



The Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture

**STUDENT & PARENT
HANDBOOK**



AGRICULTURAL, LEADERSHIP,
AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION
VIRGINIA TECH.

CONTACT INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL, LEADERSHIP, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

214 Litton-Reaves Hall (0343)

Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, VA 24061-0343

Phone: 540-231-6836

Fax: 540-231-3824

Website: <https://www.alce.vt.edu/signature-programs/governors-ag-school.html>

DIRECTORY

In case of an emergency, parents may want to contact their students at the following numbers. **Students should bring cell phones with them, but they may not be used during class or other scheduled activities. Abuse of cell phones during class or other scheduled activities will result in the temporary confiscation of the cell phone.**

Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture Office:

Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Governor's School Day Phone

(540) 231-6836

Governor's School After Hours

(540) 231-1003

Governor's School Email Address

agschool@vt.edu

Residential Housing Office:

Monday – Friday, 5:00 pm – 8:00 am

Saturday – Sunday, 8:00 am – 8:00 am

Residential Housing Help Desk (24/7)

(540) 231-5721

University Student Health Services

(540) 231-6444

Montgomery Regional Hospital

(540) 951-1111

Virginia Tech Police/Fire and Rescue

(540) 231-6411

Non-emergency

(540) 231-6411

Emergency

911

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WELCOME TO THE VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR AGRICULTURE

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians:

Congratulations on your acceptance to the 2024 Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture Summer Residential program! Personnel from your local school divisions and the Virginia Department of Education have chosen the best and the brightest students across Virginia to participate in this program. It is our desire that this program would provide your child a wealth of academic information and opportunities for personal growth. We understand that you are entrusting your child to our care during the program and we at the Governor's School take this responsibility seriously. We want to provide a safe, supportive environment for your child to explore new ideas, problem solve, and think critically in the classroom and through activities. We also want to give your child the opportunity to interact with students from diverse backgrounds, and experience living in a college environment. We look forward to seeing your child grow through the Governor's School program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brett Milliken". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Brett Milliken
Director, Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture

LAND AND LABOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Virginia Tech acknowledges that we live and work on the Tutelo/Monacan People's homeland and we recognize their continued relationships with their lands and waterways. We further acknowledge that legislation and practices like the Morrill Act (1862) enabled the commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands, both locally and in western territories. We understand that honoring Native Peoples without explicit material commitments falls short of our institutional responsibilities. Through sustained, transparent, and meaningful engagement with the Tutelo/Monacan Peoples, and other Native Nations, we commit to changing the trajectory of Virginia Tech's history by increasing Indigenous student, staff, and faculty recruitment and retention, diversifying course offerings, and meeting the growing needs of all Virginia tribes and supporting their sovereignty. We must also recognize that enslaved Black people generated revenue and resources used to establish Virginia Tech and were prohibited from attending until 1953. Through InclusiveVT, the institutional and individual commitment to Ut Prosim (that I may serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence, we commit to advancing a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

VIRGINIA TECH PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY

All VGSA participants are to adhere to Virginia Tech's Principles of Community in all aspects of the program.

Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community.

Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our on-going efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:

- We affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.
- We affirm the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.
- We affirm the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.
- We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.
- We pledge our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve).

MISSION OF THE VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR AGRICULTURE

The mission of the Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture at Virginia Tech is to develop future leaders and scientists for careers in agriculture. Concentration is placed on the integration of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics within the five [United States Department of Agriculture - National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#) (USDA-NIFA) initiatives:

- childhood obesity prevention,
- food safety,
- resilient agroecosystems in a changing climate,
- sustainable bioenergy, and
- water for food production systems.

The Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture also strives to demonstrate and help students connect the five USDA-NIFA initiatives with the [17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#). This is done to build an understanding of global issues related to food, fiber, fuel, and shelter, how those issues impact people and communities, and the role agriculture plays in providing solutions to complex problems.

This mission will be accomplished through rigorous scientifically-informed courses and experiential-based activities such as academic research, lab work, and field trips.

GOALS OF THE VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR AGRICULTURE

Goals of the VGSA at Virginia Tech are to:

1. Provide a rigorous agricultural educational program that will challenge gifted and talented students to study and research the scientific nature of agriculture as it relates to and affects the Virginia and global agriculture industry;
2. Provide structured educational discourse designed to increase the students' ability to critically think and solve problems associated with providing safe, economical, and environmentally sustainable food, fiber, fuel, and shelter to the world's population.
3. Acquaint rising junior and senior students with scientific education and career opportunities available in agricultural economics, agricultural leadership, animal science, biological systems engineering, food and nutrition science, plant science, and veterinary medicine;
4. Promote an atmosphere of inquiry and dialogue while learning to embrace a diversity of cultures, thoughts, ideas, and perspectives as a way to develop culturally competent and effective communicators.

VIRGINIA GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR AGRICULTURE CRITICAL DATES*

Sunday, June 23 – Arrival and Check-in: 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Students should arrive Sunday, June 23, between 9 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. for check-in to the program and residence hall. Students and parents must first report to Litton-Reaves Hall for check-in before moving into the dorm. Parking will be available in lots located around Litton-Reaves Hall. You can park anywhere on campus after 10 p.m. weekdays and anytime on the weekend. The student must be moved into the dormitory by 2:30 p.m. Students will be able to eat lunch in the dining hall. Parents, guardians, and family are welcome to eat in the dining hall but must purchase their meal. You are also free to eat off campus or pick up any last-minute items from local shopping centers.

Sunday, June 23 – Opening Ceremony: 3:00 p.m.

All students and parents must attend the Opening Ceremony which will be held in Litton-Reaves Hall, Sunday, June 23 at 3:00 p.m. The program will consist of guest speakers and an overview of the VGSA. **At the conclusion of the Opening Ceremony parents and family will be asked to leave and students will remain in the auditorium.**

Friday, July 19 – Global Seminar Symposium: 1:30 p.m.

This event is a presentation of VGSA projects exemplifying the result of the learning experience and effort put forth by students for the duration of the four-weeks. The event will take place Friday, July 19, beginning at 1:30 p.m. The approximate time for the students' group presentation will be set at a later date and will be distributed to parents via email. We encourage parents, guardians, teachers, and guests to attend this session to support the students in presenting their final product. Parking is available, **but parking passes will be REQUIRED**. Parking passes can be purchased online through ParkMobile (<https://parking.vt.edu/parking/parkmobile.html>) or through the ParkMobile app. The VGSA will not be responsible for providing parking passes, validating parking, or for parking tickets received. More information about parking on campus is offered below under the Visiting Campus section. **At the conclusion of the Global Seminar Symposium students will remain on campus with VGSA and visitors will be invited to return for the check-out and closing ceremonies the next day.**

Saturday, July 20– Check-out: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Students must check out of the dorms between 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 22. All trash and personal items **must be removed** prior to checkout. Student rooms must be inspected and approved by a GSA staff member before you may leave.

Saturday, July 20 – Brunch Buffet: 10:00 a.m.

The family brunch buffet recognizes the contributions of parents, guardians, and family to the lives of the VGSA students. Although this is a free event, parents, guardians, and family must RSVP to the Virginia Governor's School on registration day if they plan to attend. Tickets will be distributed to students the week of the brunch buffet.

Saturday, July 20– Closing Ceremony: 2:00 p.m.

Parents, teachers, and all other supporters are encouraged to attend the closing ceremony. Students must be in Litton-Reaves Hall 1670 (Auditorium) by 1:45 p.m. All students must be present for the closing ceremony. You may drive to Litton-Reaves Hall 1670 (Auditorium) and park in the any of the lots in the nearby area. At the conclusion of the closing ceremony, students may only be picked up from the by an adult aged 21 or older. This person's name must be on the Emergency Information, Releases, & Health History form on file and they must show ID when picking the student up.

**Please note that times, locations, and other details may change as we get closer to the beginning of Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture. All changes and final details will be communicated to both the participants and their parents/guardians.*

CAMPUS LOGISTICS

VISITING CAMPUS

Absolutely no visitors are allowed for the duration of the program. This rule is in place to help the school to achieve a cohesive, self-contained environment in which students can study and come to know one another with minimum external distractions. This extends to parents or other family members or friends checking students out for a period of time. The only exception will be in cases of emergency.

PARKING ON CAMPUS

Parking passes are required during the weekday before 10 p.m., but not after 10 p.m. or on weekends. Friends and family may obtain parking passes through Parking Services located at 505 Beamer Way, online (<https://parking.vt.edu/parking/parkmobile.html>), or the ParkMobile app. There is a \$8 fee for the parking passes. Please consult the Parking Services website for more info: <https://parking.vt.edu/parking/visitors.html>.

MAP

A Virginia Tech campus map can be found [HERE](#). Litton-Reaves Hall is building #118 in grid between grid G-6 and G-7.

MAILING ADDRESS OF STUDENTS

Friends and family may want to contact students through the mail while they are a resident of the school. Please be aware Virginia Tech's Campus Mail adds 1-2 days' time to all letters and packages since items must go through a central sorting service on campus before being delivered to Litton-Reaves Hall. FedEx and UPS will also deliver to the same address. Keep in mind, if the USPS isn't delivering because of a holiday, then neither will Virginia Tech Campus Mail. Virginia Tech Campus mail also does not deliver on weekends. Below is the address that can be used to contact students.

Students' Name
C/O Governor's School

214 Litton Reaves Hall (0343)
175 W. Campus Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24061

VIRINGIA GOVERNOR’S SCHOOL FOR AGRICULTURE CURRICULUM

The Virginia Governor’s School for Agriculture curriculum is designed to develop an appreciation of the broad nature of agriculture and natural resource systems on a global level. Students will experience instruction and activities that provide exposure and insight into the real-world challenges involved in the feeding, clothing, and housing the world’s population of over 8 billion people.

Students will be involved in a series of courses, career awareness activities, seminars, extracurricular activities, and a group project called Global Seminar. The courses consist of core classes, elective classes, and courses in a major assigned to each student. Courses include both classroom instruction and experiential activities that take place in the lab and in the field.

CURRICULUM FOUNDATIONS

The curriculum for the Virginia Governor’s School for Agriculture is informed by the [United States Department of Agriculture - National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#) (USDA-NIFA) initiatives which include:

- childhood obesity prevention,
- food safety,
- resilient agroecosystems in a changing climate,
- sustainable bioenergy, and
- water for food production systems.

In addition to the USDA-NIFA initiative areas, Governor’s School for Agriculture integrates these initiatives with the [17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#). This is done to build an understanding of global issues related to food, fiber, fuel, and shelter, how those issues impact people and communities, and the role agriculture plays in providing solutions to complex problems.

INSTRUCTORS

Students are taught by internationally known faculty, scientists, researchers, and graduate students from Virginia Tech who are experts in their field of study. Students will potentially interact with approximately 30-40 different faculty, scientists, researchers, and graduate students throughout their time at the Virginia Governor’s School for Agriculture while engaging in a variety of classroom discussions, field experiences, and research projects.

CURRICULUM FORMAT

All students will have the opportunity to participate in **Exploration Courses** during the first two weeks of the program. The purpose of these courses is to provide all students with a base understanding of the complexity and the interdisciplinary nature of agriculture and begin to build the connections to science, technology, engineering, mathematics, economics, and natural resources.

During the third and fourth weeks of the program, students will enroll in **Immersion Courses**. The purpose of these courses is to guide students deeper into more specific topics, issues, and ideas within agriculture. These courses will be taught in groups of no more than 20 students and generally have lab work, field experiences, or other applied learning opportunities associated with them. Enrollment of these courses will open at the conclusion of the first week of the program.

GLOBAL SEMINAR

On the first day of the program students will be divided into research teams of 4-5 students to undertake a research-based project situated around the five USDA-NIFA initiative areas. Topics will be assigned to groups based on the initiative areas. The research-based project will include a literature review, research poster, and a research conference-style presentation. Other project components in the past have included 3-D printing, brochure design, and infographic creation; additional components may be added. The project serves as the conceptual centerpiece for the school curriculum and provides the basis for a formal symposium and poster session that serves as the academic culmination of the month-long program. Students will participate in a variety of classes and workshops led by Virginia Tech research librarians and other graduate students to help them actively engage with the project and prepare for the Global Seminar Symposium.

GLOBAL SEMINAR SYMPOSIUM

At the conclusion of the Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture, a symposium will be held to showcase the student groups' projects. There will be a general poster session, as well as several concurrent sessions featuring student groups' presentations of their research. Parents/guardians are invited to attend, and students are encouraged to invite a high school teacher who has impacted them to campus to be guests at the symposium.

COURSE GUIDE

The courses, field excursions, and other applied or experiential learning opportunities for the 2024 Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture are not fully confirmed. A course guide will be uploaded to the Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture website and be emailed to students.

GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR AGRICULTURE FACULTY AND STAFF

A broad and diverse group of Virginia Tech faculty and staff are involved in the planning and delivery of the Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture. During the Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture, the students will have the opportunity to interact with many of these individuals. Below is a description of several of the people you will meet, as well as their roles with Governor's School.

DIRECTOR

Dr. Brett Milliken serves as the administrator of the Governor's School for Agriculture. All issues affecting the quality of the program, personnel, instructional faculty, and students' wellbeing should be brought to the attention of the Director.

ON-SITE DIRECTOR

The On-site Director, Maggie Morris, is available to students at all times and lives in the dormitory throughout the duration of VGSA. The role of the On-site Director is to provide guidance concerning day-to-day issues, such as supervising staff, transportation, and ensuring the school runs smoothly.

INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY

Students will often interact with the faculty members or graduate students that are teaching courses for the program. The faculty members and graduate students are from Virginia Tech and the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. These faculty members and graduate students are selected for their participation in the school based on their research and academic specialty, as well as a history of positive teaching evaluations.

GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL LEADERS

Governor's School Leaders (GSLs) are assigned to work with students throughout their time at the Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture. These leaders are undergraduates or graduate students with expertise in a particular major area. They team up in groups of two or more to provide instruction, mentorship, and assistance. They will attend the courses with the students, as well as accompanying them on field trips and activities. Leaders are selected to participate in the school because of their academic ability, enthusiasm, and leadership. Many are former Governor's School participants or GSLs.

HOUSING INFORMATION

The residence halls will be located on the main Blacksburg campus of Virginia Tech. The residence halls used for Governor's School for Agriculture are modern, air-conditioned, suite-style dormitory, with either two or three rooms sharing a common living room and bathroom. Each suite living room is furnished with a coffee table, sofa, side chair, and rocker. In addition, residence halls generally feature study lounges, a family room, and a kitchen. Each room will house two students of the same gender. Females and males will live in the same dormitory; however, they will be placed in separate areas of the building and supervised by Governor's School staff. At no time is it permitted to be in the living area or dorm room of the opposite sex.

In the rooms, each student will have the following:

- Twin Bed (Extra Long)
- Mattress
- Closet (share with roommate)
- Bureau/Dresser
- Chair, desk, and bookcase
- T-100 Ethernet connection and electrical outlets
- Shower curtains

Coin-operated laundry facilities are conveniently located in the residence halls and the cost is approximately \$2.75 to wash and \$2.50 to dry. Students are expected to do their own laundry and will need to bring quarters and laundry supplies (e.g., detergent, fabric softener, laundry basket). The laundry facilities do not take cards or cash, only quarters. Be sure to have enough quarters to do laundry for the entire duration of the program. Students are advised to bring a drying rack if they prefer not to dry their clothes in a dryer. Please keep in mind that laundry facilities are shared with other Governor's School students and other summer program participants, and prompt removal of clothing from machines is the student's responsibility.

Two keys will be issued at registration. One key is for the student's suite, and the other key is for the student's individual room. Students are responsible for keeping track of keys throughout their time at the school. **Students will be charged a \$50 fee for each lost or stolen key.** Students are responsible for respecting the property of Virginia Tech and will be charged for damaged or stolen property.

TELEPHONE ACCESS

Students will not have access to telephones in their dorm rooms. **Students should bring cell phones with them, but they may not be used during class or other scheduled activities. Abuse of cell phones during class or other scheduled activities will result in the temporary confiscation of the cell phone.**

SECURITY

Virginia Tech police have general responsibility for dormitory security and make routine, unscheduled visits around and throughout the public portion of all dorms. The campus of Virginia Tech is very safe; however, to reduce the chance of theft within the dorms, students need to keep their doors locked to protect their personal valuables. Objects susceptible to theft include laptops, tablets, or other easily portable or expensive items. **The Governor's School for Agriculture is not responsible for lost or stolen items.**

COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to bring a laptop computer to the Governor's School to complete assignments requiring basic word processing, spreadsheet calculations, and online research. Virginia Tech supports both Mac and PC computers. Also, please note the following:

- There is Wi-Fi across campus, including in dorm rooms, classrooms, library, and most outdoor spaces.
- Virginia Tech IT may not, under any circumstance, troubleshoot or assist students with any personal computer or software related issues. Please make sure that students are familiar with the technology that they bring to campus and have a plan in place for dealing with technical issues.

STUDENT EMAIL ACCOUNTS

Students will be using their email address that they used when applying for Governor's School while they are attending. These email accounts can be used for educational and personal uses. Governor's School staff or instructors may contact students regarding course information via email. Students also interact with other members of their group through email. Therefore, **students should check their emails on a**

daily basis. Students are also encouraged to use this email to contact friends or family.

LIBRARY

The Newman Library and Veterinary Medicine Library located on the Virginia Tech campus has many resources that may be helpful to students during their stay.

Newman Library hours:

- Monday – Thursday, 7:30 am – 8:00 pm
- Friday, 7:30 am – 6:00 pm
- Saturday, 9:00 am – 6:00 pm
- Sunday, 9:00 am – 8:00 pm
- Closed July 4, 2024

LIST OF ITEMS FOR STUDENTS TO BRING

Students are **REQUIRED** to bring the following items:

- Laptop
- Toiletries and personal hygiene items
- Toilet paper
- Towels and washcloths
- About \$20 **in quarters** for washing and drying clothes
- Laundry detergent
- Rain gear/poncho/umbrella
- Sweatshirt or jacket
- Footwear suitable for hiking
- Digital camera or a cell phone that can take photos
- Old clothing, including long pants and long sleeve shirts to be worn during outdoor field experiences
- Pens, pencils, and notebooks
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Hat
- Closed toe shoes for barns and wading through wet locations
- Money for leisure spending (more information provided below)
- Snacks
- Prescription or over the counter medications for the month
- Twin-sized, extra-long sheets and pillow case, pillow, and blankets
- Trash can with trash bags
- Swimsuit (no string bikinis)

LIST OF SUGGESTED ITEMS TO BRING

Students may **want** to bring the following items:

- Room decorations and poster putty
- Stationery and stamps
- Snacks and drinks
- Portable iron and ironing board
- Clothes hangers
- Speakers for music
- First aid supplies
- Personal sports equipment
- Musical instruments
- Hats for sun protection
- Extra pillow
- Recreational games
- Dishware
- Personal fan

- Tissues and paper towels
- Cleaning supplies
- Small lamp
- Snacks
- Books, activities, and games
- Bathroom mats

LIST OF PROHIBITED ITEMS

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Students are **PROHIBITED** from bringing or possessing the following items:

- Vehicles
- Bicycles, unicycles, scooters
- Rollerblades or skates
- Skateboards/Longboards
- Vapes, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, chewing tobacco, marijuana, etc.
- Other wheeled recreational devices
- Televisions
- Large stereos or stereo equipment
- Walkie-talkies or two-way radios
- Fireworks
- Utility/pocket knives, weapons
- Illegal substances

VEHICLES

Students are NOT permitted to have a vehicle on campus for any part of the Governor’s School. This extends to roller skates, rollerblades, bikes, scooters, and skateboards.

ACTIVITY FEE AND SPENDING MONEY

The Virginia Department of Education and participating schools pay for all of the educational and room and board expenses associated with the Governor’s School. However, students will have the opportunity to participate in activities, such as bowling, going to the movies, and hiking. Consistent with Virginia Board of Education regulations that govern student activity fees there will be a non-refundable \$210 fee per student. The amount of the fee is determined by the cost of the activities or events that are part of the extra-curricular component of the program. Based on financial needs, students may make a request to the program Director for relief or reduction of the activity fee on a case-by-case basis.

Previous GSA students have found that bringing between \$100 to \$150 is sufficient to cover expenses such as snacks, drinks, souvenirs, etc. There are many ATMs on campus for use with debit and credit cards.

DINING FACILITIES

The dining hall offers a variety of food choices in an all-you-can-eat cafeteria venue. Faculty and staff will be provided with meals at the same facilities as the students. Vegetarian and vegan dishes are available on a daily basis and are clearly labeled. If students have any additional dining accommodations, a written request can be submitted to the dining hall. The form to request for dining accommodations is included on the Student Information form, which is filled out as part of the registration process.

Meal cards will be issued to students that will allow them to gain access to the dining hall. Students are responsible for keeping track of their meal cards. **Lost or stolen meal cards will result in a \$5 charge for**

replacement. The dining hall is open for certain hours each day to serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Dining facility hours of operation are:

- Breakfast: 7:00 am – 9:30 am
- Lunch: 11:00 am – 1:30 pm
- Dinner: 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Students will be allowed to gain access to the dining hall only once for each of the meal times each day. The dining hall stops serving meals 30 minutes prior to closing. Dining hall hours of operation may change.

ATTENDANCE

In order to receive a certification of completion from the Governor’s School for Agriculture (GSA) at Virginia Tech, students must be in residence from the program’s opening ceremony through the closing ceremony. Participants are expected to attend all activities set forth by the GSA at Virginia Tech. These activities include but are not limited to scheduled classes, meetings, and field trips. Participants are not allowed to leave the GSA unless special permission is obtained from the GSA On-site Director and GSA Director. Special permission is granted in cases of emergency only. These guidelines are in place to ensure the participants are safe and receive the maximum number of benefits that the school has to offer.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Being a student enrolled in the Virginia Governor’s School for Agriculture is a privilege. Students are nominated to become part of the school, and, as such, they are representing not only the Virginia Governor’s School for Agriculture, but also their schools, their parents/guardians, and themselves at all times. Students and parents are responsible for reading this handbook in its entirety before the start of the Virginia Governor’s School for Agriculture.

Compliance with the following rules is mandatory for all VGSA participants:

1. Obey local, state, and federal laws. Abide by any special rules for a VGSA event or activity.
2. Speak and act in a responsible, courteous, and respectful way. Harassment, threats, or bullying of any type is prohibited.
3. Act responsibly to maintain a safe environment for all participants. Acting in a manner that could endanger the health, safety or welfare of yourself or others is prohibited. Report threats to the well-being of any participant immediately to the adult in charge.
4. Possession or use of tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapes, alcohol, or illegal drugs is prohibited.
5. Possession or use of weapons or other dangerous objects is prohibited, except when required as part of an approved educational program. Weapons are defined to include, but are not limited to, guns, knives and incendiary or explosive devices of any kind.
6. Respect all property, facilities, equipment, and vehicles. Students are responsible for any damage or other consequences resulting from behavior.

7. Participate fully in VGSA functions. Be in the assigned program areas (e.g., dorms, classrooms, common areas, etc.) on time. If you are unable to attend or participate, you must tell the adult in charge. Help others have a pleasant experience by making every attempt to include all participants in activities.
8. Dress appropriately for each GSA function.
9. Name tag must be visible and worn properly at all times unless otherwise specified by VGSA staff.
10. Use of any mobile electronic device during a scheduled VGSA activity (i.e., class) is prohibited unless activity-specific rules otherwise allow. When permitted, they should be used only in a manner that is consistent with the approved activity and not discourteous or disruptive.
11. The belongings of youth participants, including but not limited to bags, purses, computers, other electronic devices, and dorm rooms are subject to search and seizure by VGSA faculty/staff upon reasonable suspicion that a prohibited and/or illegally possessed substance or object is contained within that area.
12. Students are never permitted to be in the living area or dorm rooms of the opposite sex.
13. Students are required to walk in groups of two or more at all times.
14. Students must be on VGSA-designated floors in Cochrane Hall by 9 p.m. every night unless otherwise stated by VGSA staff.
15. Students will be in their suite by 10 p.m. each night, and will remain in their suites from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.
16. No visitors are permitted in the residence hall or suites at any time other than move-in and move-out unless granted permission by the On-site Director or the VGSA Director.
17. Students must comply with residence hall rules, as set forth by the VGSA and Virginia Tech officials.
18. Room and suite doors shall be locked when vacant.
19. Students are not allowed in GSA staff dorm rooms or the dorm rooms of other programs' participants.
20. Quiet hours will be observed each night. No loud music or other loud noise should be created during these hours. Quiet hours are as follows:
 - Sunday – Thursday, 7 p.m. – 10 a.m.
 - Friday – Saturday, 11:00 p.m. – 11 a.m.
21. Students may not have any guests.
22. Students may not play ball games or throw Frisbees or other objects in the residence hall. Likewise, elevators in any building will be used for their intended purpose.
23. Pets are not permitted in the residence hall.
24. Students must keep rooms and suites tidy for the duration of the school.
25. Students must clean rooms and suites prior to check-out; rooms must be approved by a VGSA staff member before you may check out.
26. One suite per night will be responsible for cleaning the common areas.

The following occurrences will result in immediate expulsion from the school:

1. Use or possession of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, vaping products, marijuana, or illegal substances of any type.

2. Being in a living area (i.e., dormitory room), dorm room, or other closed room alone with a member of the opposite sex without special permission from VGSA staff.
3. Leaving the VGSA designated areas without special permission from VGSA staff.
4. Possessing or using a weapon of any kind.
5. Committing any act of violence.
6. Intentionally damaging or stealing the property of Virginia Tech, the VGSA, or another individual.
7. Leaving the residence hall after curfew without permission from the VGSA.
8. Exhibiting potentially harmful behavior to yourself or others.
9. Bringing a vehicle to campus, riding in a vehicle while not accompanied by parent/guardian, or riding in a vehicle not approved by GSA staff/faculty.
10. Disrespecting faculty, staff, presenters, other students, university employees or others on campus.
11. Inappropriate social media use, including but not limited to bullying, harassment, impersonation, and intimidation.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

Each student will receive a name badge at registration. The Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture student name badge must be worn properly at all times. It is required for entrance into the dining hall and all activities and allows the faculty and staff to accurately identify the students since Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture is not the only group that visits our campus during the summer. Failure to do so will be considered a violation of rules and result in disciplinary action.

TITLE IX VIOLATIONS

Title IX The Governor's School takes seriously all reports of sexual misconduct. All Governor's School employees in receipt of a complaint or report of discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct must report it to the Title IX Coordinator without delay. To learn more about Virginia Tech's Title IX policies and procedures please review the information on the [Office of Equity and Accessibility](#) page.

VIOLATION OF RULES

For minor rule violations, the following steps will be taken:

- 1st offense: conference with student and Governor School Leader (GSL) and On-site Director
- 2nd offense: conference with student, GSL, On-site Director, and GSA Director
- 3rd offense: conference call with student, GSL, On-site Director, GSA Director, and student's parent/guardian
- 4th offense: expulsion from school

Note: In case of severe violations of the code of conduct, Title IX, or Virginia Tech Principles of Community, some steps may be omitted and lead directly to expulsion from GSA.

DRESS CODE

Students' dress during their enrollment in the school should meet the following guidelines:

Casual Girls	<p>Pants: Nice jeans or khakis Shorts: Not too short Tops: T-shirts, etc. Shoes: Tennis shoes, sandals, boots, flip-flops, etc. (Labs and field trips require closed toed shoes.)</p>	<p>The majority of the Governor's School is spent in casual dress. (e.g., class, field trips, in and around the dorm).</p>
Casual Guys	<p>Pants: Nice jeans or khakis Shorts: Not too short Tops: T-shirts, etc. Shoes: Tennis shoes, sandals, boots, flip-flops, etc. (Labs and field trips require closed toed shoes.)</p>	<p>The majority of the Governor's School is spent in casual dress. (e.g., class, field trips, in and around the dorm).</p>
Business Casual Girls	<p>Pants: Dress pants or khakis are acceptable. Skirts: Should be knee length and not too tight; avoid high slits. Jacket: Blazer, suit jacket, or sweater (optional). Shirt: Dress blouse, sweaters (knits and cardigans, no hoodies). Shoes: Avoid open-toed shoes or sandals. Heels or flats are acceptable.</p>	<p>Virginia Department of Agriculture and Forestry presentation College and Majors Fair</p>
Business Casual Guys	<p>Pants: Khakis or solid color slacks. Ties: Optional Jackets or Sport Coats: Optional Shirts: Must have collar; may be button-up or polos. Shoes: Should be leather shoes like oxfords or loafers.</p>	<p>Virginia Department of Agriculture and Forestry presentation College and Majors Fair</p>
Professional Girls	<p>Suit: Suits are appropriate. Pants: Dress pants; no capris or cropped pants. Skirts: Need to be knee length and not too tight; avoid high slits. Shirt: Dress blouse Shoes: Avoid open-toed shoes; no sandals. Basic pumps with 1–2" heels are appropriate. No stilettos or platforms.</p>	<p>Closing ceremony, breakfast brunch, symposium, and additional ad hoc evening programs.</p>
Professional Guys	<p>Suit: Suits are appropriate and encouraged. Jacket: Sport coats or blazers with slacks are also acceptable. Pants: Dress slacks. Shirts: Must be button-up with collar. Ties: Required Shoes: Should be leather loafers or lace-ups.</p>	<p>Closing ceremony, breakfast brunch, symposium, and additional ad hoc evening programs.</p>

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR DRESS CODE

- During class, field trips, and recreation students can wear long or short sleeve shirts, long pants, shorts, comfortable shoes, footwear suitable for hiking. Closed toe shoes and long pants may be required for some activities. Old clothes and shoes that can get wet and muddy will also be

necessary.

- Name tags will be provided and must be worn at all times unless otherwise stated by the VGSA staff. **Name tags will be worn above the waist and clearly visible.**

The following dress/attire is unacceptable. Students should refrain from bringing these items:

- Clothing with language or images that are vulgar, discriminatory, or obscene or clothing that promotes illegal or violent conduct, such as the unlawful use of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or drug paraphernalia.
- Clothing that exposes cleavage, the midriff, or undergarments.
- Sagging or low-cut pants, low-cut necklines, tube tops, spaghetti straps, halter tops, backless blouses or blouses with only ties in the back, and clothing constructed of see-through materials.
- Bathing suits are only allowed for water-related recreational activities. One- or two-piece bathing suits are acceptable for female participants (no string bikinis), and trunk swim suits for male participants.
- Pajamas or overly casual clothing during instructional time, field trips, or other organized activities.

Note: The Virginia Governor’s School for Virginia specifically, and Virginia Tech more broadly has a diverse population. Students should keep this in mind when they are choosing attire and avoid controversial clothing and accessories.

The Governor’s School reserves the right to require students to return to their room to change clothing if it is deemed inappropriate before participating further in activities.

MEDICAL PROTOCOL

At the time of this publishing Schiffert Health Center, the Virginia Tech health clinic, will be available to non-students or conference guests during summer 2024. Medical needs exceeding the capability of the Schiffert Health Center or other urgent care providers in the area will be referred to the Montgomery Regional Medical Hospital, which is a modern, comprehensive medical facility, located less than five miles from campus. If students need to visit an urgent care facility or hospital, a staff member will accompany them. Forms will be provided for parents/guardians to sign to allow their child to obtain emergency treatment until the parents/guardians are contacted.

The Virginia Governor’s School for Agriculture carries an accident and sickness insurance policy that may cover a small amount of the initial cost of any medical event that occurs with the students during the Virginia Governor’s School for Agriculture. If the cost of treatment exceeds the maximum coverage, the parent/legal guardian will be billed directly and will be responsible for the remainder. Pre-existing conditions are not covered under the Governor’s School’s policy. **Parents and guardians must disclose all medical information for the safety of their child.**

Many insurance providers require a referral in order to authorize payment for medical care. If the parents/guardians' insurance provider requires a referral they will need to make the necessary arrangements with their primary care physician. Some medically related expenses and medications are not covered by insurance (e.g., co-payments for a physician's visit, replacing eyeglasses/contacts, orthodontic repair, prescriptions). **Parents/Guardians should discuss how to cover these unpredictable expenses with their child.**

MEDICATION POLICY

Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture adheres to the medication policy set forth by the Virginia Tech Office of Youth Protection. Youth under 18 years old will not be allowed to keep ANY medicines with them. The only exceptions to this policy are when student have a documented medical need for inhaler, EpiPen or diabetes related items.

All medications (except those mentioned above) must be submitted at check-in and must be in the ORIGINAL CONTAINER with the student's name printed on the bottle. Over the counter medications submitted at check-in must match the medication form submitted with registration. Lose medications in zip-lock bags, other bottles, bottles printed with someone else's name, or any other type of container besides the original, will not be accepted. Actual dosage listed on the bottle must be followed unless there is a written note from the prescribing doctor outlining different indications. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY.

SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

The Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture intends to create an inclusive and welcoming community for all students. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for any student with special needs or circumstances. The Emergency Information, Releases & Health History form has a section for parents/guardians to complete detailing any special needs of their child. Included on the form is room for any details about special dietary needs as well. Parents and students can also review the [D2 website](#). Although the menu options rotate throughout the year, Virginia Tech and D2 make an effort to communicate food options for those with allergies or other dietary restrictions. All students with allergies and other dietary restrictions need to be able to self-manage these needs.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Students at the Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture are given the opportunity to practice their faith through student led and virtual services of their choice. No official religious services are provided on-campus. The State of Virginia regulations prohibit the Virginia Governor's School for Agriculture from using state vehicles to transport students to and from religious services. Therefore, no travel off-campus is permitted for religious services. A list of local religious congregations that provide virtual services are

listed below. Please speak with a GSL if a space is required for prayer or worship.

Blacksburg Baptist Church	540-552-3869
Blacksburg Presbyterian Church	540-552-2504
Blacksburg United Methodist Church	540-552-5424
Christ Episcopal Church	540-980-2413
First Baptist Church	540-552-6393
Luther Memorial Lutheran Church	540-951-1000
The Dwelling Place Christian Fellowship	540-381-5500
The River Anglican Church	540-381-4674

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

A wide range of recreational facilities are available on the Virginia Tech campus. Some of these facilities are free while others have an entrance fee that is not covered by the VGSA. Some of these facilities also have an age requirement. Below are listed the facilities that are available to students enrolled in the Governor's School.

Squires Student Center:

- Bowling
- Pool/billiards
- Video games
- Music practice room

Outdoor Facilities:

- Tennis courts
- Cross country course
- Volleyball courts
- Basketball courts
- Golf course
- Frisbee golf

Note: The VGSA cannot guarantee that facilities will be in operation for the duration of the school. Students who wish to participate in these activities must bring their own equipment and students are solely responsible for safely storing such equipment. There are no equipment rental options available.

Athletic Facilities:

- VGSA students DO NOT have access to other recreational facilities including War Memorial Gym, McComas Gym, or Rec Sports Field House. **This is a Virginia Tech policy, not a Governor's School policy.** Additionally, no students participating in VGSA will be permitted to meet with, alone or otherwise, student athletes, coaching staff, mentors, or others connected with Virginia Tech athletics or Virginia Tech sponsored athletic camps. **No exceptions will be granted.**

IN CLOSING

The faculty and staff at the Virginia Governor’s School for Agriculture look forward to meeting and working with you this year. If after reading through this handbook you still have questions, feel free to contact the Director or. Questions can be emailed to agschool@vt.edu, or call the Virginia Governor’s School for Agriculture office.