

VALLEY FORGE ELEMENTARY

Family Handbook

2015-16



Valley Forge Elementary

99 Walker Road

Wayne, PA 19087

(610) 240-1600

Website: www.tesd.net/vfe

Emergency Closing Number - 854

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TABLE of CONTENTS

General Information.....	3
Health Services.....	6
Lunch, Breakfast, and Food.....	7
Home/School Communication.....	8
Instructional Program.....	10
Support Programs.....	15
Student Activities.....	17
Parent/Teacher Organization (P.T.O.).....	18
Code of Conduct.....	20
School Climate.....	23
Index.....	24

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GENERAL INFORMATION

HOURS

Grades 1-4 - School begins at **8:45 am** and ends at **3:20 pm** for children in **Grades 1-4**. Students arriving after 8:45 am must report to the lobby desk with a written explanation for the tardiness. Please do not transport children to school before 8:35 am since there is no supervision of children before that time.

AM Kindergarten begins at 8:45 am and ends at 11:40 am. Bus transportation is provided to school and parents provide transportation home with pick-up at 11:40 am.

PM Kindergarten begins at 12:25 pm and ends at 3:20 pm. Parents provide transportation to school and children may begin arriving in the lobby after 12:15 pm. Bus transportation is provided at dismissal time.

Half-Day Sessions During Parent-Teacher Conferences - When school is in session for a half day because of parent/teacher conferences, grades 1-4 dismiss at 12:20 pm. Kindergarten sessions are not held on these days.

EMERGENCY DELAYED OPENINGS AND CLOSINGS

TE All-Call

The T/E School District uses TE All-Call, an automated phone notification system. TE All-Call allows the School District to send important messages quickly via phone to parents and guardians. This calling service will be used in the event of weather-related closings, late openings, early dismissals, and any other unscheduled closings, cancellations, or emergency situations.

In order to provide this service effectively, you will be asked in to provide three phone numbers that will be used as the contact numbers in the TE All-Call system. The system will call three numbers per child. For a list of frequently asked questions on TE All-Call, please visit the T/E School District website at www.tesd.net.

Announcements about Delayed Openings or Closings

In addition to TE All-Call, closing information will also be broadcast on major television networks, displayed on TETV, Comcast Channel 14, and Verizon Channel 20, and recorded on the Information Hotline at 610-240-1970. For announcements on KYW radio, our School District Emergency Number is **Chester County 854**.

Early Dismissal Due to Emergency/Weather

The automated message sent by TE All-Call on early dismissal days will instruct parents to press “1” to confirm that the message was heard. It is important that parents listen to the entire automated message and then press “1” when the message is complete. The school office will use the information from TE All-Call to track parents who may not have heard the automated message. If parents do not press “1” when they receive the call on at least one of their three contact numbers, they will receive an additional call from Valley Forge Elementary School confirming that they are aware of the early dismissal. **Parents are encouraged to make appropriate arrangements and review emergency procedures with their children prior to an early dismissal.** The school office is extremely busy on early dismissal days so, if possible, please refrain from calling the main office on these days.

Delayed Opening for Grades 1-4

In the event of a two-hour delayed opening, school begins at 10:45 AM. Classes will follow a revised two-hour delayed opening schedule with special attention to instruction in reading and math.

Modified Kindergarten

When there is a late opening due to weather, modified sessions are scheduled for kindergarten:

AM Kdg: 10:45- 12:40 (Children may be picked up at 12:40 p.m.)

PM Kdg: 1:25-3:20 (Children may be dropped off after 1:15 p.m.)

DISMISSAL

At the conclusion of the school day, children who are walkers or parent pick-up and those going to A Child’s Place are dismissed first. **A child**

must have a note if they are going home any way other than the usual way.

Parents who wish to have children dismissed early or excused from school for doctor appointments or other urgent reasons should send a note to the child’s teacher. Your child will be dismissed through the office at the designated time. Please inform your child of the pick-up times.

Children taking the bus will be dismissed from their classrooms. Bus passes are required for those wishing to take a bus other than their own. Bus passes may be obtained in the morning by writing a note requesting alternative transportation for that day.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Parents are notified of their child’s bus number and stop at the beginning of the school year in the back-to-school mailing. Bus routes and schedules are also posted on the district’s website. Children may not ride a bus other than their own bus without a bus pass. Written parental permission to take another bus or to exit the bus at a different stop is required. Bus passes are contingent upon available seating. Long-term bus change requests may be made on a form, *Request for Long-Term Alternate Bus Assignment*, which is available in the school office or on the VFE website - www.tesd.net/vfe .

Questions or concerns about bus routes, stops, and other bus information should be directed to the Transportation Department at **610-240-1680**.

CAR TRANSPORTATION

Arrival

School starts at 8:45 am and students should be in class by that time. Students arriving to class after 8:45 am are late. As you enter the school driveway from Walker Road, form a single line in the far right side of the driveway and proceed to the front entrance of the school. Do not enter the bus circle area. The bus circle is for buses only. Please wait in a single line until you can safely drop off students at the front entrance. Pull all the way forward to the sidewalk at the front entrance in a single line and discharge passengers from the right side of your vehicle onto the sidewalk. At no time should children be in the driveway. Several cars can easily pull up to the curb in a single file. Please pull forward and do not park in front of the school or leave your vehicle.

Dismissal

School is dismissed at 3:30 pm. As you enter the driveway from Walker Road, form a single line on the far right side of the driveway. Please do not enter the bus circle area. The bus circle is for buses only. Students are dismissed from the Second Grade Lobby but please pull forward to the front entrance to allow room for several cars. Place the designated parent pick-up sign in your front window with the family name of the student(s) to be picked up. School personnel will record the names and inform other personnel to send the appropriate child out to his/her vehicle. If your child is not at the pick-up area and there are other parents waiting behind you, pull forward and we will call for your child. After your passengers have boarded, check that they have their seat belts fastened and proceed carefully (10 mph).

TRANSPORTATION CHANGE

When your child will not be going home by the usual way, please send a note to school stating how your child will be going home. If a pass for another bus is requested, please include the following information: child's name, student with whom your child will be going home, and the number of the bus your child will be riding.

ABSENCES

We request that parents call the School Attendance line at **610-240-1600 Option 5** by 8:55 am of the morning when their child will be absent. This line is accessible 24 hours a day. After attendance is taken in the classroom, the office verifies all student absences and calls to check on those who have not called in to report absences.

Absences are considered lawfully excused when a student is prevented from attendance for mental, physical, or other urgent reasons such as illness, family emergency, death of a family member, medical or dental appointments, authorized school activities, educational travel with prior approval, pre-approved religious instruction (limit 36 hours per year), or a bona fide religious holiday.

Parents/guardians must provide the school with a written excuse explaining why their child was absent within three calendar days of an absence. Handwritten notes, e-mails from parents'/guardians' designated e-mail address, or faxes created and sent by parents/guardians are acceptable forms of written notes. E-mail notes should be sent to vfeattendance@tesd.net. Phoning in does not take the place of a written note.

If a child will be out of school **for more than one day**, homework can be requested by calling the office. The teacher will prepare homework that will be available for pickup in the office 24 hours later.

Legal absences for student educational travel must be requested at least two weeks in advance of the travel. A form requesting legal absence may be obtained in the office or on our website at www.tesd.net/vfe. The Superintendent must approve trips greater than 5 days in length.

The full District Attendance Policy and Regulation 5113 are provided on the district's website at www.tesd.net.

TARDINESS

Students arriving after 8:45 am are considered tardy. (PM kindergarten students are tardy after 12:25 pm.) When students arrive late, they must report to the lobby desk to receive a tardy pass that admits them to class. Parents are required to send a written note to explain the tardiness. Tardiness is considered excused due to illness or a doctor's appointment.

DRESS CODE

Students should wear clothing that is appropriate for elementary school. A student's day can be filled with various activities that require physical activity, therefore appropriate shoes should be worn to school. Sneakers are required for physical education class. Boots, warm coats, hats, and gloves are recommended during cold weather so that children will enjoy outdoor recess on cold days. Please label all clothing with children's names. If a child's dress is considered inappropriate, the parents will be notified.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and Found is located in the main lobby or cafeteria. Parents and children are encouraged to check the Lost and Found whenever jackets, sweaters, or other items are missing. Periodically the contents of the Lost and Found are donated to a local charity.

A CHILD'S PLACE

An extended care enrichment program provides before and after school care for students through "A Child's Place".

Before School Care: 7:00 am to 8:45 pm

After School Care: 3:20 pm to 6:00 pm

Kindergarten Enrichment:

AM Session 8:45 am to 11:40 am

PM Session 11:40 am to 3:20 pm

For information on pricing and registration please call **610-687-1263**.

HEALTH SERVICES

HEALTH SCREENINGS AND VACCINATIONS

The state-mandated health program guides the T/E program. Under this program, students are required to have medical examinations upon their original entry into school and for all students entering 6th and 11th grades. These exams are also required for any students who transfer into the school district. The physical examination form is available on the district website (www.tesd.net). Dental exams are suggested upon original entry into school and for all transfer students. The law provides for medical or religious exemptions.

Screening procedures are done regularly by the school nurse for vision, hearing, height, weight, and basal metabolic index (BMI).

Written verification of the following immunizations are required:

- 4 doses of tetanus (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- 4 doses of diphtheria (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- 3 doses of polio
- 2 doses of measles (given after 1st birthday)
- 2 doses of mumps (given after 1st birthday)
- 1 dose of rubella (German measles - given after 1st birthday)
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine or history of disease

Please contact the school nurse for addition details regarding immunizations or visit our website at www.tesd.net.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Children suspected of having a communicable disease are excluded from school and may not attend until their condition is no longer contagious. To protect the health of each student, their classmates, and the school staff, all children should remain home for at least 24 hours after they have had any illness accompanied by vomiting, diarrhea, or fever. Children excluded because of the following infectious diseases may not return to school until the child is under treatment or has recovered:

PA Department of Health Communicable Disease Exclusion Regulations

Chickenpox---Six days from the last crop of vesicles.

Contagious Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) ---24 hours after start of appropriate treatment

Diphtheria ---Two weeks from the onset or until negative culture

Fifth Disease ---No Exclusion

Impetigo ---Until judged not contagious by the nurse or physician

Measles ---4 days from the onset of rash

Mumps ---9 days from the onset or until subsidence of swelling

Pediculosis (Lice) ---Until judged not contagious by the nurse/physician

Pertussis ---4 weeks from onset or 7 days from start of antimicrobial therapy

Pinworms ---Until first dose of treatment is given

Respiratory Streptococcal Infections (including scarlet fever) --- Not less than seven days from the onset or 24 hours after start of appropriate therapy

Ringworm ---Until judged not contagious by the nurse/physician

Rubella ---4 days from onset of rash

Scabies ---Until judged not contagious by the nurse/physician

Tonsillitis ---24 hours from start of appropriate therapy

Trachoma ---24 hours from start of appropriate therapy

Undiagnosed skin eruption, sore throat, cough, or eye condition --- Until medically evaluated and determined not communicable

First Aid is given in school for pupils who are injured or who become ill while attending school. The school doctor recommends standard orders for first aid. Parents are expected to give information to the school to cover emergency situations and to make transportation available when needed. The school is not responsible for treating injuries that happen at home.

PRESCRIPTION AND NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

Pennsylvania State law prohibits prescription and/or over-the-counter medication from being administered in school without specific written orders from the physician. The physician's written request must include date, student name, medication, dosage, time to be administered, physician's signature, and telephone number.

Medication must be brought to school by the parent in a properly labeled container. The container must include on its label: student name, date of prescription, name of medication, dosage and time to be given, name and phone number of pharmacy, and the physician's name. Non-prescription medicine must be in the original container. Written physician's orders must be renewed each year. Medication will not be administered in school if the date on the prescription is more than one year old or the drug is expired.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARDS

Emergency Medical Cards are filled out by parents at the beginning of each school year. The information on this card is critically important in the event of illness or accident. Please fill out this card on the first day of school and return it to school the following day. Any updates or change of information can be made by contacting the school nurse or school secretary.

CAFETERIA FOOD GUIDELINES

Our School Cafeteria operates under the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Menus are published and posted on the school website www.tesd.net/vfe.

BREAKFAST

The cafeteria operates a School Breakfast Program that consists of (1) ½ pint of milk, (2) ½ cup servings of fruit or full strength vegetable or fruit juice, and (2) 2oz of protein or 2oz of bread or cereal or 1oz each of protein and bread or cereal. Under the "offer vs. serve" option, a student may decline one item.

LUNCH

TESD cafeteria meals are planned according to federal regulations to provide 1/3 of the students' Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) and contain no more than 30 percent calories from fat and 10 percent calories from saturated fat averaged over the week. Our cafeteria operates under the National School Lunch Program. Lunch consists of five components: (1) a serving of high protein food, (2) ½ pint of milk, (3 & 4) two servings totaling ¾ cup of fruits and/or vegetables and (5) grain. Under the "offer vs. serve" option, students may choose to take three, four, or five of the components. In addition, milk, juice, snacks, desserts, and other a la carte items may be purchased in the cafeteria.

Menus and prices are on the district website (www.tesd.net) under Departments—Food and Nutrition Services.

PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS

Each student has a Personal Identification Number (PIN) for the cafeteria. Parents may send in a check in any amount payable to the Valley Forge Elementary Cafeteria for each child's account. This account is a debit account and each time a student purchases food from the cafeteria, the account is debited. Parents can restrict the number of snacks the child is permitted to buy by writing a note to the cafeteria. Allergy information can also be linked to the students account by writing to the cafeteria. The PIN number remains the same for each child from year to year. When a student does not have money in his/her account for lunch, he/she may charge lunch or milk only. If your child charges, please try to repay this debt the next day.

Information regarding free and reduced-price lunch applications is available either in the school guidance office or the Food Service Office at 610-240-1955. Students approved for these meals use the same type of account as the other students to prevent any overt identification.

FOOD FROM HOME

As a general practice for any occasion, please communicate with your child's teacher before sending any food into the classroom or school. Please make every effort to provide healthy and balanced lunches and snacks for children. Soft drinks should not be sent in to school. Any food items sent to school for birthdays or classroom celebrations must be commercially prepackaged and the package must list the ingredients.

SNACKS

All grade levels have a snack break during the school day. For children in K-1, snacks are provided from home. For children in grades 2-4, snacks are provided from home or can be purchased from the school cafeteria. For snacks from home, please do not include any foods that include peanuts, tree nuts, peanut or tree nut oils, peanut butter, or any peanut or tree nut products.

If you are providing a snack for your child, please make every effort to assure that it is healthy and nutritious.

QUESTIONS

Any questions concerning the cafeteria may be directed to the cafeteria manager or the Supervisor of T/E Food Services (610-240-1955).

CELEBRATIONS

Classroom Parties

During the school year there are four classroom celebrations: Halloween, Winter, Valentine's, and End-of-the-Year parties. Homeroom parents work with classroom teachers to organize the parties. The celebrations include refreshments and a craft or game planned by homeroom parents. Homemade foods are not allowed. Any food sent to school for birthday or classroom celebration must be commercially prepackaged and the package must list the ingredients.

Student Birthday

It is our preference that students who choose to celebrate their birthdays in school do so with a non-food item (pencil, sticker etc...). Parents who choose to recognize their child's birthday with a food item must send a commercially prepackaged food item with all ingredients listed. The food item should contain no nut products.

Please communicate with your child's teacher before sending any food or item into the classroom for a celebration or birthday at least one week in advance.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

CONTACTING TEACHERS

Communication between home and school is an essential component of our school. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher when they have a concern or a question. If a teacher receives a note or phone call that requires a response, teachers will make every effort to answer within 24 hours. All teachers have voicemail. We do not interrupt class time with phone calls but teachers do check their voicemail daily and will respond to parent messages.

VALLEY FORGE ELEMENTARY WEBSITE

The TESD and VFE website are great resources for parents and community members to learn more about the various facets of our school such as grade level curriculum, PTO information, and upcoming events. Please take the opportunity to periodically visit our site: www.tesd.net.

E-MAIL GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

A professional staff directory listing names and voicemail extensions can be found on the T/E website, www.tesd.net. If you choose to send an e-mail message to a member of our professional staff, you may not get an immediate reply as staff members will determine how best to contact you: by e-mail, phone, or scheduling a personal conference.

When using e-mail we ask that you follow these guidelines:

- Please do not send vital timely messages by this medium. Use the telephone to be sure your message is received and clearly understood. For example, do not use e-mail to inform a teacher that your child is not to go home on the bus.
- Please do not share confidential information in an e-mail message.
- E-mail is not the best way to fully discuss the details of a student's academic progress or behavior. These topics are

best addressed through a phone conversation or by scheduling a conference.

- Please keep all contacts professional. Do not forward jokes, amusing or special stories, chain letters, or commercial solicitations.

NEWSLETTER

The VFE *Falcon* is published bi-weekly by the PTO. It is sent to all families via e-mail and is also available on the VFES PTO website <http://vfespto.org>. This newsletter contains information about upcoming events, community programs, and PTO-sponsored events. The **Falcon** contains information about current curriculum and program at each grade level as well. Please inform the school office if you cannot retrieve the newsletter electronically and require a "hard paper copy" of it.

VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS

Parents are encouraged to visit our school particularly for special activities and events. All visitors and volunteers must sign in with the lobby greeter when entering the building. A Visitor Pass will be provided at the time of sign-in. This pass must be worn during the building visit and returned when the visitor leaves the building. Although it takes an extra minute to sign in, this procedure is an important safety measure in our school. When visiting a classroom or volunteering, we ask that parent-teacher conferences not be held so that our teachers can give their full attention to the children in their class. During the school year, members of the school district's administrative staff may also visit classrooms.

The school program is greatly enriched by the volunteer services of many parents. Volunteers play an important role in the quality of life in our school. The following guidelines have been developed to assist you in serving in this unique function. Offering to volunteer in our school assumes your understanding of these guidelines.

- Confidentiality: Information you see or hear can affect the lives and future of individual students. Volunteers must respect the privacy of this information and maintain the same in strict confidence.
- Attendance: School personnel depend upon and plan for the assistance of volunteers when scheduled. Volunteers are encouraged to notify the staff with whom they work as far in

advance as possible if they are unable to help during their scheduled time.

- Cell Phones: When volunteering, please silence your cell phones to prevent distractions.

Please contact your child's teacher or the PTO Volunteer Chairperson if you would like additional information about volunteering.

* Notice Regarding Volunteer Clearance Requirements

As the result of new amendments to the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) enacted on July 1, 2015, implementation of the requirement for volunteer clearances will take effect July 1, 2016. The new amendments include significant changes to the 2014 amendments to the CPSL. Most notably, volunteers with regular and repeated contact with students *and* who are responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or control of children will need clearances. Additionally, renewal of clearances will now be required every five (5) years. The District will continue to communicate further guidance on these new requirements as available.

DROPPING OFF MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS

Materials that need to be dropped off for students should be left at the lobby desk and will be delivered to or picked up by students. We value instructional time and ask that parents and visitors respect our teachers' need to focus on the children in their classroom without interruption.

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

In accordance with District Policy 5414 students may possess electronic devices including, but not limited to, cellular telephones, cameras, and personal digital assistants with video/camera capabilities within all of the buildings owned by the District. The administration has the right to regulate the use of all electronic devices.

At the elementary level we recommend that students do not bring electronic devices to school. In unusual circumstances when a student's family feels the need to have their child bring an electronic device (i.e. cell phone), the device must be turned off during the school day so that it does not cause any disruption to the education program. Individual teacher discretion is used to plan for the use of e-reading devices. If families choose to send an e-reader or any other electronic device with teacher permission, the school cannot be responsible for missing or damaged items.

SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES

All policies and regulations for the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District are available on the district website at www.tesd.net.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

T/E MISSION STATEMENT

To inspire a passion for learning, personal integrity, the pursuit of excellence, and social responsibility in each student.

CONSENSUS BELIEFS

- We believe that every individual has intrinsic value.
- We believe that each individual has potential.
- We believe that individuals are responsible for their choices and actions.
- We believe that external and internal expectations strongly influence personal growth and achievement.
- We believe that individuals and communities are strengthened by a culture of participation, contribution, and support.
- We believe that lifelong learning is essential for one to flourish in a continually changing world.
- We believe that meaningful growth comes from building on successes, experiencing challenges, and overcoming adversity.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The purpose of education in the District is both to challenge and to assist each student toward becoming a constructive member of our changing society. By providing experiences that develop intellectual excellence and promote a positive understanding of one's self, the school can effectively help each student to appreciate the contributions of our nation's heritage, the interdependence of individuals, and the dignity of all.

The focus of the educational program, therefore, is to help students to develop to their maximum potential and to acquire skills in ways that stimulate curiosity and foster creativity.

The responsibility of the District, in conjunction with families and the community, is to motivate and to assist each student:

- To acquire the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to be productive in a global society;
- To develop critical thinking skills;
- To develop self-discipline;
- To accept responsibility, acquire self-reliance, and develop leadership skills;
- To formulate social and ethical values consistent with living in a democratic society;
- To appreciate the value of individual effort;
- To learn to adapt to change;
- To learn to collaborate with others;
- To gain a fundamental knowledge that will serve as a basis for further development.

The goal of the schools is to prepare students to be self-directed, creative life-long learners and responsible involved citizens.

PHILOSOPHY

The elementary program focuses on the education of the whole child while preparing students to become productive members of a diverse community. Using current research and best practices as well as state and national standards as regulatory guidelines, the program strives to differentiate instruction to meet each student's individual needs. Critical thinking and intellectual curiosity are developed as students are encouraged to access, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from various resources and points of view.

The goal is to foster a resilient and culturally competent student body by cultivating learning habits and tools for independent life-long learning. In order to meet the needs of the global community, the elementary school practices will continuously evolve as influenced by technological and societal demands.

The elementary school program recognizes the importance of promoting healthy academic, social, physical, and emotional growth in all students. The elementary school program upholds the District's strategic planning mission statement, "To inspire a passion for learning, personal integrity, the pursuit of excellence, and social responsibility in each student." The students, staff, families, and community work together to support a caring and nurturing learning environment."

Grouping students for instruction at the elementary level places an emphasis on individual student progress leading to the development of the maximum potential for learning. In order to accomplish this goal, it is essential that children have opportunities to be intellectually challenged in skill areas and given opportunities to learn and share with children of varying abilities. In the process of grouping students, consideration is given to formation of groups that will enhance and foster interdependence among learners, promote independent thinking, build positive self-concept, and provide a stimulating learning environment for each student.

TEAMS

Our elementary school is organized into teams so that the collaborative efforts of teachers can best serve the learning and developmental needs of each child. Each elementary school is comprised of five grade level teams (Kindergarten through Fourth Grade), a Special Area Team (Art, Music, Physical Education, Library), and a Support Team (Guidance, Reading, Math Support, Learning Support, ESL, Nurse, Speech, and other support personnel). Joint planning allows teachers to meet daily before school to discuss individual student needs, to plan curriculum, to integrate subject areas, to share ideas, and to plan for the grouping and regrouping of students for instruction.

CORE CLASS

Students in Grades 1 through 4 are assigned to a Core class. Core time is the majority of a student's day in which all subjects other than math are taught. In this setting, subject areas are meaningfully integrated. The design of integration can include independent, small group, whole classroom, or grade level instructional activities. Core classes are designed to include students of more than one achievement level. Language Arts instruction will occur in the core classroom.

HOMEWORK

The District believes that homework consists of any instructional requirement assigned by a teacher to be completed by the student as a continuation or extension of classroom instruction. Homework is a necessary part of the curriculum and vital to the learning process. Homework assigned should be suited by amount and task to the age and ability of students and should be consistent with instructional objectives. Homework provides the necessary practice of skills, enriches and enlarges upon classroom experiences, and utilizes school and community resources. In addition, carefully planned assignments foster responsibility, help students work independently, and require the development of good study skills and work habits. Homework can also provide an opportunity for the teacher, parent, and student to work together in the learning process.

The length of time spent on homework can vary from child to child. Generally, time spent on homework each night would be as follows:

First grade: 10-15 minutes

Second grade: 15-20 minutes

Third grade: 25-30 minutes

Fourth grade 30-40 minutes

Homework assignments reinforce the skills and concepts taught in the classroom. Additional time should be spent reading nightly and routinely practicing basic math facts. Reading to children, at every age, is highly beneficial and valued.

RECESS

Recess is an important part of the school day. It affords the children a time for recreation and social interaction in an unstructured, supervised setting. Please be sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather.

CURRICULUM

Language Arts

The District's Language Arts Learning Competencies provide the framework for language arts learning in eight key areas. Using these competencies as a foundation for spiraling skills development, teachers enrich the reading program with the most valuable aspects of a balanced

literacy approach. This balanced approach accommodates the individual learning needs of each student and stimulates teacher creativity while providing a strong, consistent level of reading instruction across the District.

Language Arts Learning Competencies:

- Reading comprehension: Learning strategies (Example: main idea, sequence)
- Reading comprehension: Thinking skills (Example: inference, compare/contrast)
- Reading: Investigating language patterns (Example: word analysis, decoding, phonics)
- Speaking and writing (Example: writing process, grammar, spelling)
- Study skills
- Research skills
- Response to various genres (Example: fiction, biography, poetry)
- Lifelong reading

Language Arts - Kindergarten

Students in kindergarten are grouped heterogeneously for Language Arts. Literacy instruction includes both whole class and small group opportunities. Language Arts instruction consists of a one hour block divided into two half hour segments. One half hour segment of the Language Arts block is dedicated to whole class instruction by the core teacher. During the other half hour segment of the Language Arts block, the class is divided into small groups according to the children's needs. The goal of the program is to meet the needs of the students; therefore, the number and makeup of groups may vary based on those needs. Guided by on-going assessments, use of multi-level instructional groups provides teachers the flexibility to move students between groups as necessary.

Language Arts – Grades 1-4

Language Arts instruction occurs in the core classroom. Classes are designed to include students of more than one reading achievement level. Neither the highest nor the lowest achievement group on a team by itself constitutes a total class. Typically, the goal of core grouping is to have 2-3 instructional levels per class. However, the goal of the

Language Arts program is to meet the needs of the students; therefore, the number and make-up of groups may vary based on those needs.

Literacy instruction includes whole group and small group opportunities as well as time for independent practice. A single class on a grade level team will include students with a range of reading achievement levels. Guided by on-going assessment, use of these multi-leveled instructional groups provides teachers the flexibility to move students between groups as necessary.

An overarching consideration when constructing core classes is to create well-balanced groupings that meet students' academic, social, and emotional needs.

Writing

Writing begins with the student's initial school experience. The use of the writing and reflecting process (brainstorming, pre-writing, drafting, revising, conferencing, editing, and publishing) continues throughout the grades. Writing is not an isolated experience but is integrated throughout the school day in various curricular areas. Teachers introduce and reinforce the components of good writing at each grade level. Students and teachers use the portfolio as a vehicle for the development of skills in composing, revising, and reflecting on writing throughout the grades.

Listening/Speaking

Communication skills are an integral part of the learning experience. Early modes of learning center around kinesthetic and visual activities. Listening and speaking skills develop as the child progresses through school. Learning these skills enables the student to become an active participant in the learning process.

Spelling

Beginning in kindergarten, students experiment with letters and sounds and learn how those letters build words. Emergent writers may have difficulty spelling words within their oral vocabularies. Rather than interrupt the flow of thought, invented spelling is encouraged. As students progress in their writing abilities, the purpose of the spelling curriculum is to help students master conventional spelling. The formal spelling program focuses on spelling patterns and words student frequently misspell. Students also learn to use tools such as the dictionary, collaboration with peers, and technological devices.

Handwriting

In the early elementary grades, students learn the strokes which form the basis of manuscript letters. Handwriting instruction focuses on the development of letter formation skills and the application of these skills throughout the curriculum. Cursive handwriting is introduced in the third grade and refined in fourth. Students work with keyboarding and word processing, progressing in efficiency on an individual basis.

Study Skills

The development of good organizational and study skills is an essential part of schooling. Such topics as how to manage time, plan for long- and short-term assignments, organize workspace and materials, and study for tests are taught and reinforced at the appropriate team levels.

Mathematics

The T/E mathematics curriculum is based on a set of clearly defined learning objectives. Major concepts include: numbers and numerals, measurement, rational numbers, geometry, decimals, graphing, number theory, and probability. These concepts are developed through a balanced use of manipulative materials, various text-based instruction, and technology. Students are grouped for instruction beginning in first grade. This approach to teaching and learning accommodates the needs of students and provides students with appropriate challenge. Some factors that may be considered when grouping students by achievement include teacher recommendation from the previous year, district-developed placement tests, standardized testing data, on-going classroom assessment, and teacher monitoring. *Math in Focus*, *Singapore Math* is used across the district to provide a consistent foundation for each child to develop strong mathematical skills. This series emphasizes a balance for concrete, pictorial, and abstract instructional strategies.

Mathematics is an important subject and T/E's teachers are dedicated to preparing every student to meet the challenges and demands of the future.

Science

Science is best learned when students are engaged in practicing Science. Hands-on activities encourage students to experience for themselves, through direct observation and experimentation, the process, joy, and fascination of science. Through scientific

experimentation, students answer their own questions and develop patience, persistence, and confidence. T/E's elementary Science curriculum in kindergarten is a hands-on, theme-based program.

Grades first through fourth have adopted *Science and Technology for Children* which was developed by the National Academy of Science in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institute. Each elementary school provides both hands-on Science instruction in a Science lab and classroom Science instruction where reading and writing are tools for learning. A full-time Science aide assists and supports the classroom teacher in the preparation and implementation of lessons.

The units of study are as follows:

Kindergarten	Senses/Properties, Weather, Insects, Seeds/Plants, Energy, Agriculture
Grade 1	Comparing and Measuring, Weather, Rain Forests or Oceans, Organisms, Magnetism, Solar System, Sustainability
Grade 2	Life Cycle of Butterflies, Balancing and Weighing, Changes, Soil, Sound, Solar System, Sustainability
Grade 3	Chemical Tests, Rocks and Minerals, Plant Growth and Development, Land and Water
Grade 4	Ecosystems or Animal Studies, Food Chemistry, Electric Circuits, Motion and Design

Social Studies

The T/E Social Studies curriculum is designed to help students understand cultural diversity and their place in a global community.

Grade one focuses on the concept of "Our Global Village" and in addition to units on Japan and Africa, includes a unit on communities, maps, and geography.

Grade two concentrates on exploring the concept of time and the use of a historical timeline.

The cultures, geography, and history of the United States are the thrust of the third and fourth grade programs.

Throughout the curriculum, students are encouraged to explore the following questions:

Grade 1	Who Am I in the World? Units of Study: Our Global Village, Japan, Africa (Nigeria and Kenya)
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- Grade 2** Who Am I in Time? Age of Dinosaurs and Early Man, Ancient China, Exploration and Immigration, Space
- Grade 3** Who Am I in My State? Units of Study: Native Americans, Chester County, Pennsylvania, Elections
- Grade 4** Who Am I in My Country? U.S. History: Geography, Early Settlers and Settlements/Colonies, American Revolution, America Grows

Health

K-4 health is divided into four basic areas of study incorporating both factual knowledge and the development of positive attitudes and lifelong healthy behaviors.

- Safety** Includes personal and group safety concerns involving, but not limited to, bus, bicycle, fire, playground, and other grade-appropriate issues.
- Drugs and Alcohol** Incorporates Officer Friendly, Guidance, and REACH (Responsible Adolescents Concerned and Helping) to encourage the child to make appropriate decisions based on factual information.
- Family Life** Focuses on information, self-concept, interpersonal relationships, and positive decision making. Please note: An alternate to the Family Life curriculum is available upon parental request.
- Care of the Body** Provides children with activities that enable them to understand the value of maintaining good health through acquiring information and encouraging supportive health habits.

Art

Students have a regularly scheduled art class with an art teacher in Kindergarten and in grades 1, 3 and 4 once per cycle. In grade 2, students have two scheduled art classes per cycle. The classes range from 35 minutes in Kindergarten to 45 minutes in grades 1-4. All levels of the program include experiences designed to exercise and strengthen the pupil's ability to perceive, appreciate, perform, and criticize. Provisions are made for each student to be involved with a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional materials and to gain understanding of our visual arts heritage. The activities are planned to promote the development of independent thinking and self-evaluation.

The Art curriculum follows a developmental scope and sequence and is a discipline-based approach to Art education. Lessons are designed to provide instances for integration with elements of the core educational program.

Music

Classroom Music

The goals of the Music program are to provide the opportunity for every child to learn the basic skills of singing and reading music, to develop song repertoire, and to broaden listening skills. Once per cycle in grades K, 2, 3 and 4, every class meets with the music teacher for a period of thirty to forty-five minutes for musical activities that include listening, singing, performing, moving, reading, and creating. In grade 1, students have two scheduled music classes per cycle. Through these activities, the students learn concepts dealing with the major elements of music which are rhythm, melody, form and harmony, tone, color, style, and expressive qualities. In third grade, students are introduced to the "recorder" as an adjunct to the music reading program.

Instrumental Music

When students reach the third grade, they have the opportunity to study a string instrument. At the fourth grade level, they may begin instruction on suitable band or orchestra instruments. Group instrumental lessons are scheduled for thirty minutes once per cycle and rotate from cycle to cycle so that the same subject is not missed in the regular classroom. Students are invited to join a string orchestra and/or band that meets before school for forty minutes each week. In this setting, students are provided with the opportunity to further develop performance skills and produce both winter and spring concerts for the school and surrounding community. The students rent an instrument from an outside source. The district will continue the practice of providing rental-free instruments for deserving students from families with a financial hardship. Please contact the school counselor if there is a need.

Performance Groups

Students are provided with a variety of performing opportunities. All elementary schools provide three music performance organizations: string orchestra, beginning band, and chorus. These groups rehearse before school once each week. Parents are responsible for providing transportation to rehearsals.

Physical Education

Physical education contributes to the well-being of students through participation in activities designed to meet their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs. It is a tool used to develop individual values of good citizenship and sportsmanship for real-life situations. As students move through the elementary grades, there is an increased degree of difficulty in skills and a greater emphasis on team play. The program is designed to provide equal opportunities for all students to participate in physical activities that promote self-confidence and the ability to work in coeducational groups. Our physical education program includes:

Kindergarten and Grade 1

- Locomotive skills
- Eye hand coordination
- Ball handling skills
- Stunts
- Game-type activities
- Movement and posture education

Grades 2, 3, and 4

- Physical fitness, testing
- Start of formal exercise
- Stunts, tumbling, apparatus
- Rhythmics and dance
- Game program
- Sports program
- Individual/dual activities
- Citizenship/sportsmanship

Library

The library is a warm, friendly, and inviting place where we encourage children to become lifelong readers. Books may be checked out and taken home to enjoy. We do send home reminder notices on a regular basis if books are late. Children of all grade levels come to the library to enjoy rich literature and to receive direct instruction in the workings of the library and its many technological resources. Research has

demonstrated that students who are exposed to a print-rich environment, engage in voluntary reading, and read at home tend to develop the habit of reading. We encourage families to take advantage of the resources of our library and share the joys of reading together. We strongly encourage all parents to spend time reading with their child each day.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS

BRIDGE

The “BRIDGE” program is designed to provide early intervention and/or supplemental reading instruction to kindergarten and first grade students who require additional literacy support.

In kindergarten, eligible students receive intensive small group instruction four to five times a week. The objective of the program is to enhance language development, concepts about print, and reading readiness skills. The evaluation for eligibility in the kindergarten program begins with the fall Kindergarten Screening that is administered to all kindergarten students. A team made up of the reading specialist, speech/language therapist, and BRIDGE teacher uses the results to select children for further assessment, including a language evaluation and teacher recommendation.

In first grade, one-on-one instruction is provided daily. The objectives of the program are to teach successful strategies in approaching print and to develop sight vocabulary. Core teachers, the reading specialist, and the speech/language therapist collaborate to select students for evaluation with the Early Literacy Assessment and the Test of Auditory Analysis Skills. On-going communication with parents takes place throughout the year.

READING SUPPORT

This program is designed to provide supplemental reading instruction for students in need of additional support in grades one through four. Instruction for eligible students occurs 3-5 times per week.

ESL (ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE)

The goal of the ESL program is to increase proficiency levels for English language learners in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. Students acquire the academic language necessary to function comfortably in the American classroom. The ESL

teacher acts as a liaison between school and home. Recognizing the diversity of T/E students, the ESL teachers foster each child's participation in the T/E schools while preserving the child's own language and cultural heritage.

COUNSELING

The elementary guidance program serves children through counseling, consultation, and coordination of services. The school counselor delivers the developmental guidance program. This program provides experiences that will assist each child in the development of a positive self-concept and an understanding of sound human relationships. The counselor works with children individually or in large and small group settings.

The counselor consults with parents, teachers, and community resource personnel to ensure that the needs of individual children are met. Acting as a coordinator, the counselor helps to plan meetings, share information, and facilitate the process of accessing help for the child.

MATH SUPPORT

The Math support teacher provides supplemental help in Mathematics. Assessment for eligibility includes classroom observations by the regular Mathematics teacher, progress monitoring within the Math class, and performance on standardized tests. To receive this support, children may meet in small groups and/or individually with the Math support teacher either inside or outside of the regular mathematics class time.

SCHOOL INTERVENTION TEAM

The purpose of the School Intervention Team (S.I.T.) is to help children who are experiencing social or academic problems. The team consists of the principal, psychologist, counselor, Math support teacher, Reading specialist, classroom teacher, other teachers, and parents. The team works together to suggest and implement changes to help the child in the classroom setting. A child may be recommended for the SIT process by the principal, a teacher, or the child's parents. Parents who wish to initiate the process should contact the classroom teacher, school counselor, or principal. After a request is received, a member of the team notifies parents, collects data, observes the child, and provides interventions targeted for the child. There will be periodic review of the student's response to intervention and ongoing communication with parents.

The goals of SIT are:

- to provide initial screening and direct intervention for students for whom instructional or behavioral support is needed;
- to provide peer support for teachers and staff;
- to enhance home/school communication;
- to coordinate the delivery of support services to the child;
- to monitor and evaluate the child's progress.

LEARNING SUPPORT

The District provides a range of special education supports and services for eligible students. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed to specify the type of support and instruction that enables the student to participate in regular education to the fullest extent possible. The Learning Support program provides students with academic and/or behavior support to ensure that each child has the opportunity to be a successful learner. Students who participate in this program require specially designed instruction. This instruction is described in the child's Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.). Parents and teachers, working together, create this plan for the individual child.

At the elementary level, the District operates programs of learning support, emotional support, autistic support, life skills support, and speech and language support. In addition, related services such as occupational, physical, vision, or hearing therapies are provided by qualified personnel when the student requires these services. The IEP is reviewed at least annually. Any team member may request a meeting at any time during the school year to review the program.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Identification of children who may have articulation, voice, fluency, and/or language problems occurs through referrals by parents, classroom teachers, other school professional staff, the family doctor, or the child. Any parent with a question, concern, or whose child has had previous speech therapy is encouraged to contact the Speech and Language teacher or the counselor. Support services are provided once a child is determined to be in need of specially designed instruction. The plan for this support is developed in the child's IEP. Speech support services may be provided in the classroom, in small groups, or individually both formally and informally.

CHALLENGE

The Challenge program is an enrichment program for mentally gifted students. Students are identified on the basis of multiple criteria including standardized scores on aptitude and achievement tests, teacher and parent recommendations, academic achievement, and psycho-educational testing. Students in this program are involved in a variety of activities directed toward the goals of developing creative thought processes, higher level thinking skills, communication skills, group processes, decision-making skills, problem solving, vocational and avocational interests, and self-awareness/self-concept.

A Gifted Individualized Educational Plan (GIEP) is developed that specifies the type of support and instruction that meets the students' needs. Options may include direct instruction by the gifted support teacher, small group enrichment, curriculum and instruction differentiation, and collaboration with the classroom teacher.

DENTAL PROGRAM

A dental hygienist is employed part-time by the T/E School District for an educationally-based, state-mandated program in kindergarten through fourth grade. Local dentists act as resource persons and consultants to the program.

The Children's Dental Clinic is a community organization that provides dental treatment for eligible students. The Clinic, which is open one day per week, is a non-profit, charitable organization supported by fund-raising events and contributions.

CLASSROOM FIELD TRIPS

Field trips, which are an integral part of the instructional program, are authorized for the students of the District provided that provisions for such field trips are included in the annual budget. Financial assistance is available for deserving families. Please contact the school counselors for assistance.

PROGRESS REPORTS

The school issues progress reports three times each year. Each special area teacher assigns grades for two of the three marking periods. There are also two parent conferences per year. Check the school calendar and newsletter for dates.

Kindergarten progress reports are issued three times a year with a format more specifically designed to match the program.

RECESS

As part of a well-balanced school day, a period of outside play is planned for each day. We attempt to take the children outside for recess in all but rainy weather or if the temperature is below 20 degrees. Parents are encouraged to have students wear the appropriate clothing for outdoor recess throughout the year including a warm coat, gloves, boots, and hat. Except in the most unusual circumstances, pupils who are not able to go outside during recess are considered too ill to attend school. If you do not want your child to go outside for an extended period of time, a doctor's excuse may be requested.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

CHORUS

Students in fourth grade who enjoy singing may join the Chorus. The Chorus rehearses before the school day begins. During the spring, the Chorus presents a concert along with the Devon Elementary School Band and Orchestra.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Third and fourth grade students may elect to receive instruction on the violin, viola, or cello. Fourth grade students may elect to receive instruction on string, woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments. The orchestra and band rehearse before school. Students have the opportunity to perform in a concert during the school year.

SCHOOL STORE

The school store is operated by fourth grade parents on Friday mornings during snack time outside the cafeteria. Proceeds from the School Store support the Annual 4th Grade End of Year Party.

CLUBS AND AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The PTO sponsors a variety of after-school clubs during the course of the school year. In the past, there have been clubs for a variety of topics

such as: LEGO Club, Computer Club, Foreign Languages, Tennis, Drama, Science, Kids Fit, and Yoga Club. The District funds an After School Sports program for children in grades 2 through 4.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Parent Teacher Organization is a vital part of Valley Forge Elementary School. Volunteers are active every day of the school year. Among other things, they serve as homeroom parents, media center volunteers, classroom volunteers, and field trip chaperones. The PTO raises funds to benefit the children of Valley Forge Elementary School.

PTO COMMITTEES

The purpose of the Parent-Teacher Organization is to support the educational process. This is accomplished by promoting a closer relationship among administration, students, parents, and faculty. Parents can become personally involved through a large number of volunteer opportunities. Listed below is a partial list of volunteer opportunities at our school. For a complete listing, please visit the "Volunteer" page on the PTO website (www.vfespto.org). If you can help, contact one of the Executive Board members listed or sign up on the website Volunteer page.

Art Goes To School

Art Goes to School is a non-profit community program. Parent volunteers assist an AGTS representative with age-appropriate presentations that provide the children with enriching experiences in art appreciation. The program began in 1962 under the auspices of the Junior League of Philadelphia and has been conducted in our school district for the past 25 years. Parent volunteers do not need teaching or art experience - just a genuine interest in art and in working with children.

Clubs (Before and After School)

The PTO organizes optional, supervised activities for students for a small fee. The offerings vary each year depending on student interest. Parent volunteers coordinate registration for the club and assist the instructor if needed. Students on club rosters will attend before or after school clubs

as scheduled. If a student will not be attending a scheduled club, please send a note in the child's red folder about the change.

Book Fair

Our annual Book Fair fundraiser is sponsored by the PTO each fall in conjunction with Scary Gym. The Book Fair offers a wide variety of books to the children in order to encourage them to read. Parent chairpersons plan and organize the event. Parent volunteers sign up for shifts to help with classes as they visit the book fair.

Cultural Arts

The TESD Cultural Arts Group is called DELTA. This group includes parent representatives from the five elementary and two middle schools in the district. It is a non-profit organization that strives to provide affordable professional entertainment for the entire community with two evening programs open to the public during the year.

Additionally VFE has an internal Cultural Arts committee that coordinates a series of programs that are funded by the PTO. The goal is to enrich our children's educational experience with exposure to various dance, music, drama, and science performances and workshops. Parents are always welcome to attend these programs. Parents can volunteer to serve on the committee as a grade-level representative or assist at one of the programs.

Dental Clinic

Our school district provides a free dental clinic for children who otherwise would not receive regular dental care. The PTOs in the district help fund this project. Volunteers drive the children to and from the clinic which is located at the T/E Middle School. The VFE coordinator of the Dental Clinic distributes fundraising materials once per year.

Homeroom Parents

Homeroom parents coordinate class parties and schedule volunteers from their class for the Spring Fair.

Inter-School Council

InterSchool Council serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among parent/teacher organizations in the District. The goals

are to continue to improve education for children and provide a forum for discussion and possible resolution of areas of concern. Each school has a representative from its parent group. Topics discussed include (but are not limited to) the educational process, legislation, student behavior, and activities. Meetings are generally held monthly, September through May. A parent representative from each school is present at all meetings but all parents are invited to attend these informative gatherings.

Library Volunteers

Parents support the librarian and library staff performing a variety of tasks during their assigned library shift.

Newsletter - The Falcon

The VFE Newsletter is published every other week and sent to each household via email. Two parent volunteers share responsibility as co-editors of the newsletter which results in a commitment every 4 weeks during the school year.

Publishing Center

The Valley Forge Elementary Publishing Center provides a way to showcase students' original writing. Children write, revise, and edit their work in the classroom with the help of their teachers. The pieces are then submitted to the Publishing Center where a coordinator and volunteers create the final product. Students take the text and covers home to illustrate. All parents are asked to help in this step by encouraging children to complete their illustrations by the specified due date and by making sure the portfolios are returned to the Publishing Center. One copy of the book is placed in the library collection and the second copy of the book is given to the child to take home. Publishing books helps our young authors develop a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Parent volunteers perform various tasks which include typing, proofreading, and editing as well as the binding and assembly of the books. The Publishing Center Coordinator is available to train all new volunteers.

Scary Gym

In late October, parent volunteers organize and construct a "not-so-scary" maze in the gym that is appropriate for elementary age children.

Optional participation by VFE students in this event is broken down by grade for the students so "scary effects" are appropriate for the various K-4 grades. Parent volunteers are needed for maze construction, student organization, treat baking, and "scaring".

School Board Representative

The School Board Representative attends monthly meetings and acts as the "eyes and ears" of the Valley Forge Elementary community. Reports from our representative presented at PTO meetings or through *The Falcon* help our community stay informed. All parents are encouraged to attend school board meetings and register for school district updates at www.tesd.net.

School Store

Two fourth grade parents coordinate a weekly school store. Parent volunteers work at the store which offers school supplies and novelty items. All proceeds are used to pay for an end-of-year party for all 4th grade students.

Social Events for the Families

The PTO sponsors a variety of social events throughout the year. In past years, the PTO has sponsored Pizza Bingo Night, the Bowling Party, Family Fun Night, the Ice Cream Social, and the Back to School Picnic. Parent coordinators organize these events and general parent volunteers serve on the committee and work shifts during the event as needed.

Falcon 5K and Spring Fair

The major events at VFE are the Falcon 5K in the Fall and the Spring Fair in May. The idea is to have a fun, family event to start and finish off the year. The Falcon 5 K and Spring Fair Chairpersons work with a committee of chairpersons to plan the events. Many volunteers are needed on the days of the events to make it safe and fun for everyone.

Teacher Appreciation Luncheons

The PTO hosts three luncheons each year: "A Welcome Back" luncheon in August, a pre-holiday luncheon in December, and an "End of the Year Appreciation" lunch in June. Each event has a parent coordinator and much help is needed from parent volunteers with food preparation, hosting, and clean-up in order to make these events a success.

Spirit Sale

The PTO sponsors the sale of various “Spirit” items with the Valley Forge Elementary School name. A parent coordinator organizes all communication to the families, interacts with the vendor, processes orders, and submits all financial paperwork.

CODE OF CONDUCT

PHILOSOPHY/MISSION

- The development and maintenance of self-discipline is an integral aspect of learning.
- Each professional staff member, as a part of the normal teacher-learning process, shall develop and emphasize self-disciplinary procedures with students.
- Each staff member is responsible for contributing to the maintenance of these standards of behavior which are conducive to learning not only in the classroom but in corridors, the cafeteria, and throughout the school site.

(From TE District Regulation 5401)

The goal of each elementary school in the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District is to provide the highest quality of educational programs for our students. The cornerstone of school discipline lies in the development of responsible behavior in each child. All five schools utilize the Batsche “Pro Social Skills” model which emphasizes the responsibility of students to make proper choices for their behavior. When a choice is made, a student must reflect and evaluate it with an awareness of direct consequences. To facilitate these skills, guidelines are established which are consistent at all grade levels. All school staff members are trained to employ this model if and when a confrontation occurs.

Student behavior on buses, in hallways, cafeteria, and recess areas is expected to comply with established guidelines. In addition, rules for behavior are in effect at school-sponsored events during or after school hours and both on or off the building premises.

We believe that a climate conducive to learning is established through the consistent application of disciplinary guidelines, staff expectations and parent support. The Elementary School Code of Conduct reflects a strong sense of community and partnership exemplified through the responsible behavior and academic excellence of our elementary students.

PRO-SOCIAL SKILLS OVERVIEW

The Pro-Social Skills Program includes a five-step system that provides language to help children control impulses and make constructive choices. The following is a list of the five steps and the rationale for each.

1. STOP AND THINK

Teachers say “Stop and think” to students behaving inappropriately. This message interrupts negative and impulsive behaviors. This prompt also aids self-control as students internalize and apply it themselves. For adults, “Stop and think” is calm, rational, consistent response to challenging behaviors. It serves as an alternative to emotional responses such as yelling or being drawn into arguments with children.

2. GOOD CHOICE OR BAD CHOICE

Teachers ask, “Are you going to make a good choice or bad choice?” This question places responsibility for decisions squarely upon children. Power struggles and win-or-lose situations that are generated by child defiance are defused. It is made clear that consequences are derived from choices made by children.

3. CHOICE OR STEPS

Implementation of this part of the sequence varies according to need. Some children are helped to explore alternative choices. In other cases, children are taught social skills essential for school and interpersonal success. These steps are concrete and specific. For example, steps for ignoring are Break (the gaze), Turn (your body), and Move (out of the area). These steps are verbalized to reinforce the controlling capacity of language.

4. JUST DO IT!

Teachers say, “Just do it!” This message is intended to activate children and eliminate excessive verbiage regarding events and behavioral expectations.

5. HOW DID I DO?

This step is used for self-monitoring and self-evaluation. Children reflect upon the results of their choices and consider behavioral alternatives when needed.

Based on the work of Dr. George Batsche; Adapted by Jerry McMullen, Ph.D.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

All five schools hold discipline expectations for students which are consistent among all staff members regardless of the location or grade level in the building. A primary goal of the school is to nurture the concept of self-discipline and respect for others. The following guidelines are to be reviewed by students and their parents annually at the beginning of school and referenced frequently throughout the year:

Hallways

1. Students should always walk when traveling to and from classes.
2. Quiet voices are to be used.
3. Students must keep their hands to themselves.
4. Students are not to linger in bathrooms.

Office Area

1. Students should be considerate of those working and wait their turn to speak.
2. The office telephones are not to be used unless it is an emergency.

Cafeteria

1. Students should enter and exit quietly.
2. Students should remain seated unless following routines of trash disposal, snack, or bathroom use.
3. Students shall demonstrate appropriate table manners.
4. Nothing should ever be thrown in the cafeteria.
5. Running is not permitted at any time.
6. Students should respect others' space.

7. When finished eating, students should leave the area clean.
8. Students should not lend or borrow money from each other.
9. Students must be silent for announcements and follow directions of the cafeteria monitor.

PLAYGROUND

While each grade level constructs specific rules for recess behavior, the following are common in all schools:

1. Students must play safely only in designated areas and remain within playground boundaries.
2. Fighting or games involving body contact are not permitted at any time.
3. Students should use equipment and supplies in a safe and appropriate manner.
4. Any serious problem involving equipment or injury should be reported to the teacher on duty immediately.
5. Students may not play on ice or throw snowballs.
6. When hearing the bell or whistle, students should line up quickly and quietly.
7. A request not to participate in outdoor recess due to health reasons requires a note from a parent for one day or from a physician for an extended amount of time.

Indoor Recess

1. Students must remain in the classroom unless given permission by the teacher on duty to leave the room.
2. Activities and equipment should be appropriate for an indoor setting and approved by each grade level team.

BUS

1. The same conduct that is expected in the classroom should be observed on the bus.
2. Students should walk on and off the bus.
3. Quiet voices should be used.

4. Students must remain seated and keep their hands to themselves. Head, hands, and feet must be kept inside the bus.
5. Students should not eat or drink while riding the bus. Nothing is to be thrown out of windows.
6. No profane language is permitted at any time. The bus should be kept clean and students should not tamper with any equipment.
7. Students should ride only on the assigned bus and disembark at the assigned stop unless given prior approval through the principal's office.

Buses may be equipped with video cameras to monitor behavior on the buses. The cameras will provide both audio and video taping. The camera will aid the District in enforcing its disciplinary policies with a goal of maintaining an orderly environment on school buses.

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

To ensure the rights, privileges, and safety of all elementary students, the following guidelines are in place to some degree in each school. The listing is not inclusive but meant to be a guide for fair and equitable treatment of students. The administration will exercise its discretion in making judgments regarding behavioral issues not listed within these guidelines. (The complete T/E School District Student Discipline Policy and Regulation #5401 are available on-line.)

The Elementary Code of Conduct, General Behavior Guidelines, and Disciplinary Measures exist to ensure the safety of each child in our schools. These protective measures are in effect during school hours, field trips, on bus routes, at after-hours school, and PTO-sponsored events.

OFFENSE	MINIMUM RESPONSE
1 Disruptive behavior in the classroom, in the library, at assemblies, during fire drill, field trips, at social events, or other school-sponsored events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Warning Given 2 Time Out 3 Parent Contact 4 Suspension

2 Physical injury caused by fighting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Parent Contact 2 After School Detention 3 Suspension
3 Possession of weapons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 See Policy #5401
4 Sexual Harassment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 See Policy #5420
5 Destruction of student or school property	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Parent Contact 2 Restitution in Some Manner 3 Possible Suspension
6 Bus Offenses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Warning 2 Written Notification 3 Parent Contact 4 Bus Dismissal 3 Days 5 Bus Dismissal 5 Days by Approval of the Superintendent
6 Threats	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Parent Contact 2 Report to Administration 3 Possible Suspension 4 See Policy #5401 Risk Assessment
7 Bullying	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Warning 2 Parent Contact 3 Loss of Privilege 4 Possible Suspension

SCHOOL CLIMATE

Our Valley Forge School community is committed to fostering a positive, warm, safe, and caring environment where children are encouraged to learn and develop their potential. This is accomplished through several avenues:

- The VFES Pledge, song, and Superhero Character Traits
- PATHS: Promoting Alternative Thinking Skills
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
- Developmental Guidance

VFE PLEDGE

I pledge to try to do my best

Every single day.

Listening, learning, and being fair

When I work and play.

Keeping hands and feet to myself,

Treating others with respect,

Making sure our things are neat

Is what we should expect.

I'll listen when my teacher speaks

And follow every rule.

I pledge I'll be a good citizen

In my classroom and my school.

PATHS PROGRAM

PATHS, which stands for Promoting Alternative THINKING Strategies, is designed to help elementary children to develop better thinking skills, more mature and responsible ways of behaving, and improved academic performance. PATHS lessons are taught on a weekly basis in all grades. The goals of the PATHS program include:

- Increase children's abilities to think and solve problems for themselves;
- Increase children's abilities to use their thinking skills to act responsibly and maturely;
- Improve children's understanding of themselves and others;
- Improve children's feelings about themselves and others;
- Increase children's abilities to learn more effectively in the classroom environment.

OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM

Our elementary schools use the research based Olweus Bullying Prevention Program as the foundation for creating a safe environment for children. This program presents a clear definition of the term "bullying".

"A person is bullied when he/she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons."

This program provides a structured approach to the prevention of bullying. It promotes increased understanding of the issues involved with "bullying" behaviors and provides a coordinated plan for addressing these issues. It also includes strategies for bystanders to use when they observe bullying behaviors. The goals of the program are:

- To reduce (and ideally eliminate) existing bully/victim problems among children.
- To prevent the development of new problems
- To achieve better peer relations at school

There are four essential rules that we teach:

We will:

1. Not bully others;
2. Help students who are bullied;
3. Include all students who are left out;
4. Tell an adult at school and home when someone is bullied.

DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDANCE PROGRAM

The developmental guidance program introduces “ I-Care” Rules in kindergarten and these are reinforced through the grades. The program reinforces getting along with others and teaches resiliency.

I-Care Rules:

1. We listen to each other.
2. Hands are for helping, not hurting.
3. We use I-Care language.
4. We care about each other’s feelings.
5. We are responsible for what we say and do.

INDEX

A Child’s Place	5
Absences	5
Announcements: Delayed Openings/Closings	4
Behavior	21
Breakfast	6
Bus Transportation	4
Cell Phones And Electronic Devices	9
Challenge	17
Chorus	17
Clubs And After School Activities	17
Code of Conduct	20
Communicable Diseases	6
Contacting Teachers	8
Core Class	11
Counseling	16
Curriculum	11
Delayed Opening For Grades 1-4	3
Developmental Guidance Program	24
Valley Forge Elementary Website	8
VFE Pledge	23
Disciplinary Measures	22
Dismissal	4
Dress Code	5
Dropping Off Materials For Students	9
Early Dismissal Due To Emergency/Weather	4

Email Guidelines For Parents	8
Emergency Delayed Openings And Closings	3
Emergency Medical Cards	7
ESL (English as a Second Language)	15
Food From Home	8
General Information	3
Health	6
Health Screenings And Vaccinations	6
Home/School Communication	8
Homework	11
Hours	3
Instructional Program	10
Instrumental Music	14
Learning Support	16
Lost and Found	5
Lunch	7
Math Support	16
Modified Kindergarten	4
Newsletter	9
Olweus Bullying Prevention Program	23
Parent/Teacher Organization (P.T.O.)	18
PATHS Program	23
Personal Identification Numbers	7
Prescription And Non-Prescription Medication	7
Pro-Social Skills Overview	20
PTO Committees	18
Reading/Language Arts	11

Reading Support And Bridge	15
Recess	11
School Climate	23
School District Policies	10
School Store	17
Snacks	8
Speech And Language Support	16
Student Activities	17
Support Programs	15
Tardiness	5
TE All-Call	3
Teams	11
Visitors/Volunteers	9