



## PRINCIPLES OF PARTNERSHIP

At Veritas, we believe learning can truly be a ‘garden of delight’, a place where young plants are given excellent nourishment, rich ‘soil’, and joyful encouragement. Partnering with Christian parents who are growing in their faith, in the care of a church community, means that the minds and hearts of students are cultivated not only at school, but also at home and church. We pray that in each setting, our students are being established and equipped to bear much fruit – for the glory of God and the good of others.

This partnership is at the very core of who we are as a community of faith and learning. By partnership, we mean we are in covenant with one another, and with God, in this shared vision and mission. The relationship between parent and school must be a cooperative and collaborative one for us to be successful.

As such, the Veritas partnership philosophy is based on three main ideas:

### Shared and Agreed Upon Goals

One of the beautiful things about a Veritas education is clearly established “telos” – meaning the purpose or end goal. With that telos in mind, we’ve designed an in and out of classroom education that begins with the end in mind. From the mortar boards of graduation to the laurel wreaths our youngest students receive their first day of school, everything we do flows out of what we call the “Portrait of the Graduate”. In joining the Veritas community, families are agreeing on the primary objectives captured in this portrait.

### Portrait of a Graduate

We desire to cultivate students who ...

- Understand and believe the Gospel, enjoying a sincere, growing faith.
- Experience and desire authentic Christian community.
- Communicate effectively in speech and writing.
- Reason critically, expansively and independently.
- Possess the tools and desire for a lifetime of learning.
- Serve the kingdom of God and engage their culture faithfully.

In addition to the Portrait of the Graduate, we work hard to clearly communicate other priorities, goals, and objectives that are core to who we are. We call these our “Core Commitments”. They include things like instruction in Latin and logic, the pursuit of the heart rather than just behavior, the value of great literature, art and music, the integration of disciplines, the cultivation of the affections, and so on.

Together, these make up the “90%” that define us as a school and drive curricular and co-curricular activities and programs. We will never all agree on the remaining “10%” and therefore we all have to compromise to some degree. Certainly, families will have different preferences as to the next language they want their child to study, the sports they want offered, a uniform preference, or whether or not a snow day is called. When we use the term “the 90% Rule”, we are saying that if you are aligned and in agreement with the 90%, we ask you to be understanding and gracious about the 10% that might not be your particular preference.

If we are truly aligned on the major objectives, walking shoulder to shoulder in the same direction, we avoid much of the distraction and division that can characterize school communities.

## Healthy Communication

Partnering well requires healthy, biblical communication from everyone in our community. The school has to communicate clearly the goals and priorities mentioned above, teachers must communicate how a student is faring – academically and otherwise, parents must communicate if they have questions or concerns. The Veritas Standard outlines principles and practices that we commit to in being a part of this community. We ask that parents and teachers pay particular attention to the “Communication Philosophy and Commitments” section of the Standard both on an annual basis, and when a challenging situation arises.

### Normalizing Conflict

The Gospel is clear: we are all sinners, fallen short of God’s glory. We experience destructive conflict because we want what we do not have. As we seek to satisfy our desires, we may find others do not always cooperate with our plans. In the Veritas School environment, 500 men, women and students are brought together five days a week, seven hours a day. While not the defining experience of our life in community, conflict is neither abnormal nor to be avoided, but rather a welcome opportunity to examine our hearts, our desires, and how we seek their fulfillment. Because we believe the Gospel’s indictment of our own hearts, we are neither shocked nor disheartened when conflict arises at school, but we stand ready to open a conversation that moves beyond symptoms to the root cause. What a privilege to move together from conflict to peace-making, through the revealing, healing work of the Gospel!

### In the Midst of Conflict

While understanding that conflict is a normal, and even helpful part of growing together, working through our disagreements can still be very difficult. With this in mind, we believe the following principles provide a helpful foundation as we seek mutual understanding and biblical reconciliation:

- We will believe the best of one another, giving the benefit of the doubt when misunderstandings or miscommunications arise.
- Our goals are truth, restoration and partnership; these goals trump seeking vindication or one of us needing to be right. Conflict resolution is not a zero-sum game.
- We will remember that most conflicts are brought about by a confluence of peoples’ sin rather than one sole contributor – a sinful act eliciting a sinful response. We will acknowledge that we all sin and that we don’t know everything about any given situation.
- We will remember that both parental and school authority are not based on moral superiority but on position; before God we are all equally destitute and in need of a Savior. The Gospel helps us to be humble and vulnerable with one another, and points the way to reconciliation.
- When we feel the swell of self-defense, we will listen longer and/or ask a question rather than begin talking.
- We will apologize for the small issues that may have contributed to the conflict along the way to resolution of the bigger issue.
- When appropriate, we will give one another space and time to prayerfully consider the issue before us, without demanding immediate answers and resolution.

## Parent Engagement

When describing the role parents play at Veritas, “engagement” might be a more accurate term than “involvement” . While involvement is important, we believe digging deeper – engaging with content, classmates, and community – will bear the best fruit.

### Connecting

Engagement is a natural result of connecting. We desire and expect that Veritas parents would be connected – both to what your child is learning and also to the lives of those we are in community with. To be a part of Veritas is to not only

partner with the school but to partner with the other families God has brought together in this important work. As you care for your own children, it speaks volumes to them when they know you are truly interested in what they are learning and experiencing at school. Knowing that you also care for their classmates and their classmates' families prepares children for the communities they will love and serve in the future.

### Reading

One of the best ways to be engaged with your child's education is to read. Read to them, with them and in front of them. Encourage them to read beyond the classroom requirement so that they understand that reading is not about school, but about learning, growing, and stewarding the mind God has given them. The benefits of reading are quickly evident in the life of a student – well beyond the assigned work – and equips children for a lifetime of learning and joy.

### Modeling

By God's design, parents are, by far, the most significant influence in a child's life. While Veritas School strives to consistently put before students that which is true, beautiful and good, to provide tools for a life of learning, and to fill classrooms with faculty who love God and others, the daily witnessed practices of parents are far more important.

For the partnership between parents, church and school to be of greatest effect, the experience of each must be consistent, winsome, authentic and compelling. Children are keen observers. Hypocrisy, double-standards and inconsistency are deeply felt.

What do our children witness as we navigate conflicts with our spouse, neighbor, boss, pastor? How are we most entertained? Whom do we invite to dinner and what do we talk about? Which books are dusty on the shelf and which do we read over and over? How do we speak of those in authority? Do we remain faithful to our commitments and how do we handle disappointment? How and how often do we seek forgiveness? Are we kind?

The truth is that we all – without exception – regularly fail in every area of our lives. In these moments, what do our watching children learn about God and our need for Jesus? About repentance and restoration? Modeling humility, repentance, and a growing faith is a tremendous gift to give our children.

Veritas is not a perfect school seeking to partner with perfect parents who attend perfect churches. We do, however, desire to humbly seek to honor God and His good and perfect gifts by together giving attention to that which is praiseworthy. It is a joy and privilege to partner with you.