



*The St. Johns County School District will inspire good character and a passion for lifelong learning in all students, creating educated and caring contributors to the world.*

**STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK**

**2018-2019**

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## **Principal's Message**

Welcome to Palm Valley Academy, where we are ***Building Purposeful Leaders Who Shine Through Achievement.*** (vision) Our students are encouraged to dream big and set goals, while working toward their highest potential. This handbook has been prepared to assist in making the school year successful for both you and your child.

The handbook is designed as a resource with an alphabetical reference of important information. We hope that you will find this useful as questions or concerns arise throughout the school year and that it will be a meaningful tool for you.

We are enthusiastic about the 2018-2019 school year. It is a privilege to spend each day learning and growing with your child. At Palm Valley Academy, ***We Pursue Excellence, We Value All, We Achieve Success!*** (mission)

## **Access to our School**

All adults must be registered volunteers to enter the school building during school hours. You must complete the district's Volunteer Application if you wish to volunteer in a classroom, participate in any class activities, chaperone/attend a field study, eat in the cafeteria, participate in a conference, or attend any performance or event during school hours.

Please follow the link on the Volunteer tab of the Palm Valley Academy or St. Johns County School District websites to apply.  
<http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/cr/volunteer/access>

Once registered as a volunteer, all visitors will sign-in at the front desk and present a valid state identification in order to receive a Volunteer Badge to be worn in the building.

## **Accidents**

Every accident occurring on school grounds or at any school-sponsored event should be reported to the supervising staff member/adult and to the front office immediately.

## **Address and Telephone Number Changes**

Please notify our office immediately if there is a change in your address, telephone number, or emergency contact information. This information is very important in case your child becomes ill or injured. If your address has changed, please bring in three proofs of residency reflecting the updated information.

## **Arrival Procedures**

Students who arrive at school before 8:05 a.m. must be enrolled in the Palm Valley Academy Before-Care program. School supervision of students begins at 8:05 a.m. when parents may drop off students in the car circle or cart circle. Please ensure that your children only exit the vehicle on the right (sidewalk) side of the vehicle. Students may enter classrooms at 8:05 a.m.

## **Attendance**

The importance of regular attendance cannot be over emphasized. All students should be in school every day that they are physically able. It is extremely difficult to successfully keep up with class work if attendance is irregular. Students having five unexcused absences within a calendar month or ten unexcused absences within a 90 calendar-day period shall be reported to the principal/designee to secure and determine rationale for such absences. If a student is absent more than fifteen days, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide a doctor's note.

**Excused absences include:** Personal illness, family emergency, death in the family, religious holidays of the student's established religious faith, required court or law agency appearances, public functions,

state competitions, scheduled doctor or dentist appointments.

**Unexcused absences include:** shopping trips, pleasure trips, suspension from school, appointments without prior approval except in case of emergency, truancy. For a complete list of excused and unexcused absences, students and parents should refer to the *Student Code of Conduct*.

**When Absent:** Parents must notify the school office of a child's absence. Any student who has been absent from school shall bring a note from a parent or guardian within forty-eight (48) hours of returning to school stating the cause of the absence. Notes and emails should include the following information: full name, teacher, and specific reason for the absence. Failure to bring in a note will result in an automatic unexcused absence. If your child is absent for two or more days, contact your child's teacher to arrange for the school work your child has missed. For other absences, please notify the principal in writing prior to the absence.

**Checkout:** A student who is ill should be checked out through the main office. Teachers will be informed of students dismissed for illness. Students who are ill or who are suspected of having a communicable disease must be removed from the classroom according to school policy. To prevent the spread of infection through direct contamination (coughing, sneezing, talking, sharing articles, etc.), students must be asymptomatic before returning to school. In other words, students must have no fever, vomiting, etc. for 24 hours prior to their return to school, or have a physician's note stating that the student is not contagious and/or is under treatment.

**Tardiness:** School begins at 8:30 am. Any student reporting to school after that time is tardy. Any tardy student must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to the front office to receive an admittance slip before going to the classroom. Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and has a negative impact on student achievement.

**Early dismissal:** Children will be released only to their parents or individuals approved by their parent in prior written communication. Remember a photo ID is required. Based on district policy, any student who checks-out prior to 11:40 a.m. is considered absent for the entire day. Palm Valley Academy has six hours and 20 minutes of academic time each day, making the half-day mark fall at 11:40 a.m. Students may not be checked out later than 2:15 pm each day and 1:15 pm on Wednesdays, this is our time dedicated to dismissal preparation.

### **Backpacks**

Students may carry backpacks to and from Palm Valley Academy. All backpacks must be kept in homerooms for K-5th grade students. Middle School students are allowed to use string bags throughout the day. Rolling backpacks can be a tripping hazard. We would prefer that students do not have rolling backpacks, unless there is a medical reason the need for a rolling backpack.

### **Birthdays/Celebrations**

If you wish to bring in a birthday treat on your child's special day, it must be pre-approved by the classroom teacher. While we honor and cherish each child's birthday, our primary goal is to preserve the routine and structure of the academic day. Due to food allergies, there will be no birthday treats allowed in the cafeteria. Your child's homeroom teacher will provide an appropriate time for you to drop off the treat and your treat must be approved by the teacher for potential food allergens. The safety and health of all students is a priority. There must be enough snacks/treats available to serve each student within a given classroom who may wish to participate. Balloons, signs, banners, flowers or gifts are not permitted at school. Photography of students during these events is not permitted. Donations of books to the school library, in honor of a child's birthday or other special event, are welcome.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is prohibited. According to (s. 1006.147 F.S.) St. Johns County's Student Code of Conduct defines bullying as systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. All cases of bullying should be reported immediately and will be handled in accordance with school district policy.

## **Bus Regulations**

<http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/transportation/routes/>

Students are given the privilege of using the services of the St. Johns County School District for transportation to and from school as well as to and from field trips. Standards of discipline must be maintained at all times in order to satisfy safety requirements. Whenever a driver must direct his/her full attention away from the road, danger exists. No student will be allowed to endanger the other students on the bus. Cell phones and other digital devices are not to be used and must remain in the off position to and from school. Parents are not to board the bus at any time. A complete list of bus regulations is available in the *Student Code of Conduct*.

## **Cafeteria Prices/Payment**

Elementary, middle and high school lunch menus are available on [mealviewer.com](http://mealviewer.com).

<https://schools.mealviewer.com/district/StJohnsFL>

This system greatly enhances our school lunch menus by providing photos and nutritional information of the menu items, as well as a Spanish language version of the menus. General Information about Food and Nutrition Services can be found at:

<http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/food/guide/>

Parents may also access printable versions of our menus and view them on mobile devices with the Mealviewer [iOS](#) and [Android](#) app.

**A La Carte Items:** Palm Valley Academy provides several a la carte items in the cafeteria. These items

include choices such as baked chips, pizza, Gatorade, juices, frozen fruit bars and ice cream. These items are not included in the free and reduced meal program.

**Parental Restrictions:** Restrictions can be placed on your student's meal account by requesting, in writing, the restrictions. Once restrictions are placed, they can only be removed by the parent in a written letter/email to the food service manager.

**Payments:** Students may bring cash or check to pay for lunch or make pre-payments to the student's meal account with VISA, MasterCard or Discover credit card through the PayPams online system. For cash or check, please indicate the student's name and meal account number. For more information on PayPams, check your First Day Folder or access their website at: <https://www.paypams.com> or call 1-888-994-5100.

**Free and Reduced Applications:** Parents are encouraged to complete one application per family. Please return the application to the school where the youngest child is enrolled. The approval process can take up to ten (10) days to complete.

**Food Allergies:** If your child has food allergies, please provide the school nurse with a physician's note indicating the allergies and appropriate medical attention required.

**Refunds:** Refunds are addressed at the school level and require a written request. Please contact the food service manager for a refund.

**Account Balances:** Student account balances can be obtained on the website [www.paypams.com](http://www.paypams.com) at no charge to you. Your student's account balance, either positive or negative, from the previous school year will roll into the new school year unless a refund has been requested. Although students are to pay for their meal upon receipt, students may forget their lunch or lunch money. Students will be permitted to charge two meals to their account.

There will be no charging of any a la carte food items including entrees or snacks.

### **Cafeteria Rules**

The cafeteria is a vital part of our school. A well-balanced breakfast and lunch are offered at a reasonable price. All students are expected to display acceptable decorum by:

- Talking quietly
- Using good table manners
- Treating all employees and volunteers with respect
- Walking carefully
- Leaving the tables and floor around one's space in a clean condition for others

### **Cell Phones**

**Cell phones** must be **OFF** and **OUT OF SIGHT**, unless used for instructional purposes as authorized by the classroom teacher. Cell phones must remain out of sight during lunch, recess and hallway times. Please refer to the district **Student Code of Conduct** for more details on this policy.

**Parents, for the safety of our children, staff and visitors, please refrain from the use of cell phones during parent drop off and pick up.**

Palm Valley Academy is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

### **Child Abuse Reporting**

School teachers and other personnel are mandatory reporters under the Florida child abuse reporting laws. Please understand that we must take our obligations seriously and if we assess that a situation requires it, we will make a report to child abuse authorities of situations that we reasonably suspect constitute abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Depending on the circumstances, we may not be able to communicate with parents about the report until authorized by child abuse authorities to do so.

We ask for your understanding as we do our best to protect the children under our care.

### **Class Size Amendment**

The St. Johns County School District is required by the state of Florida to fully implement the Class Size Amendment (CSA). The CSA requires that core classes not exceed the following numbers of students in specific grade levels:

Pre-K – Grade 3	18 students
Grade 4 – Grade 8	22 students
Grade 9 – Grade 12	25 students

Our school district utilizes teacher associates as one method to meet the Class Size Amendment.

### **Clinic**

The clinic is for temporary first aid only. Students will be sent home if there is evidence of vomiting, diarrhea, or a temperature of 100F or higher. It is expected that students remain home for an unmedicated 24 hour symptom-free period, or as directed by a doctor's note. Please let our nurse know of any allergies.

### **Communication**

The school works very hard to keep parents informed and the lines of communication open. Parent concerns regarding individual students should be directed first to the appropriate teacher, every effort will be made to solve any issue. A weekly folder including children's work and other pertinent information and notices will be sent home each week. We do not want you to miss any important information communicated. For regularly updated news and information visit our website.

*Conferences* - Parent and teacher communication is vital to the success of your child. To contact a teacher or make an appointment, you may call the school to leave a message, send the teacher an e-mail, or send a note to the teacher with your child.

*E-Mail* - All staff at Palm Valley Academy can be reached by e-mail, with a reply within 48 hours. Staff email addresses can be located on our website.

Email is not always accessible to staff during the school day. Should you need to contact a staff member during the academic day, call the school office at 904-547-4201

Home Access Center (HAC) - The Home Access Center (HAC), is a web-based application that is part of our Student Information System called eSchoolPlus. Please visit the website below to access or sign up for an account at <https://homeaccess.stjohns.k12.fl.us>

Additional information can be found on our school's website under "HAC." The website is <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/hac/>

School Closings - Local radio and television stations will carry all school closing announcements due to inclement weather or other emergencies by 6:30 a.m. whenever possible.

Visiting Classrooms - Parents may visit classrooms only with the pre-arranged permission of the teachers. "Drop-ins" are not permitted. All visitors are required to sign in at the front office. For the safety of all students, parents and visitors are not allowed to go directly to any area in the building without permission. **Siblings are not permitted to accompany parents while visiting a classroom.** Because our staff has required duties and meetings, we are unable to accommodate parents who do not have a scheduled appointment. We are unable to allow unannounced classroom visitations prior to the beginning of the school day. Parents may not walk students to their classrooms.

School Website - Communication is the key to a successful school/home partnership. Our school website provides information about upcoming events: <http://www-pva.stjohns.k12.fl.us/>

## Discipline

Discipline at Palm Valley Academy is thought of in terms of academic discipline as well as behavior. Children are expected to interact with one another in a positive, constructive manner so as not to impede the process of learning whether it be a game on the playground, a social studies lesson, or an art or music experience. Self-control, proper language, and respect for peers and adults is

emphasized and expected. We want parents to reinforce these feelings as well.

Academic discipline is a realization on the child's part that classwork and homework are expected to be completed in a timely and neat manner. Incomplete assignments and failure to prepare properly, lead to the child being under considerable pressure. Parents are asked to encourage academic discipline but not to create unreasonable expectations for their child.

Our faculty is a caring and supportive group of professionals. They have a very keen sense of the individual and varied needs of the children. Discipline problems are dealt with for the most part by teachers with the full support of the school administration. We hope to have very few problems because of the great support and interest of our teachers and parents in the children they serve.

## Dismissal Procedures

**Times:** Students are dismissed at 2:50 pm all days except Wednesday. On Wednesdays, students are dismissed at 1:50 pm.

**Bikers, Walkers, Carts:** Parents picking up bikers, walkers, and students riding home via golf cart may wait near the gates by the bridge. Please do not enter the building to meet your child. During inclement weather bikers, walkers, and cart riders will be held inside the building and will be released to a parent/guardian through the car line. Parents/Guardians can provide prior permission to release their student to another adult in emergency situations through written communication.

**Parent Pick Up:** Those parents picking up children in the car line must remain in their cars at all times. A hanging sign or name plate listing children's names and grade levels needs to be displayed in the front window. **Cell phone use is prohibited in the car line. This procedure is for the utmost safety of the children.**

## Dress Code

The dress and grooming of our students should contribute to the health and safety of the individual, promote a positive educational environment and not disrupt the educational activities and processes of the school. Palm Valley Academy follows the school district's dress code guidelines explained in *the Student Code of Conduct*.

**Please review the dress code before planning a shopping trip for school clothes.**

### **Student Dress Code**

The dress and grooming of St. Johns County Public Schools students shall contribute to the health and safety of the individual, promote a positive educational environment and not disrupt the educational activities and processes of the school. Because inappropriate clothing worn by a student is detrimental to the school program, the wearing of garments suitable for school shall be encouraged. All faculty and administrative staff shall be on the alert to give positive guidance in these matters, without embarrassment to the student.

These rules on personal appearance of students are intended to enable the students of St. Johns County Public Schools to dress casually but reasonably. However, the school principal is the final authority with regard to the appropriateness of student dress. **Nothing in these rules shall be construed to pre-empt the principal's authority** to act in specific cases when, in the principal's judgment and discretion a student's dress threatens to disrupt the educational process or the good order and discipline of the school, or is otherwise inappropriate.

### **All Students**

Personal attire shall not be worn to school if it creates a safety issue within the learning environment. Personal attire may be in the style of the day, but clothing that is immodest, revealing, or distracting in character is unacceptable. Clothing, piercings and accessories shall not be worn if they display profanity, violence, discriminatory messages, sexually suggestive phrases, advertisements, phrases or symbols of alcohol, tobacco or drugs.

In accordance with statutory requirements, and as more particularly specified in the standards for boys and girls below, students are prohibited from wearing clothing that exposes underwear or that exposes body parts in an indecent or vulgar manner.

Head coverings, including but not limited to, caps, hats, bandannas, hair curlers and/or sunglasses, shall not be worn on campus unless required by a physician or authorized by school administration.

Students must wear shoes that are safe and appropriate for the learning environment. Middle school and elementary school students must wear shoes that have a back or strap on the heel. High school students may wear backless shoes; however, bedroom slippers and footwear commonly considered as beachwear is prohibited. (For example, beach sandals, or other such beach shoes, will not be allowed in school).

Hair shall be clean and well combed or brushed. Extreme hairstyles will not be acceptable.

Skirts, dresses, shorts, baggies, culottes, no shorter than four inches (4") above the top of the knee, are acceptable. Skirts shorter than four inches (4") above the top of the knee worn with leggings or tights are not acceptable.

Gang graffiti will not be drawn or worn on backpacks, notebooks, folders, papers, clothing or any other object or on the body of any student or person on school property.

Tank tops and shirts are not acceptable except in physical education classes. Any student who attends First Coast Technical College must follow dress code regulations established by each occupational department of the F.C.T.C. (i.e., safety clothing, protective garments, and business attire).

### **Standards:**

**Boys** Boy's pants/slacks must be worn at the waist. No boxer shorts or underwear may be visible.

Mustaches and beards shall be neatly trimmed.

## **Standards:**

**Girls** Tops and shirts must cover the entire shoulder and they must be modest and not revealing or distracting. Midriff or "cut-out" dresses and "cut out" tops may not be worn. Extremely short skirts are not allowed. Skirts must be no shorter than four inches (4") above the top of the knee. Revealing clothing, pajamas and lingerie are not acceptable. Underwear must not be exposed.

Hair curlers and excessive make-up shall not be permitted.

Girls' pants/slacks must be worn at the waist. No underwear may be exposed.

### **Dress Code Violation Procedures:**

1. The parent will be asked to bring a change of clothing to school if the student does not have an appropriate change of clothes.
2. The student will wait in in-school suspension until the appropriate change of clothing arrives.
3. If a parent is unavailable, the student will be sent to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day.
4. If we have appropriate clothing, we will provide a change of clothes for the student, and the student will be sent back to class.

### **Enforcement and Waiver**

5.

**The principals or designees will determine the appropriateness of attire.**

6.

For special events and occasions, principals may grant requests to modify this policy for their particular school.

7.

The School Advisory Council may recommend and the Superintendent may grant an individual school's request to deviate from dress requirements. Examples include requiring school uniforms, all shirts shall be tucked in, no shorts, pants must have belts, etc.

## **Early Check-Out**

Parents must provide a written excuse for any student requiring early checkout. The time and reason for leaving school should be included. Students will turn in the request to their teacher in the morning and will stay in class until someone in the front office calls for them to be dismissed. Children will be released only to their parents or to individuals named on the Emergency Card. Students may not be checked out later than 2:20 p.m. each day and 1:20 p.m. on Wednesdays.

## **Emergency Drills**

Emergency drills will be conducted throughout the school year. We conduct monthly fire drills as required by the Florida Fire Prevention Code. We will also practice drills for the following scenarios: severe weather, bomb threat, lockdown, and shelter-in-place. Our severe weather drill relocates students to safer areas of our buildings. A bomb threat may require a building evacuation and/or an off-site evacuation. Our emergency off-site evacuation location is Ponte Vedra High School. A lockdown procedure is used to secure the campus from a potentially dangerous intruder or other threatening or hazardous condition. The shelter-in-place drill is a short-term solution to a short-term problem. This short-term measure is designed to use a facility and its indoor atmosphere to temporarily separate people from a hazardous outdoor environment. Our school district also requires bus evacuation drills for our bus riders. Safety is of the utmost importance.

## **Extended Day**

The owners of Palencia Montessori Academy, The Village Academy and Village Academy *North*, run our before and after school program. Students remain on the Palm Valley Academy (PVA) campus during the programs duration. The PVA Extended Day program is proud to provide an energetic environment that is safe and nurturing, and filled with a variety of structured activities that deliver



opportunities for learning, exercise, social development – and fun!  
Children have homework time each day and participate in daily activities including arts and crafts, outside play, inside games, science experiments, cooking, community service, and more. Please visit the PVA Extended Day website for more detailed information about the program, rates, and third party enrichment programs offered.

<http://www.village-academy.com/extended-day/palm-valley-academy-extended-day/>

**School Holidays and Summer Break** – Drop-In services for registered PVA Extended Day students are available at Village Academy *North*. Village Academy *North* and The Village Academy also offer a fantastic Summer Camp experience. Please call 904-824-7997 for more information.

### **Field Studies**

Educational field study trips are planned by grade levels and by certain clubs and organizations. When a child’s history suggests that he/she is likely to present a discipline problem which jeopardizes his/her safety or the safety of others, that child may be denied permission to participate in a field study. No children, including siblings, relatives, or friends, may attend a field study unless they are part of the group for whom the trip was arranged. Only parents and guardians of children for whom the trip was arranged may serve as chaperones and must be approved and cleared through a criminal record check. All participating students must ride the school bus to and from those field study trips that begin and end during the regular school day. Parents may elect to transport their own children to a field study or an event if it occurs outside of the hours for a regular school day. Administration reserves the right to revoke field study privileges, deny refunds, or approve alternative means of transportation on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### **Forgotten Materials**

The front office will be happy to place forgotten homework, PE uniforms, band instruments, laptops, school supplies, or projects in the Teacher’s box. Students are responsible for bringing these items to school therefore class will not be interrupted. The only exception to the policy is a student’s lunch or lunch money.

### **Grading Scale**

The Governor and Legislature of the State of Florida have set the following grading scale for all students in public schools in the state:

- A.....90-100%.....Outstanding Progress
  - B.....80-89% .....Above Average Progress
  - C.....70-79%.....Average Progress
  - D.....60-69%.....Lowest Acceptable Progress
  - F.....0-59%.....Unacceptable Progress
- Florida Statute requires schools to report to parents their child’s Conduct Grade and whether the child is working on or below grade level in reading, math and writing in grades K-5.

### **Guidance**

The school counselors provide guidance services. The primary function is to assist students with their educational and personal development. This is carried out through classroom programs, individual and small group counseling with students, conferences with parents and teachers, individual educational testing, and working with the MTSS/RtI Team.

### **Homework**

Students should expect to have an average of 10 minutes of homework per grade level (i.e., 7th grade: 70 minutes), in addition to reading and practicing math facts. Long-term assignments and projects may be assigned periodically. We do not interrupt class for homework deliveries. All homework delivered to

the school will be placed in the teacher's mailbox to retrieve at his or her convenience.

### **Items Brought To School**

**Animals:** No animals should be brought on to the school campus unless they are approved service animals.

**Toys:** Toys should not be brought to school. Bringing a toy gun or any other weapon to school could result in disciplinary action.

**Aerosol Cans or Pump Sprays:** Students are not permitted to have aerosol cans or pump sprays at school to include those containing food or used for personal hygiene.

**Balloons:** Having balloons delivered or brought to school is not allowed.

**Bicycles:** Students riding a bicycle (or skateboard) to school must wear a helmet. (s.316.2065 F.S.). Once on campus, bicycles and skate boards must be walked, parked, and locked in the bike rack. Roller blades and scooters are not permitted on school grounds.

**Cards:** Playing or trading cards are not allowed at school.

**Chewing Gum:** Students may NOT chew gum at school.

**Personal Electronic Device:** Students and/or Visitors Requesting a Waiver for Personal Electronic Property: Students and visitors requesting to operate their personal electronic property within the district must obtain written approval by completing the Waiver for Personal Electronic Property found in the Student Code of Conduct. This waiver must be signed by the school or district department administrator prior to operating any equipment in the St. Johns County School District schools or offices. Any student or visitor operating personal electronic equipment must also sign the Acceptable Use Procedures Agreement form, also located in the Student Code of Conduct. **Palm Valley Academy is not responsible for the loss of any electronic devices. \*\*\*NON-SCHOOL ISSUED CAMERAS OR RECORDING DEVICES ARE NOT PERMITTED\*\*\***

**Lost and Found:** Please put your child's name in all clothing, backpacks, and lunchboxes. In the event that your child does misplace an item they can check the 'Lost and Found' for lunch boxes and clothing. Articles such as glasses and jewelry will be placed in the front office. Unclaimed articles are periodically donated to organizations that support those in need.

### **Locks and Lockers**

Lockers will be assigned at the beginning of the year to all middle grade (6-8) students. All students must use a combination lock(s) provided by Palm Valley Academy. A deposit of \$5.00 will cover PE, band, and homeroom lockers. Parents may ask for the deposit returned through a written request received by the school's bookkeeper no later than twenty days prior to the last day of school. Only locks provided by Palm Valley Academy are permitted. Students are REQUIRED to use a school issued lock on homeroom, band, and PE lockers at all times. It is very important that students keep their locker combination confidential so locker contents are secure. If a student should misplace his/her lock, another lock will need to be replaced at the cost of \$10.00 per lock. We recommend that students do not leave valuables in their locker. These lockers are for a convenience, but are school property, and the administration reserves the right to inspect the contents of a locker. Lost or stolen items will not be investigated if this procedure is not followed.

### **Medication**

If a child needs to take a prescribed medication during the school day, a parent or guardian must bring the original bottle of medication to the clinic and complete a Medication Authorization form. A doctor's note is also required for dispensing over the counter drugs such as Tylenol or cough syrup. **Both prescription and non-prescription medication are not to be transported to and from school by students.** Please note: all medication must be picked up in the clinic by the last day of school, otherwise it will be destroyed.

## **Parents**

Parents play an essential and positive role in the life of a child's education. Not only are parents advocates for their children, they also support the faculty and administration through extensive volunteer activities and events. Trust and mutual respect are the most essential underpinnings of effective working relationships between parents and school employees. Parents best support a school climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher or administrator closest to the problem.

## **Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)**

The PTO offers parents the opportunity to become involved in the life of the school. Parent volunteers work together to coordinate school-wide events and projects. Parent involvement is essential to the continued success and growth of the school, and parents are encouraged to actively participate in the PTO. For more information about the PTO and opportunities to volunteer, visit our website at <http://www.pvapto.org/>

## **Pupil Detention, Search & Seizure**

Administration, teachers, or any other members of the staff are authorized to temporarily detain and question a student when circumstances indicate that such student has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a violation of law or a regulation of the school board. 1. If at any time reasonable suspicion arises that the student is unlawfully concealing any stolen or illegal property, an alcoholic beverage, illegal drugs, or any weapon as prohibited in these regulations, a member of the instructional staff may search for the presence of the items. 2. If a search of a student's locker or other property reveals stolen or illegal items as prohibited by law or school board regulations, such item or items may be seized and such action taken as provided by law or school board policy.

## **Physical Education/Activities**

To ensure the safety of our children during physical activity, it is highly recommended that every child wear socks and sneakers to school. Children will participate in some type of physical activity on a daily basis. On days where students have PE, it is important that they are not wearing crocs, sandals, boots, ballerina flats or flip flops which can present a safety risk during these more rigorous activities. **Water bottles, hats, and sunscreen are always recommended for outside activities.**

## **PE Uniforms (6-8 grade students only)**

Students in grades 6-8 will be required to purchase a PE uniform at the beginning of the school year. PE uniforms are available as a shirt/short set or individual items.

All middle school students enrolled in physical education classes will dress appropriately and participate in activities, unless they have a medical excuse. Excuses for a day's absence will be honored with a note from the parent, but if more than five days are missed, a doctor's excuse will be required.

## **Pillars of Character and Leadership**

At Palm Valley Academy, the St. Johns County Pillars of Character and student leadership are considered to be vitally important to our students' development. Incorporating these practices within our school environment and curriculum helps students become caring contributors to society and equips them for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Critical skills and characteristics such as: trustworthiness, motivation, problem solving skills, goal setting, personal responsibility and the value of teamwork are embedded throughout the school day.

## **The Character Counts Pillars are:**

- ★ Citizenship ★ Responsibility
- ★ Fairness ★ Caring
- ★ Trustworthiness ★ Respect

### **School Advisory Council (SAC)**

The School Advisory Council is a state-mandated organization that allows for school-based management and accountability. An improvement plan is developed each year, largely composed of defined areas of growth based on school data. The School Advisory Council is made up of faculty, parents, and other members of the school community. SAC meetings are held at Palm Valley Academy on the third Thursday of every month @ 3:15 pm in the school media center.

### **School Messenger**

School Messenger is a rapid phone, email, and/or text notification system provided by our school district to communicate important or emergency information efficiently. This system will be used for providing accurate information to parents/guardians about safety and daily attendance, as well as communication from the principal.

### **Spirit Wear –SPIRIT DAY EVERY FRIDAY**

The PTO will sell spirit wear t-shirts, other articles of clothing, and various items to foster school spirit and generate funds for student materials and school activities. Grade levels may design t-shirts to be sold and worn on field trips and other class/grade level activities.

### **Transportation Changes**

If you need to make a transportation change for your child, please send a **written note** to your child's teacher that morning. In the event that a note could not be sent, you may call or email the Front Office 904-547-4201 BEFORE 12:15 p.m. Please remember that only adults you have approved through prior written communication may pick up your child. We apologize for any inconvenience, but the safety of our children is our number one priority.

### **Videos, Photographs, Recordings**

Students, parents and visitors are not allowed to videotape, photograph or make audio recordings while on school premises except for Open House and public events (including plays, musicals, fairs, fundraiser raisers, and awards/recognitions.) All recording devices must be turned off at school. The purpose of this general rule is to foster an appropriate educational environment, prevent unwarranted disclosure of student images and information, and to comply with the requirements of the negotiated agreement with the St. Johns Education Association.