



Village
Community
School



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The New York Leader in K-8 Education

“VCS is the ideal environment in which to raise children for our interconnected world.”

–VCS Alumni Parent



WELCOME

Village Community School is uniquely structured to ignite and nurture your child's passion for learning.

We offer a stimulating environment that immerses children in their education. We provide the pathways and the tools that enable students to stretch to their fullest potential – academically, socially, emotionally and physically. From their first day, our students learn how to interact with and make a difference in the world around them.

VCS is a vibrant, inclusive community committed to helping your child develop the intellectual curiosity, foundational knowledge and self-confidence needed for a happy, successful life.

“Deep learning, academic excellence and social responsibility help create citizens for today and tomorrow.”

–VCS Parent



MISSION STATEMENT

Village Community School develops self-motivated students who value the challenging and rewarding process of learning as an integral part of life. We choose to be a diverse community where equity, creativity and critical thinking are essential to the rigorous education we provide. Our graduates are skilled and confident, able to advocate for themselves and others. They are well prepared for high school and for their futures in an increasingly complex and dynamic world.

-Excerpt from Mission Statement



DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Village Community School is strengthened and enriched by the diversity of our students, families and staff. We are committed to cultivating intellectual, social and emotional growth in an inclusive environment where diverse experiences and perspectives are essential to the rigorous education we provide.

-Excerpt from Diversity Statement



“These 8th Graders are some of the most thoughtful, kind and self-possessed of any I’ve had the pleasure of teaching over the years.”

-Guest Teacher

BENEFITS OF OUR K-8 ENVIRONMENT

The K-8 years are critically important to a child’s academic and personal development. At VCS, we devote all our resources to helping students establish an unabashed love of learning and a strong sense of self that will serve them well for a lifetime.

As *The New York Leader in K-8 Education*, we know how sophisticated young minds can be when offered opportunities to stretch beyond typical expectations. We take our students seriously. Observers of VCS Upper School classrooms often note how the level of discourse is similar to that of a university seminar – rich in debating different points of view, collaborating to solve problems and pursuing new ideas sparked by our students’ well-honed intellectual curiosity.

Our K-8 environment allows students to mature socially in keeping with their chronological age, unburdened by the influence of older teenagers. VCS students retain their spontaneity and unselfconscious excitement about the learning process. They flourish emotionally as they look up to a developmentally appropriate standard that bolsters confidence and a sense of belonging.

Our K-8 structure also provides many opportunities for students to be leaders. Students in the 4th and 5th Grades are the Lower School’s leaders and serve as mentors to younger children. These responsibilities grow as students advance through Upper School. Our 7th and 8th Graders are empowered, enthusiastic role models for the entire student body. They best demonstrate what it means to value and to encourage each other, developing rewarding relationships across age groups based on respect, trust and mutual reliance.

Students graduate from VCS feeling self-assured and ready for high school. They look forward to this new chapter in their education, having chosen it with great forethought and in alignment with their talents and ambitions.

“I am struck by how VCS continues to innovate. VCS pioneers practices that other schools adopt years later.”

-Educational Consultant

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

At VCS, children are immersed in their studies. We believe classroom education is most effective when students encounter meaningful information through resonant, in-depth experiences. Such experiences enrich their understanding and better their knowledge retention.

We are forward-thinking educators who incorporate the latest discoveries in cognitive science into our teaching methods and curricula. Our students are active, inquisitive learners – participating in hands-on, project-based coursework, as well as direct instruction, repetition, review and reinforcement.

Because children learn in different ways, we believe it is essential to offer multiple pathways to mastery. Teachers may ask students to write about a topic, graph it, debate and test it, ask a world-renowned researcher about it, act it out, paint it or explore it through other activities that tap into the children’s talents.

Our students learn how to learn, not only from teachers, but also from each other. We encourage questioning of assumptions, lively discourse and creative, collaborative problem solving. VCS students develop a strong moral character, with a sense of responsibility for themselves and their community.



“The challenge of being in classes with both older and younger children has helped our son excel beyond our expectations.

-VCS Parent

LOWER SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

Our mixed grade Lower School classrooms span two grade levels and serve children with an age spread of 12-24 months. This practice allows maximum flexibility in class placement.

Mixed grade groups offer children opportunities to experience different group dynamics and roles. Sometimes they're among the oldest and serve as leaders; sometimes they're among the youngest and emulate their more advanced classmates.

This deliberate, thoughtful process ensures that all of our students are doing their best work, making new friendships and achieving intellectual and social milestones.

Mixed grade groups end as VCS students enter 5th Grade.





TEACHERS

Our teachers are accomplished, thoughtful role models who exemplify intellectual curiosity and an enduring passion for knowledge. Though they come from a variety of backgrounds, they share a deep commitment to our curriculum and a caring approach to education.



As enthusiastic learners themselves, our teachers continually pursue professional development, bringing new insights to their VCS classes. They are recognized scholars, working artists and active civic participants who regularly win grants from organizations like the Fulbright Foundation, the Whitney Museum, the Freeman Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts to further their studies.

“This school has a culture of achievement that honors and respects the individual.”

-VCS Alumni Parent

COMMUNITY

Our goal is to create a close-knit community of students in every classroom. That positive rapport engenders collaborative problem solving while enhancing students' cognitive growth and reinforcing their learning.

Our school is a welcoming, respectful and caring environment where we strive to model the skills students need to work and live together both at school and in the world outside our walls.

That greater community of New York City (and beyond) also plays an important role in a VCS education. Students participate in VCS partnerships with cultural institutions, parks and museums. Community service projects focus and mobilize children's altruistic impulses while setting a precedent for a lifetime of civic involvement.





SOCIAL STUDIES CORE CURRICULUM

Social studies forms the nexus of the VCS curriculum. Through their exploration of human communities across history and the world, children gain an understanding of themselves and others as social beings creating and living in cultural contexts that both reflect and define themselves. This exploration feeds intellectual curiosity and builds an empathic sensibility.

Beginning with a study of their own communities – their families, classroom, school and neighborhoods – through to studies of complex ancient and modern civilizations, our coursework promotes an appreciation for human diversity and interdependence while imparting knowledge and supporting students' mastery of skills.

Teachers integrate various disciplines into the core program. Students survey and analyze scientific inventions, literature, architecture, religious and political ideologies, musical traditions and art to understand their impact on history and our current society. As a result, children experience learning as an exciting process of examination and synthesis.





“It’s amazing to see our little one asking – and tackling – such big questions. VCS’s teachers and curriculum bring out the excitement of learning.”

-VCS Parent

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Our coursework challenges students to reach their full potential through myriad opportunities for cognitive, social, emotional and physical growth. We teach subject matter in depth with a strong interdisciplinary focus; children gain a substantial body of knowledge along with the ability to make connections between various areas of learning.

Our curriculum is coherent in its scope and sequence yet allows flexibility for teachers and students to pursue topics of interest as they arise. Please see the VCS Curriculum Guide for a comprehensive overview.

VCS students are encouraged to ask profuse and pertinent questions, to express their opinions with confidence and to turn to one another (not just the teacher) as valued sources of information and ideas. They are empowered to take intellectual risks that discipline and stretch their minds. Students begin taking standardized achievement tests in 3rd Grade as one of many progress measures.

Through their course of study, our students master the tools needed to become skilled readers and writers, critical thinkers and creative problem solvers, respectful leaders and enthusiastic participants. They are well prepared to succeed in high school and beyond.



THE LOWER SCHOOL

The Lower School program encompasses Grades K-5. These years have a profound impact on a child's mindset about learning for the rest of his or her life. Dedicated, caring and talented teachers make our Lower School an exceptional educational environment.

Young children need an array of sensory experiences to develop their cognitive abilities. Using developmentally appropriate activities, we introduce the basic skills of reading, writing, science and mathematics. We enrich the homeroom program with small-group, specialist-taught classes in art, library, technology, music and woodshop along with physical education and daily active play in our gym, play yard and on our rooftop playground.

Older children are capable of more abstract learning, but they continue to need a balance between conceptual, intellectual work and hands-on experiences to become agile thinkers and problem solvers.

As students mature, we emphasize the refinement of academic skills in a stimulating environment where the acquisition of new knowledge can be put to effective use. Regular homework and specialized subjects like Spanish and

“VCS teaches students how to learn.”

-VCS Teacher

STEAM [science, technology, engineering, art, math] are added to an already rigorous curriculum. Students are immersed in every aspect of their studies; children may act as archaeologists in ancient Egypt, brush painters in China or biologists in Hudson River Park.

As the curriculum expands, teachers help students navigate the increasing complexities. Students learn time-management and organizational skills. Digital technologies provide further opportunities for customized, hands-on learning. VCS students begin taking standardized achievement tests in 3rd Grade.



THE UPPER SCHOOL

Our Upper School program is a stimulating, challenging blend of required and elective courses that broaden students' knowledge while honing their abilities for complex,

abstract thinking. Gifted faculty provide steady support as children mature into young teens; we continue employing a variety of teaching methods to ensure adolescents remain engaged, active learners.

In Upper School, students encounter a departmentalized curriculum that expands to include three world language options – Spanish, Latin, Mandarin – and a rich array of electives such as Model Congress, Japanese Culture, Mathematical Puzzles and Advanced Coding, among others. Students employ effective time-management strategies, developing self-disciplined study habits.

Physical activity and confidence are especially important for children approaching adolescence. We offer a structured physical education program, daily recess and opportunities to participate in interscholastic athletics.



Personal development and strong friendships are also integral to the VCS experience. Grade-level dances, outdoor education trips, community service projects, participation in the Student Advisory Board and myriad after-school enrichment activities are all opportunities for students to grow socially and emotionally.

Small classes, individual guidance and demanding instruction prepare our Upper School students to move into high school with ease.



“We’re competitive with ourselves at VCS. We want to do our very best and expect our friends to do theirs.”

–Upper School Student

Avenues: The World School

Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts

Beacon School

Elisabeth Irwin

Brooklyn Friends School

Princeton High School

Léman Manhattan Preparatory School

Brearley School

The Dalton School

Riverdale Country School

TREVOR DAY SCHOOL

St. Paul's School

Grace Church School

The Urban Assembly Institute of Math and Science for Young Women

Ethical Culture Fieldston School

MILLBROOK SCHOOL

The Urban Assembly Institute of Math and Science for Young Women

Packer Collegiate Institute

Trinity School

Ethical Culture Fieldston School

The Nightingale-Bamford School

BERKELEY CARROLL SCHOOL

Frank Sinatra School of the Arts

“VCS graduates are not only exceptional students, they are fantastic people determined to do great things with their lives.”

-Director of High School Placement

HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Highly selective high schools and universities seek out VCS graduates. Our students excel in competitive environments that value their adept critical-thinking skills and confident, collaborative approach to learning.

Our objective is to help each student find a high school that is an ideal match for his or her academic talents and personal aspirations. Each spring, parents of 7th Grade students meet with the Director of High School Placement for an overview of the application procedure. During the 8th Grade year, the Director of High School Placement schedules a series of meetings with parents and students to provide individual guidance and support throughout the high school placement process.



FACILITIES

Village Community School's campus spans the entire block of West 10th Street between Washington and Greenwich Streets. Our school is housed in two beautiful five-story buildings, noteworthy for their high ceilings and abundant sunlight in the classrooms and public spaces. Our original building, a historic Victorian structure, is seamlessly joined with a modern addition completed in 2003. Beyond classrooms equipped with the latest technology, we offer a 20,000-volume sky-lit library, a state-of-the-art computer lab, three well-equipped science centers, two bright, naturally lit art studios, a woodshop, two music studios with optimal acoustics, a rooftop garden and playground, a large outdoor play yard, a gymnasium, an auditorium and a lunchroom with a full-service kitchen.



HISTORY & ACCREDITATION

VCS was founded in 1970 by a small group of families wanting to create a West Village K-8 school to replace the Bank Street School that had moved uptown.

Founding Director Sheila Sadler led VCS for 20 years, retiring in 1989. Jeff Wallis then served as Director until 1996. Current Head of School Eve Kleger has led VCS since 1996. Village Community School is an independent, non-profit, educational corporation, chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York, accredited by the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS), and licensed by the Health Department of New York City. The school is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), NYSAIS, the New York Guild of Independent Schools, the Independent School Admissions Association of Greater New York (ISAAGNY), the Parents League, the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), Prep for Prep, Early Steps, A Better Chance (ABC) and the Interschool Faculty Diversity Search.



ADMISSIONS

We invite you to visit VCS and see our program in action. We look forward to meeting your family and discussing your educational goals.



Non-discrimination Policy

Village Community School admits students of any race, color, sexual orientation, gender identification, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, gender identification, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, tuition assistance and loan programs, athletic and other school-administered programs.

VCS

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