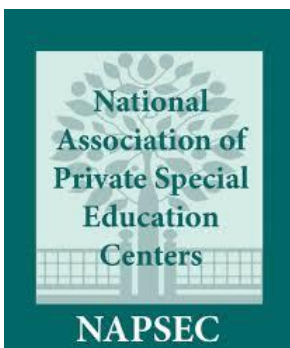




**2021-2022**

**STUDENT and PARENT  
HANDBOOK**

**Unicorn Village Academy  
500 NE Spanish River Blvd.  
Suite 12  
Boca Raton, Florida 33431  
561.826.9156**





## WELCOME MESSAGE

*Dear Students and Parents,*

*I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Unicorn Village Academy.*

*Our primary focus is to offer a uniquely diverse learning experience that assists our students with developing skills towards their future goals. Our intent at Unicorn Village Academy is to provide a school climate of mutual caring, respect, and responsibility.*

*Our Middle School has been designed to support younger students in preparation for a successful transition into High School. This offers students early access to the UVA curriculum, integrating self-regulation, coping strategies and independence skills into their academic Middle School experience.*

*UVA goes beyond the traditional four year high school design allowing adequate time to provide all necessary instruction and training. This unique educational program encompasses an equal emphasis on academic instruction and vocational training.*

*This handbook will give you information you may find helpful to better understand **your** school.*

***Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year!!!***

*Sincerely,*

*Evelyn Falconer*

School Principal



## **Mission Statement**

*To provide a strength based learning environment  
that prepares Neurodiverse students to live, work and enjoy life  
in communities and with individuals of their own choosing.*

## **Unicorn Village Academy Creed**

*One word never to be heard is Can't. All of our students Can.*

*My job is to discover what they can do and understand how they learn,  
to effectively teach them and guide them towards success.*

*I will help them learn from their mistakes, not feel inadequate.*

*I will recognize their gifts, build on those abilities and teach them how to  
use their strengths to learn new skills.*

*I will listen and observe, do more and say less.*

*I will lead by example, speak with kindness, support with sincerity  
and teach with integrity.*

*I will be the best teacher, mentor and advocate I can be.*

*If my students do not succeed, I have failed, not them.*

*I will demonstrate the attributes I wish to see in my students,  
and nurture the growth within each of them.*

*I know that my students will be better people because of me and  
I will be a better person because of them.*

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## **A Different Way of Teaching**

### *For a Different Style of Learning and Preparation for Life*

UVA focuses on the whole student, teaching Life skills, Career Education & Academics. The curriculum encourages independence, integrity and respect, through exploration and hands on learning.

The effectiveness of UVA is in recognizing individual learning styles and temperament of each student, and preparing a learning plan to meet their needs. **Regardless of academic abilities, it is the Social, Communication, and Relationship Development Skills that will truly make a difference in the success of students to become productive members of society.**

Unicorn Village Academy believes that teachers should focus on the student as a person. Our teachers lead students to ask questions, think for themselves, explore, investigate, and discover. The objective is to help their students to learn independently and retain the curiosity, creativity, and intelligence with which they were born. They present lessons in small groups allowing for individualized attention and differential instruction. UVA teachers don't simply present lessons, they are facilitators, mentors, coaches, and role models.

**UVA teachers closely monitor their students' progress as they get to know their students' strengths, challenges, interests, and personalities. UVA teachers often use the student's interests to enrich the curriculum and provide alternate avenues for accomplishment and success.**

#### **PARENT COMMUNICATION**

- UVA will often send emails with important information and program updates. It is imperative that parents read all emails to ensure the information is received. You will be held responsible for the information sent home and expect that your child be prepared when requested.
- Teachers are available for parent conferences by appointment only. They are not available to receive or make phone calls during teaching hours.
- Teachers may be contacted via email
- Teachers will return calls and/or reply to emails within 24 – 48 hours.
- There are two planned Parent-teacher conferences. See calendar for dates.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

- Transportation to and from school is a parental responsibility.
- For community learning, jobsites, internships and field trips, students will be transported in designated school vehicles.

## **ATTENDANCE**

- UVA is in session 180 days per school year
- Family vacations are NOT excused absences
- Religious Holidays are an excused absence if a note is provided in advance
- A death in the family is an excused absence
- Medical appointments or an illness with a doctor's note is an excused absence

### Students are expected to:

- Attend their scheduled classes and be on time
- Complete all in school assignments
- Make-up all assignments that they miss due to an excused or unexcused absence

### Parents are expected to:

- Get your child to school on time
- Pick up your child from school on time
- Supply a doctor's note if your child is out of school due to an illness lasting 2 days or more, or out of school due to a medical appointment
- Provide an email or written note if your child will miss school due to a religious holiday
- Provide a written note if your child misses school due to a death in the family
- Call or email the school when your child will be absent or delayed

## **ABSENCES**

Absenteeism, excused or unexcused, regardless of the reason, negatively affects the continuity of the learning process. As a student's absenteeism increases, there is a greater responsibility for the school to deter future absences, and there is a greater responsibility for the student to demonstrate that such attendance has not negatively affected performance mastery.

If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from school, he or she must be under the supervision of a physician in order to receive an excuse from attendance.

All absences which have not been specifically identified as excused are unexcused absences. A student's absence due to suspension from school for a disciplinary problem will be an unexcused absence.

Excessive unexcused absences (10 or more per semester) may result in a grade of "incomplete".

## **TARDINESS**

UVA emphasizes the importance of work ethics and respect. Being punctual is a big part of this. Tardiness is unacceptable. In addition to setting a poor standard, arriving late is disruptive to the learning environment and has a negative impact on student achievement. Please make certain that your child arrives to school on time, every day.

## UVA CODE OF CONDUCT

- **General Rules**
  - Everyone is accountable for his own actions.
  - No one will be physically abused, treated with rudeness or inconsideration, or be verbally attacked.
  - Everyone is accountable for dressing in appropriate clothing for each activity and should have such clothing on the premises at all times.
  
- **Specific School Rules**
  - Everyone is required to be in class on time and be prepared to participate.
  - Everyone is expected to do all schoolwork within a reasonable time and with concentrated effort.
  - Everyone is required to participate in activities as directed by staff.
  - No food or food utensils are allowed outside of eating area.
  - No dangerous objects or anything which could be considered a weapon, is allowed, including but not limited to matches, lighters etc.
  - No student is allowed to leave the building without permission from their parents and school staff.
  - Students are not allowed to trade or sell items to each other. Occasionally students can lend or borrow items only with staff permission.
  - Students are not permitted to give or receive food of any kind.
  - No swearing or obscene or vulgar language is allowed.
  - Students must have respect for school and personal property. Students and their families will be held responsible for malicious destruction of school property, or personal properties of others.
  - Donation of clothing or gifts may be made to the school and will be distributed to those students in need.
  
- **Student Expectations**
  - Students will respect staff, peers, and themselves (hands to themselves, follow directions, polite tone and words, etc.)
  - Students will respect school property (keeping school property undamaged)
  - Students will respect class time (not speaking out, doing their work, being prompt, etc.)
  - Students will be where they are supposed to be (in class during class time, in the bathroom or sensory room if that is their stated destination, etc.)

**Students are expected to honor their responsibilities and behave in ways that respect the rights of all. Failure to do so will result in detention, suspension and/or other disciplinary actions.**

## PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

- Personal electronic devices are not permitted at school, and will be confiscated. This includes cell phones, iPads and Smart watches.
- Students may bring electronic devices to school under the following conditions:
  - For use as assistive technology, augmentative or alternative communication
  - Must be prearranged
- Use of cell phones is not permitted at any time during school hours.
- If students arrive with cell phones or other devices, they will be confiscated for the day.

## **BULLYING**

UVA takes all forms of mistreatment and bullying seriously.

In 2009, the State of Florida enacted the Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up For All Students Act, which called for districts to enact anti bullying policies that prohibited face to face mistreatment, as well as cyber bullying and cyber stalking

***Unacceptable Behavior*** – *Bullying* means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress in person to person encounters and/or by means of electronic communication or technological devices on one or more students or school employees. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to: teasing, social exclusion, threat, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, theft, sexual, religious, or racial/ethnic harassment, public humiliation, damaging or destruction of property, placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or property, and cyber bullying, and cyber stalking.

**Please do not encourage your child to fight or retaliate. Counter aggression rarely works and often escalates the problem.**

Instead, encourage self-reporting – Discuss the distinct difference between "tattling" (snitching, rattling, giving up) and "telling/reporting" with your child. Explain that "tattling" is when a person intentionally tries to get another student in trouble for something minor. "Telling" is completely different because it means informing an adult of the harmful, immoral, unethical, dangerous, destructive, hateful or threatening behavior that has hurt the individual or someone else.

If your student is being bullied online or by text messaging encourage him or her not to retaliate and/or reply, but rather to report the activity.

**What you should do if your child is bullied:**

- Most importantly, focus on your child. Listen, be supportive and gather information and the facts related to the incident.
- Stay calm and report the incident(s) to your child's teacher or principal. Document all incidents of mistreatment, abuse, cruelty, and/or disrespectful acts toward your child.
- Seek resources to assist you in strengthening your child's resiliency toward harm.

**If your child is engaging in bullying behavior:**

- Make it clear that you take bullying seriously and you will not tolerate this behavior.
- Develop clear and consistent rules within your family for your child's behavior.
- Spend more time with your child and carefully monitor his/her behavior.
- Build on your child's talents by encouraging him or her to get involved in pro social activities.
- Speak with school principal to approach this behavior as a team.
- If your child needs additional help, speak with a counselor or mental health professional.



## **DRESS CODE**

- Students are expected to come to school with proper attention to personal cleanliness, grooming and neatness of dress.
- Students whose personal attire or grooming distracts the attention of other students or teachers from their school work shall be required to make the necessary alterations to such attire or grooming before entering the classroom.

### **All students must wear the school uniform unless specifically told not to do so.**

- **UVA School Uniform**
  - UVA logo shirt (must be ordered)
  - Black or brown belt- recommended.
  - Khaki pants or shorts. No tears or patches.
  - Shoes or sneakers. No flip flops or sandals.
  - Female students may wear khaki shorts, skirts or pants. The shorts and skirt must be 'fingertip length'.
  - Shirt must be tucked into pants, shorts, or skirt.
- **UVA Phys. Ed Uniform**
  - UVA tag-less t-shirt (must be ordered)
  - Gym shorts or sweat pants of the student's choice

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION, HEALTH & FITNESS**

UVA offers Health Opportunities through Physical Education (HOPE). All students enrolled are expected to participate in this program. It combines a variety of activities designed to promote physical health and recreational activities.

## **HOMEWORK**

The staff at UVA understand that homework assignments can be overwhelming at times and a major source of stress and frustration. All material will be presented in a manner where mastery can be obtained at school. On occasion, homework will be assigned as a supplement or review.

## **EMPLOYMENT READINESS AND INTERNSHIPS**

One goal of UVA is to prepare our students for further training and/or employment. Students will be provided with structured work/educational experiences. They will gain experience at a variety of supported employment sites under the supervision of UVA staff. These experiences offer opportunities to apply previously learned academic, social, communication and vocational skills. Additionally, a system of natural supports enables each student to learn from on-site staff. Students will be evaluated on a regular basis. **Students must adhere to the following, and will not be permitted to participate unless they meet all requirements.**

Professional behavior and attire is required for students participating in these programs.

- Students must be well groomed, in long khaki pants (belt recommended) and uniform shirt.
- Students must arrive on time and be present for planning period.
- Students must comply with school wide behavioral expectations.

***All schedules are subject to change, at the discretion of UVA Program Coordinators.***

## **PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS**

- There are times, while in the classrooms at UVA, or while out in the community, that your student may be photographed or video-taped. These photos or videos may be posted to various websites, such as the UVA website or the Unicorn Children's Foundation website. Photos may be used in local newspaper publications as well.
- Parental signature on the UVA Photo Release form, indicates permission for the publication of any videos or photos taken of your student while they are attending UVA, or a school function.
- If you prefer that your student's photograph is not taken, please notify administration at the time of enrollment.
- A photograph of each student will be taken and added to their record for use in case of an emergency.
- 

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are a privilege, not a right. This privilege can be denied for unacceptable behavior. An educational alternative may be offered. Field trips are generally tied to the student's course of study and may involve career education, social skills, or academic enrichment.

## **LUNCHES**

- Each student is expected to bring in a lunch each day. .
- Lunch times will vary each day depending on schedules and activities.
- Lunches should be sent in a soft-sided lunch pack.
- Please note: We are NOT a peanut free zone.
- Field Trips: Depending on the nature of the trip either a brown bag lunch or money to purchase lunch will be required. Advance notice will be given.

## **LOCKERS**

- Each student will receive a personal locker. Only the following items may be kept in it:
  1. Back pack
  2. Change of clothes
  3. School supplies
- The following items are not permitted to be kept in lockers
  1. Electronic devices
  2. Any food or beverage

## SECURITY

Security is taken quite seriously at UVA.

- Visitors are welcome by appointment only.
- In cases of divorce or separation:
  - Only individuals authorized and listed on file will be permitted access to any student during school hours.
  - Report cards, personal student information, financial statements, billing, etc. will ONLY be released to the custodial parent unless he/she requests that the information be shared with the other parent.

## IMPORTANT SCHOOL YEAR DATES

**First Day of School:** August 24, 2021

**Last Day of School:** May 31, 2021

**September 6, 2021**  
Labor Day

**September 07**  
Fall Holiday

**September 16**  
Fall Holiday

**October 15**  
Teacher Work Day

**October 20 – 21**  
Parent/Teacher Conference

**November 24 - 26**  
Thanksgiving Break

**December 23, 2021 - January 3, 2022**  
Winter Break

**March 14 - 18**  
Spring Break

**March 23 – 24**  
Parent/Teacher Conference

**May 30**  
Memorial Day

**May 31**  
Last Day of School

## **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

### **Parents MUST provide updated contact information**

- If Palm Beach County schools are closed because of a hurricane or other weather emergency, UVA will also be closed.
- UVA has a 'phone tree' in place and will contact each family in the event of a school closing due to weather, or some other hazard.
- If the city of Boca Raton, or Palm Beach County is placed on a Hurricane Warning, or Severe Weather Warning, UVA will be closed. If the warning occurs during the school day, parents will be called and it is their responsibility to pick up their student by the scheduled closing time (usually within 1 hour of the warning announcement). UVA will re-open when the building is safe and electricity is restored (if an outage). We do not follow Palm Beach County school district when it comes to re-opening the school. School staff and administration will contact you to let you know when school resumes.

## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR NEW & EXISTING STUDENTS**

- Completed UVA application
- Health exams and immunization records
- Signed request for the transcript from the student's previous school(s)
- Copy of the student's birth certificate
- Copy of the student's social security card
- Completed Photo/Video release form (for each school year)
- Signed UVA contract
- Medication form
- Signed field trip permission slip (for each school year)
- Completed Student Pick-up Authorization
- Uniform order form and payment
- McKay Scholarship forms, as necessary

## **TUITION FEES AND POLICIES**

- The current tuition rate is \$26,000 per academic year. This does not include uniforms, summer or after school programs.
- For eligible families, the McKay or Gardiner scholarship awards are applied.
- A quarterly payment schedule is provided at the beginning of the school year.
- Payment is expected on the due date.
- There is a \$50 late fee for payments overdue 30 days or more, and a \$35 return check fee.
- Transcripts and report cards are withheld for families in non-compliance and may result in expulsion from UVA.
- Limited financial assistance may be available each year.

## **MEDICATION**

It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to notify the school of any health condition of their child which may require medication, treatment, or monitoring at school or on a school sponsored activity.

### **Unicorn Village Academy does not administer medication.**

If your child requires medication, at the request of physician, during school hours, the following procedure must be followed:

- A Medication Authorization Form must be completed and signed by physician and parent.
- Medication must be delivered to the UVA office in a prescription bottle with the proper label, dosage and time noted on the bottle.
- UVA personnel must be notified in writing, of any changes to your student's medicine or treatment routine.

**Students are not permitted to carry any medications (prescription or non-prescription). This includes vitamins, supplements, topical creams, etc. Should any be found, they will be confiscated.**

## **COVID-19 SAFETY PROCEDURES**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, specific safety measures must be adhered to in order to ensure the safety of UVA students, their families and our staff.

1. All students will be required to wear masks. They should arrive wearing a properly fitted mask fully covering nose and mouth.
  - a. Mask breaks will be provided
2. A health screening must be completed prior to entering school. This can be done from home on a computer, phone or other device.
  - a. If any symptoms are reported, a COVID test will be requested.
  - b. A temperature scan will be taken upon arrival. Please keep your child in the vehicle until it is complete.
3. If your child is diagnosed with COVID or tests positive, contact school immediately and keep your child home.
  - a. Cases of COVID-19 will be allowed to return to school after meeting the following criteria:
    - i. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and
    - ii. At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and
    - iii. Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved
4. Students will be required to wash hands often and use hand sanitizer in between hand washings, as needed and expected to maintain appropriate personal hygiene.
5. All students will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing while in the building, upon entering and exiting school. They will be expected to maintain movement at all times while in hallways.



## UVA Student Handbook Acknowledgment

Student's name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and office staff all have important roles to play in maintaining the highest standards within our school. Policies and guidelines have been created to ensure the best possible climate for the optimum learning experiences for all students. These policies and guidelines apply to everyone and work only when everyone knows what they are.

The Student Handbook lists many of Unicorn Village Academy's policies and expectations for students and parents. They apply to all activities occurring on school grounds, on other sites being used for school activities and for any vehicles authorized for the transporting of students. Please read through this carefully.

Parent support is a vital factor as we partner to ensure our students' success. It is important that you are aware of the expectations and provide all updated information as needed.

Please review the contents of this handbook and sign below acknowledging that you have done so. Additionally, we ask that you review with your child and have him/her sign as well.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent or guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date