

Application for 2009-2010



# VILLAGE FREE SCHOOL

A CENTER FOR FREEDOM, RESPONSIBILITY, AND COMMUNITY

## This Information Packet Includes:

1. Enrollment Instructions
2. Our Three Core Principles - Explained
3. Tuition Information
4. Interview Request Application

The Village Free School admits students of any race, color, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

This public benefit corporation does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs, employment practices, election of officers, membership, or election to the Council.

Thank you for your interest!

Here is some information for you to keep about our enrollment process:

### Step 1: Send in the application (it costs nothing to apply!)

We arrange interviews on a first-to-apply, first-to-be-interviewed basis (within our age group and gender cap policies) so it is important to send in your application as soon as you are ready. You can send it to us by electronic or snail mail. We will contact you by phone or e-mail shortly after we receive your application to set-up an interview, if space allows, or to inform you that we've placed you on our waiting list.

### Step 2: Join us for an interview.

The interview is fairly informal and offers a chance for students, family, and a staff member or two to learn more about each other, share the vision of our free school, and understand what everyone wants the VFS experience to look like. The interview will likely take about 60 minutes. **There is a non-refundable \$40 fee for this interview process to cover staff time and expenses.** When you arrive at the interview please bring cash or check payable to: The Village Free School.

We believe that age diversity and peer mentoring are invaluable resources, thus we work to ensure that the school is age-balanced. We offer interviews for spaces within each of three age groups (5-8, 9-12, and 13-18). If you have any questions about our admission policies please feel free to ask.

### Step 3: School Experience Days

We want to offer students and ourselves a way to see if this partnership will be a good fit for all involved. We invite you to spend between three and up to seven days at the school as a prospective student. **Your first three experience days are free.** We ask that you pay \$30/day for any additional days to support the time, energy, and resources it takes for us to host you. This "step" may not be available (i.e. school is not in session in August) or can be waived at the discretion of our staff.

### Step 4: Conditional Enrollment

After the interview and experience day (unless waived) everyone involved is asked to determine if this is a good "fit". You do this by making a commitment within 3 days of your last experience day by verbally committing, completing some paperwork, and making the *non-refundable* tuition pre-payment of \$300.00.

### Step 5: Full Enrollment

During the first five weeks of being enrolled (or after having attended 15 days), a conference will be held with the student, staff, and family members. Feedback on joys and concerns will be solicited from all present and shared openly. A staff decision and a family decision will be made regarding full admission to our school.

## Our core principles:

### 1. Freedom is for everyone.

Regardless of a person's age, credentials, or resources, we think everyone deserves freedom. Students own their daily routines by deciding what, when, and how they will learn. They have the power to say both "yes" and "no". They enjoy freedom from manipulation, coercion, and physical or emotional violence. Each student, with guidance from advisors and mentors, determines his or her own requirements for success. Unrequested homework, undesired tests, standardized benchmarks, and compulsory attendance have no merit in our school. Human behavior around learning is often dictated by the rigid roles of "teacher" and "student." At the VFS staff, parents, and volunteers are released from the limitations of "Authority Figure" and allowed the joy of interacting naturally with students. They are free to share wisdom, offer classes, provide guidance, and just be themselves.

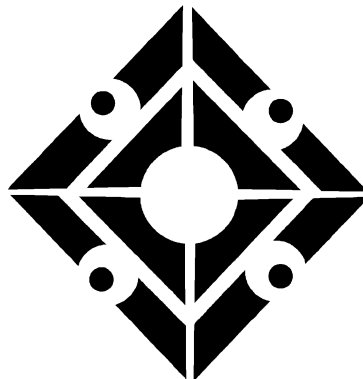
### 2. Freedom cannot exist without responsibility.

With increased freedom comes increased responsibility to ourselves, one another, our community, and the planet. We share the responsibilities of upholding agreed upon community laws, respecting the school property and the property of others, using money and resources wisely, and maintaining a successful and sustainable school. We share a commitment to co-create and preserve a place where all are welcome and free to thrive. In order to preserve our freedom, we must respect and defend the rights of everyone. A successful community balances personal freedoms and community responsibilities.

### 3. Community requires joint ownership and participation.

As a conscious learning community, we strive to model a cultural shift that broadens and deepens our concept of education. Education is more than developing a set of skills or acquiring a body of knowledge. Education is a life-long process honoring the journey of the individual while defining a larger purpose in the world. True knowledge is the result of meaningful engagement with the world around us.

Ownership is reflected in the belief that everyone matters here, both in word and in action. Everyone has a role and responsibility in sustaining our community. In order to establish ownership each student, each community member, must ask two questions: "Who am I?" and, "What does the world ask of me?" Our community provides the social context and support to answer these questions. The framework of our community encourages opportunities for learning through dialogue and building authentic relationships across ages and roles.



# Tuition Rates

Tuition for the 2009-2010 school year is soon to be determined by the community. Rates provided are an estimate but could change significantly.

Rate Options	12 months	9 months	Total Yearly Cost
Standard (Full Cost)	\$375	\$500	\$4,500
Earned Discount Program	\$275	\$367	\$3,300

**Standard Tuition:** This is what it costs per student to operate the school when no fundraising dollars are used to offset tuition and a family does not participate in the Earned Discount Program. Families who can afford this option and still actively volunteer are helping contribute to our efforts to keep our school financially stable and accessible to people of all income levels.

**Earned Discount Program (EDP):** Students and members of their support system (aka family) are able to participate, upon request, in our Earned Discount Program. The EDP requires volunteering approximately 150 hours over the course of the school year, attendance at mandatory training sessions, and accountable tracking of your contributions. Any families enrolling more than one student and participating in the EDP will be given the EDP discount without needing to complete additional volunteer hours.

**Our tuition model is based on a very stripped-down budget that relies on the school community to actively participate in grassroots fundraising efforts regardless of the tuition rate selected.**

## Tuition Payment Options

Tuition can be paid in four ways with **all payments due on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month owed**. If you choose to leave the school mid-year you will be obligated to provide 30 days notice and pay through the last day of that notice, in addition to losing the non-refundable tuition pre-payment, whether a student is in attendance or not. This policy is intended to help the school remain financially stable while honoring that the school might not work for everyone's needs.

1. Month-to-Month over 12 months starting in September.
2. Month-to-Month over 9 months starting in September and paying thru May.
3. Trimesters: In September, December, and March
4. Annual: One lump sum in September.

Each of the payment plans results in the school receiving the exact same amount of money regardless of the choice of plan. If paying for tuition under one of these plans at the cost provided will not work for you, we encourage you to think creatively, reach out to resources around you, and to contact us. We will do our best to point you in the direction of other private school scholarship funds and/or to connect you with community partners who might be interested in sponsoring your child's attendance. This type of support is not yet developed and may be more difficult to offer in the first few years of the school's existence. We are actively working to create new options for tuition payment in order to make the school more financially accessible to everyone.



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## Admission Interview Request Form

Name of student(s) interviewing:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of adults accompanying the interviewee:  
(We require all parents or guardians to attend the interview.)

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime/Evening telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about The Village Free School? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***\*Please take the time to briefly answer the questions on the reverse side of this page.***

Please return application to either:

1) [thevfsofficecrew@gmail.com](mailto:thevfsofficecrew@gmail.com)

Please make the subject line: Application of (name of student)

2) By mail using the address at the top of this page.

We invite both parents and students to consider and respond to these questions:

*Why are you interested in attending the Village Free School?*

*What has been your experience with school in the past?*