



Vitarete Academy

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Teacher & Parent Handbook

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Mission Statement

It is our belief that students should have the freedom to grow and learn without boundaries. The world is our classroom! We want all students to embrace their innate desire to learn, to excel, and to be filled with the notion of purpose. We include, curriculum, hands-on activities, online learning programs and life experiences to enhance this process and work with each family to create an environment that allows our students to excel and accomplish all of their educational goals.

Vitarete Academy believes that every child should be afforded the opportunity to reach all their educational achievements. When provided with an individualized educational plan that truly works with their child's specific needs, that child has a greater opportunity to reach higher academic goals and achieve long term academic success.

Educational Philosophy

Unlike most public or other private schools, Vitarete Academy believes that when various educational choices are available, parents and students are able to make the best educational choices for their families. Allowing multiple educational options and educational plans that cater to the individual student encourages children to grow and learn without boundaries while still complying with the Florida course requirements for high school graduation.

When naming our school, we found two words that encompassed these ideals: Vita [VEE-tah] and Arete [ahr-i-tay]. Vita is a Latin word meaning life. Arete is a Greek word that means excellence of any kind or having practical knowledge.

Vitarete Academy realizes that as an educational organization, we have obligations to our enrolled families. We will provide:

- Student handbook containing requirements, important dates, student and school obligations
- Curriculum & Academic Advisement Counseling as needed
- Maintain student grade records, attendance and transcripts
- Online recordkeeping for Teachers
- Guidance with FLVS & Acellus course registration
- 6th through 12th grade courses - Florida Virtual School
- K – 12th grade courses - Acellus, Science of Learning *Additional Fees required
- Provide Semester and Year End Report Cards
- Dual Enrollment with local Colleges with oversight and advisement
- Florida Private School Diploma (upon successful completion of all Florida high school graduation requirements).
- High School Credit & Record Review
- Teacher & Student ID's
- FPEA Membership discounts

Enrollment Requirements

All students applying for enrollment in Vitarete Academy should submit:

1. A completed Vitarete Academy online family enrollment form.
2. A photocopy of the birth certificate for each student.
3. Health exam (Form DH 3040) – Form must have been completed within the last 365 days.
*****Note:** If you have religious convictions that conflict with the health and/or immunization requirement, you may file a religious exemption letter in replacement of the required form.
4. Immunization record (Form DH 680) – Form must have been completed within the last 365 days.
******* All students enrolling in 7th grade must submit a new current immunization form or a religious exemption form provided by your local health department (See below).

Parents may request their immunization records, DH Form 680, electronically if their physician participates in “Go on Record” <http://www.flshots.com/parents/index.html>

*****Note:** If you have religious convictions that conflict with the health and/or immunization requirement, you may file a religious exemption letter in replacement of the required form. Families can file a DH681 (religious exemption form). These forms can only be obtained through your local county health department office. For your county location, please visit <http://www.floridahealth.gov/public-health-in-your-life/county-health-departments/CHDlisting.html>

All forms and documentation may be submitted via the website during the enrollment process. Families will have an opportunity to upload all the required information and save it directly to their family account. The online submissions process is the most convenient way to complete enrollment, however, you may also submit a paper enrollment form and all the required documentation via an e-mail to our office at admissions@vitareteacademy.com.

Florida law requires all private schools to maintain certain records for all enrolled students. These records are for Florida’s Compulsory, Health and Immunization requirements only. Our school respects and understands your desire to maintain your privacy. Vitarete will not request or maintain any more personal information than legally required by the State of Florida.

Florida law also requires all private schools to submit an annual report called the Annual Database Survey. This is submitted via Florida Department of Education’s website and includes basic information about the school. We are required to provide a head count of how many students (broken down by grade level) are enrolled in Vitarete Academy. No personal or identifiable information is sent to the FDOE.

Where are you coming from?

Depending on whether you were previously in a public or private school, or filed with your local school district, there are some steps you need to take with the previous school or the county. Please remember that you will need to confirm your enrollment with Vitarete Academy **PRIOR** to taking any of these steps.

1. If you are enrolling in Vitarete and coming from a public school:
 - a. You must go to the school and formally withdraw them from the public school. The front office will have the form you need to sign. If you do not do this and just stop showing up, you will create a truancy issue.
 - b. You should request a copy of your student's school records. This should be done in writing and before you formally withdraw them from the school.

2. If you are enrolling in Vitarete and coming from another private school:
 - a. You should send a letter formally withdrawing your student from the private school
 - b. You should request a copy of your student's records. This should be done in writing and before you formally withdraw them from the school.

3. If you are enrolling in Vitarete after filing a Letter of Intent establishing a Home Education Program (HEP) with your local school district:
 - a. You must send a letter of termination to the county. It should clearly state that you are terminating the HEP for (insert student's full name) and enrolling them in a private school, Vitarete Academy. This letter will go to the same location as your original Letter of Intent was sent to. We recommend that you send the letter of termination **AFTER** you have confirmed enrollment with Vitarete Academy.

******* Please check the "Forms Page" of the Vitarete Academy website for a blank termination letter form available for download.

Records

All incoming high school students must provide all previous high school records and any middle school records for which high school credit was previously earned.

Fee Schedule

K through 6th grade enrollment:

1. New students, one time non-refundable enrollment fee: 25.00
2. Annual tuition: 50.00

7th through 9th grade enrollment:

1. New students, one time non-refundable enrollment fee: 50.00
2. Annual tuition: 100.00

10th grade enrollment:

1. New students, one time non-refundable enrollment fee 10th grade: 100.00
2. Annual tuition: 100.00
3. Submission of 9th grade report card and 2 work samples for 9th grade core subjects for records review

11th grade enrollment:

1. New students, one time non-refundable enrollment fee 11th grade: 150.00
2. Annual tuition 100.00
3. Submission of 9th & 10th grade report card and 2 work samples for both years core subjects for records review

12th grade enrollment:

1. New students, one time non-refundable enrollment fee 12th grade: 200.00
2. Annual tuition 100.00
3. Submission of 9th, 10, & 11th grade report cards and 2 work samples for all three years core subjects for records review

Submission of two (2) work samples from each core course (Math, English, Science, and Social Studies) is required in order to receive high school credits.

**** Enrollment fee discounts are available for families with three or more students. Please contact our office for more information.

Many students are able to complete more than one grade level in a year. Vitarete's fee schedule is based on grade level not school year. When your student completes a grade level, you will need to re-enroll them for the next grade level.

Attendance Requirements

Students must complete a minimum of 180 days per school year of instruction as prescribed by Section 1011.60(2), F.S., or the hourly equivalent of one hundred eighty (180) actual teaching days, determined as prescribed below:

- (a) Kindergarten through grade 3: Not less than seven hundred twenty (720) net instructional hours.
- (b) Grades 4 through 12: Not less than nine hundred (900) net instructional hours.

Teachers must keep a daily attendance record as required by Section 1003.23(2) F.S. (A reproducible daily attendance form has been provided for your convenience at the back of this handbook).

Teachers must complete annually via online form attesting you have maintained daily attendance logs and have completed 180 days of instruction or the equivalent in instructional hours. Attendance is due annually with the Year-End grade reports. We recommend uploading the daily attendance logs along with any other work samples of school record documents.

Curriculum Requirements

Students have different learning styles and abilities. Every student needs to be able to learn at their own pace, utilizing any resource available to them. Teachers will:

1. Research options for educational methods and curriculum
2. Create an individualized educational plan for your student and re-evaluate plan for improvement each year
3. Employ the best curriculum which will allow the student to be academically successful. Examples include:
 - a. Textbooks, workbooks, CD's, DVD's, videos, or private tutors in addition to participating in hands-on group learning or other activities at various locations.
 - b. Standards based class offerings through our online educational partners
4. Adhere to the standards for each course description as outlined in Florida's CPalms Course Catalog <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Course>
5. Curriculum must be appropriate for the student's level.

Grade Reporting Requirements

1. Vitarete Academy works on a two (2) semester year. Teachers need to submit a copy of the students' grades twice yearly. Once at end of your 1st semester and once at the end of your school year. The annual attendance report should be submitted along with the Year-End grade reports. Report cards use the following grading system. This grading system will ensure all students receive the

most accurate grading scale conversion for their high school transcripts.

Letter Grade	Percent Grade	4.0 Scale	5.0 Scale (Honors)
A+	97-100	4.0	5.0
A	93-96	4.0	4.67
A-	90-92	3.7	4.33
B+	87-89	3.3	4.00
B	83-86	3.0	3.67
B-	80-82	2.7	3.33
C+	77-79	2.3	3.00
C	73-76	2.0	2.67
C-	70-72	1.7	2.33
D+	67-69	1.3	2.00
D	65-66	1.0	1.67
F	Below 65	0.0	0.0

2. Teacher's will submit all required documentation including grade reports, annual attendance records, and work samples through the online portal For high School credits, a list of curriculum used plus two (2) work samples for each core subject (Math, English, Science, Social Studies) must be submitted. For students enrolled in FLVS or College Dual Enrollment courses, transcripts from these institutions are to be submitted in order to fulfill the work sample requirements.
3. Only grades of "C" or higher in core subjects for both enrolled students and students' credits transferred from previous schools are accepted. Failing grades will not be accepted. Should a student fail a required core course, they must retake the course and receive a passing grade.
 - a. There are many ways to figure grades: various combinations of evaluating quizzes, projects, tests, homework, etc. **Remember** – Grades are based on academic performance and should be based on the child's individualized education plan.

Re-enrollment Process

To enroll your student for the next grade level, parents will click on the "Enrollment" tab to create the next year's grade level enrollment for their student. Upon completing the next year's enrollment, simply click on "Invoices & Payments" tab and the "Recalculate Invoice" to update the annual tuition fee. Then click on "Check out with PayPal" and submit fees to complete the New Year's enrollment.

*** Parents will not be able to create the next grade level enrollment until the prior year's documentation has been completed.

Withdrawal Procedures & Refunds

Students wishing to withdraw from Vitarete Academy must:

1. Complete a Vitarete Academy withdrawal form.
2. All fees must be paid in full
3. All required grades, attendance and reporting requirements must be met before we can forward any records to the new school.
4. Students will automatically be withdrawn if re-enrollment fees and/or re-enrollment paperwork is not received by re-enrollment date.

Students withdrawn within seven (7) days of enrollment will receive a full refund of the tuition; however, enrollment fees cover the costs involved with initial processing and are non-refundable.

Reinstatements

There is a reinstatement fee for all students that withdraw from Vitarete Academy and choose at a later date to re-enroll. Returning students who have never been in High School with Vitarete must enroll as new students.

Standardized Testing

Beginning in 9th grade, students are encouraged to take the PSAT/NMSQT. Students should prepare to take the SAT, ACT, or the PERT beginning in their 10th grade year.

1. Seniors must submit standardized testing scores as a requirement for graduation. (SAT of 750 or ACT of 14 or PERT with equivalent or standardized test indicating 12th grade level of accomplishment). [A passing standardized test score is required for graduation.](#)
 - a. Completion of six (6) college credits, having a GPA of 2.0 and higher, will count as an alternative to the standardized testing requirement.

High School Credits in Middle School

High school credits can begin to be earned high school credit starting in the 7th grade. High school courses must be designated as a high school based curriculum or program in order to receive high school credit. Any credit earned will be applied to the high school transcript upon successful enrollment in 9th grade.

High School Credits

Course requirements for graduation are traditional and follow the Florida Standard High School Diploma 24 credit hour requirements.

1. All textbooks must be on a high school or higher level as determined by the publisher.
2. Minimum hourly requirements for high school credit:
 - a. 67.5 hours is equivalent to .5 credit
 - b. 120 hours is equivalent to 1 credit

High School Graduation Requirements

Florida allows for many different types of diplomas. Here at Vitarete Academy, we believe only the academic diploma, which requires a total of 24 credits (See Graduation Requirements Below), will offer our students the best possible opportunities for higher education, employment or entrance into the military.

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=1000-1099/1003/Sections/1003.4282.html

In order to receive an academic high school diploma from Vitarete Academy, students must complete a total of 24 credits and receive a passing grade of C or above for all required courses:

Subject	Credits 1 Full Year = 1 credit
English	4 Credits (In order to count as a credit the course must include a mixture of Vocabulary, Grammar, Literature, and Composition).
Math	4 Credits (Algebra I level and higher)
Science	3 Credits (Must include Biology and two courses must include a lab)
Social Studies	3 Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1 American History- 1 World History- 1/2 American Government- 1/2 Economics
Practical Arts/Fine Arts	1 Credit (Art, Photography, Drama, Dance, Computer Science, Speech, Debate, etc.)
H.O.P.E	1 Credit <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1/2 Physical Education/Personal Fitness- 1/2 Health
Electives	8 Credits (For students planning on attending college or applying for Bright Futures – 2 courses should be a single Foreign language)

***Eligibility for Bright Futures or other scholarships may have additional requirements. Students are advised to check with their future college admissions office to confirm that school's specific requirements while planning your high school course sequence. If you are unsure your curriculum meets these standards, please contact Vitarete to speak with one of our guidance counselors.

High school students need to keep a portfolio of their work for their entire high school career. This should include a list of curriculum materials used and several work samples from each subject. You should also maintain a copy of any virtual schools or college dual enrollment transcripts.

Certificate of Completion

With careful planning and monitoring, students with disabilities should be able to earn a standard high school diploma. However, some students may complete the required high school courses but fail to meet all of the other graduation requirements. Students unable to meet all graduation requirements may receive a certificate of completion from Vitarete Academy. It is important to understand that a certificate of completion is not a diploma and that it may not be accepted for admissions at most colleges, for entry into the military, or even by some employers.

Honors Courses

For a course to be considered Honors it must consist of one of the following:

1. Any college level course
2. Any course designated Honors by curricula
3. Any Foreign Language above level 2
4. Any course designated honors by the FL DOE on their website
5. AP courses, CLEP credits

Dual Enrollment

As of the 2013 Legislative session, Florida colleges are not required to offer articulation agreements with private schools or to waive tuition and registration fees. If students are interested in dual enrollment, please contact the institution to verify their dual enrollment policy.

Minimum Dual Enrollment Eligibility:

1. Completed their freshman year of high school
2. Have an un-weighted cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
3. Take one of the following: the ACT, SAT, P.E.R.T, or the C.P.T. – Check with the institution to confirm which test they prefer.
4. A signed Statement of Legal Compliance by Vitarete Academy

*** Each institution may have additional and/or higher eligibility requirements. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they are eligible, that the institution participates, and that they have met all the requirements for dual enrollment.

*** Depending on the institution, students may be responsible for tuition, registration, books, materials, and/or transportation access fees.

Transferring from Private School to Public School

If you decide to transfer your child back to public school, they are required to be placed in an age appropriate class. However, within one grading semester the student will be tested to evaluate that placement and to determine if there are any special needs that may need to be addressed.

Florida public High Schools have certain End of Course (EOC) evaluations that are required in order to graduate and receive a diploma with a scholarly designation. Should your student transfer back into public school, they may be required to take one of these exams to receive those high school credits. Please review the EOC requirements link for more information.

<http://www.fldoe.org/bii/studentpro/pdf/Grad1314.pdf>

Bright Futures Scholarship

The State of Florida offers three (3) different Bright Future Scholarships. Each award level has minimum eligibility requirements that include test scores, academic, community service hours, and funding length. It is important that your student is aware of what each award level requires and what courses will meet the minimum academic requirements. If you are planning on applying for the Bright Futures Scholarship, please review the requirements for each award level, and plan your high school class sequence accordingly.

- Florida Academic Scholars (FAS)
- Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS)
- Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV) - For students with a minimum of three Career and Technical Education credits in one vocational program

See link for more information regarding the Bright Futures Scholarship:

<http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf/>

*** Students must submit a request to Vitarete Academy for Bright Futures Transcript processing within 30 days of applying for Bright Futures Scholarship.

FAFSA

Every senior, regardless of eligibility, should complete a Federal Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) beginning in January of their senior year.

<https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

Community Service Hours

Bright Futures and many other college scholarships have a community service requirement. A properly signed form on Organization Letterhead with printed contact information is required for community service hours to be added to the transcripts. Parents are not eligible to sign for their student's hours.

Graduation

Upon graduating from Vitarete Academy, students will be issued a standard academic high school diploma along with one official high school transcript.

To apply for graduation:

1. Complete the 24 graduation credit requirements.
2. Achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher using a high school curriculum.
3. Submit a completed graduation application. The application for graduation must be submitted with the end of the 1st semester. (Graduation applications are located in the forms section on the Vitarete Academy's website)
4. Passing results of 40% or higher on a nationally accepted standardized test (or six (6) college credits with a GPA of 2.0)
5. Submit final report card, attendance form, two (2) work samples for core courses, and unofficial transcripts from any FLVS, Acellus or Dual Enrollment college course.

Transcripts

All high school graduate transcript requests must be submitted via your Parchment Exchange account. Transcript requests are \$3.50 each. Upon request, transcripts will be electronically sent directly to the college or university of your choice. If you have not created a parchment account, you can do so by visiting the Parchment Exchange website. <http://www.parchment.com/>

Sports Policy

Vitarete Academy does not offer sports. Based on 2011 legislative action, in some cases, students enrolled in a private school are eligible to play sports with the public school they are zoned to attend or at another private school. Please check with the proposed school to verify your eligibility.

Accreditation

Vitarete Academy is not currently accredited by the regional accreditation agencies. In most cases, having an unaccredited high school diploma will not be an issue. Most colleges do not look at the diploma as much as they want a transcript showing the 24 required credits for graduation and the minimum required test scores for college admittance. However, families should check the enrollment requirements of their choice college to confirm their diploma will meet or exceed eligibility requirements.

Additionally, not all accreditation is considered equal. There are many “Accreditation Agencies” out there that are not recognized by the Federal Department of Education or most main stream higher educational institutions. When checking an institution’s accreditation – make sure you ask the right questions. Being “affiliated” or a “member” of an accreditation agency is NOT the same as being Accredited BY that agency.

Lastly, while accreditation is not typically an issue, we do recommend joining groups such as Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), who advocate for all home school families, including private schools that cater to home educators. Membership to advocacy groups, such as HSDLA, gains families access to additional support and legal resources to help assist families should a question regarding accreditation arise.

Special Note **** If a student is looking to participate in college sports, the NCAA has specific standards. Families looking to have their student play college sports should contact the NCAA and verify they are properly completing all requirements necessary for acceptance.

Non-Discriminatory Admissions Policy

Vitarete Academy admits all students regardless of any race, color, religious beliefs, or national and ethnic origin. Vitarete does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious beliefs, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or school-administered programs.