ● Scholars will have the opportunity to make up any major tests.

Grading Expectations for Unusual Calendar Circumstances

Throughout the school year, we will have weeks with special events, such as breaks and Family Conferences, which interrupt the normal expectations for grading scholar work. In such weeks, you should plan to have **one graded assignment** per school day. For example, on a week with classes Monday-Wednesday, but no school on Thursday and Friday, you would be expected to grade three assignments for that week.



Academic Interventions

Valence College Prep is a school for all students, and it is our responsibility to put systems and supports in place to ensure that all of our students are set up to be successful in school. As such, students who are performing below grade level in reading and math receive small group instruction during Intervention blocks four times per week.

We are committed to meeting the needs of all students with IEPs and 504 Plans and will provide all accommodations, modifications, and special education services as mandated by student IEPs and 504s. We have certified teachers on our staff to provide ICT in ELA, Social Studies, Math, and Science, and SETSS groups in ELA and Math. We are also committed to meeting the needs of all English Language Learners and provide small group push-in and pull-out services to English Language Learners at all levels of proficiency.

In addition to supporting our students with IEPs and 504 plans and our English Language Learners, we will actively ensure that any student who needs academic support receives the appropriate interventions through Academic Response to Intervention (RTI).

Saturday Academy and Summer Academy

Valence College Prep holds Saturday Academy for scholars who will benefit from supplemental help in fundamental skills. As needed, students may be invited to participate in Saturday Academy and Summer Academy to receive specific interventions or additional instruction. Students invited to participate in these additional interventions will receive a letter home, as well as a phone call from the school. All academic and behavioral expectations of the school and the Code of Conduct remain in effect during Saturday Academy and Summer Academy.

After School Enrichment

Different enrichment clubs are offered each year. Clubs meet Friday during the school day, and all students are required to join a club and attend its weekly meetings. Students whose weekly deduction total exceeds 40 points will be required to attend Friday After School Reflection and Scholars will be dismissed at 2:00 PM if required to attend After School Reflection, students are supervised by the Dean of Students or another Leadership Team member, and are expected to reflect on their academic and behavioral progress from the previous week. Friday Reflection takes place during regular school hours on Fridays with the same dismissal time. A limited number of after-school activities are offered based on teacher and student interest each year. After-school activities are held from 3:45-5:00pm, and families are responsible for creating a transportation plan for their scholar to get home following these activities. All scholars will be dismissed at 5:15pm, and accommodations cannot be made for late pick-up.

VIII. Important Notice of Additional Policies

DASA- Dignity for All Students Act

Valence College Prep creates a safe and supportive environment for all community members; we abide by the New York State Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). Intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying (including cyber bullying) on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice,



disability, sexual orientation, gender, and sex are expressly prohibited. To read the full Dignity for All Students Act, please visit <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/>.

Harassment of a fellow student, as prohibited by DASA, is a violation of our Code of Conduct and will be punishable in accordance with the Code of Conduct. To seek help if you are subject to harassment or bullying by another student or by any employee of Valence, contact our DASA Coordinator, Ms. Kone, in person, by letter, or by email.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (commonly referred to as “504”) is a federal law that protects students and all Valence employees from discrimination based on disability. A disability may be a physical or mental impairment (such as an allergy or asthma or a learning disability) that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Section 504 assures that students with disabilities have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to students without disabilities. If you believe that your child is experiencing discrimination or loss of educational opportunities due to a disability, please contact our 504 Coordinator, our Dean of Student Support, in person, by letter or email. The 504 Coordinator will arrange a 504 meeting to develop a health plan or another kind of 504 Plan. S/he will also explain your right to impartial review of a Section 504 Plan and procedures for filing a complaint, if your concerns are not resolved.

Mandated Reporter Policies

Child Abuse or Maltreatment at Home or in an After-school Child-care Facility

All teachers and school administrators who work with your child are required by state law to report all instances of suspected child abuse neglect or maltreatment (Social Services Law, Article 6, Title 6, Sections 413-417, & 419-420). Reports must be made whenever there is “reasonable cause” (Social Services Law, Article 6, Title 6, Section 413), which could “be as simple as distrusting an explanation for injury” (Summary Guide for Mandated Reporters in New York State, 2011). This means that a Valence College Prep staff member must submit reports of suspected abuse or maltreatment when presented with *any* suspicion regardless of previous relationship with or knowledge of a student’s family or home life.

As outlined by law, reports are submitted directly to the New York Statewide Central Register for Child Abuse & Maltreatment (800) 636-1522, and include photographs of any visible signs of abuse or maltreatment observed on the student (Social Services Law, Article 6, Title 6, Sections 413-417, & 419-420). Upon receiving the report, a Child Protective Specialist determines whether the suspicion warrants an investigation. If the report is accepted for investigation, then a written report (LDSS-2221A) must be completed by the reporting staff member from the school.

Valence College Preparatory Charter School is required to cooperate fully with any investigation or casework activity carried out by Child Protective Services regardless if the report originated from the school. Such activities include, but are not limited to: granting access to academic, behavior, IEP, and attendance records; allowing child protective workers to observe a student in class, interview a student, interview employees, and/or hold a student at school until a protective worker arrives. In addition, Child Protective Service workers may take children into custody if they deem it necessary.

Child Abuse or Maltreatment in the School Setting



All teachers and administrators who work with your child and any staff member of Valence are expected to report to the Head of School any observation or complaints of abuse in the school setting, including corporal punishment, excessive restraint or verbal abuse. This policy applies on school property, on school trips, at any school functions, and off school premises if such abuse affects the school community. Verbal abuse includes language that belittles or embarrasses or subject students to ridicule.

The Head of School will promptly investigate such a report, and if there is a reasonable basis to conclude that such abuse may have occurred, the Head of School will notify Parents and will make appropriate reports to law enforcement and/or the New York City Department of Education.

Technology

Please see the terms of use in the chart below. If a student violates one of these terms, he/she may face a range of consequences from Referral to Suspension.

Terms of Use	
Etiquette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Students exercise control and use technology in a respectful manner. . Students safely navigate the web and participate in positive and educational dialogue with peers and teachers online.
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Students use technology and access the Internet only to support learning material during class, small group, advisory, or enrichment. . Students engage in a meaningful experience with technology by using web-based applications to foster positive youth development and content. . Students use Chromebooks to navigate only websites as directed by their teachers. . Students may use headphones only as directed by their teachers.
General Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Technology carts are housed in classrooms and only teachers may distribute Chromebooks to students during designated times. . Chromebooks are not used during lunch. . Food and drink must be kept separate from Chromebooks at all times. . Chromebooks are not allowed to leave the school grounds unless authorized by a leader of the school.
<p><i>Each student is responsible for their chromebook for the duration of the school year. As such, any substantial damage done to the chromebook will result in additional consequences including but not limited to damage fees.</i></p>	

Social Media Policy

The same standards expected in a school setting are expected on the school social media site for all student activity and peer-to-peer interactions. What would be considered inappropriate in the school or classroom is inappropriate online.

Students are responsible for their own behavior when communicating on social media and will be held accountable for the content of the communications that they transmit or post. Students are responsible



for complying with Valence College Prep's Code of Conduct requirements. Examples of inappropriate conduct include, but are not limited to:

- . Posting or publishing any insensitive or inappropriate information or content on any social media and viewing any insensitive or inappropriate social media content.
- . Communicating with teachers or administrators via personal social media. *The only permissible electronic method of email communication with a teacher is through emailing the teacher or administrator at his or her authorized Valence email account.*
- . Impersonating or assuming the identity of any other individual while using social media.
- . Posting or publishing any information about one's self or another individual that is confidential or of a private nature. This includes posting contact information or any other information that is private.
- . Using any device capable of capturing video, pictures, or audio to record or take pictures of any other individual without express consent and permission and posting any pictures taken in the school setting, even if taken with permission, unless they are educationally related.
- . Students must immediately comply with any request that offending materials be removed from any social media platform.

The violation of any provision of this policy may result in the restriction of a student's social media or technology access and/or the imposition of additional appropriate consequences--including both school-based consequences and referrals to law enforcement.

This social media policy applies any time students are using school property, under the supervision of school authority, or, when social media is being used away from school premises, in a manner that impacts the school community. Misuse of social media that impacts fellow students will be subject to school-based consequences whether students used it on or off school grounds. Please refer to our section on CyberBullying for more information.

Bathroom Policy

Creating a safe environment in every part of our building is key to maximizing the efforts of our scholars. Teachers track the use of each student's daily bathroom use. If it's suspected that a scholar is continuously using the bathroom to avoid their responsibilities during class, the scholar's family may be contacted and required to conference with their teacher and a member of the Leadership Team. Scholars are expected to uphold the code of conduct during their bathroom breaks, Valence College Prep reserves the right to assign a bathroom chaperone to your scholar in the event of continuous reports of misconduct.

Family Restorative Process and Informal Complaint Procedure

If families have a concern about a school operational policy, academic grade, discipline decision, or anything else related to the institution, we welcome a restorative conversation. We are dedicated to making the School a community where you can approach us to discuss any problem or concern. We request that families to utilize the following steps:



- 1) **Discuss your issue directly with the individual teacher or staff member that your issue concerns.**
- 2) **If you cannot resolve your issue directly, you may raise your issue with the relevant Dean or Director, listed below.**

Area of Concern	Dean/Director Responsible
Academics	Grade Level Dean
Behavior & Discipline	Dean of Students
Special Education Supports	Manager of Special Education
Operations	Director of Operations

The Dean or Director will discuss your issue with you and work towards a resolution.

- 3) If you still believe your concern has not been addressed, **you may speak with the Principal or leave a written account of your issue, addressed to the Principal**, with the Operations Team in the Main Lobby, or with the Director of Operations. The Principal will review this concern within 10 school days and respond with a summary of any and all actions planned to resolve the issue.

Procedures for Filing a Formal Complaint

The above family process should efficiently and fairly address concerns you may have about a policy or action of the School. But if you believe that the School has violated the law or its charter agreement, you may file a formal complaint. The school’s full Complaint Policy is below.

Complaint Policy and Procedures of Valence College Preparatory Charter School

Purpose and Scope

This policy pertains to certain complaints about instructional materials, personnel, emergency or urgent facilities conditions that pose a threat to the health and safety to pupils or staff, and teacher vacancies or missed assignments. This policy is to comply with applicable state laws and regulations governing these subjects to be responsible and compliant. Pursuant to this policy, persons responsible for conducting investigations shall be or become knowledgeable about the matters that they are assigned to investigate. Valence College Preparatory Charter School (“Valence College Prep” or “the School”) shall maintain a record of each complaint and subsequent related actions, including all information required for compliance with school mandates, procedures, and policies as set by the following: SUNY Charter School Institute, New York State Education Department, and the mission and charter of Valence College Prep.

In addition, Valence College Prep maintains that this policy will serve as a uniform complaint procedure for investigating complaints of: (1) discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability; and (2) complaints related to personnel issues, academic issues, any single person or combination of persons of staff, student, fellow parent, family, volunteer matters that appear to compromise and/or conflict with the school’s mission and/or charter, violations of the laws and regulations governing consolidated categorical aid programs, child development, counseling, special education, and nutrition services. The



school will receive and investigate uniform complaints that fall within these categories to ensure that the school is in compliance.

Furthermore, complaints that address unlawful discrimination or lack of compliance with certain federal and state programs are subject to different requirements and are governed by state and/or federal authority. Either of these complaint procedures, however, is intended to govern every type of complaint about a school of the Department of Education. To the contrary, these complaint procedures address only those complaints that fall within the policy's specified scope.

Valence College Prep encourages informal resolution to informal complaints whenever possible. Any issues unrelated to the law or fulfillment of the charter are regarded as informal complaints and are best resolved through communication between the parties most immediately involved. We encourage informal complaints to first be voiced to the parties involved and, if unresolved, voiced to the Head of School. Any parties who believe that an informal complaint has not been adequately addressed by the Head of School may bring such a complaint to the Board of Trustees in public comment, but the Board is not required to address any such complaints directly. If a member of the Board believes that such an informal complaint constitutes a performance concern in its management of the Head of School, a member of the Board may raise the discussion of the complaint as new business for the full Board. If the Board believes that disciplinary action is justified, it may vote to pursue such action pursuant to the personnel policy.

In the case that any party believes that there has been a violation of the law or of our charter, a formal complaint should be filed. Pursuant to the requirements of New York State Education Law § 2855(4), the legally required procedure for formal complaint to a single authority of the School will be followed.

Responsibilities and Records in the Formal Complaint Process

The Board of Trustees will delegate the responsibility of review and decisions regarding complaints to the Head of School. Complaint forms will be available at the main office and, if submitted, will be forwarded to the Head of School, or his/her delegate. The Head of School, or his/her delegate, will leverage the assistance of other members of the Leadership Team, staff, and/or student(s) in identifying specifics to gather information about the complaint, to continue investigation and/or to work toward resolution of the complaint. Valence College Prep will distribute the complaint policy and complaint form to staff via the staff handbook, to parents/guardians via the Student and Family Handbook, and/or to the school community, if necessary, in order to satisfy complaint protocol and procedure needs.

The Head of School will maintain a detailed record of all complaints, including the date the complaint was received and the results of any investigation necessitated by the complaint. All complaints and responses shall be public records. Complainants or student(s) of complainant shall not be subject to retaliation as a result of the filing of a complaint. The Head of School shall provide a copy of the disposition to the Board of Trustees and to Charter Schools Institute upon request, if and when a complaint resolution/decision has not satisfied the complainant and an appeals process has been initiated.

Complaints shall be processed in accordance with the steps below. In addition, any Title 1 complaints received shall be processed, resolved, and tracked in accordance with the steps below and will be identified as a Title 1 parent complaint.

Step 1: Filing the Complaint

Complaints are registered on the complaint form by Complainant. Complaints may also be verbally communicated with the Head of School and/or appropriate Leadership Team member(s); however, a record of a complaint must be in written form as indicated. If for any reason a complainant is unable to put a complaint in writing, the appropriate Leadership Team member(s) shall allow the complainant to record their complaint onto a recorder to be transcribed and/or translated and affirmed by the complainant. Complaint forms shall be available in the main office of the school. The complaint should



state the date of the complaint and a detailed statement of the circumstances, and the requested remedy. A complainant may include as much text as s/he feels is necessary to explain the complaint. The complainant shall be provided a copy of their complaint form and this complaint policy and procedure if complainant has not already received one.

Step 2: Investigation of the Complaint

The Head of School and/or appropriate Leadership Team member(s) will make all reasonable efforts to investigate complaint/problem within his/her authority. Investigation shall include, but not be limited to, interviews with the complainant and/or complaint's representative and any other person(s) believed to have relevant knowledge concerning the complaint.

Step 3: Response and Final Decision

The Head of School and/or appropriate Leadership Team member(s) shall remedy a valid complaint within a reasonable time period but not to exceed ten (10) working days from the date the complaint was received. The Head of School or appropriate Leadership Team member shall complete a written response/report within fifteen (15) working days of the initial filing and provide a copy to the complainant (if a response is requested by the complainant) as well as place a copy in complaint log teacher/student file, if applicable.

The reported decision shall be written in English and in the language of the complainant whenever feasible or required by law.

The complainant's right to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint will not be affected by the complainant's pursuit of other remedies, such as the filing of a complaint with any outside entity.

Appeal Process

If a complainant does not believe that the School has adequately addressed a formal complaint, the complainant may present the complaint to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute via the SUNY Formal Complaint Form. The Institute shall investigate and respond, if so determined by them. If, after presentation of complaint to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, the individual or group determines that the SUNY Charter Schools Institute has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may present the case to the New York State Education Department's Board of Regents, which shall investigate and respond, if so determined by them. The SUNY Charter Schools Institute and the Board of Regents have the power to take appropriate remedial action, if so determined.

IX. Encouraging Positive Student Behavior, Behavior Intervention, & Discipline

Merit Points System

Merit Points System Beliefs:

- Consistency of expectations across classes is beneficial for students and allows them to focus on learning
- Students should be frequently rewarded for meeting expectations and doing the right thing
- High-expectations means holding all students accountable for meeting all expectations, all the time
- A deduction is a reminder, not a consequence in itself

System Overview:



- Students receive 5 merit points for coming to school on time each day.
- Throughout each day, students can earn merits, +2 points, or deductions, -2 points. Above and beyond behaviors can earn major merits, +5 points, and more severe misbehaviors can earn students major deductions, -5 points.
- Students who have earned 40 or more deductions throughout the week, will be assigned Friday After School Reflection or Lunch Reflection.
- Students can spend merit points at our school store, the NarMall, during their lunch period each day.
- As part of Progress Reports distributed every Friday, students receive a merit point report that details all the merits and deductions earned for the week and their current merit point total.

Merits & deductions:

Merits are granted for behaviors that uphold and exemplify our RIGHT values.

RIGHT Values and Sample Behaviors	
Value	Sample Behaviors to Earn a Merit
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I listen attentively to my peers when they speak in class. • When I accidentally harm one of my peers, I apologize. • I am careful with my belongings and the belongings of others.
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I complete assessments independently. • When my partner asks me for an answer, I respond by explaining the process. • I fully finish my independent reading book before taking the mastery quiz in Accelerated Reader.
Gratitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I say thank you to the staff member who hands me my lunch. • I participate fully in gratitude circle in Friday Advisory. • I tell a peer or staff member that I appreciate their help with a task I did not understand.
Hard work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I move urgently to begin an assignment immediately after it is directed by the teacher. • I persevere through multiple ways of solving a problem after one method fails. • I take my teacher’s feedback to improve my work.



Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I look my partner in the eye and nod as they speak. ● I show silent support for peers when they ask and answer questions. ● I help a peer by modeling a task for them.
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Scholars may struggle to meet the high behavioral expectations of Valence classes. When they do, deductions and referrals provide the consequences commensurate with their actions. The table below describes the behaviors for which Valence staff will issue consequences. However, it is not intended to be comprehensive, and disciplinary consequences may be issued for negative behaviors of comparable severity to those listed below. All consequences are given at the discretion of the Dean of Students.

Value	Behaviors Earning a deduction	Behaviors Earning a Major deduction	Referral (includes a Major deduction)
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ignoring a teacher's directions ● Inappropriate language (e.g. 'crap') ● Touching another scholar's materials, including hiding or playing with them ● Misuse of school supplies ● Calling out in class ● Speaking out of turn in class, including side conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repeated refusal (second time) to follow a teacher's directions ● Rude or unkind language directed toward a peer or adult ● Laughing at a peer ● Swearing ● Non-permanent vandalism of room or another person's materials ● Tossing materials - no contact with peers/adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repeated refusal (third time) to follow a teacher's directions ● Swearing at a peer or adult ● Slurs ● Bullying ● Destruction or permanent damage to another person's materials
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Looking at a partner's classwork for an answer ● Filling in an answer on homework due upon arrival to school as it is being handed in ● Distraction of peers ● Out of seat without permission ● (Hallway) Turning around or talking in line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Looking at a classmate's work during an assessment ● Purposeful but minor mischief out of seat (e.g. passing a note or toy) ● Purposeful distraction of peers ● Inappropriate response to a teacher's direction, redirection, or deduction (eye roll, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Copying HW, classwork, or any other assignment ● Mischief directed at a peer (backpack flipping, pranks of any kind) ● Planned mischief directed at major disruption (stink bombs, laser pointers, etc.)



		loud sigh, sucking teeth, etc.)loud sigh, sucking teeth, etc.)	
Gratitude	<i>Intentionally blank</i>	<i>Intentionally blank</i>	<i>Intentionally blank</i>
Hard work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off-task behavior despite redirection (daydreaming, tapping, etc.) Repeated poor posture Head completely on desk Not following directions Lack of expected/given classroom supplies (Hallway) Dragging body against wall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping head down or poor posture following redirection and deduction Purposefully poor work product Head down on desk, sleeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated refusal (3 times successively) to correct posture, on-task work, or sleeping
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inattention to a partner's answer in discussion Completing part of a team assignment independently Not tracking after a reminder/redirect Ignoring a peer's request for help during open collaboration time Repeated turning around in class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refusal to work with a teammate Working independently on an intended partner or team assignment Purposely ignoring a peer's question Purposeful misleading of a peer Keeping a resource away from a teammate (e.g, refusing to share a book) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated refusal to work with a teammate Repeatedly ignoring a peer

Rewards & Incentives

Valence College Prep believes in rewarding and celebrating students who work hard to do the right thing, make strong choices, and positively contribute to our community. Below are the daily, weekly, monthly, quarter, and annual rewards and incentives students can earn.

When	Reward/Incentive	Behavior	Timeframe
Daily	Merit (+2 points) or Major Merit (+5 points)	Demonstrating Core Values	Immediately
Weekly	Narwhal of the Week	Demonstrating achievement or growth in core values	Weekly at Family Meeting
	Advisory of the Week	Class section with the most RIGHT Blocks each week	Weekly at Family Meeting



	Narmall	Earning merit points	Weekly, during their Lunch period
Semesterly	Merit Auction	Earning merit points	During Family Meeting the last week of quarter 1-2
	Honor Roll	Earning high grades	During Family Meeting at the end of each quarter
	RIGHT Race Trip	Based on Right Block totals	Fall & Spring Semesters
Annually	End of Year Awards	Awards for academic achievement and improvement; RIGHT Values	End of Year Ceremonies

Disciplinary Consequences for Violation of the School's Code of Conduct

The following Code of Conduct that lists the behaviors that are specifically prohibited at Valence. It also shows the likely consequences of engaging in prohibited conduct.

Some violations of the Code of Conduct will result in In-School Suspension (ISS) for a student. This means that the student will receive all academic work in a special setting outside of the classroom and will not participate in special programs or extra-curricular activities. More serious violations of the Code of Conduct may result in Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS). Before a student receives an In-School Suspension (ISS) or Out of School Suspension (OSS), the student will have an opportunity to respond to the charge that his/her actions violated the Code of Conduct. The procedures for assuring an opportunity for such response are described below.

Code of Conduct	
<i>Infractions</i>	Possession of minor contraband, including but not limited to; candy, soda, energy drinks, gadgets and/or toys.
	Misuse of schools technology and resources.
	Being out of uniform
	Arriving late to class
	Being unprepared for class (missing materials, homework, assignments etc.)
	Disrupting class for any reason
<i>Serious Infractions</i>	Swearing or crude language used in any form, whether directed to someone or indirectly stated.
	Mocking or unkind words toward a peer or adult, both written or spoken. "Unkind words" refers to any language that can be considered rude, belittling, and or disrespectful.
	Copying from a peer or source on an independent assignment or allowing a peer to copy an assignment. Independent assignments include but



	are not limited to; exit tickets, homework, assessments, independent projects.
	Repeated defiance of a school staff instruction.
	Minor physical intimidation
	Threatening to harm or harming another scholar and/or adult either spoken, written, or sent digitally.
	Minor theft, including but not limited to pens, books, phones, and articles of clothing but items are returned.
Major Offenses	Verbal sexual harassment
	Discriminatory language directed at another student or at an adult
	Kissing or kissing-like actions at or around school
	Any physical contact that may be perceived as sexual at or around school.
	Horseplay, play fighting
	Attempted fighting
	Hate speech, written or spoken whether directed at an adult or peer, or indirectly stated.
	Cyberbullying including rude or negative public comments made and directed towards a peer and/or adult.
	Major theft, including but not limited to phones, headphones, smartwatches and items of high value and items are not recovered.
	2 warnings in afterschool reflection room.
3+ Class step out conversations in one day.	
Egregious Offenses	Any form of physical aggression, demonstrated towards a peer or adult, . i.e. shoving, slapping, punching, tackling, or full physical conflict.
	Any form of vandalism or graffiti. This includes drawings, or words of any kind, and the destruction of any property owned by the school.
	Threatening to kill a peer or adult or to cause mass harm Note: This action may be punishable by law according to NY State Penal Law
	Possession of major contraband, including but not limited to; stink bombs, lighters, laser pointers, smoke bombs, firecrackers, weapons, and water guns.
	Threat to use or actual use of a weapon at or near school, or threat of another scholar from our school off of our premises.
	Possession of tobacco or vaping products on school premises



	Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs on school premises (not in possession)
	Possession of any drugs or alcohol on school premises
	Selling or trading tobacco, drugs, or alcohol on school premises
	Attempted gambling on or around school premises.
	Leaves school premise or classroom without the permission of an adult.
	Failure to serve assigned consequences.
	Willfully disobeying teachers and/or school staff.

The above list is not exhaustive, and consequences will be assigned for any behavior that does not meet the school's standard of conduct.

At Valence College Prep, as in life, all actions have consequences. The potential consequences at Valence are explained below.

Potential Consequences	
<i>Deduction</i>	<i>Verbal warning</i>
<i>Hallway conference</i>	<i>Non-verbal warning</i>
<i>Referral</i>	<i>Confiscation of property</i>
<i>In-class Reflection (ICR)</i>	<i>Scholar/Teacher Conference</i>
<i>After School Reflection</i>	<i>Loss of classroom or other school privileges</i>
<i>In-school Suspension (ISS)</i>	<i>Exclusion and/or removal from a particular event</i>
<i>Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)</i>	<i>Seating arrangement changed</i>
<i>Parent/Guardian Meeting</i>	<i>Friday After-School Reflection</i>
<i>Bus Suspension</i>	<i>Paying for or replacing any damaged or missing property</i>
<i>After-school Program Suspension</i>	<i>Verbal or written apology</i>
<i>Administrative Tasks as assigned by the Dean of Students</i>	<i>Lunch Reflection</i>
<i>Modified classroom participation (e.g., limited partner work, etc.) to best support the student</i>	<i>Expulsion hearing</i>
<i>Other consequence deemed appropriate by school staff or the Board of Trustees</i>	

The above list is not exhaustive, and logical consequences will be assigned based on the severity of the misbehavior displayed.

Every Friday, parents are given a report with their scholars' weekly merit/deduction total. Students who accumulate more than 40 deductions for the week are required to attend after school reflection or two sessions of Lunch Reflection depending on the grade of the scholar. Refer to the chart below for more information on the potential consequences of high deduction totals.

Grade	Number of Points Deducted	Consequence
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5th & 6th	40 +	2 Day Lunch Reflection
7th & 8th		Friday After School Reflection
All Grades	80 +	2 days of After School Reflection
All Grades	100+	Parent Meeting
If a scholar is absent on the day of their assigned reflection period, they will need to make it up upon their return to school.		

Behavior Response to Intervention

Valence College Prep recognizes that some students may have difficulty adjusting to the School's expectations for student behavior. Behavior Response to Intervention (RTI) is a system for students who need additional support.

Behavior RTI Tier 2

Students may be selected by the Grade Team Leader and Dean of Students for Behavior RTI Tier 2. Students in Behavior RTI Tier 2 have a parent meeting with the Dean of Students, and receive weekly interventions that could include plans for increased parent communication, relationship building, and student investment.

Behavior RTI Tier 3

Students in Behavior RTI Tier 3 are students whose behavior has not improved significantly after 6-7 weeks of Tier 2 interventions and need more targeted support. For these students, grade teams engage in a root-cause analysis and create an individualized action plan. Students whose behavior does not improve after 6-7 weeks of Tier 3 interventions might qualify for a formalized Functional Behavior assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

FBA/BIP

If, after 6-7 weeks of a Behavior RTI Tier 3 intervention, a student's behavior does not demonstrate improvement, grade teams in consultation with the Dean of Student Support might conduct a formal Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). The FBA is based on behavior data and may include an analysis of the student's behavior at home and at school, with input from parent and student, as well as teachers. This analysis helps the team to determine the causes, or triggers, that contribute to behaviors that distract from learning. The FBA enables the School to create a more robust intervention plan to support that student.

Behavior RTI Progress Monitoring

All Behavior RTI plans will be formally evaluated each Data Day and decisions will be made to either (1) discontinue or de-scaffold plans because of student success, (2) move a student into a more supportive tier of Behavior RTI, or (3) revise a plan to make it more effective for the student.



Pre-Suspension Procedures

Before a School Suspension is imposed, the following Procedures will be followed:

Short-term In-School Suspension (ISS) or Out of School Suspension (OSS); 10 days or Fewer

The Dean of Students will arrange for a preliminary investigation of reported misconduct, will notify the student of the allegations, and will provide the student with an opportunity to respond. The Dean of Students or Associate Dean of Students will also notify parents by telephone and in writing. An in person meeting may be required if deemed necessary by the Dean of Students. If the student's presence in school presents a continuing danger or an ongoing threat of disruption, the suspension will be effective immediately. During an in-school suspension, a student will remain in school for the entire day but will complete classwork outside of the classroom.

Long-term Suspensions (More than 10 days) and Expulsions

Before a student is excluded from school for more than ten days, the student will have an opportunity to present evidence at a formal disciplinary hearing before a Hearing Officer designated by the Board Chair. After a Hearing Officer is appointed, the Executive Director or their designee will contact the parent to schedule the hearing. If the student has an IEP, a Dean will also write to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) to request a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR). The purpose of the MDR is to determine whether the conduct that is the subject of the hearing is closely related to the student's need for special education.

At the hearing, the student will be accompanied by a parent and will have the right to be represented by an advocate or counsel. Both the student and the school will have the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses and to cross-examine each other's witnesses. The Hearing Officer will first determine, based on the evidence presented, whether or not the student is guilty of the charges. If the student is found guilty of at least one charge, the Hearing Officer will consider the student's academic and disciplinary record and any findings of the Committee on Special Education with respect to a connection between the conduct and a student's disability. Parents and students will also have an opportunity to present additional information, which may be relevant to the disposition. Following the hearing, the Hearing Officer will make a decision regarding the penalty, which shall be considered final.

If a parent or guardian is not satisfied with the decision of the Hearing Officer, a complaint may be made in writing to the State University of New York, Charter Schools Institute's Grievance Desk, 41 State Street, Suite 700, Albany, New York 12207, Telephone Number: 518-445-4250.

Students with Special Needs

Students who have special needs have the same rights and responsibilities as other students and may receive consequences for the same misbehaviors. However, students with disabilities have additional protections guaranteed by federal and state laws.

If Valence is considering a suspension in excess of ten consecutive days or a short-term suspension which may bring the total number of days of suspension during a school year to more than ten, the School will refer students with IEPs to the Committee on Special Education for a Manifestation Determination Review (an MDR) for consideration of whether the behavior that is the subject of the disciplinary proceeding is a "Manifestation" of the student's disability. A student who receives 504 accommodations for an



educational disability is also entitled to this protection. The Dean of Students and Inclusive Learning will review the student's evaluations and Section 504 plan and will determine whether or not the conduct which is the subject of the disciplinary proceeding is connected to the student's disability.

If the CSE's MDR Team or the School's 504 Team finds that the conduct which is the subject of the disciplinary review is a "manifestation" of the student's disability, the student will return to class, and the School and the CSE or Section 504 Team will work together with the student and his/her parents to develop a plan to address the behavior within the school or in another setting.

If, upon review, the CSE's MDR team or the School's Section 504 Team determines that the student's conduct was not a result of his/her disability, then the student may be disciplined in the same manner as a student without a disability. Parents may request an impartial review to challenge the CSE's manifestation determination. The student will remain in his/her current educational placement while the hearing is pending except under the following circumstances:

Protections for Children Not Yet Eligible for Special Education and Related Services

A student who does not have an IEP or a 504 Plan may claim any of the protections given under federal law to students with disabilities if, before the behavior that led to the disciplinary proceeding occurred, the parent of the student had requested that the student be evaluated or expressed concern about the student's possible need for special education services, or if School officials had expressed concerns about the student's pattern of behavior.

Student Searches

In order to maintain the security of all of its students, Valence College Prep reserves the right to conduct searches of its students and their property. If searches are conducted, the school ensures that the privacy of the students is respected to the extent possible. School closets and desks, which are assigned to students, remain the property of Valence College Prep Charter School, and students should have no expectation of privacy in these areas. Such areas are subject to searches by school officials at any time.

Restraint

Valence College Prep Charter School maintains a strict Code of Conduct and clear disciplinary procedures. Corporal punishment of pupils is prohibited, but School personnel can use reasonable force as is necessary to protect themselves from physical injury, to protect the pupil, another pupil or teacher or any other person from physical injury, or to restrain a pupil whose behavior is interfering with the orderly operation of the school, provided that alternative procedures and methods not involving the use of physical intervention cannot be employed. An incident report will be prepared in any instance in which restraint is used and parents will be notified.



Acknowledgment Form

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Family Handbook for Valence College Prep. While I understand that the Family Handbook is neither a contract nor a legal document, I recognize that it is my scholar's and my responsibility to read and understand the policies, provisions, and procedures contained in the Family Handbook.

In addition, I understand that the contents of the Family Handbook are subject to change. I acknowledge that the Parent Handbook will be revised in accordance with the rules or regulations of state, federal, and accrediting entities, or at the discretion of the Board of Trustees of Valence College Prep. I recognize that any such revisions will supersede, modify, or eliminate the current contents of the Family Handbook. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to stay informed of policy and procedure revisions to the Family Handbook, which will be posted on our school website at www.valencecollegeprep.org.

Moreover, I recognize that it is my responsibility to contact the Main Office at Valence College Prep for any questions I might have about the contents of the Family Handbook now and in the future.

Scholar

I hereby acknowledge that I have been provided with a copy of the Family Handbook and have read and understand the handbook and the related policies. I understand that failure to sign and return this form does not relieve me from complying with the rules and regulations referenced in the handbook. Lastly, I understand that failure to comply with the rules of Valence College Prep may warrant disciplinary action, at the discretion of the Dean of Students Office.

Parent/Guardian

As parents or guardians of this scholar, I have read the 2023-24 Valence College Prep Family Handbook. I have read and understand all of the rules and regulations referenced in the handbook, and I acknowledge that failure to sign and return this form does not relieve my family from complying with said rules and regulations.

Parent Name

Scholar Name & Grade

Parent Signature

Date

