



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2021-2022

25Q240

Veritas Academy

35-01 Union Street

Flushing, NY 11354

Phone # (718) 888-7520 Fax # (718) 888 -7524

www.theveritasacademy.com

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

Jason Vanderwalker, Principal

Deborah Kiernan, Assistant Principal

Dorene Lorenzoni, Assistant Principal

Frank Raccuglia, Assistant Principal

Andrea Sheridan, Assistant Principal

Guidance Counselor

Antonio Bausone

Guidance Counselor

Katherine Garzon

Deans of Student Affairs

John Hallisey

Bobby Thomatos

Parent Affairs Coordinator

TBD

QUEENS HIGH SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT

Elaine Lindsey

Dear Students,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2020-2021 school year at Veritas Academy! We look forward to a great year at our exciting learning community where we will have the opportunity to work together on many projects and investigations. We will celebrate your creativity, discuss your opinions, and explore things in many different ways. We will support you every step of the way so that you know that you can and you will make a difference in this world.

We will all be a part of many challenging activities such as field trips and computer-based learning. We will reach out to other students and places around the world to teach and learn from them. We will provide opportunities for you to participate in community service programs and activities in your area of interest. We know that by the time you graduate from Veritas, you will be well prepared for the college and career of your choice.

We sincerely hope that the years you spend here with us are happy and productive. This handbook was prepared to help you understand your privileges and responsibilities. Please read it with care.

Students, teachers, guidance personnel, and supervisors are partners with students and their families. We are working together in our school to create our Veritas family atmosphere. With all of us participating, we will continue to make it better every day!

If you have any questions that are not answered here, ask any of your teachers and you will always be assisted. We wish you much luck and know that a wonderful educational adventure awaits you. Let's all make the most of it!

Very truly yours,
Jason Vanderwalker
Principal

VISION

Veritas will be a nurturing, safe, and professional environment that supports educational success while furthering the social, emotional, and physical development of all students. Veritas will offer an array of core and elective courses that will be standards-based, academically engaging, and meet the needs, experiences, and cultures of diverse learners.

MISSION

Veritas is a Renzulli school that focuses on the enrichment of all students. Veritas uses the schoolwide enrichment model which provides opportunities for students to voice their interests through targeted surveys that inform the development of elective courses. In these courses, students have opportunities to co-construct curriculum with their teachers in a student-centered learning environment.

Additionally, this model provides enriched learning experiences and higher learning standards for all children through three goals:

- developing talents in all children
- providing a broad range of advanced-level enrichment experiences for all students
- providing advanced follow-up opportunities for young people based on their strengths and interests

At Veritas, various student support structures work in a systemized way to provide students with social and emotional support that incorporates individualized and group counseling. Students engage in learning activities both inside and outside of the school that build students' self-efficacy, confidence, and self-esteem to enable them to become civic-minded citizens.

Veritas aims to implement a rigorous, standards-aligned curriculum that develops critical thinking skills that equips learners with the ability to read, write, communicate, and problem solve in a constantly changing society.

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

All students will enter and exit the building using Exit #17 located next to the Flushing High School Main Entrance starting at 8:00 AM. Students must remain socially distant and must wear a mask at all times on campus. Students must take their temperature at home before leaving for school. Breakfast will either be provided upon entering the building or in the cafeteria. Breakfast will be grab and go. Any student who arrives after 8:05 AM is late. Students arriving after 8:30 AM will enter through Exit 16. All students will be dismissed from school at 2:20 PM. Students will enter and exit the building in an orderly fashion and maintain 3ft social distance at all times. Students must immediately leave school grounds upon dismissal.

COVID PROCEDURES

Due to Covid-19, many restrictions have been enacted by the NYC DOE:

1. Students should take their temperature at home, if you have a fever - a temperature of 100 degrees and higher - you must stay home.
2. While in the building, students **must wear a form fitting mask** over their nose and mouth at all times except while eating. Bandanas and neck gators are not suitable masks.
3. Students who refuse to wear a mask will face disciplinary action including possible suspension from school.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is a very important part of student achievement and is factored into the Department of Education Promotion Policy Guidelines. All students must be present either in school or in their remote classes every day as per their cohort schedule to ensure a successful high school career. Students must be present in each class, either in person or remote. Students who are not in class will be marked absent for that class. If a student is going to be absent from school, we kindly ask that a parent/guardian call the main office @ (718) 888-7520 no later than 8:00AM. We will need to know your expected date of return to school. When students return to school, they must bring a note to the school secretary Ms. Kathleen Santoro from a parent/guardian or a doctor documenting the absence. Students are responsible for completing all work missed during their absence. Absences for medical reasons, a death in the family, religious holidays, and court subpoena require notes upon your child's return to school. A medical note will be required in all cases of excessive absences due to illness. While we understand that family emergencies may impact attendance, family vacations should be scheduled around the school calendar.

Vacations are not excused absences. Please plan your vacations accordingly. Attendance is crucial to your education.

LATENESS POLICY

Arriving on time for school is important for student success. Students who are excessively late will face disciplinary measures.

STUDENT PICK UP

If a student must be picked up early from school, a parent/guardian must sign the student out from the main office. Students will be sent to the Main Office upon parent/guardian arrival. Students are responsible for the work missed in class due to early dismissal. Students are not permitted to leave the building for any reason without being signed out by a parent or guardian. The only exceptions to this are seniors leaving early and students who do not feel well with the nurses' approval. Students will only be released to adults listed on the emergency blue card who can produce proper identification.

NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO ANYONE WITHOUT A PHOTO ID, EVEN IF THEY ARE ON THE CONTACT CARD.

CLASSROOM AND HALLWAY CONDUCT

There are eight periods in each school day. At the end of each class period, students will not leave their rooms until they are dismissed by the teacher. Movement will be limited around the building. Students must remain 6ft from others. Any student found in the hallway after the change of periods must have a pass. Hall sweeps will be conducted on a regular basis and any student caught will be subject to disciplinary action.

BATHROOM POLICY

Bathrooms will be locked during the change of periods in addition to the first and last 5 minutes of each period. Bathrooms will reopen during class time. Students may not leave the classroom at any time without the teacher's permission.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is a vital component of the education process. It is a reflection of the classroom activity and will provide an opportunity for independent practice. Homework may be assigned on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis due to the nature of our project-based curriculum. It is the responsibility of all students to pace themselves accordingly, and to hand in appropriate assignments on their respective

due dates. We ask that parents check for the completion of homework on a regular basis. There will be a reasonable amount of homework expected to be completed daily. Specific homework guidelines are posted online and in all classrooms. Students and parents can use google classroom to access homework assignments.

SCHOOL DRESS CODE

Veritas Academy adheres to a School Dress Code. There are multiple schools housed in our building. It is necessary to be able to identify Veritas students from other students in the building. Therefore, for safety reasons, all students are asked to purchase one of the several shirts available either on-line* or in school.

*Dress Code polo shirts, sweaters, sweatshirts, and gym uniforms may be purchased from either Land's End at LandsEnd.com or Smooth Sportswear at Smoothusa.com/veritas.

As per Chancellor's Regulations, students dressed in an inappropriate fashion can be distracting to the educational process. Student clothing must cover from the shoulders to the knees. **No shirts showing the midriff area are allowed. Students are not permitted to wear leggings or ripped jeans. No inappropriate messages and/or images will be allowed on clothing.** Slacks, jeans, shorts, and skirts to the knee are permitted to be worn during the school day.

Students who do not come to school dressed appropriately will be given the opportunity to purchase a shirt or a parent/guardian may bring up appropriate clothing. Parents/guardians will be notified of the circumstances.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

All students must follow a set of rules and/or policies in order to maintain a comfortable, safe, working and rigorous learning environment. All students will be held to the "Citywide Standards of Conduct and Uniform Disciplinary Measures" (NYC Discipline Code) and all disciplinary procedures will be handled accordingly by the Dean of Student Affairs for any student who is not in compliance. All Veritas students are expected to act like adults at all times. Please refer to *The Citywide Discipline Code and Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook* for additional information-
<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/discipline-code-grade-6-12-english>

REFERRAL POLICY

Students need to follow all school rules. Referrals can be earned by poor classroom behavior, use of electronic devices, and many other offences (see NYCDOE School Intervention and Discipline Code).

SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET POLICY

Below is a non-exhaustive list of examples of prohibited behavior:

1. Causing harm to others, damage to their property or Department of Education property, such as:

- Using, posting or distributing profane, lewd, vulgar, threatening, or abusive language in e-mail messages, material posted on Department web pages, or professional social media sites;
- Accessing, using, posting, or distributing information or materials that are pornographic or otherwise obscene, advocate illegal or dangerous acts, or advocate violence or discrimination. If users inadvertently access such information, they should immediately disclose the inadvertent access in a manner specified by their school or central division office;
- Accessing, posting or distributing harassing, discriminatory, inflammatory, or hateful material, or making damaging or false statements about others;
- Sending, posting, or otherwise distributing chain letters or engaging in spamming;
- Damaging computer equipment, files, data or the Department's Internet System in any way, including spreading computer viruses, vandalizing data, software or equipment, damaging or disabling others' electronic property, or engaging in conduct that could interfere or cause a danger of disruption to the Department's educational or business environment;
- Using the Department's Internet System in a manner that interferes with the education of the user or others or the job duties of the user or others;
- Downloading, posting, reproducing or distributing music, photographs, video or other works in violation of applicable copyright laws. Any music, photographs and/or video should only be downloaded for Department, and not personal purposes. If a work specifies how that work may be used, the user should follow the expressed requirements. If users are unsure whether or not they can use a work, they should request permission from the copyright or trademark owner; or
- Engaging in plagiarism. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were original to the user.

2. Gaining or attempting to gain unauthorized access to the Department's Internet Systems, or to any third party's computer system, such as:

- Malicious tampering, phishing or hacking activities;
- Intentionally seeking information about passwords belonging to other users;
- Disclosing a user's password to the Department's Internet Systems to other individuals. However, students may share their Department password with their parents.
- Modifying passwords belonging to other users;
- Attempting to log in through another person's account;
- Attempting to gain access to material that is blocked or filtered by the Department;
- Accessing, copying, or modifying another user's files without authorization;
- Disguising a user's identity;
- Using the password or identifier of an account that does not belong to the user; or
- Engaging in uses that jeopardize access into others' accounts or other computer networks.

3. Using the Department's Internet Systems for commercial purposes, such as:

- Using the Department's Internet Systems for personal financial gain;
- Conducting for-profit business activities, personal advertising, or other non-Department business communications;
- Engaging in fundraising (except as set forth in the Chancellor's Regulation A-610); or
- Using the Department's Internet Systems on behalf of any elected official, candidate, candidates, slate of candidates or a political organization or committee.

4. Engaging in criminal or other unlawful activities.

Filtering

In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA"), the Department blocks or filters content over the Internet that the Department considers inappropriate for minors. This includes pornography, obscene material, and other material that may be harmful to minors. The Department may also block or filter other content deemed to be inappropriate, lacking educational or work-related content or that pose a threat to the network. The Department may, in its discretion, disable such filtering for certain users for bona-fide research or other lawful educational or business purposes.

Users shall not use any website, application, or methods to bypass filtering of the network or perform any other unlawful activities.

See additional information regarding CIPA

Designated SAVE Room

The SAVE room is room B08. Students who pose a threat to themselves or others may be escorted from class by the Dean and/or Administrator and brought to the SAVE room for the remainder of the period. In addition, disruptive and/or insubordinate students may be temporarily removed from class for 1-4 days (periods) by teacher request.

LUNCH

While in the cafeteria, students must remain seated, all facing the same direction on one side of the table and remain 3ft. apart at all times. Masks must be worn unless you are actively eating or drinking.

LOST & FOUND

The Lost and Found is located in the Main Office. If a student finds something that belongs to someone else, he/she must give it to a teacher, administrator, or someone in the main office. Items will be discarded or donated after 5 days.

TRANSPORTATION

Students who use public transportation may be eligible for a Metrocard. Students who are eligible will receive the appropriate full fare or half fare card. If a Metrocard is lost, a replacement will be provided after 1 week. If a second Metrocard is lost, a parent/guardian must come to school after 1 week to obtain a new Metrocard.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Students will follow all instructions during emergency drills. These drills will be explained and practiced on a regular basis. Everyone is required to vacate the building immediately when the evacuation alarm sounds. Students must maintain 3 feet distance during an evacuation drill. Emergency drills can happen any time during the school day. During an emergency drill there needs to be absolute silence. Listen very carefully and follow directions from your teacher and you will know exactly what to do. This could save your life! You will receive instructions from your teachers with regard to the bells and what they signify.

LOST BOOKS

Textbooks are loaned to students for use at home during the school year. A book receipt is completed for each book given out and is returned when the book is handed in at the end of the year. Books **MUST** be returned in the condition they were received. Always keep books covered. If books are lost, stolen, or damaged, students must pay for their replacement. This payment must be made before a student can receive his/her final report card and/or diploma.

NOTICES TO PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

Teachers may give students notices to take home or post the notices on the Veritas Academy website. Some notices are information of upcoming events at our school and others require the slip to be returned to the teacher. Students are expected to give all notices to a parent/guardian in a timely manner. Parents/ guardians are asked to check for these notices daily. Parents/guardians can also use www.skedula.com to monitor their child's grades. Please contact Mr. Singh to set up your parent account.

GUIDANCE

If you would like to meet with a guidance counselor to discuss any problems, issues, or concerns, a pass must be obtained from your teacher. The guidance counselor will be happy to assist you and speak with you. If a parent would like to speak with the guidance counselor, please call the school and they will be happy to assist you.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the event of excessive snow or storm conditions, the school may be closed or delayed in opening. There may also be an early dismissal. Parents are asked to listen to the radio or television news broadcasts for details. Students may transition to remote learning.

HONOR ROLL

Our Honor Roll will be posted after every marking period. It will be displayed on the Honor Roll bulletin board outside of Room 112. As an institution of higher education, we celebrate three levels of honors: *Summa Cum Laude*, *Magna Cum Laude* and *Cum Laude*. *Summa Cum Laude* recipients must attain a 95 to 100 percent overall average, *Magna Cum Laude*, 90 to 94 percent and *Cum Laude*, 85 to 89 percent. All recipients must receive all satisfactory conduct grades on the report card. Veritas Scholars is the precursor to the National Honor Society. It honors those freshman and sophomores who commit themselves to the pursuit of academic excellence, social-emotional growth and community service.

ARISTA & VERITAS SCHOLARS' HONOR SOCIETIES

Established in 1921, the National Honor Society, known as ARISTA in New York City, is the oldest and most respected student recognition organization in the United States.

Junior and senior membership in the ARISTA National Honor Society (N.H.S.) is based on a student's fulfillment of four requirements: **scholarship, leadership, service, and character**. Freshman and sophomore students fulfilling these same requirements will be admitted into the prestigious Veritas Scholars' Honor Society.

Requirements for induction into ARISTA N.H.S and the Veritas Scholars' Honor Society are as follows:

- 90 percent overall average or higher for the fall semester
- 90 percent overall average or higher for the spring semester second benchmark
- Excellent/Satisfactory conduct
- No more than 10 absences or lateness
- At least 10 hours of in-school or community service

FIELD TRIPS

All DOE policies and procedures will be followed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students will be participating in physical education this year. Directives will be provided by your PE teachers.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT/ STUDENT CLUBS

Veritas Academy will hold an election for its Student Government at the start of the school year. These officers, along with a delegate elected from each class, hold regular meetings. Their first job is to encourage every student in each class to become a member. At meetings, students will help plan school activities, make suggestions, and help conduct fundraisers. Officers and delegates may be removed for infractions of school rules and/or NYCDOE discipline code. A separate behavioral expectations/ club guidelines policy will be disseminated to each participant.

ENRICHMENT ELECTIVES

A very important component of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) is Enrichment Electives. Students and teachers will participate in Enrichment Electives on a regular basis. These electives will allow students who share a common interest

to produce a product, performance, or targeted service based on that common interest. Students and teachers will select the electives in which they wish to participate.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)

The School Leadership Team is composed of administrators, parents, teachers, students and school staff that are involved in many vital areas of decision making for the school. The members of the School Leadership Team represent the key stakeholders in the education of our children. We encourage parents to become actively involved.

REPORTING OF INCIDENTS AND SPECIAL PROBLEMS

Veritas Academy will always be a safe school. Our students are well-behaved and care very much about learning. However, if a student has a problem with someone in the school, he/she is expected not to get involved in any type of confrontation either verbal or physical. He/she should walk away and report the incident to the nearest adult. There are many people here to help. In an emergency, the student can always go to the Dean, Assistant Principal, Guidance Counselor, or Main Office.

EMAIL SYSTEM AND WEBSITE

Veritas has gone green!

In an effort to go green, we ask that you visit our website regularly. Please log on to www.theveritasacademy.com to find all upcoming events and important information. Please join our email system. If you have not done so or your email address has changed, please call the school and provide us with your email address so that we may notify you of special events. If you do not have Internet access, please let us know so that we can offer support. www.skedula.com is used by the school as an online gradebook. Parents/ guardians can create their own accounts to monitor their child's progress. Contact Mr. Singh for help setting up a parent account.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

If a student is not feeling well, he/she can obtain a pass from the teacher and go to the Medical Office which is located in Room 268. If no one is in the Medical Office, the student can go to the Veritas Main Office, Room 118. Parents/guardians should bring special health concerns to the attention of teachers and the school nurse. In the case of ongoing medical conditions, a 504 form must be filed. Please speak with the nurse for details.

PERSONAL ITEMS AT SCHOOL

Cell phones and all other electronic devices are only to be used when permitted.

Students should not use them anywhere or anytime in the school without permission. The school cannot assume responsibility for the loss, theft or breakage of such items. If a student is found using a cell phone or other electronic device, it may be confiscated and/or you may lose permission to use these items. Confiscated items **may** be held by administration until a parent/guardian comes to school to retrieve the item.

CLEANLINESS OF THE BUILDING

Our custodial staff helps to keep our building clean. Students must also help in maintaining the classroom clean at all times. We ask that all students assist by throwing all papers and trash in waste paper baskets and helping teachers pick up papers from the floor. Students are not to write on desks. Anyone found defacing any school property, will be subject to disciplinary action.

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

2020-2021

Below is the calendar of school closings for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year. Please plan your vacations accordingly. Attendance is crucial to your education.

September 13	Monday	First day of school for students
September 16	Thursday	Yom Kippur, schools closed
October 11	Monday	Italian Heritage Day/Indigenous People's Day, schools closed

November 2	Tuesday	Election Day, fully remote, asynchronous instructional day
November 3	Wednesday	Evening parent-teacher conferences for elementary schools and K–8 schools
November 4	Thursday	Afternoon parent-teacher conferences for elementary schools and K–8 schools; students in these schools dismissed three hours early.
November 10	Wednesday	Evening parent-teacher conferences for high schools, K–12, and 6–12 schools.
November 11	Thursday	Veterans Day, schools closed
November 12	Friday	Afternoon parent-teacher conferences for high schools, K–12, and 6–12 schools; students in these schools dismissed three hours early.
November 17	Wednesday	Evening parent-teacher conferences for middle schools and District 75 school programs.

November 18	Thursday	Afternoon Conferences for middle schools and District 75 school programs; students in these schools dismissed three hours early.
November 25-26	Thursday-Friday	Thanksgiving Recess, schools closed
December 24–31. Return to school Jan 3	Friday-Friday	Winter Recess, schools closed
January 17	Monday	Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, schools closed
January 25-28	Tuesday-Friday	Regents Administration
January 31	Monday	Professional Development day for 9–12 and 6–12 schools, students in these schools do not attend

February 1	Tuesday	Lunar New Year, schools closed
February 2	Tuesday	Spring Term begins for semester-based schools
February 21-25	Monday-friday	Midwinter Recess, schools closed
March 2	Wednesday	Evening parent-teacher conferences for elementary schools and K-8 schools.
March 3	Thursday	Afternoon parent-teacher conferences for elementary schools and K-8 schools; students in these schools dismissed three hours early.
March 9	Wednesday	Evening parent-teacher conferences for middle schools and district 75 schools and programs.

March 10	Thursday	Afternoon parent-teacher conferences for middle schools and district 75 schools and programs; students in these schools dismissed three hours early.
March 16	Wednesday	Evening parent-teacher conferences for high schools, K-12, and 6-12 schools.
March 18	Friday	Afternoon parent-teacher conferences for high schools, K-12, and 6-12 schools; students in these schools dismissed three hours early.
March 29-31	Tuesday-Thursday	3-8 ELA Assessment administration
April 15-22	Friday-Friday	Spring Recess (includes Good Friday and Passover), schools closed
April 26-28	Tuesday-Thursday	3-8 Math Assessment administration

May 2	Monday	Eid al-Fitr, schools closed
May 30	Monday	Memorial Day, schools closed
June 7	Tuesday	Clerical Day, K--5, K-6, 6-8, and K-12 schools and D75 programs, students in these schools do not attend
June 9	Thursday	Anniversary Day, Chancellor's Conference Day for staff development, students do not attend
June 15-24	Wednesday-Friday	NYS Regents Exams Administration
June 20	Monday	Juneteenth (observed), schools closed
June 27	Monday	Last day of school for students