

Lower Merion School District
Penn Valley
Elementary School
Panthers



Handbook

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PVES Handbook

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Principal's Welcome

Dear Families and Students,

We are thrilled to embark on a new adventure with you for the 2018-2019 school year! We have spent the summer preparing the building, the grounds, and the classrooms for your arrival. The floors have been waxed, the furniture arranged and the classrooms organized...now we need the vital ingredient...the students! Welcome back!

The purpose of this handbook is to communicate our school expectations, practices, routines and procedures so we can continue to provide the children with a first class educational experience.

The Lower Merion School District provides each family with a district calendar. This calendar provides the dates and times of school and district based activities. The calendar also identifies holidays, early dismissal dates, and student days off for teacher in-services.

The Home and School Association (HSA) produces a yearly student directory. This directory can be obtained by paying very modest Home and School Association dues. The directory is a useful source of information. In it you'll find student names, addresses, telephone numbers, staff pictures and other Home and School information.

Every Thursday you will receive an email containing announcements from the school and HSA. Families are asked to review each week. News and announcements about the school are also broadcasted on the district's cable access station, Channel 6, and may be posted on the school and district web page.

If a family has a concern about their child's progress or day to day life at school, they should make an appointment with their child's teacher to discuss the concerns. Although classroom instruction cannot be interrupted for telephone calls, school personnel attempt to respond to messages/voice mail as soon as possible. Every staff member has an LMSD voice mail extension available on our web page.

No form of communication replaces the personal interaction between parents and teachers. In order to accomplish this, we rely on mutually respectful, candid, and timely dialogue.

We ask that you review and discuss the contents of this handbook with your child(ren) during the first week of school.

I look forward to meeting and working with all of you as we begin another exciting school year at Penn Valley Elementary School. Together we can ensure your child's academic, emotional, and social success.

Sincerely,

Scott Mitchell, Principal

LMSD Mission Statement

Committed to excellence and continuous improvement, the Lower Merion School District strives to ensure that all students achieve their highest level of critical thinking and creativity, that they value themselves and the diversity of others, and that they are knowledgeable, contributing citizens capable of excelling in a rapidly changing world.

This is accomplished by individuals engaging in innovative active experiences tailored to myriad ways of learning and in partnership with our community.

Penn Valley...

Building Character, Excellence, and Community as we lead the future

Penn Valley Mission Statement

The mission of PVE is to prepare our students to become independent learners with the desires, the skills, and the abilities necessary for lifelong learning. We will create a learning environment which is focused on students, directed by teachers, and supported by home and community.

Penn Valley Vision Statement

In the next decade, PVE will play a leading role in transforming the lives of our students, their families, and their communities by responding to learner and community needs through the use of partnerships, innovation, and outreach. We will make learning more personalized by collaboratively designing transformative learning experiences for all students.

Penn Valley Code of Conduct

Penn Valley School is a warm and nurturing place for children to grow and learn. There are times, however, when we all need help coping with problems, frustration and sometimes anger. School should be a place where we all feel safe, both physically and emotionally.

One way to make sure we feel secure in school is to ensure that expectations are clear. “The Penn Valley Way” will help us continue to implement the social skills our children must learn not only through our words but also through our actions. Each fall, each classroom teacher helps their students develop their own classroom expectations.

Penn Valley staff expects every student to exhibit:

- **Cooperation**
- **Assertion**
- **Responsibility**
- **Empathy**
- **Self-Control**

School Bus Expectations

- exhibit respect for self and others
- exhibit respect for school property and equipment
- keep your hands and feet to yourself
- model positive and appropriate behaviors
- remained seated for the duration of the ride
- use regular speaking voices
- obey directives from drivers and other adults

Playground Expectations

- exhibit respect for self and others
- exhibit respect for school property and equipment
- keep your hands and feet to yourself
- model positive and appropriate behaviors

Cafeteria Expectations

- use regular speaking voice
- use good table manners and clean your own area
- exhibit respect for self and others
- exhibit respect for school property and equipment
- keep your hands and feet to yourself
- model positive and appropriate behaviors

Assembly Expectations

- enter and leave quietly
- treat presenters and neighbors kindly in word and action
- use regular speaking voice
- exhibit respect for self and others
- exhibit respect for school property and equipment
- keep your hands and feet to yourself
- model positive and appropriate behaviors

Hallway Expectations

- stay with class and adult
- keep to the right
- exhibit respect for self and others
- exhibit respect for school property and equipment
- keep your hands and feet to yourself
- model positive and appropriate behaviors

Possible Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior

After disruptive or inappropriate behavior has been exhibited, one or more of the following consequences may be utilized:

- Contact family
- Development and implementation of behavior plan
- Referral to the principal
- Warnings issued
- Before and /or after school detention
- Restricted Access to School Activities/Events
- Assigned seats on bus/in cafeteria
- Lunch detention
- Recess detention
- Out of school suspension
- Suspension from bus

Civility Policy of the Lower Merion School District:

Purpose - The Lower Merion School District believes that all schools should be places where mutual respect is practiced and reinforced. This Policy is designed to promote an environment in which all members of the school community will be treated with respect and expect the same in return. We refer to this respect as civility.

Definition – The District has adopted as part of its strategic plan an objective to identify and model behaviors for the entire school community to become collaborative, respectful, and contributing citizens. The District’s role is to establish and enhance an atmosphere where people are encouraged and expected to exhibit language, attitudes and behavior that foster sound educational practices and allow people to grow socially and academically.

This policy can be found in the Board Policy Handbook in our school library, main office and online at www.lmsd.org.

Civility is expected in verbal interactions, nonverbal interactions, and written communications between adults and students.

GETTING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Arrival:

Students should not arrive to school before 8:40 a.m. Adult supervision is not available before this time. The only exception being when children are participating in teacher or school sponsored activities. Students join their grade level peers outside of their assigned homeroom until 8:55 a.m. At 8:55 a.m. teachers will welcome their students to their classrooms. The instructional day begins at 8:55 a.m.

- **Parent Drop Off:** Children may be safely dropped off at Margo Lane and can enter by way of this entrance until 8:55 a.m. An adult will be present at this entrance between 8:40 a.m. and 8:55 a.m. Only students are permitted to enter the school through this door. Families must enter the building through the front doors and sign in.

If arriving after 8:55 a.m., you must come to the reception office with your child to sign them in tardy. If a child is unaccompanied, the family will be contacted and reminded of this protocol.

Dismissal:

The instructional day concludes at 3:35 PM. Students are directed/guided by staff members to their assigned bus lines, Margo Lane for parent pickup, or Right at School for after school care.

Every student residing in our attendance area is provided with school bus transportation. If you choose to drive your child to and from school, it is important to observe the following guidelines:

- **Parent Pick Up:** Children being picked up are supervised at dismissal, and are dismissed from two designated doors located on the Margo Lane side of the school. Children not picked up by 3:45 p.m. are escorted to the main office where they will wait for their parent/guardian to arrive.
- **Margo Lane Pick Up:** Last names beginning with the letters A-L will dismiss from Margo Lane Door 34 at the 4th grade wing. Last names with the letters M-Z will dismiss from Margo Lane Door 42 at the kindergarten wing.
- We will utilize the following process for dismissing students. Families will arrive and wait for the staff member on duty to call your child to the door. Children will not be permitted to exit until the staff member calls the student's name.
- If a child is going home with another student from the other half of the alphabet, the children will report to the place where the host family reports.

The Faculty Parking lot located on Margo Lane is neither a safe, nor appropriate, drop off/pick-up area.

Attendance Procedures

Reporting Student Absence:

Families are asked to notify the school office on or before the day of a child's absence by calling **610-645-1403**. Each time a child is absent and has not been called-out, the LMSD automated messenger will make direct contact with the family to ensure the child's safety. If a family is not contacted via the home number, cell phones then emergency contacts are called until direct contact is made. As you can imagine, this is a time consuming task.

Returning from an Absence:

Upon returning from an absence, a written statement providing the reason for the absence must be provided to the classroom teacher. For your convenience, we provide a form you can use to record your child's absence. Additional copies are available on the office eboard. Without an absence note, absences will be recorded as "unexcused" in accordance with state guidelines. Calling Project Safe does NOT replace a note.

Student Absence from School Not Related to Illness or Emergencies:

A child's daily attendance to school is critical to their academic achievement. Vacations taken during instructional days interfere with a child's attendance and performance and are thus discouraged. Absences which exceed five school days must be approved by the Superintendent of schools. A formal request must be filed with the building principal two weeks in advance of the scheduled vacation.

Student Lateness:

Children arriving to school after 8:55 a.m. are to report to the reception office with their guardian before going to class. **An adult must accompany the student into the reception office to complete a tardy note.** This will assist us in making sure that all students are accounted for in the daily attendance count sent to the reception office. Students will be marked late beginning at 8:55am (school office clock).

Early Dismissal from School:

If an early dismissal is necessary, families are asked to submit a note to the teacher before the early dismissal date noting when the child will be picked up and stating the reason for the request. Families must report to the reception office to sign the student out. The office staff will notify the classroom teacher and the child will meet the parent in the reception office.

Snow Days and Late Openings:

Please do not call the school for closing information. Notice of school closing due to weather or other problems is given on the following radio stations, using the School Code 302 for Lower Merion School District: WCAU-AM (1210); KYW-AM (1060); WPEN-AM (950) and WIP-AM (510). It is also posted on the Lower Merion School District cable access station, Channel 6 and on the district's web site (www.lmsd.org). Occasionally, the school may open late (usually two hours). Buses will run late during late openings, with times adjusted (for example, if a child's bus usually arrives at 8:30 a.m., with a two hour delay opening, the bus can be expected around 10:30 a.m.). During late openings all before school activities and morning kindergarten sessions are cancelled. The afternoon session will begin at its normal time on these days.

Transportation of Students

Students are picked up by the district's school buses at designated stops and returned to the same spot after 3:35 p.m. Children should be at their bus stops 10 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. If a child does not arrive home on the bus within 10 minutes of the expected time, the transportation office should be contacted (610-645-1940) directly, not the school office.

Request to ride an unassigned bus or Different Bus Home:

Students are not permitted to ride another bus or to disembark at any stop other than their assigned bus top.

Adults on School Buses:

Riding of school buses is restricted to students and school personnel. The only exception to this policy is during field trips when parents/guardians act as chaperones. During these occasions, parents/guardians board the buses at the school with the students and staff. Additional information regarding transportation routines and policies is available in the district calendar and the Board Policy Handbook.

ACADEMICS

Achievement Team

The Achievement Team (comprised of an administrator, guidance counselor, classroom teacher, Instructional Support teacher, school psychologist, speech & language therapist, Reading specialist, and math support teacher) meet regularly throughout the school year. The team discusses various instructional strategies which can help teachers meet the diverse needs of students in the classroom. A member of the team is designated as the liaison with the parents throughout the process. The team reviews the outcomes of the implementation of strategies. Together with parents, the Achievement Team determines what steps are needed to plan for a child's individualized academic growth.

Homework

Homework is an essential component of our instructional program. It is designed to reinforce, review and extend concepts learned at school. We ask that families take an active role by providing each child with a quiet area in which to complete homework assignments and also by reviewing assignments with children. Please check with your child's teacher to see what supplies may be needed at home to complete homework assignments. We do ask that any assignment too difficult for a child to complete be brought to the attention of the teacher as this is an indication that the concept being reviewed at home may not have been fully understood.

Formal homework is introduced as students are considered ready to benefit from it. The amount of time needed for formal homework will vary from grade to grade; however, each child is asked to either read or be read to every evening for 20 minutes in addition to the assigned homework. Expect approximately 10 minutes of homework/night/grade level (ie: 1st grade = 10 minutes, 2nd grade = 20 minutes, 3rd grade = 30 minutes, etc.). Our teachers make every effort to be sensitive to holidays when assigning homework and projects.

Requesting Homework during an Absence:

- For a one day absence, homework will not be provided. All missed assignments will be completed upon return to school.
- For multiple day absences, teachers will provide assignments upon request. We do need advance notice in order to ensure each teacher has time for the collection of materials.

Report Cards

Report Cards are issued three times a year. Families will receive appointments to attend a conference in the fall and early spring one month in advance of each conference. Additionally, teachers are available to meet with families to discuss concerns or questions about a student's progress. Throughout the year, you are welcome to call the school office in order to set up an additional appointment if needed.

Materials/Textbooks

All students are supplied with necessary textbooks and workbooks. In addition, school supply lists are posted on our web page. We do expect children to appreciate and respect the value of their school supplies and texts. Failure to replace damaged or lost textbooks and/or library books can lead to restricted access to the library and/or delay in the issue of report cards.

Library Procedures/Policies

Our goal is to provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum. To foster a stimulating learning environment, the following policies have been put in place.

Borrowing Books

- Students in grades Kindergarten and First Grade: May borrow one book for two weeks.
- Students in Second Grade through Fifth Grade: May borrow two books for two weeks.

Reserving Books

- If a book is checked out to another student, the requesting student can fill out a reservation form at the circulation desk.
- Upon the return of the book, the student will be notified via the classroom teacher.
- The student must pick up the reserved book within a week of receiving the notice.
- If the book is not picked up within the given time, it will be returned to the shelf for circulation.

Overdue Books

The Monday after a book is due, the student will receive an overdue notice via the classroom teacher. After the book has been overdue for one month, a letter is sent home to the parent/guardian via US mail. If the student knows that the book is lost, a letter providing the replacement cost will be mailed home. We encourage them to do a thorough search both at home and at school. However, the student is responsible for the book and its replacement, if necessary.

Lost and Damaged Books

Books are carefully examined before check out and when they are returned. If the book is damaged while a student has it checked out, it will be noticed upon return. If a book is lost, a replacement of the exact title and binding of the book or an acceptable replacement may be requested **OR** the purchase price of the book.

A damaged book is:

- any water-damaged book
- any book that is scribbled and written in, or on, in any way.
- any book with pages that have been torn out.
 - *The student must bring it to the attention of the librarian who will determine whether it is reparable or not.*
- when the binding breaks or separates from the book cover.
 - *The student must bring it to the attention of the librarian who will determine whether it can rebound.*

Note: Students are encouraged to put their books in a safe place after they borrow them from the library. They should never put a library book in their school bag with water bottles or left out where a younger child or pet can get a hold of it.

ACADEMIC EXTENSIONS

Specials (Art, Music, PE, Library)

Art, Music, PE and Library are scheduled for students in grades 1 through 5. Each student will receive one hour of PE, Art and Music each 5 day rotation. Students receive 30 minutes of library each rotation.

Kindergarten students receive 30 minutes of library and PE each rotation.

The goal of all of the specials is to expose the students to many different genres, healthy activities, media, and musical styles.

Guidance

The school counselor is a consistent staff member for all students in grades K through 5. The counselor teaches the Second Step program to all students. The counselor is also a trusted staff member for students to share issues and concerns. The counselor attends family, student, 504 and special education meetings as well.

Foreign Language

Beginning in 1st grade, the students at PVE receive Spanish instruction. Spanish is ungraded and is intended to expose the students to the cultures, traditions, music, and foods of various Spanish speaking countries. The students are instructed 100% in Spanish with English support as needed.

COMMUNICATION

Use of e-mail

Every staff member has an LMSD email address available on our web page. We ask that the following guidelines be observed when using this form of communication:

- Messages should be concise and to the point. If you need to set up an appointment with a staff member in order to discuss lengthy or confidential information, please send a message via e-mail with a phone number and a good time to reach you.
- E-mail is designed for convenience not immediacy. Staff members routinely check their e-mail before and after school. Important messages that must reach a staff member immediately are best sent through the office or via a written note. Alternative dismissal arrangements, emergency information and other timely information that must be received by the staff member the same day should not be sent electronically.
- We all try to be sensitive to the issue of confidentiality. References to other students, parents or staff members in an e-mail are not to be made. E-mail messages are not meant to replace direct communication with school staff.

Blackboard

Each classroom teacher creates and maintains a current Blackboard (e-board). Blackboard is a link found on the PVE web site. Teachers are able to post pertinent classroom information and updates.

Thursday Envelope

Each Thursday, families will receive an email containing all of the LMSD and community announcements. Families are expected to review Thursday Envelope email each week. Families know to look for the Thursday Envelope Email and realize there are many important documents attached each week.

Change of Address or Phone Number:

Parents/guardians should inform the central registration office immediately of any change of address, telephone number, or e-mail address. For a change of address, verification of the new address must be brought to the central registration office within 30 days. Delays in reporting these changes could result in delayed/missed contact and confusion during an emergency. All changes are made by appointment only. Contact the Central Registration Office @ 610-658-3996. A change of information form can be found on lmsd.org – then follow the ‘Registration Information’ link.

TECHNOLOGY

Internet Access by Students

Lower Merion School District takes pride in ensuring that our students have access to information and resources available on the Internet. Parents and guardians received a copy of the LMSD-Net: Student Use, Rights, and Responsibilities policy in a back-to-school information packet. This policy represents LMSD’s computer network and Internet student user agreement. Accompanying this policy is a copy of the Student User Notice form. **Parents and guardians who do not wish their child to have access to LMSD network or Internet via the LMSD network should return this form signed to their child’s school.** Additionally, any student who violates the provisions of this policy may have their LMSD network privileges suspended or revoked and school disciplinary action and/or legal action may be pursued. Students access the Internet under the direction and supervision of teachers, and students will be provided with LMSD-Net and Internet training. This training shall include educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and cyber bullying awareness and response. Students can also access LMSD resources from home using their student account.

LMSD Acceptable Use Policy

- If you commit any violation of the Policy, your access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action may be pursued.
- This access is designed for school-related purposes.
- The LMSD-Net administrator may review your files and communications on LMSD-Net to maintain system integrity and ensure that you are using the system in accordance with District policy.
- You have no expectation of privacy in any material or information stored on, created on, accessed through or transmitted through LMSD-Net.
- Your files and communications on LMSD-Net may be erased at the end of the school year.

STUDENT HEALTH

Health Services

A registered nurse is available five days a week to provide services. Parent/guardian are encouraged to notify the nurse of any handicap or special health needs that may require accommodations at school. See “Medications” below for details about dispensing medication during school hours.

First Aid-Emergency Care: The nurse will provide first aid and emergency care for students who become ill or injured during the school day. If your child is too ill to remain in school, parents will be expected to make arrangements to pick up the student. Staff members are not permitted to transport students. In case of a serious illness or injury, an ambulance will be called to transport the student to the nearest hospital.

When to Keep Your Child at Home: It is important to maintain a healthy environment in the classroom to protect students. A child will be readmitted to school after 24-48 hours of appropriate therapy for the following conditions: strep throat, scarlet fever, impetigo, ringworm, pinworm, conjunctivitis (pink eye).

Chicken Pox: May return 6 days after appearance of the last crop of vesicles and vesicles are completely crusted.

Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Meningitis: Require a physician's note to return.

Fifth Disease: Children with fifth disease are not excluded from school however parent/guardian should notify school nurse.

Head Lice: Students may return when appropriately treated with a pediculocide.

Medications: Whenever possible, all medication required by students should be administered at home. School personnel may administer medication only when a physician's written order and parent's written permission are supplied. The medication in its original labeled container must be delivered by the parent/guardian to the principal or school nurse. Under no circumstances should medication be sent to school in a student's book bag. Medication authorization forms can be obtained from the school nurse.

Allergies to Insects/Food: Families of students with known bee allergies or life threatening food allergies must alert the school nurse, provide necessary medication and have a physician complete a medication authorization form with instructions for emergency treatment.

Asthma Inhalers & EpiPens: Medication authorization forms must be completed and kept on file in the nurse's office. The physician should indicate on the form if the child may carry the medication and self-administer. Self-administration of medication is permitted for emergency medication only.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Act 26

Act 26 amended the school code regarding students who bring weapons to school. As used in the school code, the term "weapon" shall include, but not limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, shotgun, rifle, and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

If a student is found with a weapon, the law is very specific: the principal must notify the superintendent and the local police. Normally, students found in possession of a weapon must be expelled from school for a year. It is important for all families to be aware of the items children bring to school. Families are encouraged to remind children to check their pockets/book bags so that inappropriate items are not accidentally brought to school.

Dress Code

Families are asked to help us maintain a positive educational setting. The following guidelines will be observed:

- Students are not permitted to wear any article of clothing that advertises alcohol, drugs, or has objectionable language or depictions.
- Bare midriffs are not permitted for boys or girls. In addition, students are not to wear tops with spaghetti straps.
- Backless shoes, flip flops, and open toe sandals are discouraged as they pose a safety hazard to children.
- Students are not permitted to wear hats, hoods or sunglasses in the building.
- Additionally, the wearing of large or heavy neck medallions and hoop earrings pose safety issues in school and are discouraged from being worn.
- Shorts are permitted in warm weather. The bottom of the shorts must extend further than the extended fingers while arms are resting at one's sides.

Nutritional Services

Our school district offers breakfast and lunch services. Students have the option of bringing a lunch from home, supplementing a bag lunch or buying a complete meal. A menu is sent home at the beginning of each month or may be found on the district web site. The Nutritional Service Department has implemented a computerized debit system. This system allows you to prepay for meals as you wish. This system is designed to be a convenience for the parent, student and district. Your child will feel more at ease because of the confidentiality and they won't need to carry cash on a daily basis. An added feature that you may take advantage of is the Individual Participation Report so you may view what your child is eating for lunch and keep track of their balance. You may also go online to www.myschoolaccount.com to view your child's account and add money with credit card or check card.

Free and reduced priced lunches are available to those who qualify. All students receive information and forms for this program on the first day of school. Families are responsible for supplying lunch money or a bagged lunch until a letter of approval for this program is received. Regular lunch fees apply until approved.

Student Personal Property:

Electronic devices are not permitted in school or on busses. Students are not permitted to bring play items to school. This includes sports equipment of any type.

Pets

Pets are not permitted on school property. As likeable as our pets are, there are many children with allergies for whom exposure to pets could have dire consequences.

Recess

Children go outside for recess unless there is precipitation or extreme cold. Supervision is provided by staff members. Children should dress appropriately for winter with hats, gloves, and coats. Recess equipment is provided for all students. If conditions are poor, recess is conducted in the classroom with adult supervision provided by teachers and other staff members.

Physical Activity (PA)

An additional 15 minute brain-break. No instruction during this time. The goal is to get students up and moving; ideally outside as weather permits. PA is 5x/week for 15 minutes/day.

Security

Access to the school: Throughout the school day, all exterior doors remain closed and locked. No visitor is permitted to enter the school through any door other than the main door. Neither staff nor students are permitted to open any exterior door for visitors. We appreciate your support of the strict enforcement of this policy. Please access the building through the front doors.

Visitors:

Families and community members are encouraged to visit us! Anyone wishing to visit the school during the school year should observe these guidelines:

- Please sign in, show current photo ID and receive a visitor's pass. This is a safety precaution which benefits all stakeholders.
- Please make alternate arrangements for non-school-aged children during the visit.
- During the visit, the instructor will direct you to a seat in the room.
- Unless invited by the instructor, please do not attempt to communicate with the teacher, or students, during the visit.
- Please silence all electronic devices.

If it becomes necessary to deliver articles to a child, the item should be labeled and brought to the reception office. The staff in the office will notify the child at a time which does not disrupt classroom instruction.

Emergency Procedures

The district and school Emergency Plans are available on the school's web page. In order for our district Global connect Emergency system to be effective, families are responsible to keep the school abreast of any changes in emergency contact information.

Home & School Association

The Penn Valley Home & School Association is an active participant in the life of our school community. Through its efforts, the Home & School Association enables teachers to extend the curriculum by supporting field trips, cultural programs, speakers and artists in residence. The HSA Panther Press Update is available online (www.lmsd.org). It can also be sent home in paper form if needed. We encourage every family to become a member of this important organization. Please visit the PV School Portfolio for additional information regarding the H S A

Lost & Found Items

The "Lost and Found" is located in the cafeteria. Students should check this area if they lose a personal item. Unclaimed items are periodically collected and donated to an appropriate charitable organization.

Requests to Complete Forms for Agencies, Physicians, Schools

All requests which require LMSD staff to provide reports/evaluative feedback about students must first be reviewed by the school guidance counselor. Our staff members are only able to complete non-subjective, fact based questions/surveys/reports. Please allow five work days for the forms to be completed and returned.

PENN VALLEY

C.A.R.E.S.

Cooperation

Assertion

Responsibility

Empathy

Self Control

