Victory Autism Academy

Student & Parent Handbook

2026 – 2027

VAA Sun City West 13950 W. Meeker Blvd. Sun City West, AZ 85375	**VAA Goodyear Elementary** 1781 N. Central Avenue Goodyear, AZ 85338
VAA Goodyear Middle School 13530 West Van Buren Street Goodyear, AZ 85338	**VAA Goodyear High School** 13530 West Van Buren Street Goodyear, AZ, 85338 Suite 104 and 105
VAA Phoenix 6849 W. Indian School Road Phoenix, AZ 85033	**VAA GCU** 2930 W. Bethany Home Road Phoenix, AZ 85033
VAA Anthem 41900 N. 42nd Avenue Anthem, AZ 85086	**VAA Queen Creek Elementary** 20365 W. Ocotillo Road Queen Creek, AZ 85142
VAA Queen Creek Middle and High School 7377 Hunt Highway San Tan Valley, AZ 85142	

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Mission Statement

Provide students on the autism spectrum, a whole child education that will not only improve their quality of life but also prepare them for future success.

Vision

To be courageous in everything we do.

Core Beliefs

- **Enrich-** Our goal is to provide an educational setting with programs and tools to improve and enhance life skills for those on the Autism spectrum as well as their families. We aspire to make life more meaningful and rewarding.
- **Inspire-** We dedicate ourselves to being a positive and uplifting school that encourages, promotes, and celebrates success in all individuals. We believe each person on the autism spectrum has the opportunity to make a positive difference in this world.
- **Empower-** We strive to empower individuals on the autism spectrum to achieve their highest quality of life academically, emotionally, physically, and socially.

Office School Hours

Monday – Friday
7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

School Hours

Monday – Thursday
8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Early Release (Every Friday)
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

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.

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 student 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.

Attendance

In accordance with Arizona law (ARS § 15-803), students are required to attend school at least 90% of the time. At Victory Autism 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.

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.

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 Autism 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.

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.

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.

Allergies

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

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.

Medication at School

Victory Autism 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.

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.

Visitor Procedures

Victory Autism 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, Privacy, & Non-Disclosure Agreement before entering any classroom
- A Victory Autism 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.

Staff Boundaries and Outside Employment Policy

To maintain professional boundaries and uphold the privacy of our students and families, Victory Autism 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 Autism 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 parents' or guardians' 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.

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.

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 Autism Academy requires official documentation, such as court-issued letters of guardianship, before the student can be enrolled or continue enrollment.

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 Autism Academy (VAA) 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 VAA 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 VAA staff to support their child's education.

Dress Code and Personal Appearance Policy

Victory Autism 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

Celebrations

At Victory Autism 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 ingredients 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.

Behavior and Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI)

Victory Autism 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 Autism 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 Autism Academy is not liable for injuries resulting from a student's own physically aggressive or self-injurious behavior.

Home and School Behavior Expectations

Victory Autism 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.

Suspension and Expulsion Policy

Victory Autism 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.

Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)

Victory Autism 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.

Outside Service Providers

At Victory Autism 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.

Academics and Grading

At Victory Autism 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.

Educational Pathways at Victory Autism Academy

At Victory Autism Academy, we believe that every student deserves an educational experience as unique as they are. To support the whole child, we offer four specialized pathways designed to meet a wide range of learning styles, abilities, and future goals. These pathways, Star, Navigator, Trailblazer, and Voyager, are thoughtfully designed to help students grow academically, socially, emotionally, and functionally.

Our Four Pathways

Each pathway offers a unique structure and set of supports, while focusing on the following core skill areas:

- Social Skills
- Academics
- Daily Living Skills
- Emotional Regulation
- Executive Functioning
- Safety Awareness
- Self-Advocacy
- Transition Planning

Curriculum and Support

Each pathway utilizes a carefully selected set of approved curricula, tailored to the needs of the students it serves. These instructional tools are designed to be engaging, accessible, and aligned with the skills emphasized in each pathway.

Our curriculum selections may include, but are not limited to:

- Unique Learning System (ULS)
- News2You & SymbolStix
- TeachTown
- Be Safe

- i-Ready
- Schools PLP

Individualized and Evolving

Pathways are not static. They are reviewed and updated annually as part of the student's IEP or ISP meeting to ensure continued alignment with their evolving strengths, challenges, and long-term goals. Adjustments are made based on student progress, input from the educational team, and family collaboration.

Pathway Placement

Students are placed in the pathway that best fits their individual learning profile. Placement is determined through a collaborative process involving assessments, team input, and family engagement. As students grow and gain new skills, movement between pathways is possible and encouraged when appropriate.

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 unauthorized content or damaging equipment, will be addressed in accordance with the school's disciplinary policy.

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)
- 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.

Therapies Provided

Speech Therapy

Speech and language therapy plays an important role in supporting students with autism by helping them develop more effective communication skills. At Victory Autism Academy, speech therapy is tailored to each child's individual needs, whether they are working on verbal communication, nonverbal cues, or social interaction.

Purpose of Speech Therapy

The goal of speech therapy is to help students communicate more effectively and functionally, whether through spoken words, gestures, or alternative communication methods. Therapy is personalized to meet the unique strengths and challenges of each student.

Common Areas of Focus

Because communication needs vary from child to child, speech therapy may focus on a wide range of skills, including:

- Strengthening the muscles in the mouth, jaw, and neck for better speech production

- Making clearer speech sounds

- Improving understanding and use of body language and facial expressions
- Practicing how to ask and respond to questions
- Enhancing conversation skills, such as turn-taking and topic maintenance
- Supporting the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices when needed

Speech therapy services are determined by a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Service Plan (ISP) and are delivered by licensed speech-language pathologists.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy (OT) supports students in developing the cognitive, physical, social, and motor skills they need to succeed in daily life. At Victory Autism Academy, OT services are designed to help children become more independent, more confident, and more actively involved in classroom and community activities.

Purpose of Occupational Therapy

For students with autism, OT often focuses on areas such as play skills, learning strategies, self-care routines, and managing sensory challenges. These therapies are personalized to meet each student's needs and are an important part of building life skills both in and outside of school.

Key Skill Areas Addressed

Occupational therapy may focus on improving:

- Daily living skills (e.g., toilet training, dressing, brushing teeth, grooming)
- Fine motor skills (e.g., handwriting, using scissors, manipulating small objects)
- Gross motor skills (e.g., walking, stair climbing, bike riding)
- Posture and perceptual skills (e.g., sitting properly, identifying colors/shapes/sizes)
- Body awareness and spatial relationships
- Visual skills used for reading, writing, and navigating environments
- Play, coping, self-help, problem-solving, and communication skills

Therapeutic Outcomes

Through regular occupational therapy, students may:

- Build stronger peer and adult relationships
- Improve focus and attention span
- Learn to delay gratification and improve patience
- Express feelings in healthy, appropriate ways
- Participate more fully in peer play and group activities
- Develop stronger self-regulation and coping strategies

Physical Therapy (PT)

Physical therapy (PT) at Victory Autism Academy is designed to help students improve their gross motor skills, strength, coordination, and mobility, supporting their ability to move and participate safely and confidently in everyday activities, both inside and outside the classroom.

Purpose of Physical Therapy

For students with autism and other developmental needs, physical therapy focuses on building the physical skills necessary for independence, safety, and active engagement in learning and play. PT services are individualized to meet each student's abilities and goals, as outlined in their IEP or ISP.

Key Skill Areas Addressed

Physical therapy may support 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 physical stamina for daily routines

Therapeutic Outcomes

Through consistent physical therapy, students may:

- Improve mobility and safety
- Gain greater independence in daily school activities
- Participate more confidently in physical education, recess, and structured movement breaks
- Reduce physical discomfort and prevent injury
- Build the foundation for an active and healthy lifestyle

Animal Therapy

We recognize the unique benefits that animals can offer to children with autism spectrum disorders. Animal-assisted intervention may be incorporated into the educational experience for some students to support emotional well-being, social engagement, and attention.

Why Animal-Assisted Interventions Can Be Beneficial

Animals can provide powerful, nonjudgmental support for students with autism. Research and practice show several key benefits:

Improved Attention and Engagement

Studies have shown that children with autism may focus longer on the faces of animals than on the faces of humans. The presence of an animal can help maintain a child's attention throughout an activity or intervention.

Increased Social Interaction

Animals often serve as natural "ice breakers." Their presence can encourage students to smile, initiate conversation, and engage more socially, especially for those who experience challenges in peer interactions.

Emotional Comfort and Stress Relief

Children with autism are at a higher risk of experiencing stress and social isolation. Animal-assisted interactions can provide calming, nonjudgmental companionship that offers comfort, reduces anxiety, and alleviates feelings of loneliness.

Implementation at School

When incorporated, animal-assisted intervention is carefully planned and supervised by trained staff to ensure safety and effectiveness. Participation may vary depending on individual needs, allergies, and student preferences. Parent consent is required for all animal-assisted activities.

Specials

Music

Music therapy is a powerful and engaging tool used at Victory Autism Academy to support the social, emotional, cognitive, and communicative development of students with autism. Music activates both hemispheres of the brain, allowing it to strengthen connections across multiple areas of learning and interaction.

Purpose of Music Therapy

For children with autism, music offers a non-threatening and enjoyable way to explore communication, emotions, and social behavior. Through songs, instruments, rhythm, and lyrics, students can build self-awareness, strengthen relationships, and learn new ways to express themselves.

How Music Therapy Supports Students

- Encourages interaction and communication in a safe, structured way
- Promotes self-expression through sound, rhythm, and movement
- Develops language and vocabulary by introducing new words through lyrics
- Teaches social concepts (e.g., sharing, turn-taking, empathy) through musical storytelling
- Fosters group participation, such as singing or playing instruments in small ensembles
- Builds confidence and emotional regulation through musical exploration

Why Music Works

Music therapy often begins with an individual's connection to an instrument or a song, which can serve as a bridge to social interaction. Children may first engage with music independently and gradually feel more comfortable interacting with others doing the same. Just like a band requires collaboration, music can gently introduce the concept of teamwork and shared experiences.

Art

At Victory Autism Academy, students participate in art class weekly as part of their well-rounded educational experience. Our art program is designed to be accessible, meaningful, and enjoyable for all learners, regardless of ability level.

What Students Learn

During art class, students are introduced to:

- Famous artists and their unique styles
- A variety of art mediums (e.g., paint, clay, collage, mixed media)
- Project-based learning that incorporates personal interests and creativity

Each lesson is thoughtfully adapted to meet the diverse needs of our students, ensuring that every child can engage, explore, and express themselves through art, no matter the theme or medium.

Why Art Is Therapeutic for Students with Autism

Art offers more than just creativity; it provides powerful therapeutic benefits, especially for children on the autism spectrum:

- Creative Freedom: Art allows students to express themselves in a safe, nonverbal way. This freedom can help reduce stress and promote emotional regulation.
- Improved Communication: Through visual expression, students can share thoughts and feelings that may be difficult to express with words.
- Increased Confidence & Independence: The diverse nature of art empowers students to make choices, develop skills, and build self-esteem in a supportive environment.
- Inclusion & Joy: Because there are so many ways to create art, every student can succeed and enjoy the process of making something uniquely their own.

Adaptive PE

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

- Soccer
- Basketball
- Flag Football
- Track
- Bowling
- Cheerleading

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.

Pledge of Allegiance

At Victory Autism 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.

IEP and ISP Meetings

At Victory Autism Academy, we are committed to ensuring every student receives individualized support through a structured, collaborative, and compliant IEP (Individualized Education Program) or ISP (Individualized Service Plan) process. All meetings are designed to ensure alignment between the student's needs, our program model, and instructional practices.

Student Placement Types

District-Placed Students (IEP)

- All students placed through a school district will have a current IEP and Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET).
- The placing district will attend and participate in all IEP and MET meetings.
- All state and district procedures, timelines, and compliance requirements will be followed.

ESA/Privately Placed Students (ISP)

- Students enrolled through ESA funding or private pay will be supported through an ISP.
- ISP meetings follow the same structure, timelines, and collaborative expectations as IEP meetings.

Annual Meeting Scheduling

- All IEP and ISP meetings are scheduled 2–3 weeks prior to the annual review date.
- A draft IEP/ISP will be provided to parents/guardians at least 5 school days prior to the meeting for review.
- The full team, including parents/guardians, will review the draft during the meeting and make updates as needed.

Parent Collaboration & Communication

- Families are encouraged to review the draft and provide input prior to the meeting.
- Feedback may be shared with the teacher ahead of time to ensure a productive meeting.
- Meetings are collaborative, and all feedback is considered in real time.

- A finalized copy of the IEP/ISP will be provided following the meeting.

New Student Meetings (Initial Plans)

To ensure all students receive appropriate supports aligned to the Victory program model:

- All newly enrolled students without a current IEP or ISP will have a meeting scheduled within 30–45 school days of enrollment.
- During this period, the school will collect:
    - Classroom and baseline academic data
    - Behavior and social-emotional data
    - Speech and Occupational Therapy (OT) screeners (as appropriate)
    - Additional relevant assessments
- This data will be used to develop an IEP or ISP that aligns with:
    - The student's individual needs
    - Victory Autism Academy's program model
    - Instructional expectations and supports
- All ESA/private pay students will have an ISP developed within this 30–45 day window.

Ongoing Support

- Parents/guardians may request an IEP or ISP meeting at any time throughout the school year.
- Meetings may be scheduled to review progress, address concerns, or adjust services.
- Procedural safeguards will be provided at each IEP meeting in accordance with state and federal guidelines.

Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET)

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

Responsibility

- The student's district of residence is responsible for completing the MET process.

- The placing district will coordinate and participate for district-placed students.
- Victory Autism Academy will support families by:
    - Providing data and documentation
    - Assisting with communication
    - Supporting coordination as needed

Important Information Regarding MET Timelines

- It is critical that MET evaluations remain current to maintain eligibility under an IEP.
- If a MET is not completed within the required timeline:
    - The student may no longer qualify for services under an IEP.
    - The student may be transitioned to an ISP, which may impact services provided.

Victory Autism Academy is committed to partnering with families and districts to ensure every student receives appropriate, timely, and effective support. If you have any questions regarding the IEP/ISP process, our team is here to support you every step of the way.

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 Autism 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.

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.

Before and After School Tutoring

Victory Autism 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

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 Autism 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.

Pickup and Drop-Off Expectations

To help maintain safe and timely routes for all students:

- School vans will wait approximately 2–3 minutes at each scheduled stop before continuing the route.
- Students should be ready and waiting prior to the scheduled pickup time.
- Repeated delays may result in adjustments to pickup arrangements or transportation services.

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

Tuition

Victory Autism 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): $19,500
- Kindergarten (Full Day) – 12th Grade: $36,000

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 Autism 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 15th - July 31st
Q2	October 1st - December 31st	October 15th - October 31st
Q3	January 1st - March 31st	January 15th - January 31st
Q4	April 1st - June 30th	April 15th - April 30th

Victory Autism 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 Autism Academy offers a summer program designed to support continued growth and prevent learning loss during the break; this program is not included in annual tuition. 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 Acknowledgment and Agreement

The Victory Autism 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 Autism 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 Autism 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 Autism Academy.

Parent/Guardian Name (Print):

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Student Name:

Date:
