

# GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ALL STUDENTS

## ABSENCES

1. When an absence is only expected to last for one or two days, parents are requested to email or telephone the school office; this should occur before 8.30am. Students arriving at school after 8.30am must sign-in to the Compass Electronic Kiosk in the school Foyer opposite the school office on arrival and receive a printed Late Pass.
2. A note from parents/guardians explaining any student absences should be emailed to the School Office via Compass School online community or email [victorianarts.ss@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:victorianarts.ss@edumail.vic.gov.au)
3. The Student Year Level Coordinator will follow up any prolonged or inadequately explained absences with the student's parents/guardians.
4. If parents know of an impending absence they are requested to notify the school in writing.
5. Music students should notify the appropriate instrumental teacher, Head of the VCASS music program, ensemble tutor or keyboard teachers, as appropriate, if unable to attend a lesson.

## ACCIDENTS & EMERGENCIES

If you witness an accident to a fellow student, these procedures must be followed:

1. Advise a teacher or the school office immediately
2. Do not move the injured person other than if they are in imminent danger
3. The injured person should be kept warm and someone should stay with the person, if possible. Internal injuries may not be visible but could have life-threatening consequences
4. An accident report must be completed at the school office

## **APPEARANCE/DRESS**

Students have a responsibility to ensure that their appearance at all times reflects well upon the school. To this end the school council has endorsed the following broad guidelines for student appearance.

- Students are expected to attend school in neat clean casual clothing that is appropriate for school
- Extreme hairstyles will not be permitted and body piercings should be discreet. Neither should detract from, or be a safety issue for, any class or our many public performances
- Visible tattoos are not permitted
- **NO THONGS**, these are not appropriate school footwear

If you are in doubt as to the appropriateness of your appearance please see the Head of Student Services. We may ask students to change extreme hairstyles and remove piercings in some circumstances.

Please note that dress requirements for specialist areas apply. Although the school does not have a strict dress policy, it is important to respond positively to requests from teachers. We require students to dress appropriately for school. This policy is dependent on student cooperation in order for it to remain at its current informal level.

## **BAGS**

Junior students, (Years 7-9), may not carry bags between classrooms or the library. Students must keep bags in their well secured lockers. Musicians are also encouraged to leave their instruments in their lockers. Senior students are strongly encouraged to leave their bags in their lockers. Bags are not permitted in the Library. Students are advised not to leave any valuables in their bags.

## **BULLYING**

We do not tolerate bullying in our school.

- Every student in this school will feel safe and secure
- Every student in this school has the right to be themselves and be the people they are. This right goes to the very heart of being a dancer, musician or specialist student
- Every student in this school will be supported by the adults in the face of bullying from any of their peers
- Stay calm with bullies– be firm and clear –look them in the eye and tell them to stop
- If the situation continues – walk quietly, quickly and confidently away – dramatic reactions only encourage and entertain the bully, avoid provocation
- Always tell a teacher about the bullying or harassment straight away
- Don't blame yourself for what has happened

Our simple demand is that you treat everyone as you would wish to be treated — a rule of thumb that will never fail you. If any student feels bullied they should come and see the Principal or their year level coordinator, we will act immediately.

## CAFÉ

Students have access to the VCASS café. Food and drink are not to be taken into classrooms. Students are not allowed off the school site during the day unless they have specific parental permission, this has been seen and approved by their Year Level Coordinator, and they have signed out at the School Compass Electronic Kiosk opposite the office.

## CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS

These are an important and integral part of educating students and are conducted by the school only after official notices have been sent to parents/guardians. Students may only attend if consent forms are duly completed and signed.

## CAREERS

Career advice is offered through the specialist programs by the Heads of the VCASS dance, music, theatre arts and visual arts programs, and their staff. All students between Years 10 and 12 also take part in our Managed Individual Pathways program of one to one interviews with a Student Manager. There is a careers area in the library and any student or parent can ask for an interview time to discuss future planning issues with the Head of Student Services.

## CHANGES OF ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND OTHER DETAILS

It is essential that the school office be notified without delay of any change of home or business addresses and phone numbers. Compass School Community link on VCASS web page <https://vcass-vic.compass.education/login.aspx?sessionstate=disabled>

## COUNSELLING

Student counselling is available at many levels - teaching staff, coordinators, the Head of Student Services and School Counsellor.

## HOMESTAY STUDENT ACCOMODATION

Traditionally, families who live at a distance from VCASS which makes daily travel impossible have made a wide variety of arrangements for their children to live in Melbourne. The school supports families in helping whatever arrangements have been made work as well as possible. Some families have chosen a private company called Student Accommodation Services [www.student-accommodation.com.au](http://www.student-accommodation.com.au)

Contact details for **Student Accommodation Services**:

Telephone: +61 3 9485-1900 Fax: +61 3 9495-0001 Mobile: 0413 754 267

Email: [saccomm@student-accommodation.com.au](mailto:saccomm@student-accommodation.com.au)

The contact person at VCASS for issues surrounding homestay is Neil Adam [adam.neil.s@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:adam.neil.s@edumail.vic.gov.au)

## CURRICULUM INFORMATION AND COURSE SELECTION

At the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, students are challenged to be creative and active. To do this students have access to a wide range of subjects in both their specialist area and the academic curriculum. This curriculum information is online. Through the VCASS website students and parents can access the information about all subjects that are covered in our academic, dance, music, theatre arts and visual arts programs.

Links to the handbooks can be found on the Curriculum, Academic, Dance, Music, Theatre Arts and Visual Arts and Students pages of our website, or can be accessed directly the bottom of the individual pages of each program *via content related links/downloads* - ACADEMIC – DANCE – MUSIC – THEATRE ARTS AND VISUAL ARTS on the webpage: <http://vcass.vic.edu.au/programs>

Browsing these online Curriculum Handbooks is an important part of understanding the subjects offered at the VCA Secondary School. Information on the academic subjects at Years 7, 8 or 9 is found under the Junior Academic Curriculum Handbook and Academic information for Year 10, 11, and 12 under the Senior Academic Curriculum Handbook. Also available are the Senior Academic Blocks.

### DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES:

All strategies used will aim to encourage the development of personal responsibility and self discipline. Students will be made aware of their inappropriate behaviour and then helped to understand clearly the kind of behaviour that is expected of them at the VCA Secondary School.

1. Classroom teacher will attempt to resolve problem with student
2. Incident report will be prepared for coordinator's file
3. Student may be withdrawn from class to consider behaviour and to give a written account of incident
4. Discussion with Head of Student Services should occur if problem still not resolved
5. Head of Student Services will interview student and attempt to resolve problem
6. Parent interview may be sought
7. Sanctions that may be imposed could include:
  - a. Time out from class
  - b. Conduct contract
  - c. Detention (24 hours notice will be given)
8. If problem still not resolved, Principal will become involved. Parent interview will be required
9. An official suspension may be implemented according to DET guidelines
10. When immediate intervention is warranted, the above steps may be by-passed on authority from the Principal.

The above procedures will also be applied to students who are responsible for harassing or bullying other students. (See also Students' Rights & Responsibilities)

## EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Evacuation procedures are posted next to the door of each classroom. On the sound of a warning signal:

1. Remain where you are until further instructions from the fire wardens (helmets) or a teacher
2. When evacuating, leave by the nearest exit or as instructed by the fire warden or teacher
3. DO NOT return to your lockers
4. DO NOT attempt to retrieve valuable items or possessions from other rooms
5. If building is filled with smoke or fumes, keep low or crawl if possible
6. Primary assembly point is the Melbourne City Council Park on Cnr Kings way and Sturt Street, Southbank.

## EXITING AND TRANSFERRING STUDENTS

Before leaving the school, students and parents/guardians are required to complete the appropriate exit forms and notify the school registrar via email: **Ms Ema Yandall, Registrar**  
[yandall.ema.e@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:yandall.ema.e@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Students must then ensure that they have returned all books, music, equipment, etc on loan, and obtain signatures from all class teachers, assistant principal, school office and Library staff. This form when completed is to be handed in to the school office.

## EXTRA CURRICULAR DANCE AND MUSIC ACTIVITIES

Students at our school are involved in a comprehensive developmental training program. Dance and music students at our school are not allowed to train with other dance and music schools – this includes callisthenics and gymnastic work. Permission from the heads of dance or music at the VCA Secondary School must be sought before undertaking any outside classes, examinations, competitions, performances or other related activities in order to ensure progress within the school program.

## HOMEWORK/HOMESTUDY

Students should use a planner to record all homework set. Recommendations regarding the amount of time to be spent on academic homework/home study:

- **Year 7:** 30 minutes each week in each English, Mathematics, Humanities, Science, Languages and Classroom Music. 30 minutes each fortnight in each other subject.
- **Year 8:** 45 minutes each week in each of English, Mathematics, Humanities, Science, Languages and Classroom Music. 45 minutes each fortnight in each other subject
- **Year 9:** 60 minutes each week in each of English, Mathematics, Humanities, Science, Languages and Classroom Music. 60 minutes each fortnight in each other subject
- **Year 10:** 90 minutes each week in each of English, Mathematics, Humanities, Science and Classroom Music. 90 minutes each fortnight in each other subject
- **VCE:** 120 minutes each week in each subject enrolled in, including dance and music.
- **VCE** students will be directed by their classroom teachers as to the correct requirements for homework in their subject, but higher levels of homework are required.

## INTERNET

Students have access to the internet only after signing an agreement with their parents which clearly outlines their responsibility with regard to using this important technology tool. All students are allocated a VCASS email address.

## LEAVING CAMPUS

Students must NOT leave VCASS without permission. Students who need to leave for an approved appointment are to sign out at the Compass Electronic Kiosk opposite the school office. Students with permission to go home due to illness or some other approved reason must report to the office first and sign out at the Compass Electronic Kiosk before leaving the school. Permission must be sought from the Year Level Coordinator and Parent/Guardian.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

A **Special Events form** must be completed by students who wish to attend master classes, special rehearsals, performances or other specialist events which would interfere with their normal timetabled classes. These forms are available in the school office and from the dance and music offices.

## LIBRARY and RESOURCES

Library Hours: 8:00 am to 4.00 pm Monday- Friday.

**Borrowing:** Students may have three books out on loan at any time for three weeks. Other material, such as magazines and AV equipment may also be borrowed for a shorter period of time.

**Resources:** The Library has a range of excellent print, digital, audio and AV resources. Laptop and Desktop computer and printer are also available for student use.

**Mezzanine:** Year 11 and 12 students only also have access to the mezzanine level for private study and relaxation dependent on student needs.

## LOCKERS

Head of Student Services will help with any matters relating to lockers. Students are provided with a padlock for their lockers.

## MEDICAL SERVICES

All students have access to the VCASS physiotherapist who is available part-time at school. Appointments can be made online <http://www.physiooncollins.com.au/gabby-davidson.html> All students must seek parent permission prior to making an appointment.

## NEWSLETTER - IN VIEW

This publication is distributed to Students as well as parents/guardians on most Thursdays via email and on COMPASS School community online. It should be read by students and parents/guardians.

The In View school newsletter is also available on the school's web site at <http://www.vcass.vic.edu.au/life@vcass//newsletter/>

## **NOTICEBOARDS**

The school general noticeboards in the corridor of the main 'Kolarik' Atrium contain a copy of timetables, general notices, career information, SRC notices and messages for students. Students must also refer to the appropriate specialist noticeboards. It is essential that students read the Dance and Music timetable noticeboards.

## **PAYMENTS TO THE OFFICE**

The office is unable to give change for any payments received. Therefore we request that correct money is sent in an envelope clearly marked with the student's name, amount and reason for payment.

## **PERMISSION FORMS**

A number of permission forms are used. A permission form will be sent/or emailed if a student is required to attend an excursion or activity outside of the Arts Precinct. A permission form will also be given to VCE students who undertake Unsupervised Excursions as part of their studies. A Special Events form must be filled in to gain approval for attending activities such as master classes, visiting speakers, etc.

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

All belongings should be clearly marked with the student's name. Wherever possible, students should keep their belongings locked inside their lockers.

Students are encouraged to leave roller-skates/blades, scooters and skateboards, at home. However, if they gain their parents' permission to bring them to school, they must keep them locked inside their locker during the school day and not use them on campus.

Mobile phones are an important communication tool. They must be turned off or on silent in all classes and in the dance, music and academic corridors or they will be confiscated. Mobile phones may be used out of class when necessary, but not in the areas where people are working. In general camera functions should not be used at school and privacy legislation must be adhered to. Students should not bring valuable or expensive items, or large sums of money to school unless absolutely necessary. Such valuables are the responsibility of the students. Staff may be approached to assist with their safe-keeping. Valuables should never be left unattended. Valuable items such as calculators and notebooks should be engraved with Student ID. Students must be responsible for their belongings and always alert to the possibility of theft. Families should explore insurance options.

## REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Students' work, attitude, cooperation, promptness with assignments etc., are under continual review. Formal reporting to parents takes place each term in the form of - Term 1 & 3: Progress Reports. Term 2 & 4: Full Written Reports. Parent Teacher Conferences take place in Terms 1, 2 & 3.

## STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Students have the right to be treated with fairness and respect and have the opportunity to express their personal views through appropriate channels such as the:-**

- SRC and the school council
- effective communication between school and home
- receive appropriate assistance to resolve school related problems wherever possible
- receive ongoing communications about their progress
- have suitable facilities in which to learn both at school and at home
- Students have the responsibility to:
  - attend school regularly and punctually
  - remain in the school throughout the school day
  - participate positively and cooperatively in the educational opportunities presented by the school in both academic and specialist areas
  - respect the rights of others to learn
  - respect the individuality of others regardless of race, religion or gender
  - behave at all times in a manner which shows regard for their own safety and that of others
  - respect their personal health and comply with the legal prohibitions associated with the use of cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs
  - care for their own property and respect the property of fellow students and of the school
  - hand in work on time
  - inform teachers of subject related difficulties
  - care for their environment and assist in keeping the school grounds clean and tidy
  - place the highest value on honesty in their dealings with teachers and with each other
  - comply with appearance requirements

*See also Discipline Procedures.*



## **SICK BAY**

In the event of an accident or illness, students must report to the School Office. The school will contact parents/guardians to collect students or to arrange travel home. If you are feeling ill before leaving home, it is best to stay at home as our facilities are limited. No medication will be distributed without the permission of a parent/guardian.

## **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC)**

The SRC has elected representatives from all year levels, and aims to provide a forum for students to discuss school and student issues.

## **TRAVEL TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

Students are reminded that they should exercise great care when crossing roads and using public transport. Students must obey all traffic signals and must cross roads at designated crossings. Parents and school staff have the reasonable expectation that students will come straight to school in the morning and that they will return directly home in the evening or by arrangement.

## **VISITORS**

The school welcomes visits by parents. However, it is necessary to make an appointment by telephoning the VCA Secondary School office on 8644-8644. All visitors must first call at the office. Students are not permitted to invite friends to school without the permission of the Principal or Assistant Principal.