



Dear VCMS Parents,

I hope you have had a wonderful summer and continue to enjoy the time off of school for the next few weeks. We look forward to seeing all incoming sixth-grade students and a parent at orientation on Tuesday, September 3, from 12:30 - 4:00 p.m. and all students as school begins on Wednesday, September 4.

In addition to this letter, you will receive an email from the Finals site with all of the registration materials that need to be completed before the start of the school year. Please watch for this email by Friday, August 23.

Please mark your calendar for the following:

Tuesday, September 3

12:30 – 4:00 p.m. (required attendance for sixth-grade students and parents)

Orientation and Back to School for sixth-grade students and their parents. Detailed schedule on page 2.

Wednesday, September 4: First Day of School (All Grades)

Start: 7:50 a.m.; Dismiss: 12:05 p.m. - Uniform Dress Day

The first day of school is a half-day. Students will be in classes from 7:50 a.m. to 12:05 p.m. (there is no after-school care, so pick-up is at 12:05 p.m.).

Thursday, September 5

Start: 7:50 a.m.; Dismiss: 12:05 p.m. - Special Dress Day (School Photos)

- Students will be in classes from 7:50 a.m. to 12:05 p.m. (there is no after-school care, so pick-up is at 12:05 p.m.).
- Picture day: Students may wear free dresses; however, please ensure your children meet the free dress code, or else they must change into clothing from the uniform closet.
- In addition to the orientation program, students will take their baseline Scholastic standardized testing.
- **Back to School Night (in person) for parents of seventh and eighth-grade students 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.**
 - Back-to-School Night details will be included in the August Start-of-School information.

Friday, September 6th

Start: 7:50 a.m.; Dismiss: 12:05 p.m.- Spirit Dress Day

- Students will be in classes from 7:50 a.m. to 12:05 p.m. (there is no after-school care, so pick-up is at 12:05 p.m.).
- Spirit Dress or uniforms are required for September 6th. The Parent's Guide has a full list of the VCMS dress code (uniform and spirit dress).

**Orientation and Back to School for Sixth-Grade Students and Parents (required attendance)
Tuesday, September 3, 12:30– 4:00 pm**

Registration and Back to School for incoming sixth-grade students and their parents will occur during this time. Incoming sixth-grade students will meet the staff and their classmates as they tour campus, receive their locker assignments, and participate in team-building activities. We will have activities for incoming sixth-grade students running concurrently with the parent sessions. These include time to practice opening their lockers, introductions to their peers and staff members, icebreakers, and a group Q&A session.

Parents of incoming sixth-grade students will attend a special sixth-grade version of Back to School. This event will allow parents to see the classrooms, hear from the sixth-grade teachers, and learn about the overall sixth-grade program. In addition, there will be time for parents to check in with staff for special help with academic concerns, technology needs, special services, or other areas.

	Parent Group A	Parent Group B	Parent Group C	Parent Group D
12:30 - 1:00	Welcome/ Meet and Greet in the ES (Elementary School) Cafeteria- Staff Introductions			
1:00 - 1:10	Open Assembly and Prayer (ES Cafeteria)			
1:15 - 1:35	English & Math (ES cafeteria)			
1:40 - 1:55	STEM	Social Studies	Science	Religion
2:00 - 2:15	Social Studies	Science	Religion	STEM
2:10 - 2:20	Break	Break	Break	Break
2:20 - 2:35	Science	Religion	STEM	Social Studies
2:40 - 2:55	Religion	STEM	Social Studies	Science
3:00 - 3:10	PE, Spanish/Elective, Study Skills (ES Cafeteria)			
3:20 - 3:30	Students will meet their parents in ES Cafeteria			

3:30 - 4:00 p.m.: Q & A Time for general questions, tour the building, practice opening lockers

Contacting Teachers and Department Heads

Teachers and department heads will return to school on Monday, August 26, and are expected to start checking emails as of Wednesday, September 4.

	Department	Department Chair's Name	Department Chair's Email
Open time for parents to ask general questions. Please contact the department head via email for any student-specific questions.	English	Paul Caballero	pcaballero@valleycatholic.org
	Math	Christi Chisholm	cchisholm@valleycatholic.org
	PE/Health	Kara Moore	kmoore@valleycatholic.org
	Performing Arts	Nick Fisher	nfisher@valleycatholic.org
	Religion	Nick Hegwood	nhegwood@valleycatholic.org
	Science	Allison Kelly	akelly@valleycatholic.org
	Social Studies	Butch Malec	fmalec@valleycatholic.org
	Spanish	Peggy Malec	pmalec@valleyatholic.org
	Visual Arts	Anna Harrison	aharrison@valleycatholic.org

Contacting the School Office Personnel over the Summer

The ES/MS office will be open during summer hours from 9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., August 7 - 23. The school office will resume normal hours on Monday, August 26.

Uniform Closet Summer Hours

We have gently used uniforms donated by former students. These uniforms are free, and there is no limit to how many pieces you may take. Please feel free to come to "shop." The uniform closet will be open for all families Aug. 12 - 22, 9:00-12:00 p.m. No appointment is necessary.

Summer Contact Information during August:

Mrs. Molly Teeter
Administrative Assistant
503-718-6500
mteeter@valleycatholic.org

Dr. Jennifer Gfroerer
Principal
503-718-6510
Jgfroerer@valleycatholic.org

Mrs. Alyse Rostamizadeh (after August 12)
Counselor and Learning Support
503-718-6524
arostamizadeh@valleycatholic.org

Mr. Nick Hegwood (after August 12)
Vice Principal
503-718-6509
nhegwood@valleycatholic.org

Announcement of Staff Departures

A Message from Mrs. Iserson

“After ten years, Mrs. Iserson decided to take a new opportunity outside the classroom. Valley Catholic will always have a special place in my heart, and I am grateful for the incredible experiences I had while teaching. I will miss the Valley Catholic community, especially my students and colleagues. If you see me picking up my son, don't hesitate to say hi!”

Mrs. Iserson has been an instrumental leader in advancing our STEM program and even more so in building the VCMS community. While we are excited for her as she starts her new opportunity, she will be greatly missed. Mrs. Iserson has been one of our legacy math teachers. She helped develop our Student Activities Board, led the Capstone team, developed the STEM department, and integrated new technology throughout the curriculum, just to name some of the highlights she contributed to the VCMS program. On behalf of the entire VCMS staff, we wish Mrs. Iserson the best as she moves into positions outside the teaching field.

Margaret Terry

Mrs. Terry spent the last year helping enrich our science program while co-teaching the criminal justice elective. Her experience and expertise in the OHSU lab were invaluable assets as she worked with Mrs. Ferebee to enhance some of our NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) labs. At the same time, we transitioned to a storyboarded approach within the science department. Mrs. Terry's presence allowed Mrs. Ferebee the time to be on special assignments this year, curriculum planning, and developing connections within the greater community. In addition, Mrs. Terry's positive spirit made her a wonderful addition to our staff. Being a VCS alumna herself, she was not only able to help in the classroom, but she quickly became a leader as we reinstated the advisory program. We wish Mrs. Terry the best as she returns to her position at OHSU and thank her for the time she spent with us last school year.

Mrs. Ferebee will return to her role as a full-time science teacher this year.

Announcement of New Staff Members

Director of Campus Culture and Community Engagement

Valley Catholic School welcomes Mr. Taron Pickett as our new Director of Culture and Community Engagement. This is a newly created position that will work collaboratively with the elementary, middle and high schools. The primary responsibility is to integrate the SSMO core values across all levels and all stakeholders to both strengthen and unify our campus schools around the mission of the Sisters. Our goal in adding this position is to enhance the lived experience of students and staff in each building and across all buildings, so all feel a sense of belonging to the Valley Catholic School community.

Mr. Pickett brings a wealth of experience working with youth through teaching and coaching. He also has extensive business and sports management experience through his work at Nike, The North Face, and Cain Petroleum. Mr. Pickett will have a presence on all campuses, so please take a minute to introduce yourself. He is looking forward to getting to know the students and families within the Valley Catholic community!

I have included some frequently asked “summer” questions on pages 2-3. Please do not hesitate to contact us with additional questions or need assistance.

PACE Eighth Grade Religion and Social Studies Co-Teacher

Trinity Baines is a Master's Student at the University of Portland through the “Pacific Alliance for Catholic Educators” (PACE) program. Trinity has been a part of the world of education since she graduated from John Paul the Great Catholic University in 2020. She received a Bachelors in Communications Media, graduating *summa cum laude*. Trinity also possesses a TESOL certification from Boise State University. She has taught or volunteered with students from pre-K through adults. Her teaching experience includes physical education, outdoor adventure, personal finance, entrepreneurship, and theology! Managing a podcast studio, hosting a podcast: S.A.L.T., creating social media content, conducting interviews, and making videos are all part of Trinity’s diverse background in media. During her time with us here at Valley Catholic, Trinity will spend the year co-teaching with Mr. Hegwood and Mr. Malec.

Sixth and Seventh-Grade Spanish Teacher

Oz Panek is thrilled to be joining the VCMS community in 2024. She teaches 6th and 7th grade Spanish. Oz first fell in love with the Spanish language and culture during her college year abroad in Granada, Spain. She has lived in Mexico, where she taught disadvantaged youth with Save the Children, and traveled through Central and South America. Oz worked for a non-profit organization training service dogs for people with disabilities for seven years. In 2022, she received her Master of Arts in Teaching from Pacific University. In her free time, Oz enjoys rock climbing, paddle boarding, reading, and exploring the great outdoors with her husband, daughter, and two dogs.

A message from Mr. Matcovich (VCS President):

Valley Catholic’s **2024 Gala** is scheduled for Saturday, November 2. We count on all school families to help make this a very special – and profitable – celebration for our school. This year’s goal is to host 400 attendees and raise \$400,000. These critical funds support the school’s operations and tuition assistance.

We invite each school family to make a tax-deductible contribution of \$50 (or more) to help underwrite a number of one-of-a-kind trips and experiences. These vacation and adventure packages will be shared in the Gala newsletter and available for bidding at the Gala dinner and online auction. You may make your donation [HERE](#).

If you would prefer to donate an item, please use this [form](#). Vacation home rentals, event tickets, wine tastings, and sign-up parties are just a few items that will help make our Gala a success. We are grateful to everyone who helps us achieve our financial goals and provide “only at Valley” experiences with their generous donations.

The SSMO Foundation is expanding this year’s effort with an eye toward increasing participation, whether through attending the Gala and/or through the online auction. The VCS Gala is organized, produced and executed by the SSMO Foundation and dozens of parent volunteers. If you’d like to get involved, contact cfogarty@ssmomministries.org. Mark your calendars and get involved!

Thank you in advance for your support of the VCS Gala.

John Matcovich
President

Lifetouch
Fall Picture Day is coming!

School Name: Valley Catholic Middle School

Picture Day Date: Thursday, September 5

Picture Day ID: EVTC7MJ8C

A few of the most commonly asked “summer” questions:

Have a Question? Need Information?

Chances are you will find the answer posted in the Parent’s Guide. Starting August 20, this will be your best source of information and the location where specific information about middle school policies, programs, events, and opportunities are listed. Please take time to become familiar with the documents posted here and plan to check the Parent’s Guide often once the school year begins. Until August, The Parent’s Guide can be found on the school website at: <https://valleycatholic.org/vcms-parents-guide/>. A new link is coming in the August mailing.

General School Information:

The Parent's Guide contains supply lists, calendar highlights, and general information. It will be updated throughout the summer, with the main posting completed by August 20. Parents will receive notification once all documents are updated for the coming school year.

First Day of School:

The first day of school is Wednesday, September 4, and the first week is early dismissal; school dismisses at 12:05 p.m. Students begin a full-day schedule on Monday, September 9.

Note: A sixth-grade student and parent orientation is required on Tuesday, September 3, from 12:30 to 4:00 p.m. (attendance is mandatory).

Immunizations:

To comply with Oregon law, please ensure your students receive the following shots **by the first day of school**.

Incoming Sixth Grade Students* – No updates are required if you complied with 5th grade. Your child should have received the following shots sometime between 18 months and the beginning of school: 5 Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTaP) shots, 4 Polio, 1 Varicella (chickenpox), 2 Measles, 1 Mumps, 1 Rubella, 3 Hepatitis B and 2 Hepatitis A. If your student is not current on their shots, Hepatitis A is not needed for compliance with Oregon Law once a child enters 6th grade.

Incoming Seventh and Eighth Grade Students* —To comply with Oregon law, incoming seventh and eighth-grade students must meet all the requirements listed for sixth grade PLUS have one Tdap.

**At all ages and grades, the number of doses required varies by a child’s age and how long ago they were vaccinated. Please check with your child’s healthcare provider for details.*

What time does school start and end?

School starts at 7:50 a.m. every day, starting on Wednesday, September 4, the first day.

Most days, school dismisses at 3:20 p.m. On Tuesdays, it dismisses at 1:38 p.m. Until the elementary school dismisses, a sibling room will be available on Tuesdays for middle school students with Valley Catholic Elementary School (VCES) siblings.

Note: School dismisses at 12:05 p.m. for all students during the first week, September 4-6.

Check the schedule/calendar online or in the VC View for specific dismissal times throughout the year.

What does the schedule look like?

Six different schedules are used, depending on whether it is a regular school day or if there is an assembly, mass, half-day, or late start. However, the most common schedule is the regular. Below is an example of the Regular Schedule to give students a sense of what to expect.

Example of Regular Schedule	
Morning Assembly	7:50
Period 0	8:00 – 8:42
Period 1	8:46 – 9:27
Break	9:27 – 9:35
Period 2	9:35 – 10:17
Period 3	10:21 – 11:03
lunch	11:03 – 11:33
Period 4	11:36 – 12:17
Period 5	12:21 – 1:02
Period 6	1:06 – 1:47
Break	1:47 – 1:55
Period 7	1:55 – 2:36
Period 8	2:40 - 3:20

Where do I go at the start of school?

All students report to the elementary school cafeteria every day school is in session.

All staff and students begin daily with prayer, announcements, and acknowledgments.

Are snacks and lunch sold?

The High School cafeteria prepares well-balanced lunches. The cafeteria staff sells a main item on the monthly menu and daily staples such as salad, white rice, soup, fruit, dessert, juice, soda, and water. Other items vary; a menu is available in the front office and on the website.

Students need to bring their snacks for morning and afternoon break times.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Information

The elementary and middle school buildings are open to middle school students and their families from 7:25 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on a regularly scheduled school day and until 2:00 p.m. (for siblings) on Tuesday early dismissal days.

The first ten minutes after dismissal are office hours for all full-time staff not currently coaching high school athletic teams. It is strongly recommended that all parents wait until 3:30 p.m. to pick up middle school students on regular dismissal days. After 3:30 p.m. and before 7:25 a.m., the Middle School hallways are closed to students and parents unless the student is

in a school-sponsored activity/event or study hall. Before 7:25 a.m. or after 3:30 p.m., students will need to wait outside the school building. During this time, no supervision is provided. At 3:30 p.m., the building is closed, badges are turned off, and students may not be inside unless participating in a school-sponsored activity/event or study hall.

The middle school study hall provides a supervised study area for students every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, when the school is in session for a full day, between 3:20 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. There is no study hall on Tuesdays or any day that dismisses before 3:20 p.m.

Students and parents may not access the lockers after 3:30 p.m. without permission of a Valley Catholic Middle School staff member. This includes during both evening and weekend events.

The best three locations for dropping off and picking up students are:

1. The side parking lot #5 near the ES cafeteria door
2. In the gravel parking lot by the athletic fields.
3. In the Athletic Center parking lot IF YOU ARE PARKING ONLY.
This is not an area to “drop and go.”

Note: The drop-off lane in front of the school is reserved for elementary school drop-off or families/carpools with **middle and elementary students**.

What to bring on the first day of school:

Students should bring items from their supply list that must be left at school (in the locker) and their emergency packet/bag.

When do the students receive schedules:

- Class Schedules: The orientation class schedules will change daily, so the first week may be spent enhancing skills and meeting classmates. Starting Monday, September 9, students will receive their schedules for the first semester via PowerSchool and begin attending regular academic classes. Class schedules will not be distributed or set up in PowerSchool until now.
- Music, Visual Art, and Electives: All students will receive their elective class assignments by September 16.
 - Elective classes are assigned based on student preferences while maintaining class size limits. Eighth-grade students will receive priority for elective classes since sixth and seventh will have subsequent semesters to take elective courses.
 - Registration for incoming sixth or students transferring into VCMS at the seventh or eighth-grade level will register for electives during the first week of school. Registration for sixth grade will open after the incoming eighth (current seventh) is open after Registration and Back to School (after 4:30 PM) on September 3. Registration for transfer students will open after school on September 6.
 - Students who enroll in band or orchestra must rent or purchase their instruments by Monday, September 23 (if they do not already own them). The school does not provide instruments.
- PE - Students will need their PE clothes by Monday, September 9.

Purchasing Middle School Books:

Valley Catholic Middle School students are charged one academic fee for all new books, consumables, used books, PE locks, and online materials. Families should plan on this fee of \$475.00. Families do not need to purchase their textbooks.

Purchasing Uniforms:

Our students wear uniforms. Please be diligent in looking at and complying with the dress code. Students must comply with all its components. When obtaining clothing for next school year, please ensure the items meet the waist, length, style, color, and logo requirements. A full list of the VCMS dress code can be found [here](#).

Note: Rampart plaid is no longer permitted.

The VCMS Uniform Policy has been updated, and families may purchase any shorts, skorts, or skirts from an official uniform line. Please find a brand that fits your child at both the waist and length as outlined in the dress code. Skirts, skorts, and shorts shorter than three inches from the crease in the back of the kneecap are unacceptable.

Purchasing Supplies:

A basic supply list will be posted on the Parent's Guide by August 20. While additional supplies may be needed once the year begins based on an individual child's class electives and class schedule, every attempt was made to provide as complete a list as possible. However, the supply list is a guide. Use your best judgment and consider your child's preferences while purchasing items.

For middle school students, we ask that each student has a full set of items at home as well as at school. Used supplies are acceptable/encouraged - **Do not purchase new supplies if you have USABLE used supplies from previous years** especially colored pencils, crayons, scissors, calculator, eraser, ruler, dictionary, glue, folders, expandable file, book bag, etc. While needed at times, these items are not used consistently enough to warrant the purchase of new items if you have usable items from previous years.

Lockers

Each student is issued a daily locker and a PE locker. Lockers for musical instruments are issued via the music teachers as needed for larger instruments. As you plan the use of your daily locker, it is important to know the dimensions. The daily locker is 17 3/4 inches wide, 16 1/2 inches deep, and 35 1/2 inches tall. There are hooks on both sides of the locker that are 32 inches from the bottom.

Daily lockers are assigned at orientation for incoming sixth graders and on the first day of school for incoming seventh—and eighth-grade students. PE lockers will be issued during the first week of academic classes (September 9-13).

Locker decorating rules will be distributed during orientation. No tape, magnets, or other adhesives are permitted in or on the lockers. **Do not purchase locker supplies at this time. Lockers will be assigned during orientation at the beginning of the school year.**