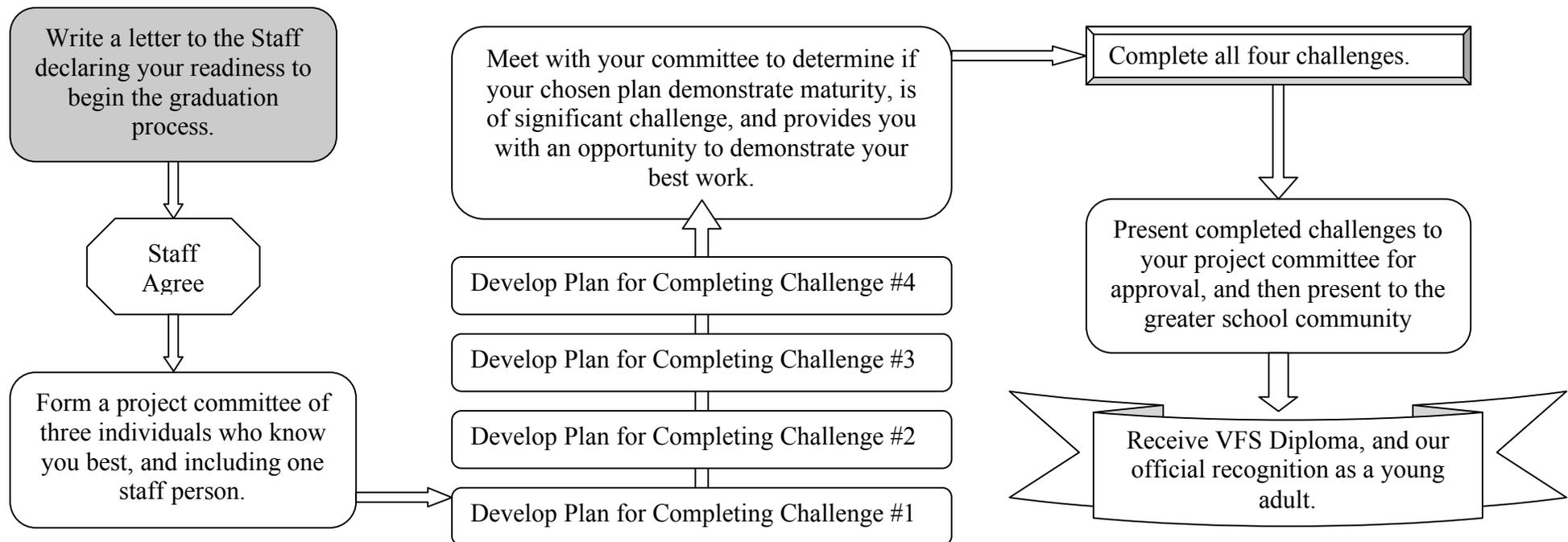


# Graduation:

Graduation is the process by which the Village Free School officially recognizes a student as an adult member of our community. In order to receive this recognition, the student must first demonstrate readiness by completing four challenges, and then presenting their work to the school community.

Meeting graduation requirements will allow the school to confidently recommend students to universities, employers, and other community organizations the student may wish to participate in after leaving the VFS.

Graduation is optional. It is possible to leave the school without graduating at any point by simply withdrawing. Completing the graduation process is recommended for students who plan on entering competitive fields after they leave the VFS, and students who wish to have the designation of Graduate.



**Self Reliance Challenge:** This is your opportunity to demonstrate to yourself, and the community you are capable of assuming the role of an independent young adult. In this challenge you will develop and execute a plan that demonstrates all of the following:

- Courage, meeting your fears.
- Endurance, strength and perseverance beyond simple survival.
- Ability to apply skills in an unfamiliar environment.
- Ability to make intelligent decisions concerning safety, planning, and contingency planning.

Step 1: Form a Project Committee. Ask three individuals who know you best to meet with you and support you in developing your plan to accomplish this challenge. This committee will ensure your plan meets the requirements of the challenge, is of sufficient difficulty, and will demonstrate your best work. Your committee must consist of at least one staff person.

Step 2: Generate an idea for a project, and share back with your committee for a quality check.

Step 3: Generate detailed plan for accomplishing this challenge, and submit the plan to your committee for approval. The plan must include:

- Explanation of how your plan demonstrates courage, endurance, application of skills in an unfamiliar environment, and ability to make intelligent decisions.
- Description of experiences that have prepared you to demonstrate courage, endurance, application of skills in an unfamiliar environment, and ability to make intelligent decisions.
- Itinerary, budget, contact list, emergency plan, addresses and phone numbers, equipment, and any other resources or necessary information.
- Explanation of how you will know if you have succeeded in this challenge

Step 4: Execute, document, and complete project. Keep all receipts, notes, letters, records, and keep a journal. Document all significant events, realizations, risks taken, obstacles, and how you responded.

Step 5: Compose a reflective essay summarizing your project, experience, and your movement towards self-reliance. Prepare a presentation of your essay, your documentation, and your success for your committee and the school community.

**Professional Challenge:** This is your opportunity to demonstrate to yourself, and the community you are ready and taking steps to secure employment, or to engage in another post-educational pursuit. In this challenge you will develop and execute a plan that demonstrates all of the following:

- Awareness of what skills, qualifications, and strengths you possess.
- Awareness of what skills and qualifications you do not possess, and in what areas you will need to grow to be successful in your selected pursuit.
- Knowledge of a profession or post educational pursuit you are interested in engaging.
- Experience in the field (or a related field or environment).
- Awareness of the social and personal impact your selected pursuit will have.
- Knowledge of related fields, and other professional options you may consider in the future.

Step 1: Form a Project Committee. Ask three individuals who know you best to meet with you and support you in developing your plan to accomplish this challenge. This committee will ensure your plan meets the requirements of the challenge, is of sufficient difficulty, and will demonstrate your best work. Your committee must consist of at least one staff person.

Step 2: Generate an idea for a project, and share back with your committee for a quality check.

Step 3: Generate a detailed plan for accomplishing this challenge, and submit the plan to your committee for approval. The plan must include:

- An explanation of how your plan will demonstrate all of the items listed above.
- A personal profile or resume of skills, strengths, and experiences you have had or will need to be successful.
- Profiles of the possible employers, schools, or programs relevant to your pursuit.
- An opportunity to acquire actual experience in this or a comparable field or environment.
- Explanation of how you will know if you have succeeded in this challenge.

Step 4: Execute, document, and complete project. Keep a portfolio of documents, information, and research. Record interviews. Keep a journal of challenges, insights, and discoveries.

Step 5: Compose a reflective essay summarizing your project, experience, and any next steps. Prepare a presentation of your essay, your documentation, and your project for your committee and the school community.

**Service Challenge:** This is your opportunity to demonstrate to yourself, and the community you are capable of seeing, understanding, and taking action to address challenges faced by your community. In this challenge you will develop and execute a plan that demonstrates all of the following:

- Awareness of an array of problems facing your community.
- Deep knowledge of a specific problem faced by your community.
- Awareness of the people affected by the problem you selected, and their perception of it.
- Knowledge of what actions may aggravate or alleviate the problem.
- Action taken to address and alleviate the problem.

Step 1: Form a Project Committee. Ask three individuals who know you best to meet with you and support you in developing your plan to accomplish this challenge. This committee will ensure your plan meets the requirements of the challenge, is of sufficient difficulty, and will demonstrate your best work. Your committee must consist of at least one staff person.

Step 2: Generate an idea for a project, and share back with your committee for a quality check.

Step 3: Generate a detailed plan for accomplishing this challenge, and submit the plan to your committee for approval. The plan must include:

- An explanation of how your plan will demonstrate all of the items listed above.
- 25 to 50 hours dedicated to action to alleviate the problem you have identified.
- Explanation of how you will know if you have succeeded in this challenge.

Step 4: Execute, document, and complete project. Keep a portfolio of documents, information, and research. Record interviews. Keep a journal of challenges, insights, and discoveries.

Step 5: Compose a reflective essay summarizing your project, and experience. Prepare a presentation of your essay, your documentation, and your project for your committee and the school community.

**Self Knowledge Challenge:** This is your opportunity to demonstrate to the community who you are and what you are all about. In this challenge you will develop and execute a plan that demonstrates all of the following:

- Your ideas concerning any or all of the following: God, Life, Family, Friends, Love, Learning, and the Universe.
- Your values, ideals, and concerns.
- Ability to reflect on profound and important past experiences.
- Ability to identify your place in your community, and your planet.
- Ability to share your ideas creatively.

Step 1: Form a Project Committee. Ask three individuals who know you best to meet with you and support you in developing your plan to accomplish this challenge. This committee will ensure your plan meets the requirements of the challenge, is of sufficient difficulty, and will demonstrate your best work. Your committee must consist of at least one staff person.

Step 2: Generate an idea for a project, and share back with your committee for a quality check.

Step 3: Generate a detailed plan for accomplishing this challenge, and submit the plan to your committee for approval. The plan must include:

- An explanation of how your plan will demonstrate all of the items listed above.
- A creative expression of your ideas. A creative act is any act that synthesizes multiple ideas or materials into something new.
- Explanation of how you will know if you have succeeded in this challenge.

Step 4: Execute, document, and complete project. Keep a portfolio of documents, information, and research. Keep a journal of challenges, insights, and discoveries.

Step 5: Compose a reflective essay summarizing your project, experience, and display of your creative work. Prepare a presentation of your essay, your documentation, and your project for your committee and the school community.