

Admissions Policies of the VFS

updated 5-12-09

- 1) It is **free to apply** to the school.
- 2) The staff sets maximum **capacity for students**. (currently at 65)
- 3) We offer interviews on a first-to-apply basis within our age and gender cap policies. We only offer interviews when we have space to admit a student.
- 4) **Age Cap:** We assign applicants to one of three age groups based on their age prior to December 31 of that school year. The age groups are A = 5-8, B = 9-12, and C = 13-18. No one age group can consist of more than 40% of the total enrollment capacity for the school year.

Example: Staff has set capacity at 65 students. No age group can have more than 26 students. Current enrollment has 25 students in the B group, 10 in the A and C group, and 6 in the D group. Five applications are received on the same day in this order: Mary (group B), Steve (group A), Taunya (group D), Bill (group B), and Shane (group B). Mary, Steve, and Taunya could enroll if they move through the rest of the process. Bill and Shane (unless sibling policy applies) would go on a waiting list because if either were admitted group B would exceed 40% of total enrollment capacity.
- 5) **Gender Cap:** We want to ensure that students of any gender identification feel welcome and supported. In addition to outreach efforts towards this end, we will limit enrollment to ensure that one gender does not make up more than 2/3s of the maximum allowed enrollment within an age group. (currently 17/26)
- 6) We charge a **non-refundable interview fee** of \$40.00. We charge an additional \$20.00 for each sibling seeking to enroll. Payment is expected in cash or check at the time of the interview.
- 7) **The interview format** is set by the staff. The primary goal is to offer a chance for students, family, and a staff member or two to learn about each other and the school in order to determine if moving towards experience days and possible admission is appropriate. The interview will take about 60 - 80 minutes.
- 8) During or following the interview, the interviewing staff member(s) determine whether or not to **offer the opportunity for experience days** (when available). No more than two students will be hosted for experience days on any given day.
- 9) One of the advisors working with a prospective student's age-group will, if at all possible, participate in their interview. Regardless, the lead advisor for each age group will ensure they or their co-advisor will orient, observe, assess, challenge, and support students during their experience days.
- 10) We **require** three experience days at no cost as part of our enrollment process, unless one is not available (i.e. over the summer) or the requirement is waived by the staff. Experience days are designed to give students and staff an opportunity to assess the fit between the student and the school. Prospective students need to attend from their age groups Morning Meeting through the end of the official school day (4:00pm).
- 11) We encourage families to consider up to four additional experience days. Families are charged the per day cost of standard tuition for each day.

12) Concerns are sought from all staff members regarding the possible conditional enrollment of the prospective student. **All staff must consent** before a student is offered conditional enrollment.

13) We require a **non-refundable tuition pre-payment** and a fully completed conditional enrollment contract within the three days following the last experience day. The pre-payment rolls from year to year (like a security deposit) and is applied to the final payments of the final year of enrollment. The pre-payment is forfeited if a student withdraws mid-year.

14) Moving from conditional to full enrollment requires:

1. Student attendance for at least two All School Meetings.
2. Family member attendance for at least one of the following: Circle Mtg, Council Mtg, Staff Mtg, Volunteer Training, Adult Education Workshop, or five hours of observation and/or active volunteering during the school day.
3. A conference with the student, their family, their temporary advisor, and the student's requested advisor. This conference will occur after the student has attended 15 days of school or been enrolled for five weeks, whichever comes sooner.
4. Documentation from the student showing that steps 2, 3, and 4 have been fully completed.
5. The gathering of current student feedback, joys, and concerns.
6. Consent of all staff during their weekly meeting for the student to be offered full enrollment.

Note: Need to adjust current contract or create conditional enrollment contract to implement.

15) The **conditional or full enrollment process is finished** only after a fully completed enrollment contract is received and signed off on by a member of the staff.

16) All previously enrolled families must complete an "**Intent to Return**" form by the date specified (usually in Mar-Apr). Enrollment for the following year is finalized when this form is returned and a new contract is completed.

17) **Sibling Policy:** Once a student has completed six months of continuous enrollment, their sibling(s) may be admitted regardless of gender and age caps. However, the sibling cannot increase enrollment above maximum capacity. Siblings seeking to enroll under this process must still complete all steps of the admissions process.

18) Enrollment for the current school year closes on the 15th day of April of each year.

19) Exceptions to these policies can be made upon written request with consent of the Executive Director or their designee.