

**Victory Deaf Academy**  
**Student & Parent Handbook**  
**2025 – 2026**



## **Mission Statement**

Victory Deaf Academy provides a comprehensive, relationship-driven education rooted in high expectations and individualized support preparing every student for lifelong success.

## **Vision**

Be Victorious in Everything We Do

## **Our Vision**

This guiding belief shapes every decision we make. At Victory Deaf Academy, victory is not just an outcome it's a way of life. Whether in academics, communication, or personal growth, our students are encouraged to pursue excellence with resilience, pride, and purpose.

## **Our Core Values**

TEAM, WIN, WHATEVER IT TAKES, NO EXCUSES, 100% EVERYDAY

## **Office School Hours**

### **Monday – Friday**

7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### **Early Release Days**

7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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## **School Hours**

### **Monday – Thursday**

8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

### **Early Release (Every Friday)**

8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

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## **Arrival**

To ensure the safety, security, and smooth operation of our school day, we have established clear procedures for student arrival and dismissal.

Students may arrive on campus between 8:10 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. To keep the drop-off line running efficiently, we ask that any concerns or messages for your child's teacher be communicated before arrival via phone or email. Staff have been directed to encourage families to follow this process in order to minimize traffic congestion and ensure a safe, timely start to the school day.

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## **Dismissal**

To avoid disruptions to learning and ensure a safe and orderly dismissal process, students will not be released after 2:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and after 12:00 p.m. on Fridays, except in the case of an emergency. This policy allows staff to finish academic instruction and transition to their dismissal responsibilities.

We kindly ask that all families arrive on time for pick-up. In the event that a child is not picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal, they will be supervised in aftercare. A late pick-up fee will be charged to help cover staffing:

- **\$25** for the first 15 minutes late

- **\$50** for each additional 15-minute increment

Repeated late pick-ups may result in a report to the Department of Child Safety (DCS).

Please refer to the school calendar for early release days and ensure appropriate pick-up arrangements are in place. Your partnership in following these procedures helps us maintain a safe, well-supervised environment for all students.

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## **Attendance**

In accordance with Arizona law (ARS § 15-803), students are required to attend school at least 90% of the time. At Victory Deaf Academy, we believe consistent attendance is essential to a student's academic success and personal growth. Regular participation in daily instruction, routines, and school activities builds the foundation for progress and achievement.

We strongly encourage families to prioritize attendance and limit absences to only those that are absolutely necessary.

If a student is frequently absent or tardy, our team will partner with the family to identify challenges and develop a plan for improvement. However, if attendance issues persist and no progress is made, we are required by law to report the matter to the appropriate state authorities.

Your support in ensuring your child attends school regularly is vital to their success. Together, we can create a strong and consistent learning environment for every student.

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## **Excused Absences**

Certain absences may be considered excused when properly documented. To ensure accurate attendance records, an absence will only be excused if it is verified by a phone call, email, or written note from a parent/guardian, or a doctor's note.

Acceptable reasons for an excused absence include:

- Personal illness
- Death of an immediate family member
- Serious family emergencies
- Court appearances or summons

- School-approved activities
- Religious holidays
- Urgent medical appointments

Please note: Routine medical, dental, therapy, or other non-urgent appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible. We encourage families to utilize early dismissal days or school holidays for such appointments. Students will not be routinely excused for therapy or recurring appointments during school hours.

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## **Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences can significantly impact a student's academic progress. We strongly encourage families to avoid any absences that are not recognized as excused, as defined in our attendance policy.

Examples of unexcused absences include:

- Family vacations or trips
- Participation in non-school related activities (e.g., sporting events, birthdays, or celebrations)
- Routine, recurring therapy or medical appointments during school hours

A student is considered truant if they are absent without the knowledge or approval of both the parent/guardian and Victory Deaf Academy. Truancy may result in school-based consequences and, if excessive, may also be reported to local authorities in accordance with Arizona State Law.

If a parent or guardian fails to ensure their child attends school regularly, the student will be considered truant, and the school is legally obligated to report chronic truancy.

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## **Tardiness**

Arriving on time is essential for a successful school day. School begins promptly at 8:30 a.m., and students are expected to be in their assigned classroom by that time. Any student arriving after 8:30 a.m. will be marked tardy.

Late arrivals disrupt classroom routines and instructional time, so we ask that families make every effort to ensure students arrive on time each day.

If a student arrives late, a parent or guardian must accompany the student to the front office and sign them in before the student proceeds to class.

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## **Illness Policy**

To help keep our school community healthy and safe, we ask that you keep your child home if they are showing signs of illness before the school day begins.

In general, students will be sent home if they:

- Have a temperature of 100°F or higher
- Are experiencing vomiting or diarrhea
- Show symptoms of a suspected contagious illness

If your child is sent home due to illness, they must meet the following criteria before returning to school:

- Maintain a normal body temperature (98.6°F) for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (e.g., Tylenol, Motrin)
- Be free from vomiting and/or diarrhea for a full 24 hours

When a parent, guardian, or emergency contact is called due to illness, we ask that the student be picked up within one (1) hour of the notification.

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## **Allergies**

Victory Deaf Academy requires all students to have a current Student Allergy List on file each school year, documenting all diagnosed allergies.

Families are encouraged to notify the front office promptly if there are any updates or newly identified allergies during the year. This allows us to take necessary precautions in classrooms, common areas, and other school settings to help ensure your child's safety.

Victory Deaf Academy reserves the right to request medical documentation to verify any reported allergies.

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## **Lice / Nit**

If a student is found to have active, adult head lice or visible nits (eggs), the parent or guardian will be contacted, and the student will be sent home for treatment. Families may be provided with information on effective head lice treatment and are encouraged to begin treatment immediately and check all household members.

The student may return to school the next day, but will be rechecked by school staff upon arrival. The student may remain at school only if no active lice or nits are detected.

If, upon recheck, the student is still found to have lice or nits, the school will contact the parent or guardian to discuss continued treatment options and next steps.

If one or more students in a classroom are identified with head lice or nits, the principal or designated staff member will notify all parents/guardians of students in that class. Information about detection, prevention, and treatment will also be provided.

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## **Medication at School**

Victory Deaf Academy requires written parent/guardian permission to administer any medication at school. A signed "Request for Giving Medication at School" form must be completed and on file.

All medications must be:

- Delivered to the school by a parent or guardian
- Provided in the original, clearly labeled, and current prescription bottle
- Accompanied by dosage instructions and other relevant information

Prescription medications will not be administered if they are not in a properly labeled and current prescription container. Upon delivery, staff will count the medication and maintain a Medication Log to track all doses given. When a refill is needed, classroom staff will notify the parent or guardian.

Because changes in medication can significantly impact a student's behavior both at school and at home, families are required to notify the school immediately of any changes. A new "Request for Giving Medication at School" form must be completed, and an updated prescription bottle must be provided.

Important: If your child requires an inhaler or EpiPen during school hours, two may be required, one to remain in the classroom and one to be kept in the school van for transportation safety.

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## **Student Pick-Up Authorization**

For the safety of all students, only individuals listed on your child's emergency contact list are authorized to pick them up from school.

If someone who does not routinely pick up your child will be doing so, they must:

- Come into the front office
- Provide a valid photo ID
- Be listed on the emergency contact or authorized pick-up list

If your child is working with a new provider (e.g., therapist, support worker) who will be picking them up, please provide the school with written authorization in advance to allow for safe release.

Anyone picking up a student during the school day must also bring identification and will only be allowed to pick up the student if their name matches an authorized contact.

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## **Visitor Procedures**

Victory Deaf Academy welcomes parents, guardians, DDD case managers, and other professionals supporting a student to visit the classroom with prior approval. Due to the unique needs of our student population, maintaining a low-distraction environment is essential. Therefore, all visits must be planned in advance and kept brief.

Guidelines for Visits:

- All visits must be pre-approved by a member of the administrative team
- Visits are limited to 20 minutes per appointment and are typically reserved for special activities (e.g., birthday celebrations, student presentations, or holiday events)
- All visitors must check in at the front office, sign in, and wear a visitor name tag
- Identification and a Release of Information Form may be required for non-parent/guardian observers
- Visitors must sign a Confidentiality Agreement before entering any classroom
- A Victory Deaf Academy staff member will escort all visitors to and from the classroom
- All visitors must sign out at the front office before leaving campus

To maintain a calm and focused environment:

- Groups larger than two visitors may be asked to split their visit into separate times
- We kindly ask that siblings or young children not accompany visitors during classroom observations
- Teachers and therapists are not available for conferences during visits. Please schedule a separate time before or after school for meetings or discussions

The safety and well-being of our students is our highest priority. School administrators reserve the right to deny entry to individuals who do not have proper documentation or whose presence is not deemed appropriate. Unauthorized visitors or individuals engaging in disruptive behavior will be asked to leave school grounds immediately.

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## **Staff Boundaries and Outside Employment Policy**

To maintain professional boundaries and uphold the privacy of our students and families, Victory Deaf Academy staff members are not permitted to accept outside employment involving current students.

This includes but is not limited to roles such as:

- Babysitting
- Home therapy
- Habilitation services
- Respite care
- Any position funded privately or through other organizations

Engaging in outside work with current students is considered a conflict of interest and may compromise the professional relationship between school staff and families.

This policy is in place to:

- Protect student and family privacy
  - Preserve appropriate and ethical boundaries
  - Prevent staff from being placed in uncomfortable or compromising situations
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## **Custody Documentation**

Victory Deaf Academy requires that the most current custody documents be kept on file in the school office. This includes the latest court-issued custody decree or any other legally binding documentation.

It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to provide the school with the most recent and updated custody documents. In the absence of updated records, the school will rely on the most recently dated documents on file to determine custody rights and responsibilities.

Providing accurate and current documentation ensures that we can follow legal guidelines and support the safety and well-being of each student.

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## **Order of Protection**

If there is an active Order of Protection related to custody or any other issue, it will be noted and flagged in our student information system to ensure appropriate safety measures are in place.

Please note that Orders of Protection are typically valid for one year. It is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the school with a copy of the renewed order once the current one expires. Without updated documentation, the school may not be able to enforce restrictions outlined in an expired order.

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## **Legal Guardianship**

Legal guardianship, including temporary guardianship, can only be established through a court order.

If a student does not reside with their biological parents, Victory Deaf Academy requires official documentation, such as court-issued letters of guardianship, before the student can be enrolled or continue enrollment.

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## **Parent Code of Conduct**

### **Purpose and Scope**

The Parent Code of Conduct is designed to foster a respectful, collaborative, and safe environment for all members of the Victory Deaf Academy (VDA) community. It outlines expectations for the behavior of parents, guardians, and visitors while on school property, attending school events, or interacting with staff and students in any setting.

## **Core Expectations**

We believe that positive, respectful relationships between families and school staff are essential for student success. All parents, guardians, and visitors are expected to embrace the following principles:

- All children deserve to learn in a safe and supportive environment
- Teachers, administrators, and families must work together for the benefit of all students
- Every member of our school community deserves to be treated with dignity and respect
- Concerns should be addressed directly with the school, giving staff the opportunity to resolve issues prior to public criticism

## **Prohibited Behaviors**

To maintain a peaceful and productive learning environment, the following behaviors are not permitted on campus, at school events, or in any communication with VDA staff:

- Abusive, threatening, profane, or harassing communication (in-person, by phone, email, text, voicemail, or other formats)
- Disruptive behavior that interferes with school operations, classrooms, offices, events, parking lots, or dismissal areas
- Threats of physical harm to staff, students, or other members of the school community
- Threats of property damage or actual destruction of school or personal property
- Excessive unscheduled visits or communications that disrupt school routines or overwhelm staff
- Defamatory, offensive, or derogatory public comments about the school or staff, including on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Google reviews, blogs, etc.)

Note: School staff and administration may not be immediately available to meet or respond to inquiries. The best way to ensure your concerns are addressed is to schedule an appointment. Staff will make every effort to return calls or emails within 24 hours.

## **Addressing Concerns**

All concerns should be addressed through appropriate school channels, allowing matters to be handled fairly and constructively. Public complaints or social media posts can damage the school community and are discouraged when issues can be resolved through direct communication.

## **Consequences for Violations**

Violations of this Code of Conduct may result in consequences appropriate to the nature and severity of the incident, including:

- Verbal or written warnings
- Restricted access to campus or events
- Temporary or permanent bans from school property or school-sponsored activities
- In severe or repeated cases, student un-enrollment due to parent/guardian conduct

These restrictions will not prevent a parent or guardian from attending IEP/ISP meetings or collaborating with VDA staff to support their child's education.

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## **Dress Code and Personal Appearance Policy**

Victory Deaf Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment. A student's attire and appearance should reflect these values and support their ability to learn and participate fully in the school day.

To ensure a positive environment for all students, the following dress code guidelines must be followed:

### **General Expectations:**

- Clothing should be appropriate, modest, and in good condition
- Students must wear closed-toe, secure shoes suitable for school activities (e.g., sneakers)

### **The following items are not permitted:**

- Slip-on shoes, such as flip-flops or backless sandals
- Revealing clothing, including sagging pants, crop tops, or exposed midriffs
- Spaghetti straps (all straps must be at least 3 inches wide)
- Clothing with violent, graphic, or inappropriate images or language
- See-through or sheer garments
- Clothing with holes, rips, or tears, especially if located above the knee or in revealing areas

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## **Celebrations**

At Victory Deaf Academy, we recognize that birthdays are a meaningful and joyful part of childhood. We understand that families may wish to celebrate their child's special day with classmates, and we aim to support those moments in a way that is safe, inclusive, and respectful of all students' needs.

To ensure that all students can participate and that classroom routines are preserved:

- Please communicate with your child's teacher in advance to request permission for an in-class birthday celebration.
- If approved, up to 20 minutes of celebration time may be allowed at the end of the school day.
- All treats or snacks must be store-bought, in original packaging, and clearly labeled with ingredient and nutritional information to accommodate students with allergies or dietary restrictions.
- The teacher will share information about approved celebrations with other families in the class as needed.

Note: Party invitations may not be distributed during class time. However, you are welcome to hand them out outside of school hours.

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## **Behavior and Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI)**

Victory Deaf Academy is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and structured environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Our staff is dedicated to promoting positive behavior, teaching appropriate skills, and responding to challenging behaviors in a respectful and therapeutic manner.

We utilize a range of behavioral interventions and Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) strategies to ensure the care, welfare, safety, and security of every student and staff member.

### **Use of Therapeutic Holds**

Therapeutic holds are used only as a last resort and only when a student poses an immediate physical danger to themselves or others. All less restrictive strategies must be attempted and found to be ineffective before a hold is considered.

A therapeutic hold is a trained, hands-on technique in which a student in crisis is safely and temporarily restrained by trained personnel, never with mechanical devices or chemical restraint.

Key guidelines include:

- Holds will never restrict a student's ability to breathe
- Holds must be appropriate to the student's age, size, and physical condition
- Holds will end immediately once the imminent risk of harm has passed
- A minimum of two CPI-trained staff members must be involved:
  - If one person is implementing the hold, a second must observe
  - For two-person holds, a third staff member must observe
- All staff involved are required to participate in a debrief meeting following the incident

### **Staff Training and Oversight**

All Victory Deaf Academy staff are trained in:

- De-escalation techniques
- Behavioral intervention strategies
- Safe and appropriate use of therapeutic holds

Staff receive comprehensive training annually, along with at least two refresher sessions per school year, under the supervision of a certified CPI trainer.

### **Incident Documentation and Parent Notification**

When a therapeutic hold is used:

- The lead responder will complete a Therapeutic Intervention Report
- An administrator will check the student for any signs of injury
- Parents or guardians will be notified the same day by phone
- Parents may request a copy of the report at any time

All incidents are tracked and analyzed to identify behavior patterns, guide staff response, and inform behavior planning. This data supports proactive strategies, teaching of replacement behaviors, and providing additional supports as needed.

## **Risk of Injury**

While every effort is made to implement holds safely, it is important for families to understand that any physical intervention carries some risk of accidental injury to the student or staff. Victory Deaf Academy is not liable for injuries resulting from a student's own physically aggressive or self-injurious behavior.

## **Home and School Behavior Expectations**

Victory Deaf Academy believes in a clear boundary between school and home discipline:

- Parents will not be asked to issue consequences at home for school behavior
- Likewise, the school will not discipline students for behavior that occurs at home

We encourage open communication and collaboration between families and staff to promote consistent behavior supports across all settings.

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## **Suspension and Expulsion Policy**

Victory Deaf Academy is committed to using positive behavior supports and individualized strategies to help students succeed. Suspension and expulsion are not common practices at our school.

However, in rare cases where a student's behavior poses a serious risk to the safety of themselves or others, or significantly disrupts the learning environment, suspension or expulsion may be considered. Each situation is reviewed carefully, with consideration of the student's needs, developmental level, and the specifics of the incident.

Our goal is always to work collaboratively with families and use every opportunity to support the student's continued growth and success.

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## **Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)**

Victory Deaf Academy partners with a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) to support students who display challenging behaviors and to assist classroom staff in implementing effective behavior management strategies.

The school-appointed BCBA may:

- Observe students in the classroom or other school environments
- Collaborate with staff to assess behavior and provide recommendations

- Offer feedback and support to promote student success and well-being

If the BCBA determines that a formal behavior plan may benefit a student:

- Parents/guardians will be notified
- A pre-scheduled meeting will be arranged to review behavior data and observations
- During the meeting, staff will present the data and outline a proposed behavior plan for discussion and collaboration

Our goal is to work as a team with families and professionals to create supportive, individualized strategies that help students develop positive behaviors and achieve their full potential.

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## **Outside Service Providers**

At Victory Deaf Academy, we understand and respect that many of our students receive outside services that are critical to their ongoing development and well-being. While we fully support families in pursuing these important services, it is equally important that we maintain a focused and distraction-free learning environment during the school day.

To minimize disruptions and ensure consistency in instruction and routines, outside service providers are not permitted to deliver services on campus during school hours.

We encourage families to schedule therapy or support services outside of the school day whenever possible, such as after school, on early release days, or on weekends.

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## **Academics and Grading**

At Victory Deaf Academy, students receive academic instruction aligned with Arizona's College and Career Readiness Standards. Instruction is also guided by each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Service Plan (ISP) to ensure that learning is personalized and meaningful.

Students are assessed based on their individual goals and current academic levels. Work is graded to reflect progress, effort, and achievement relative to each student's unique learning plan.

Our goal is to celebrate growth, support development, and help every student reach their fullest potential through individualized instruction and consistent, supportive feedback.

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## **Instructional Model & Curriculum Overview**

At Victory Deaf Academy, our instructional model is built around the belief that all Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, regardless of their starting point, deserve a learning experience that is individualized, visual, language-rich, and developmentally appropriate. Our model emphasizes foundational academics, total communication, self-regulation, and life readiness. Every element of our program is intentionally designed to meet students where they are and help them grow in meaningful, measurable ways.

We recognize that our students come to us with a wide range of strengths, abilities, and needs. Some students may be working on grade-level content, while others require more intensive support in early academics, language acquisition, or daily living skills. To meet this diversity, we implement a differentiated instructional model that ensures appropriate levels of challenge, support, and independence for all learners.

- Students performing at or near grade level receive standards-aligned instruction with opportunities to extend their thinking through project-based learning, critical thinking, and enriched content.
- Students working below grade level are supported through scaffolded lessons, visual tools, and targeted interventions that close academic gaps while keeping them connected to grade-level ideas and vocabulary.
- Students with significant support needs benefit from highly individualized instruction focused on functional academics, communication, and daily life skills. Many use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), visual supports, and multisensory materials to access instruction.

All instruction is delivered in small groups or individualized settings; whole group teaching is not permitted. This structure ensures that every student receives personalized attention and appropriate pacing. For core content areas like English Language Arts (ELA) and Math, students rotate through four structured stations (e.g., direct instruction, independent work, technology, and sensory or reinforcement). Other subjects, including writing, science, social studies, life skills, American Sign Language (ASL), and social-emotional learning, are taught in small groups that allow for hands-on engagement and language-rich interactions.

Our curriculum is not limited to one type of learner. We use a wide variety of evidence-based programs that are hand-picked to support the full spectrum of student needs. These include visual language materials, standards-aligned digital platforms, foundational reading and math programs, social skills curricula, safety instruction, and functional life skills resources. Many programs are designed specifically for students who benefit from visual, tactile, and repetitive learning strategies. Others are tailored to Deaf learners and support bilingual (ASL/English) language development.

Instruction at Victory Deaf Academy is also deeply connected to the values of Deaf culture, self-advocacy, and identity. We celebrate Deafness as a cultural and linguistic identity, not a deficit. Our team integrates

ASL and Deaf cultural content across lessons to ensure students feel empowered, represented, and proud of who they are.

Above all, our instructional model is about providing access to communication, to content, to relationships, and to life. Whether your child is learning to read their first word, solve a math problem, express their emotions, or prepare for independence, they will be supported every step of the way by a team that believes in their potential and tailors learning to meet their goals.

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## **Technology Use Policy**

Students will have access to a variety of technology tools to support their learning, including tablets, computers, and smartboards. Technology is an important part of our instructional program, and students are expected to use it responsibly and respectfully.

### **Approved Technology Use**

- Students will use school-provided devices only.
- Technology is to be used for teacher-approved educational activities and websites only.
- Personal devices (such as cell phones, tablets, Chromebooks, and laptops) are not permitted on campus, unless used as a required communication device and approved by the IEP/ISP team.

### **Internet Use**

- Students must refrain from unauthorized or inappropriate internet searches.
- The school is not liable for the content accessed during unauthorized searches.

### **Responsibility for Equipment**

- Students are expected to treat all technology equipment with care.
- Intentional damage or misuse of equipment may result in:
  - Loss of technology privileges
  - Parent liability for the repair or replacement of damaged devices

## **Consequences for Misuse**

Any misuse of technology, including accessing unapproved content or damaging equipment, will be addressed according to the school's disciplinary policy.

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## **Community Learning Opportunities**

We believe that learning extends beyond the classroom. As part of our whole-child approach, students participate in structured community outings designed to reinforce classroom instruction, support social skills development, and promote real-world learning experiences.

### **Types of Community Learning Opportunities**

Each class will participate in the following outings throughout the school year:

- Quarterly Class Outings – One outing per quarter (4 per year)
- Monthly Best Buddy Outings – Promoting social interaction and peer relationships
- Quarterly Recreational Trips – Visits to locations such as UpTown Jungle

### **Parental Permission**

- All students must have a signed permission slip from a parent or legal guardian to attend any outing.
- Communication and reminders will be sent in advance of each outing.

### **Transportation**

- Students will be transported in properly insured school vehicles.
- If the number of students exceeds capacity, a school bus will be rented to ensure student safety.

### **Supervision & Parent Involvement**

- Outings are supervised by trained school staff, allowing students to practice independence and social skills with staff support.
- Due to our high staff-to-student ratio, parents/guardians are not invited as chaperones on outings.
- Parents will receive photos and updates via School Status Connect on the day of the outing.

## **Attendance Policy**

- Community outings are considered an extension of the classroom and align with the current curriculum.
  - All students are expected to participate.
  - If a parent/guardian chooses not to have their child attend, the student must remain home for the duration of the outing.
  - Students not participating may return to school at the designated return time provided by the school.
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## **Therapies Provided**

### **Speech and Language Therapy**

Speech and language therapy at Victory Deaf Academy is designed to support the unique communication needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. Services focus on developing expressive and receptive language, social communication, and alternative communication strategies using a total communication approach including American Sign Language (ASL), gestures, visuals, written language, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems.

### **Purpose of Speech Therapy**

The primary goal of speech therapy at VDA is to ensure every student has an accessible and functional means of communication. Therapy is individualized to support students in understanding and expressing language effectively, whether through sign, voice, visuals, or a combination of modalities. Services are integrated into the student's educational environment to promote language development, academic participation, and social interaction.

### **Common Areas of Focus**

Speech and language services may target the following skill areas based on the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Service Plan (ISP):

- Receptive Language – Understanding signed instructions, vocabulary, and concepts
- Expressive Language – Expanding ASL vocabulary, sentence structure, and storytelling
- Social Communication – Practicing turn-taking, eye gaze, topic maintenance, and conversational repair strategies

- Pragmatic Language – Understanding and using appropriate communication in various settings
- Auditory Processing (if applicable) – Supporting students with residual hearing to interpret spoken language
- Alternative Communication Tools – Using AAC devices, communication books, visuals, or written supports to enhance access
- Speech Production (for students with verbal goals) – Developing oral motor skills, articulation, and clarity when appropriate

### **Service Delivery**

Sessions may occur in individual or small group formats and are often embedded within the classroom to support generalization of skills. Therapy plans are closely aligned with classroom instruction, communication goals, and the student’s preferred mode of communication.

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### **Occupational Therapy**

Occupational therapy (OT) at Victory Deaf Academy supports students in developing the cognitive, physical, social, and motor skills necessary for independence, participation, and access within their educational environment. OT services are delivered through a total communication approach, incorporating American Sign Language (ASL), visual supports, tactile cues, and environmental modifications to meet the unique needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing learners.

### **Purpose of Occupational Therapy**

OT is personalized for each student and focuses on increasing functional independence in both academic and life skills. For Deaf learners, this includes helping students navigate daily routines, build motor coordination, and develop the skills needed for success in both classroom and community environments. Therapy is delivered in collaboration with teachers and support staff to ensure strategies are reinforced across the school day.

### **Key Skill Areas Addressed**

Occupational therapy may focus on improving:

- Daily Living Skills (e.g., dressing, toileting, brushing teeth, grooming)
- Fine Motor Skills (e.g., handwriting, using scissors, manipulating small objects)
- Gross Motor Skills (e.g., balance, stair navigation, posture, coordination)

- Visual-Perceptual and Spatial Awareness (e.g., visual tracking, identifying shapes/sizes, spatial orientation)
- Sensory Regulation and Processing (e.g., recognizing sensory needs, using calming strategies)
- Executive Functioning (e.g., planning, organizing materials, self-monitoring)
- Play and Communication Skills (e.g., turn-taking, requesting, problem-solving through visual and signed communication)

### **Therapeutic Outcomes**

Through ongoing occupational therapy, students may:

- Improve independence in school and home routines
- Strengthen motor skills that support writing, play, and self-help
- Increase focus, attention, and ability to follow multi-step directions
- Enhance emotional and sensory regulation
- Build confidence in expressing needs and navigating classroom expectations
- Participate more fully in structured and social activities through consistent use of communication supports

Occupational therapy is a critical support service that promotes access, confidence, and readiness for learning. At Victory Deaf Academy, OT is embedded into the school day and integrated into classroom instruction to ensure consistent, real-world application of skills across all settings.

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### **Physical Therapy (PT)**

Physical therapy (PT) at Victory Deaf Academy supports students in developing the gross motor and physical skills needed to safely and confidently participate in daily school routines. PT services are individualized based on the student's IEP or ISP and focus on building strength, coordination, body awareness, and functional mobility in a communication-accessible environment.

### **Purpose of Physical Therapy**

For Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, physical therapy promotes independence, physical confidence, and participation across educational and recreational settings. Therapy sessions are designed to meet

students where they are developmentally, and instruction is delivered with clear visual supports, sign language modeling, and total communication strategies.

### **Key Skill Areas Addressed**

PT services may target the development of:

- Balance and coordination
- Core strength and posture
- Walking, running, jumping, and climbing
- Navigating stairs or uneven surfaces safely
- Ball skills (throwing, catching, kicking)
- Motor planning and body awareness
- Endurance and stamina for classroom and playground routines

### **Therapeutic Outcomes**

With regular participation in physical therapy, students may:

- Improve mobility and physical safety in both indoor and outdoor school environments
- Gain confidence in navigating the classroom, playground, and community spaces
- Participate more actively in PE, structured movement breaks, and group activities
- Reduce risk of injury and increase physical stamina
- Build a foundation for healthy, active lifestyles beyond school

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### **Animal Therapy**

At Victory Deaf Academy, we recognize the unique therapeutic value animals can provide to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students across a wide range of communication and emotional needs. Animal-assisted interventions may be incorporated into the educational setting to promote emotional regulation, social connection, and student engagement.

## **Why Animal-Assisted Interventions Support Deaf Learners**

Animals offer a calming, nonverbal presence that supports visual learners and those who benefit from sensory regulation. For Deaf students, especially those who experience anxiety, social hesitation, or difficulty navigating peer interactions, animal therapy can be a meaningful and motivating experience. Key benefits include:

### **Increased Attention and Engagement**

Animals offer a consistent, visually engaging presence that can sustain student focus. Many students demonstrate increased on-task behavior and emotional availability for learning during or following animal-assisted sessions.

### **Enhanced Social Interaction**

Animals provide a natural point of connection, encouraging students to initiate interactions, express emotions, and build communication confidence—whether through sign language, gestures, AAC, or facial expressions.

### **Emotional Support and Stress Reduction**

Animal-assisted activities promote a sense of calm and comfort, helping students regulate emotions, reduce anxiety, and feel more secure in their environment. For students who struggle with transitions or sensory overload, animal interaction can provide a positive, grounding experience.

## **Implementation at School**

Animal-assisted interventions are:

- Carefully structured and supervised by trained staff and/or certified handlers
- Voluntary and individualized based on student needs, interests, and sensory preferences
- Accessible and inclusive, with communication strategies adapted to support ASL, AAC, and visual cues
- Implemented only with parent/guardian consent

Participation may include structured group visits, individual interaction, or integrated learning activities involving the animal. Staff closely monitor engagement and emotional responses to ensure safety and therapeutic benefit for all students.

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## **Specials**

### **Music Therapy**

At Victory Deaf Academy, music is used as a multisensory, visual, and movement-based tool to support the emotional, cognitive, and social development of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students. While students may not access music in a traditional auditory sense, music therapy at VDA is designed to be inclusive and engaging through vibration, rhythm, visual cues, and movement.

### **Purpose of Music Therapy**

Music therapy provides students with an opportunity to express themselves, develop self-regulation strategies, and explore rhythm and patterning through accessible, nonverbal modalities. Activities are highly visual, kinesthetic, and structured to support language development, communication, and social interaction.

### **How Music Therapy Supports Deaf Learners**

- Encourages visual interaction and group participation through rhythm-based games and movement
- Promotes self-expression using body movement, instruments, or visual representations of sound
- Builds communication skills by pairing rhythm with sign language, gesture, or AAC
- Teaches social-emotional concepts such as turn-taking, sharing, and teamwork through interactive music activities
- Reinforces patterning, sequencing, and timing, which support executive functioning and academic readiness
- Enhances sensory integration using vibration, tactile instruments, and visual rhythm cues

### **Why Music Works at VDA**

For Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, music therapy is not about hearing sounds—it's about feeling vibration, seeing movement, and engaging the body and mind. Instruments like drums, resonant platforms, and visual rhythm tools allow students to experience music in a fully accessible way. Music activities often incorporate sign language, visual timers, and group routines, helping students build communication and collaboration skills in a fun, inclusive environment.

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## **Art**

At Victory Deaf Academy, students participate in weekly art classes as part of a well-rounded and accessible educational experience. The art program is designed to celebrate creativity while supporting language development, fine motor skills, and emotional expression through highly visual and hands-on instruction.

### **What Students Learn**

During art class, students are introduced to:

- Famous artists and visual storytelling techniques
- A variety of art mediums (e.g., painting, sculpture, collage, mixed media)
- Project-based learning that emphasizes creativity, identity, and self-expression
- Vocabulary development through ASL-integrated instruction tied to themes, colors, emotions, and techniques

All lessons are adapted to ensure that Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students can fully access the content through visual demonstrations, ASL modeling, step-by-step visual guides, and peer collaboration.

### **Why Art Is Especially Meaningful for Deaf and Neurodiverse Learners**

Art supports both communication and emotional development, especially for students who benefit from visual and tactile learning:

- **Visual Language Alignment:** Art naturally complements ASL and other visual communication systems, allowing students to engage in rich expression without relying on spoken language.
  - **Emotional Regulation & Expression:** Art activities provide a calming outlet for students to explore and manage feelings in a safe, supportive environment.
  - **Confidence & Independence:** Students make creative decisions, problem-solve visually, and build autonomy through open-ended exploration.
  - **Inclusion & Joy:** Art fosters an inclusive space where all students, regardless of language, academic level, or support needs, can create, connect, and feel successful.
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## **Adaptive PE**

At Victory Deaf Academy, we are committed to promoting a healthy and active lifestyle for all students. Our Adaptive Physical Education (PE) program is designed to be inclusive, engaging, and personalized to meet the diverse needs of our learners.

### **Our Approach**

PE at Victory Deaf Academy is carefully structured to be accessible to all students while also encouraging each child to reach their highest individual potential. We offer two instructional models within our Adaptive PE program:

- Traditional PE Model – For students in higher-functioning classes who benefit from structured physical fitness routines and games
- Life Skills PE Model – For students who require additional support and benefit from movement activities focused on functional living skills

### **CBSE Instructional Model**

All PE instruction is based on the CBSE model, which focuses on core areas of physical, neurological, and emotional development:

#### **Core, Balance, and Flexibility**

Functional movements and exercises that improve posture, coordination, and range of motion

#### **Brain and Sensory System**

Activities that support neurological, cognitive, and emotional regulation

#### **Strength and Muscle Development**

Anaerobic resistance training to enhance physical strength and motor planning

#### **Endurance and Stamina Adaptation**

Aerobic cardiovascular training to build stamina and promote heart health

While this model may look different from class to class based on student needs, it serves as the foundation of our Adaptive PE program and ensures that every student is building skills to support both physical wellness and classroom readiness.

## **Special Olympics**

Victory Deaf Academy is proud to be an active participant in the Special Olympics of Arizona (SOAZ), competing as part of the Palo Verde Region. Through this partnership, our students have the opportunity to build confidence, teamwork, and athletic skills in a supportive and inclusive environment.

### **Eligibility**

- Students 8 years and older are eligible to participate.
- Participation is based on student interest and team availability.
- A signed permission slip and completed athlete forms are required for all participants.

### **Sports Offered**

Victory Deaf Academy competes in a variety of sports throughout the school year, which may include but are not limited to:

- Soccer
- Basketball
- Flag Football
- Track

Additional sports may be added based on student interest and available resources.

### **Getting Started**

Each sport season begins with a team meeting where:

- Coaches are introduced
- Practice and game schedules are shared
- Expectations for athletes and families are clearly communicated

### **Practice & Participation Expectations**

- Athletes are expected to attend all scheduled practices.
- A minimum of 8 hours of practice is required before participating in any official event or competition.

- If a student is absent from school on the day of a practice or event, they may not participate in that day's practice or game.
  - Consistent attendance is essential for team success and athlete safety.
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## **Pledge of Allegiance**

At Victory Deaf Academy, we begin each day by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance as a school community. This daily practice serves as a moment of unity and reflection, reinforcing values such as respect, responsibility, and gratitude.

### **Our Practice**

We encourage all students to:

- Stand respectfully
- Place their hand over their heart
- Face the American flag
- Recite the pledge in unison with their classmates and staff

This routine helps build a sense of community, respect for tradition, and appreciation for the freedoms we enjoy.

### **Why It Matters**

The American flag is a powerful symbol of our nation's freedom and liberty. We believe in honoring the meaning behind the flag's colors:

- White: Purity and innocence
- Red: Hardiness and valor
- Blue: Vigilance, perseverance, and justice

These values are also taught and reinforced through our Character Education curriculum, helping students grow into responsible, ethical, and thoughtful individuals.

By participating in the Pledge of Allegiance each morning, students learn to recognize and honor the sacrifices of those who have served and continue to serve our country. It is a meaningful reminder of the freedoms and choices they benefit from each day, including the opportunity to attend a school that meets their unique needs and celebrates their potential.

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## **IEP and ISP Meetings**

At Victory Deaf Academy, we are committed to ensuring that every student receives the support and services they need through a thoughtful, collaborative, and transparent Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Service Plan (ISP) process.

### **Annual Meeting Scheduling**

- IEP/ISP meetings are scheduled 2–3 weeks prior to the required annual review date.
- Parents/guardians will receive a Draft IEP/ISP at least 5 days in advance of the meeting for review.

### **Parent Input & Collaboration**

- Families are encouraged to review the draft and email any feedback or suggestions to the teacher before the meeting.
- The draft will be reviewed collaboratively during the meeting, and any necessary changes will be made in real time.
- A final copy of the IEP/ISP will be emailed to parents within 10 days of the meeting.

### **Ongoing Support**

- Parents may request an IEP or ISP meeting at any time throughout the school year to discuss concerns, review progress, or make adjustments to the plan.
- Parents will always be offered a copy of their procedural safeguards at every IEP/ISP meeting.

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## **Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) Meetings**

A Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) meeting is required every three years to determine continued eligibility for special education services under an IEP (Individualized Education Program).

### **Who Is Responsible?**

- The school district where your child resides is responsible for completing the MET process.

- If your child is due for a MET, parents/guardians should contact the district of residence to request a MET meeting.
- Victory Deaf Academy is happy to assist families with this process by helping with communication and providing supporting documentation as needed.

### **What Happens If a MET Expires?**

If the MET is not updated within the required three-year timeline, and the district has not completed the reevaluation:

- Your child will be moved from an IEP to an ISP (Individualized Service Plan) for the following school year.
- This may result in changes to the level or type of services your child receives.

Staying current with MET evaluations is essential to ensuring that your child continues to receive appropriate services under their IEP. We encourage families to reach out with any questions we are here to support you every step of the way.

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### **Personal Items at School**

To maintain a focused and distraction-free learning environment, non-essential personal items should not be brought to school. This includes:

- Cell phones
- Laptops, iPads, or tablets
- iPods, cameras, or other internet-enabled devices
- Stuffed animals or toys

### **Exceptions**

If a student has an extenuating circumstance, they may bring an item only with prior teacher approval. In such cases, the item must be turned in to the teacher upon arrival and will be secured for the duration of the school day.

### **Responsibility for Personal Belongings**

Victory Deaf Academy is not responsible for any personal items or money that are lost, stolen, or damaged while on school premises. This includes items that are:

- Brought without permission
- Used without supervision
- Stored in backpacks, desks, or cubbies

To help prevent loss, please label all personal belongings (including jackets, coats, backpacks, and lunch boxes) with your child's first and last name.

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### **Student Privacy and Device Use**

To protect the privacy and confidentiality of all students in accordance with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), students are not permitted to wear or carry the following devices during the school day:

- GPS trackers
- Audio or video recording devices
- Any device capable of capturing or transmitting data

These types of devices pose a risk to the privacy of other students and staff and are therefore strictly prohibited on campus during school hours.

If you have a specific concern or need regarding your child's safety, please contact the school administration to discuss approved alternatives or accommodations.

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### **Before and After School Tutoring**

Victory Deaf Academy is proud to offer a high-quality before and after school tutoring program designed to support academic growth, social development, and creativity in a safe and structured environment. This program is open to all enrolled students and is available only on days when school is in session.

#### **Program Highlights**

Students will engage in a variety of activities, including:

- Academic support and tutoring
- Outdoor play and movement

- Crafts, art projects, and games
- Social skills development
- Snack time and downtime in a relaxed setting

This program is designed to foster independence, self-esteem, and individuality in a fun and nurturing atmosphere.

### **Attendance and Scheduling**

To ensure appropriate staffing and materials, parents/guardians must:

- Indicate in advance which days and times their child will attend the program
- Understand that they will be billed for the days they select, whether or not their child attends
- Notify the school immediately if their scheduling needs change

### **Snack Guidelines**

If your child is enrolled in the After Care Program, please send them with a nutritious snack to enjoy during their time in the program.

### **Hours of Operation**

- Before Care: 7:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.
- After Care: 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Monday-Thursday only)

Note: After school tutoring services will not be available on Fridays due to staff professional development

### **Program Fees**

- Before Care: \$10 per day (*flat rate, regardless of drop-off time*)
- After Care: \$12 per day (*flat rate, regardless of pick-up time*)

Note: If tuition is fully paid, remaining ESA funds in your ClassWallet account may be used for Before and After School tutoring services.

### **Payment Policy**

- Payment for Before and After School tutoring is due on the specified due date.

- A 7-day grace period is provided for late payments.

After this grace period, the following consequences may apply:

- A late fee of \$50 per day
  - Discontinuation of Before/After School Program services
  - Possible disenrollment from the tutoring program
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## **Transportation Options**

### **Option 1: Parent/Guardian Transportation**

Families may choose to transport their child to and from school each day independently.

### **Option 2: Designated Location Pickup (No Fee)**

Transportation is free of charge when the parent/guardian agrees to meet the school van at a designated pickup/drop-off location set by Victory Deaf Academy.

### **Option 3: Home Pickup and Drop-Off**

Families may request door-to-door service for a monthly fee:

- \$100 per month for one-way transportation
- \$200 per month for round-trip transportation
- This fee is per family, not per individual student
- Home pickup/drop-off is only available within a 5-mile radius of the school
- Families who live outside of this radius must use a designated pickup location

Important: If your child requires a booster seat or car seat, a spare seat must be provided and kept at the school. Transportation cannot be provided without it.

## **Transportation Behavior Policy**

To maintain a safe and respectful environment for all students and staff on school vans:

- Students who display aggressive behavior, use profane language, or otherwise disrupt the safety of the vehicle may be denied transportation for that day
- In such cases, parents/guardians are required to arrange alternative transportation without exception
- Repeated incidents may result in the student being permanently removed from the transportation roster

### **Payment & ESA Funds**

- After your tuition is paid in full, you may use any remaining ESA funds in your ClassWallet account to pay for transportation services
- Transportation payments are due on the specified due date
- A 7-day grace period is provided

Payments not received within this window are subject to:

- A \$50 per day late fee
  - Discontinued transportation services
  - Possible disenrollment from the program
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## **Tuition**

Victory Deaf Academy is a private educational program dedicated to providing high-quality services tailored to each student's unique needs. Below is an outline of tuition rates, payment policies, and important guidelines regarding enrollment and fees.

### **Annual Tuition Rates**

- Kindergarten (Half Day): \$18,500
- Kindergarten (Full Day) – 12th Grade: \$35,000

Please note: Tuition does not include the cost of community outings, before/after school care, clubs, activity fees, or special events.

### **Payment Terms**

- Tuition payments are subject to a 2% ClassWallet service fee per quarterly payment.
- All tuition must be paid on or before the due date.
- A 7-day grace period is provided. Payments not received within this window are subject to:
  - A \$50.00 per day late fee
  - Possible disenrollment

Important: Once a student is enrolled and tuition is processed, families who choose to withdraw will be charged a \$1,000 processing fee. No tuition refunds will be issued after payment is made.

### **Mid-Quarter Enrollment**

For students enrolling mid-quarter, tuition will be prorated as follows:

- Enrolling between 1–21 school days into the quarter: Half-quarter payment required
- Enrolling with 22 or more school days remaining in the quarter: Full-quarter payment required

### **Mid-Quarter Withdrawals**

For students withdrawing mid-quarter, tuition will be prorated as follows:

- Withdrawals between 1–21 school days into the quarter: Half-quarter payment required
  - Withdrawals with 22 or more school days remaining in the quarter: Full-quarter payment required
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## **Scholarships**

There are a variety of scholarships available in Arizona, and because of this, most of our students are able to attend Victory Deaf Academy with little or no out-of-pocket cost.

### **Empowerment Scholarship Accounts (ESA)**

The Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) is a program administered by the Arizona Department of Education. It provides state-funded accounts that families can use to pay for private school tuition, home-based education, and other approved educational services.

By enrolling in the ESA program, families formally opt out of the public school system in favor of more individualized educational choices.

**Key Features:**

- Funded with state tax dollars
- The award amount is based primarily on the student’s disability category, as outlined in an Arizona public school IEP, MET report, or medical diagnosis
- Can be used for private school tuition, educational therapies, curriculum, and more

For full details and application instructions, please visit:

👉 <https://www.azed.gov/esa/>

Quarter	Quarter Period	Funding Dates
Q1	July 1st - September 30th	July 1st - September 30th
Q2	October 1st - December 31st	October 1st - December 31st
Q3	January 1st - March 31st	January 1st - March 31st
Q4	April 1st - June 30th	April 1st - June 30th

***Victory Deaf Academy will email an invoice out 7-10 days before each quarter payment is due.***

**Private Placement**

Families who choose not to use ESA funding may pay tuition out of pocket. Private placement is available for any family wishing to enroll directly without applying for third-party scholarships.

**Summer Camp**

Victory Deaf Academy offers a summer program designed to support continued growth and prevent learning loss during the break. Students participate in a variety of engaging, hands-on experiences that help prepare them for the upcoming school year.

**The program includes:**

- Theme-based academic lessons
- Social skill development activities
- Community learning opportunities
- Fun and meaningful experiences designed to build confidence and reinforce key skills

Our summer program is both educational and enjoyable, providing a structured environment where students can learn, grow, and thrive even when school is out.

## **Student and Parent Handbook Acknowledgement and Agreement**

The Victory Deaf Academy Student and Parent Handbook outlines important policies, procedures, expectations, and responsibilities that support a safe and productive learning environment for all students. It serves as a guide for students and families to understand their roles in fostering academic success and respectful school conduct.

I, the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Victory Deaf Academy Student and Parent Handbook. I understand the policies and procedures outlined within the handbook and agree to comply with them as a condition of my child's continued enrollment at Victory Deaf Academy.

I am aware that a digital copy of the handbook is available on the school's website for ongoing reference.

If I have questions or require clarification regarding any content within the handbook, I understand that it is my responsibility to consult with the school principal.

By signing below, I affirm that I have read and understand the contents of the handbook and agree to support and uphold the expectations set forth by Victory Deaf Academy.

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**Parent/Guardian Name (Print):**

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**Parent/Guardian Signature:**

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**Student Name:**

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**Date:**

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