

The Villages® Charter School

Parent Involvement Handbook



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Mead

2009-2010

VISION

We are a school where a supportive community of students, parents and staff tailor the educational experience to meet individual needs, resulting in successful, well-rounded, responsible individuals with an entrepreneurial spirit.

CORE VALUES

Hospitality - We create an atmosphere of support where people feel welcome, comfortable, and challenged to learn and grow.

Hard Work - We are committed to excellence in all we do. Our high expectations and data driven decisions are reflected in our work ethic, personal pride at school, and in our community. We strive to exceed everyone's expectations with both effort and results.

Stewardship - We do what is in the best interest of the student, family, school, and community. We treat all resources as ours to nourish and protect.

Creativity - We encourage and embrace innovation, risk taking, and "out-of-the-box" thinking for the purpose of finding a better way.

Our mission is to provide quality learning opportunities that promote personal responsibility and inspire children's thirst for knowledge.

At The Villages Charter School, our students are surrounded by the SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM! Each and every day you will find parents willing to go above and beyond the call of duty to insure the success of their child's education and as a result, positively impacting each and every student they come in contact with.

Our students are in a very unique environment. They are surrounded by a phenomenal group of working parents. All of them bring with them their own creative talents and experiences and are willing to share those gifts with our children in new ways everyday.

- Helping with classroom activities
- Assisting staff in our offices and clinics
- Reading with our students
- Celebrating special occasions with us
- Reading and AR testing on parenting books
- Hosting/lecturing during our Career Expo/Career Days
- Serving lunch in our cafeterias
- Restocking books on the shelves of our libraries
- And so much more!

An essential element for the success of students at The Villages Charter Schools is the inclusion of parents in our day-to-day activities.

Throughout this manual we hope you will find meaningful and enjoyable ways to utilize your PI time. We look forward to you celebrating your child's educational experience with us!



Going Above and Beyond is rewarded!

At VCS, we recognize that there are many parents who are willing to go above and beyond. We thank you for being great role models, showing hard work, hospitality, stewardship and creativity in action; living our core values. **Your efforts will be recognized at the first P.R.I.D.E. meeting of the new school year (September) for the highest level you have reached the previous school year with certificates and special tokens of appreciation...**

Doubling your minimum required hours-99 hours: Green Buffalo level
Reaching 100-149 involvement hours: Gold Buffalo level
Reaching 150-199 involvement hours: Platinum Buffalo level
A total of 200+ involvement hours: White Bison level





Parent involvement is mandatory for your child to attend The Villages Charter School. It is our hope that the following information will prove helpful as we journey through the school year together. While involvement may take many forms, our charter and the Charter School Advisory Board have determined a minimal acceptable level of participation for each family as well as specific areas where involvement has the largest impact on student success.

Who Can Earn P.I. Time? The qualifying parent(s)/guardian(s), who are classified as a: father/mother/stepfather/stepmother and/or spouse, legal guardian or associated parent* are responsible for earning P.I. time.

*The Associated Parent—The Villages Charter School is sensitive to the needs of the single parent. In the absence of a second parent a child's legal parent/guardian may appoint one adult per school year to assist their family with parent involvement responsibilities. Contact the Central Office @ 259-2350 for more information.

How Much Time is Required? The parent/guardian(s) must complete 20 hours per household, 10 of which must be in informational hours every year for each school on campus where children are enrolled. The Primary Center and the Intermediate Center are one Elementary school and therefore count as one school. The requirement for The Villages Early Childhood Center is 10 hours per year, 5 of which must be informational hours. The maximum number of hours required for any family will not exceed 50 hours per school year. As a parent/guardian you may contribute time at any school, regardless of where your child attends.



While other family members, relatives or friends are encouraged to participate as community volunteers, their time cannot be calculated as PI hours but will go toward our community volunteer hour total which is counted and helps our school earn awards based on total involvement.

How Do I Earn My Time? The time frame for completing parental involvement hours begins the day after the closing of one school year until the last day of the next school year. Please plan your activities and meet your obligation in a timely manner each school year.

What Are the Different Type of Hours I Can Earn?

Parent Involvement opportunities are divided into one of three categories: Service Hours, Informational Hours/Meetings or Donations.

Service Hours - are accumulated by physically working or helping with projects, programs or events that you have been requested to help with by your child's teacher or by a staff member. Such events might include:

- Helping in a classroom
- Completing special projects at home
- Helping with special programs or athletic events
- Chaperoning field trips
- Volunteering in other areas in the schools

Informational Hours/Meetings* - are classified as meetings, events or seminars where information is being shared with you that pertains to or influences your child's education. Such meetings might include:

- Orientation/Open House
- Grade Level Meeting Nights
- BUFFALO P.R.I.D.E. Meetings
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Athletic Informational Meetings
- Field Trip Meetings
- Parent AR Reading
- Year End Surveys (School & Teacher)

*You are required to earn 10 hours in this area

Donations - You can also receive PI time for your family by making donations. Donations contribute to the success of our schools and are a great way to utilize PI time. In order to make a donation, the item(s) donated must be requested by a teacher or staff member. You may make donations to earn up to 50% of the required PI time per year. Donations can be made in a variety of ways:

- Monetary Donations
- Materials Donations (construction paper, craft supplies)
- Prize Donations (Buffalo Romp, treasure boxes)
- Athletic Donations (healthy snacks, sports drinks)
- Clinic Donations (water, sports drinks)
- Store purchased snacks, baked items or paper goods
- And so much more!

PI time for donations is calculated as: a \$50 Donation=1/2 hour of PI time. Time is accumulated and posted as donations are made.

Homemade Item Donations - Baking items for class parties, special events and functions is a huge help to our teachers and tons of fun for our students when their parents involve them in the process too! While spending quality time with your child, you will be reinforcing valuable skills that they have learned in school, such as: measurement, addition, subtraction and time calculations.

In an effort to provide consistency to the time given for the donation of homemade items, this chart will help provide a guideline for your donation.



Qty	Items	PI Time
1	Cake	1 hour
1	Main Dish	1 hour
1	Fruit/Vegetable Tray	1.5 hours
1	Sandwich Platter	2 hours
12	Brownies/Cookies	1 hour
24	Brownies/Cookies	1.5 hours
	Each additional dozen	.5 hour

PLEASE NOTE: To receive PI time for donations, a request for the donation must be made by a teacher or staff member.

Parent A.R. Reading - Our parent AR (Accelerated Reader) reading option has become a very exciting part of our Parent Involvement program! Each school's Media Center offers a great "school-age specific" selection of parenting books for you to check out. Upon completion of the book you will take an AR test. With a passing grade of 60% or better, 2 hours of informational PI time will be added to your account.



Athletic Special Needs - The athletic programs at the charter middle and high schools offer a great selection of events to become involved with. If your child participates in school athletics, we suggest that you earn at least 2 hours of service time within athletics by helping with the many needs in all of our sports programs.

Athletics utilizes the talents of our parents in many ways! If you aspire to be a commentator, please sign up to be an announcer at the next football game. If concessions is more your style we can put you to work! Ticket takers, gate keepers and scorekeepers are always needed too.



If helping athletics from your home fits into your schedule better, we like to have one parent wash team uniforms for the season. This task would need to be coordinated with the team coach and time is based on the number of loads washed, dried and folded. PI time for doing laundry is calculated as 1 hour per game and time is given at the end of the season.

Regardless if your child plays/participates in the sport or not, you are always welcome to help out.

How is P.I. Time Tracked & Reported? For every opportunity to earn PI time, we ask that each parent be responsible to either sign in/out or use their scan card (provided at the beginning of the school year and used mostly at our large events) separately for each activity. If signing in/out, please give your name, the qualifying parents name (if you are an associated parent), and the name of the student you are doing parent involvement time for. Please check your Parent Involvement Account online periodically to ensure that you are being credited for all of your work. You may obtain your web-user name and password from the Central Office 352-259-2350. *Discrepancies should be reported immediately so that we may insure the accuracy of your account. It is your responsibility to contact the school if there are any concerns.*

Checking Your PI Time

Reading Your PI Report - After the beginning of school each year, a letter will be sent to the qualifying parent of each family. The letter will contain your family user name and password that will enable you to check your Parent Involvement account on-line, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, on the VCS web-site: www.tvcs.org under the Family Information / Buffalo Adventures / Parental Involvement link.

Your account will look similar to this:

PARENT INFORMATION

Smith, John

Family Required Hours: 40 Hours Earned: 85 Required Hours Remaining: 0

Informational Meeting Hours: 10 Service Hours: 69

Donation Hours: 6 Dollars Donated: \$615.44

Recognition Level Reached: Green Buffalo Level

Date	Time	Hours	Donated Dollars	Allowed Hours	F A C	Code	Description
Informational Meetings - 10 Hours minimum							
8/16/2007	3:30 P	1		1	Elem	32	Orientation Meet the teacher
8/16/2007	11:00 A	1		1	Middle School	32	Orientation VCMS
8/30/2007	6:00 P	1		1	Middle School	28	Athletic Info Meeting
9/11/2007	5:30 P	1		1	Middle School	30	Informational Meeting Keys Trip
9/11/2007	7:00 P	0.5		0.5	Elem	31	Open House Thanks for coming!

Chaperoning - This is just one of the many fun ways to enjoy utilizing your Parent Involvement time. When the opportunity arises you will receive information from your child's teacher asking for volunteers to chaperone their field trip, special event or outing. You will be notified in advance of the number of hours to be awarded for each trip.

To insure the safety of our students it is school-wide policy that any parent/guardian accompanying a student group must have on file a completed Volunteer Application and copy of your driver's license. When the request is made for volunteers a form may be picked up from your child's school main office. You will only need to complete one Volunteer Application per school year, for the entire campus. Forms must be returned by the required deadline as a background check will be performed.

Fingerprinting & Background Checks - Some parent involvement requires fingerprinting/background checks. You will be notified if an opportunity has this requirement.



Fingerprinting takes place in The Villages Charter School Central Office, located in The Villages High School. An appointment for fingerprinting may be made by contacting your child's school secretary. The cost is \$57.25* and must be paid in advance of your appointment by going online to www.flprints.com. Your fingerprinting will remain on file with us for two years, at which time it must be renewed.

Drivers - If you volunteer to drive students on a school sponsored trip or event, you will be required to have a completed volunteer application, a copy of your driver's license, proof of current insurance, and completed and cleared fingerprinting background check on file with the school.



**SAFETY
FIRST**

* Price is subject to change.

BUFFALO P.R.I.D.E. - As the parent of a Villages Charter School student you are an honorary member of the parent/teacher organization at The Charter School known as the BUFFALO P.R.I.D.E. (Partners Responsible In Developing Education).



Meetings are hosted the first Tuesday of each month (excluding January). At P.R.I.D.E meetings you will be updated on the events and progress taking place in your child's school. You will also learn about upcoming special events, meetings, and P.R.I.D.E. sponsored fundraisers. This is a great opportunity for you to ask questions and learn more about the whole charter school experience. Meetings usually last 1 hour. On special occasions, 2-hour seminar meetings will be hosted and offer an array of educational lectures for you to attend. Informational PI time is earned by attending these meetings.

P.R.I.D.E. SPONSORED EVENTS - Visit the P.R.I.D.E. link on the VCS website for information about these events. Special events in the past have included...FOUNDER'S DAY FESTIVAL, BUFFALO BASKET AUCTION, CHRISTMAS TREE RAFFLE, BBQ BASH, and the CHARTER SCHOOL BENEFIT GOLF TOURNAMENT.

Fundraising at The Villages Charter School has far exceeded the expectations of most nationally based organizations! Since the inception of The Villages Charter School our parents have helped raise funds to allow many of the special events and celebrations we have here at The Villages Charter School, and we are always looking for new ways to expand our horizons. We attribute this success to the dedicated group of parents within The Villages Charter School. We look forward to seeing you at a meeting soon!

We consider communication the most valuable tool we use in The Villages Charter Schools. It is extremely important to us that we not only make ourselves available to you, but also make as much school related information available to you, at all times. With internet usage we are available to answer many of your questions 24 hours a day. Please take time to acquaint yourself with our web-site at www.tvcs.org. Our PI Calendar lists up-to-date parent involvement opportunities across campus.



Parent Involvement opportunities, upcoming programs and special event listing can also be found in...

- * Our campus-wide newsletter the ***CAMPUS CHATTER***
- * Classroom Fliers and Letters Home
- * **BUFFALO P.R.I.D.E.** Meetings
- * Special Event Brochures
- * School Bulletin Boards, and
- * Via E-mail

If at any time you are unable to fulfill a volunteer obligation that you have committed to, please contact the school as soon as possible, to open that position to another parent and to ensure we have coverage for all needs.

Each of The Villages Charter School sites has a Parent Involvement Coordinator that will be happy to help you with any parent involvement questions. Please feel free to contact us at:

Early Childhood Development Center - 259-7161
Primary Center - 259-7700
Intermediate Center - 259-2300
Middle School - 259-0044
High School - 259-3777



CAMPUS CALENDAR

The Villages® Charter School 2009 - 2010 School Calendar



1st Qtr 8/17-10/19 (45 days)
2nd Qtr 10/20-1/12 (45 days)
3rd Qtr 1/13-3/18 (45 days)
4th Qtr 3/19-5/28 (45 days)

7 Labor Day - No School
18 Progress Reports

23-27 Fall Break
30 Students Return

1 New Year's Day - Holiday
4 Return from Winter Break
12 2nd 9 Weeks Ends
18 MLK Day - No School*
18 Teacher Professional Day
19 Report Cards

9-19 FCATs
18 3rd 9 Weeks Ends
25 Report Cards

28 Last Day for Students
28 4th 9 Weeks Ends-Report Cards
29 VHS Graduation
31 Memorial Day Holiday

JULY							AUGUST								
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
													1		
			1	2	3	4	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		
26	27	28	29	30	31		30	31							
SEPTEMBER							OCTOBER								
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
NOVEMBER							DECEMBER								
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
29	30						27	28	29	30	31				
JANUARY							FEBRUARY								
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
					1	2									
3	4	5	6	7	8	9		1	2	3	4	5	6		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		
31							28								
MARCH							APRIL								
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
		1	2	3	4	5	6						1	2	3
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30			
MAY							JUNE								
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
						1									
2	3	4	5	6	7	8			1	2	3	4	5		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
30	31						27	28	29	30					

6 New Teachers Report
10 Returning Teachers Report
12 Non-Instruct. Staff Report
13 Orientation
17 1st Day for Students

19 1st 9 Weeks Ends
23 Student Holiday*
23 Teacher Professional Day
26 Report Cards

1 Progress Reports
18 Last Day before Break
21 Winter Break Begins
21-23 PreK-5th Camp

9-11 FCAT Writing
15 President's Day- No School*
17 Progress Reports

2 No School*
5-9 Spring Break(PreK-5th Camp)
12 Students Return
30 Progress Reports

7 Last Day for Teachers

Start and Dismissal Times

Primary Center/ECC (Grades K - 1 & PK3 & 4)	Intermediate Center (Grades 2 - 4)	Middle School (Grades 5 - 8)	High School (Grades 9 - 12)
Starts: 7:50 am Dismisses: 2:30 pm	Starts: 7:45 am Dismisses: 2:25 pm	Starts: 7:55 am Dismisses: 2:55 pm	Starts: 7:45 am Dismisses: 2:40 pm

Supervision of students is offered between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

*Indicates a designated school make-up day, if necessary.



The Villages Charter School
The Villages, FL
www.tvcs.org

**CELEBRATE THE SPIRIT OF
VOLUNTEERISM!**