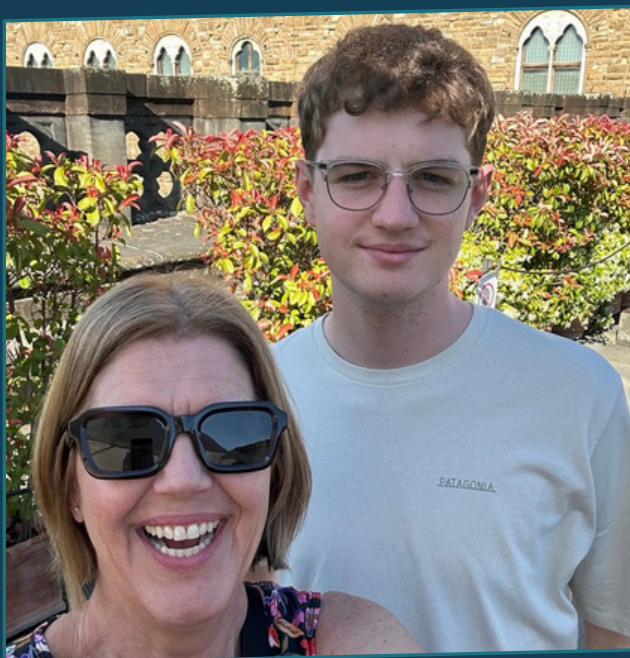


Verto Education

PARENT HANDBOOK

Empowering Your College Student



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Verto Education Community! We are so excited to accompany your student on their pathway to college. Verto is a transformative experience for students and parents alike, and so we offer this **Verto Parent Handbook** to parents in order to:

- Understand the timeline of your student’s semester
- Encourage your student’s independence and self-advocacy
- Engage with effective and appropriate communication channels
- Feel excited to accompany your student in their transformative start to college!

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ABOUT VERTO EDUCATION

Your student's transformative start to college.

Verto Education helps participants discover themselves and the world around them by making education abroad a foundational and accessible part of your student's college plan.

With Verto and our Academic Provider, the University of New Haven, your student will begin college with a study abroad experience at our international locations.

Participants can gain admission to our 70+ partner colleges, where the credits earned from our Academic Provider while abroad will count towards graduation. Participants have many options available after their time with Verto, allowing them to stay on track to graduate.

Not only will your student solidify their college path with incredible memories and transferable credits, they will also gain the **confidence, self-awareness, resilience, and global perspective** needed to thrive in college and in life.

We are delighted your student, and your family, are a part of our Verto Community.

Go Verto! 

PATHWAYS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Verto partners with a consortium of more than 70 colleges and universities across the U.S. and around the world. This network is the bridge between your student's time abroad with Verto and their continued college journey.

Two Pathways Through the Consortium



DIRECT TRANSFER ADMISSIONS PATHWAY



CHANNEL PROGRAM

Channel Program: Some partner colleges invite select first-year applicants to begin their college experience abroad with Verto. By completing the Verto program and meeting the conditional admission standards set by their college, students are guaranteed admission. [See our Channel Program here.](#)

Direct Transfer Admissions Pathway: During their Verto experience, students can apply to up to five Direct Transfer partners using Verto's free **Direct Transfer Application**. Students who maintain good conduct and meet each Direct Transfer partner's [eligibility criteria](#) will receive guaranteed admission.

To learn more about our Partner Colleges, [visit our website.](#)

THE VERTO EXPERIENCE: A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

Our Programming Model

Verto Discovery is our programming model and the way we build community and accompany students on their developmental journey towards Self-Authorship (Baxter Magolda 2001)¹ as they learn about:

- themselves (intrapersonal)
- one another (interpersonal)
- and the world around them (intercultural).

Through Verto Discovery, participants develop deeper personal, community, and global connections through curated activities and interactions with staff and each other. In this way, Verto Discovery refers to all of the activities and interactions that deepen students' understanding about themselves, our community, and the world around them.

OUR COMMUNITY VALUES

- **Compassion:** Demonstrating sincere and authentic care for oneself and fellow community members
- **Responsibility:** Taking ownership over one's thoughts, actions, and experiences
- **Vulnerability:** Peeling back a layer of our humanity to share more about ourselves in a way that deepens relationships and understanding
- **Transformation:** Orienting all goals and mindset to getting the most out of this experience by learning and growing as much as possible.

Verto Discovery is made possible through upholding our values. We ask all community members to embody these values with pride!

¹ Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2001). *Making their own way: Narratives for transforming higher education to promote self-development*. Stylus Publishing.

FAMILY SUPPORT:

Parent Testimonial



Throughout this handbook, we share Verto Parent Alumni testimonials to facilitate learning from our Verto community.

“

My son Connor was initially very resistant to attending Verto - it wasn't something he thought he wanted; he thought he would miss out on the first year of traditional college.

Instead of pushing him, I gave him one specific question to ask people he trusted: "Did you study abroad?" and told him he would hear one of two answers - either "Yes, and..." or "No, but..." - and to listen carefully to both.

*That framing really caught his attention and helped him think differently, ultimately allowing him to make the decision on his own. Once he chose to go, **he was all in**. His time abroad (Florence Fall 2024, Seville Spring 2025) became one of the most **meaningful** and **transformative experiences** of his life, and he returned more confident, independent, and clear about his future.*

He even said, "Every student should study abroad like this before starting college." Even now, as a 2nd year student at DU, he still talks about that experience and truly misses being abroad."

Karen L., Parent of Connor
Florence, Fall 2024
University of Denver

”

YOUR ROLE

as a Verito Parent



HIGHER EDUCATION & PARENT INVOLVMENT

A Family Transition

Adjusting to adulthood and less parent involvement is an integral learning experience for new undergraduate students.

Students are stepping into independence, learning to manage their time, and navigating life and challenges as an adult. Yet, families still play an important role as emotional support systems, advisors, and champions from afar.

Like traditional colleges, Verto encourages parents to stay engaged through communication, encouragement, asking guiding questions, and **trusting in your student and our team to resolve challenges together.**

We hope this **Parent Handbook** offers you practical ways to prepare your family for this transformative experience with clarity, trust, and confidence.



Verto excelled in the pre-departure communication & training sessions for both our daughter and us parents. The amount of detail that went into that pre-departure training reassured us of Verto's experience and knowledge supporting the study and living abroad experience for our daughter.

*Our daughter gained **valuable confidence** in **advocating for herself** and learned to **live more independently.***

Maria L., Parent of Sofia
Florence, Fall 2025
College of William and Mary



THE ROLE OF FAMILIES



Become a Learning Partner

We encourage parents and families to approach their role as Learning Partners rather than problem-solvers.

This means supporting your student as they make meaning of their experiences, ask questions, and navigate challenges while allowing them space to take ownership of their decisions. When families listen with curiosity, ask thoughtful questions, and encourage reflection, students develop greater confidence in their own values, beliefs, and goals.



Encourage accountability instead of intervening

When, not if, challenges arise, we encourage parents to guide students to take the lead in communicating with staff, faculty, and on-site support services rather than stepping in on their behalf.

This helps students build confidence, problem-solving skills, and a sense of ownership over their experience. By allowing students to navigate situations directly, families help them develop the independence and responsibility that are essential for success in college.



Normalize discomfort instead of removing it

Starting college is challenging, and adding the intercultural and global layer that Verto provides can create unknown situations that students must navigate.

Rather than trying to remove these feelings of discomfort, families can support their student by helping them see discomfort as a natural and valuable part of learning. Encouraging students to reflect on what they are experiencing can build resilience and confidence.



Focus on growth rather than perfection

A meaningful college abroad experience is not about getting everything right, but rather about learning and growing along the way.

We encourage families to focus on progress, effort, and reflection rather than perfection or flawless outcomes. When students feel supported in trying new things and learning from mistakes, they are more willing to take healthy risks and stretch themselves. This mindset helps students develop resilience, confidence, and a lifelong approach to learning.

THE ROLE OF FAMILIES:

Parent Testimonial

“

*I played only a small role in my daughter’s adjustment while she studied in two different countries. I’ve always believed that **each person’s journey is their own**, and I didn’t want her experience to feel limited or overly guided.*

*Instead, I encouraged her to **explore freely** and **discover her own path** without too much intervention from me.*

*During our phone calls, I would simply remind her how much we missed her, while also urging her to fully **embrace the opportunity**—spend time with her friends from home, but also step outside that circle. I encouraged her to connect with locals, immerse herself in the culture, and engage deeply with her surroundings.*

*Having familiar company was comforting, but true growth would come from **integrating into the local community** and gaining a fuller understanding of the experience.*

Delemar R., Parent of Valentina
Seville, Fall 2024 | Florence, Spring 2025
Syracuse University



”



DISCOVERY ZONE FRAMEWORK

The **Discovery Zone Framework** is our approach to all activities and programming, and designed to help students grow by intentionally stepping beyond what feels familiar and comfortable.

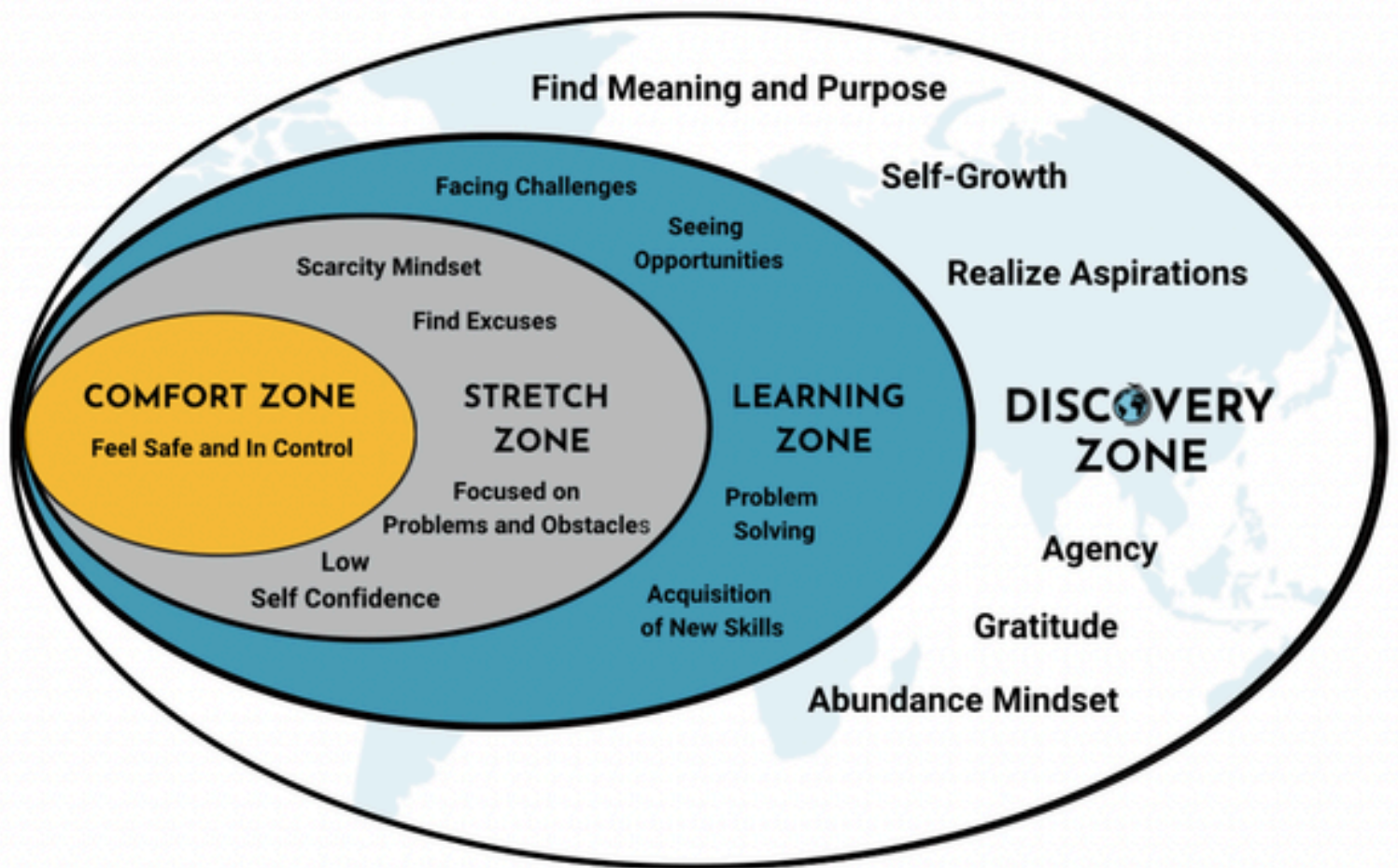
While it's natural for students to seek the safety of routines and known environments, meaningful learning and personal development often happen when they are gently challenged to try something new. For many students, staying in their **Comfort Zone** might include asking you for help instead of seeking to resolve challenges with our on-site support team or independently.

Through this framework, Verto encourages students to take thoughtful risks: whether that's engaging with the local culture, building relationships with new peers, or navigating challenges independently.

With the right **balance of support and stretch**, students develop confidence, resilience, and adaptability. These skills not only support their transition to college, but also prepare them to navigate an ever-changing world with curiosity and confidence.

DISCOVERY ZONE

The college abroad journey is a continuous evolution through growth zones. Most students start immediately in the **Stretch Zone**, and their **Comfort Zone** expands gradually as they adapt. At Verto, we aspire to accompany students in a way that allows them to thrive in their **Discovery Zone**.



DISCOVERY ZONE

Stretch Zone: First Days & Early Challenges

Student Experience:

- Adjusting to a new country, culture, and academic system
- Meeting roommates, making friends, navigating campus life
- Feeling excitement mixed with anxiety

Parent Support:

- Encourage curiosity: “What’s something new you noticed today?”
- Reassure that discomfort is normal
- Listen more than solve; ask reflective questions



Communication Tip: Frequent check-ins are normal. Early on, students rely on parents for reassurance while navigating unfamiliar situations.

Learning Zone: Facing Challenges & Growth

Student Experience:

- Embracing challenges and seeing opportunities to grow
- Managing academics and independent decision-making
- Building problem-solving skills
- Navigating social dynamics learning from diverse perspectives
- Encountering setbacks, building resilience, and acquiring new skills

Parent Support:

- Normalize mistakes and setbacks
- Encourage reflection: “What worked well? What could you try differently?”
- Provide emotional support while reinforcing independence



Communication Tip: Shift to reflective, coaching-style conversations. Ask questions that help your student think through challenges rather than giving solutions.

DISCOVERY ZONE

Discovery Zone: Self-Exploration & Leadership

Student Experience:

- Exploring passions, community engagement, and leadership opportunities to exercise agency and purpose
- Building confidence, self-efficacy, and identity
- Making intentional choices aligned with personal values

Parent Support:

- Celebrate initiative and curiosity
- Encourage exploration and reflection
- Step back as a supportive sounding board to reinforce purpose-driven decision-making



Communication Tip: Expect your student to initiate conversations and share insights. Your role becomes celebration, guidance, and strategic reflection while encouraging their independence.



*My son, with support from his **Verto Student Success Advisor**, handled everything from spilling a drink on his laptop, to the best place to study, to where to get the most delicious gelato!*

*He called to tell me all about it and share in the fun but I let him know I was too far away to be of any real help, so he handled it all on his own. **He gained confidence and friends that will last him a lifetime.***



Rachel M., Parent of Brody
Florence, Fall 2025
Providence College



DISCOVERY ZONE FRAMEWORK APPLIED

Scenario: Your student received a lower grade than they expected on their exam and would like to talk through their options with someone.

Verto participants are academically-oriented college students, and take their academics seriously. That being said, it is not uncommon for students to take a moment to adjust to academic rigor of college.

When this happens, we expect students to initiate communication with their on-site team to get connected to resources and support.

Comfort Zone	Learning Zone
<p>Meaning well, you write an email to the Dean of Students as this is what you did when your student was in high school.</p> <p>The Dean of Students Office thanks you for your email and contacts the on-site team, who contacts your student to schedule a 1:1.</p> <p>Result: Complicated communication chain to ultimately have student work with on-site team.</p>	<p>Your student emails their Student Success Advisor, letting them know they'd like to book an appointment. Your student also emails their faculty to discuss the grade.</p> <p>Student sits down with SSA to review academic resources available to support their learning and develops a Student Success Plan to get back on track.</p> <p>Result: Student gains self-advocacy skills and understands how to make use of available academic resources.</p>

STUDENT GROWTH:

Parent Testimonials

“

We are so proud of how much our son grew as a young adult with Verto. He was able to **confidently navigate logistics** with traveling, **communication with professors**, and really **immersed himself** in the culture in Florence.

The warm environment that is Verto allowed him to easily make friends and that helped his experience overall. We are so impressed with the growth he has made and we are so grateful that he was able to experience being a part of the Verto community.

Paula A., Parent of Elliot
Florence, Fall 2025

”



“

I spent a lot of time researching Verto once this opportunity became a reality for our daughter. I was very impressed with the amount of information that is provided on their website in addition to their virtual information sessions. I was also impressed with each and every staff member who helped us with any questions or concerns.

*Throughout the semester, they proved that they knew what they were doing, and **they really cared about the safety and well-being of each student**. Because of all of this, Addison's experience was everything we could have hoped for, and then some!*

Debbi W., Parent of Addison
Florence, Fall 2025

”

LEARNING PARTNER STRATEGIES



One of the most powerful ways you can support your college student’s growth is by becoming a **learning partner**: a **mentor** who listens, asks thoughtful questions, and encourages reflection. This approach helps students build confidence, resilience, and the ability to navigate challenges independently.

The tools in this section offer practical ways you can support your student while still empowering them to take ownership of their college experience.

24-Hour Pause Rule	Effort-Based Praise
<p>If your student is experiencing a challenge, wait 24 hours before contacting Verto.</p> <p>Encourage your student to take the first step.</p>	<p>Instead of: “Did you get an A?” → Try: “How did you approach that assignment?”</p>
3-Question Check-In	Shift from Supervisor to Mentor
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What stretched you this week?• What felt good?• What support do you need?	<p>Instead of solving problems, ask “What do you think your next step could be?”</p>

YOUR STUDENT'S SUPPORT SYSTEMS



STUDENT SUPPORT

One of the best benefits of the Verto Community is the unparalleled access to support your student will gain throughout the program.

From the moment your student enrolls in Verto, they have access to world-class mentorship and support, which continues once they arrive on-site.



Pre-Departure:

During Pre-Departure, your student works with their **Student Onboarding Advisor (SOA)**, completing all their checklist items and accessing information that prepares them for their on-site experience. Additionally, Verto's Academic Affairs team offers Advising Hours for students seeking guidance throughout the course selection process.



On-Site:

Once a student arrives, they no longer work with their SOA. Instead, they meet a new mentor: their **Student Success Advisor (SSA)**. This in-person, on-site, full-time role is your student's best coach, mentor, and resource throughout the semester.

While SSAs do not communicate or work directly with parents, it's important to know that your student will be expected to participate in the engagements and support interventions that your student's SSA will offer.

Faculty are another important support to your student while on-site. Not only do they teach your student in class, but they are often the first to notice when a student is struggling and can connect them to appropriate resources. Faculty make themselves available outside of the classroom as well, through office hours and email.

ROLE SPOTLIGHT: STUDENT SUCCESS ADVISOR

Every Verto student is part of a Care Team of roughly 30 to 35 peers, led by a Student Success Advisor (SSA). The SSA is your student's onsite mentor, advocate, and guide – the person they turn to from arrival day through closing ceremony.



How SSAs support your student

- **Settling in.** Lead Discovery Week activities, help students get oriented in the host city, and ensure students have access to their academic and student success tools for the semester.
- **1:1 Check-Ins.** Hold regular meetings with students, including in the first weeks to set goals, and after midterms to revisit academics and Post-Verto plans. Students can request more anytime!
- **Community and travel.** Organize monthly Care Team meals, drop-in activities, and accompany the team on overnight and day-trip excursions.
- **Academic and wellness support.** Coordinate Wellness Week, monitor academic progress, and connect students to faculty, health, or counseling resources when needed.
- **Post-Verto Planning.** Help students think through Direct Transfer pathways, access their Channel resources, and explore what comes after Verto.
- **Overcoming challenges.** Whether a roommate disagreement, difficulties in language or cultural translation, or a period of homesickness, your student's SSA will be there to accompany them and help them uncover the solution.



How to redirect your student to their SSA

When your student calls home with something hard, the most helpful thing you can do is point them back to the support already in place. A few scripts to try:

- **General:** "That sounds really hard. Have you talked to your SSA about it? They've probably helped someone through this before."
- **Academic stress:** "Ask your SSA for an extra check-in this week. They can help you talk to your professors or find a tutor."
- **Health, safety, or mental health:** "Please tell your SSA today. They know the local resources and can get you connected."

STUDENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHTS

Roxana, Student Success Advisor (Florence)

What's your favorite part of your job?

What I love most about being an SSA is the opportunity to truly make a difference in my students' lives. It's a big responsibility — but incredibly rewarding to see them grow and succeed.

I also love talking about food. When students ask for local recipes or restaurant recommendations, I get so excited to share hidden gems and city tips!

What message would you give incoming students?

Don't overthink it. Verto is an incredible way to start college — it's a step away from constant perform-and-produce culture and a step toward deeper cultural understanding. Small classes, personalized support, and a team walking alongside you the whole way. Honestly, I can't think of a smoother way to transition into adult life.



Fran, Student Success Advisor (Seville)

What's your favorite part of your job?

The privilege of listening. Every student arrives with a unique story, background, and their own set of fears. Being able to sit down with them, offer a safe space where they feel truly understood, and guide them to find their own answers in the beautiful chaos that growing up can sometimes be. That is the ultimate reward.

What message would you give incoming students?

Leave your picture-perfect expectations at home and bring an open mind. This journey is a golden opportunity to redefine who you are outside of your usual environment. Take advantage of the small classes, ask questions without fear, and trust the team. You are about to start the most transformative year of your lives. Go all in!



CARE TEAMS

The Care Team is community within a community, built through intentional time together.



Care Teams are at the center of how we build community at Verto. By creating smaller, more closely knit communities at our sites we foster collaborative and integrative learning experiences among students. Here's how we think of Care Teams in the framework of our community:

- A **Community** is a group of people, united by a common goal or perspective, that care about one another and contribute to a sense of belonging.
- **Relationships** form the basis of any healthy community, and so
- **Care Teams** help create the right conditions for positive relationships to form.

Care Teams are made of around 35 students who are led by a Student Success Advisor. In many cases, Care Teams are sorted by Channel school to help students make connections as they prepare for their Post-Verto Plan.

Why Do We Organize Care Teams?

Learning communities are groups in which faculty, staff and students learn together through intentional activities that are designed to promote involvement in academics and social learning activities, both in and out of the classroom (Zhao & Kuh, 2004)².

As a learning community, Care Teams are not only places of support but also serve as a springboard for self-discovery and student success. By creating smaller, more closely knit communities at our sites we foster collaborative and integrative learning experiences among students.

We also organize by Care Teams in order to give you a smaller cohort of students with which to develop connection, provide mentorship, and encourage leadership and advancement on their self-authorship journey.

²Zhao, C. M., & Kuh, G. D. (2004). *Adding value: Learning communities and student engagement. Research in Higher Education, 45(2), 115–138.*

CONFLICT RESOLUTION ON-SITE

When a challenge arises on-site, your student is never on their own. Verto operates a tiered care model designed to meet students where they are, with the right level of support for the situation.

Every student has a dedicated **Student Success Advisor** as their first point of contact. Onsite management, program leadership, and our Dean of Students add additional support as situations call for more specialized care.

Student Support Escalation Framework

Tier 1: Student Success Advisor

Day-to-day support: homesickness, roommate questions, minor health, adjusting to college life

Most Issues Resolved Here

Tier 2: Onsite Management

Specialized support: moderate mental health, recurring conflicts, academic challenges

Tier 3: Program Director & HQ Support

Serious situations: hospitalization, complex grievances, possible program withdrawal

Tier 4: Dean of Students & Senior Leadership

Crisis response: immediate safety risk, legal matters, family is contacted directly

Family contacted if safety is at risk

What This Means for You as a Parent

Because your student is a college student, conversations between them and the Verto support team are **confidential** by default.

You typically will not be notified when your student talks through a tough day with their SSA, navigates a roommate conversation, or works through a compassionate discipline matter.

In situations that involve an immediate safety risk, our Dean of Students and senior leadership will contact you directly.

SEMESTER AT-A-GLANCE





SEMESTER OVERVIEW

The Verto semester is thoughtfully designed to balance structure with independence, giving students both the guidance and flexibility they need to grow as a true first-year experience. **Students can expect to be in class Monday through Friday.**

While every location has its own unique rhythm, most sites follow a similar arc that blends academics, cultural immersion, and personal development. Below is a practical, week-by-week look at what students (and families) can expect.

Reference:

Academic Calendar: Accessible on the [Location Resources](#) page



Week 1-2: Arrival, Discovery Week, and Add/Drop

Students arrive on-site and begin settling into their new home in their first week on-site through **Discovery Week**. In this period, they get to know the city, meet peers, understand housing expectations, and review health, safety, and academic expectations and policies. Students will learn about their neighborhoods, participate in community-building activities, and begin adjusting to cultural differences.

After Discovery Week, the **first week of classes begins**, in addition to the **Add/Drop period** where students can request changes to their course schedules. Even if a student wants to request a change, they should attend the classes they are currently enrolled in, until the change is approved.



SEMESTER OVERVIEW

Weeks 3-4: Routine-Building and Making Connections

Academic courses pick up, and students begin establishing daily routines. This is often when the initial excitement meets real adjustment to navigating schedules, managing time, and balancing independence. Staff provide extra support as students learn how to get involved, complete assignments, and take ownership of their responsibilities.

Weeks 5-6: Honeymoon Period Over

Students are now more comfortable in their environment but may start to experience challenges like homesickness, academic pressure, or cultural differences. This is a key growth period. Students are encouraged to problem-solve, seek support and make use of academic resources when needed, and continue building relationships with peers, staff, and faculty.

Weeks 7-8: Wellness Week and Midterms

Midterms occur during this timeframe. Students receive midterm grades, which is a natural moment to assess their academic progress and seek additional support from their SSA and Faculty, if needed.



SEMESTER OVERVIEW

Weeks 9-10: Increased Independence

With midterms behind them, students tend to feel more confident and independent. Many begin exploring their city more deeply and engaging more intentionally with local culture. They are more comfortable managing their schedules and making decisions on their own. If students are off-track academically, they are meeting regularly with their Student Success Advisor and taking advantage of academic resources such as tutoring and faculty office hours.

Weeks 11-12: Taking Ownership and the Discovery Zone

Students often take greater ownership of their experience during this phase, stepping into leadership roles within the community, engaging more deeply in coursework, and strengthening friendships. They are actively applying skills like communication, adaptability, and self-direction.

Weeks 13-14: Finals and Transitions

The semester wraps up with final exams, projects, and presentations. Students also begin preparing for their transition to their next college or next step. This includes reflecting on their growth, completing program requirements, and celebrating their accomplishments with their community.



EXPECTATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

Classroom Behavior & Professionalism: Consistent with the standards of the University of New Haven and Verto Education, students are expected to thoughtfully and actively contribute to creating a positive learning environment. Respectful engagement is a core component of academic success. We practice civil discourse and engage with peers and faculty with curiosity and respect. This means listening actively, disagreeing with ideas (not people), and maintaining focus throughout the class.

Disruptive or disrespectful behavior that negatively impacts the learning environment - including off-topic or persistent side conversations, unauthorized technology use, escalated / argumentative behaviors, failure to follow classroom policies or faculty instruction, etc. will not be tolerated.

Failure to act professionally or respectfully towards peers or faculty will result in a loss of participation points, which are part of course grade.. Continued disruption of the learning environment may result in further actions including, but not limited to, removal from the course and further disciplinary action under the **Verto Code of Responsibility**.

ACADEMIC RIGOR AND SUPPORT

How will your student be academically challenged at Verto?

Teaching and learning at Verto goes beyond the traditional classroom structures and teaching pedagogies. Students can expect:

- **Low & High Stakes Assessments:** To prepare students for post-Verto partners, assignments and exams are designed to build skills and demonstrate mastery of subject matter at key points. Students develop academic confidence, time-management skills, and receive continuous feedback throughout the semester on academic progress.
- **Complex rather than more:** We don't believe in busy work. Students are challenged through complex problem solving and critical thinking where they learn to apply, analyze, and make decisions.
- **Application & Relevance:** Students take what they're learning in the classroom and apply it to real life examples and case studies.

Students also have the opportunity to apply their knowledge outside of the classroom while gaining leadership skills by supporting their peers as study group leaders and peer tutors.

ACADEMIC RIGOR AND SUPPORT

How are Faculty at Verto selected?

All faculty are chosen for their subject-matter expertise, teaching experience, and local community connections.

The University of New Haven approves each faculty based on a minimum criteria of a master's degree in their subject area and at least one year of university teaching experience. In the academic year 25/26 more than 55% of all Verto faculty held PhDs with 80% of STEM faculty holding PhDs.

What if my student needs extra support with their studies?

Verto provides a scaffolded structure to academically support students. In addition to **individual meetings** with **Student Success Advisors** and the development of a **Student Success Plan**, students will find academic support available through:

- **Individual tutoring sessions**, which are facilitated by peer or professional tutors
- **Faculty Office Hours** to ask questions to instructors about course content
- **Study Groups** for specific classes
- **Academic skill-building workshops** that encourage skills like time management and note-taking

Encourage your student to set up a meeting with their Student Success Advisor and explore their support network - we're here to help!

POST-VERTO PLANNING

Post-Verto Planning empowers students to confidently navigate their next steps after Verto. Through individualized guidance, strategic planning, and dedicated support, students become equipped to pursue their goals with clarity and purpose.



Post-Verto Planning Support

CHANNEL STUDENTS

- Channel Events and Communication
- Channel Program Resources
 - Course Registration Guides
 - Channel Program FAQ
- Mid-Semester Progress Check
 - *If not meeting requirements, implementing Student Success Plan*
- Community-Building
- Midterm Grade Reports & Final Transcripts sent by UNewHaven to Channel Partner

TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

- College Exploration
 - Identify goals and interest post-Verto
 - Major and area of study
- Verto Direct Transfer Admissions Pathway exploration and application
- Independent College Applications
- Additional Semester Interest
- End of Semester Support
 - Next steps for admission and transcript requests



Tip: Encourage your student to reach out to their on-site Student Success Advisor and/or Post-Verto Planning staff member for any questions about their plans!

COMMUNICATION, PRIVACY, AND SAFETY



ABOUT FERPA

What is FERPA?

FERPA stands for the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act** - a federal law that protects student privacy.

Key Things to Know about FERPA and your student:

- Student academic records are private. This includes grades, schedule, and academic progress.
- FERPA also includes students' housing and disciplinary information.
- Students control access. Verto can't share information with parents, guardians, or others unless students give written permission.

Are there exceptions in the case of emergency?

Yes, in some situations, such as a safety emergency or legal obligation, schools may share information without consent.

How a student can authorize a FERPA Contact?

Students can authorize you as a contact by completing the FERPA Release Form, found on the [Verto Education Participant Resource Page](#) on the UNewHaven website.

This step must be completed by the student through **MyCharger**.

For more information about FERPA, please visit the [Department of Education website](#).



WHEN WILL PARENTS HEAR FROM VERTO?

During the semester, parent communication with Verto is intentionally limited, different from ongoing communication received during onboarding.

Parents can expect a monthly **Parent Newsletter** that shares important program highlights, academic updates, and major milestones.

We also send an email to parents at **midterms** reminding them to check-in with their student and of the Continuing Student Eligibility Policy.

In most day-to-day situations, **students are encouraged to be the primary source of communication**, building their confidence and independence in real time.

Of course, our team remains available to families when needed, but our approach creates a space for student growth as they step forward and lead their own experience.

We encourage you to develop a communication plan **with your student**, including:

- **How often you'll connect:** Set a realistic cadence (e.g., weekly calls or check-ins) that supports connection without feeling overwhelming.
- **Preferred methods of communication:** Decide what works best for both of you: texting, voice notes, video calls, or a mix.
- **Expectations for response time:** Agree on what's reasonable so neither side feels anxious if there's a delay.
- **When to step in vs. step back:** Talk through scenarios where your student will handle things independently and when they might reach out for support.

COMMUNICATION:

Parent Testimonial

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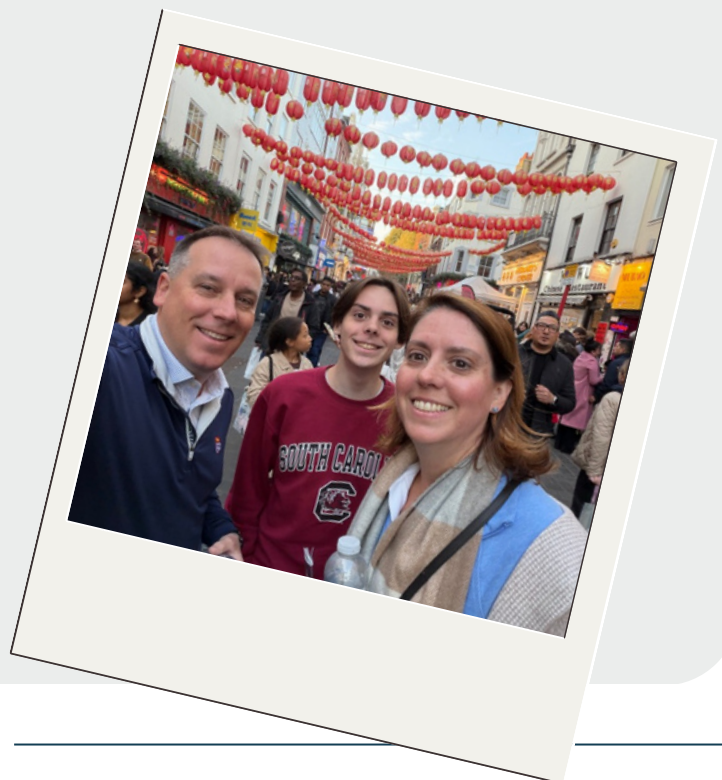
Alex is extremely extroverted, well-traveled internationally, and self-reliant as an Eagle Scout. It didn't make leaving him in London any easier. I think he was more comfortable than we initially gave him credit for.

*Regardless, **we collectively agreed on short FaceTime video calls on Sunday nights** at 8pm London time. We updated him regarding news from home. He talked about new friends, fun classes, and excursions. A few times he texted and needed to push a night.*

*We had to keep reminding ourselves that we were raising a young man... not a child. It's initially hard and sometimes creates anxiety within parents, but **the process works.***

Alex loved his Verto experience and we got back a more mature son who was excited about his next adventure at the University of South Carolina.

Chad F., Parent of Alex
London, Fall 2025
University of South Carolina



”

STUDENT-INITIATED COMMUNICATION

As a college student, we expect your student to initiate communication with staff and faculty to resolve any challenges that arise. Why?

- **Faster, more effective support:** When students communicate directly with staff, we hear firsthand what's happening and can respond more quickly and appropriately.
- **Building independence and confidence:** Reaching out, asking questions, and seeking support are skills we want students to build. Practicing them now helps students build confidence and develop the communication skills they will use throughout their academic career and beyond.
- **Adjusting to college life:** A key part of the college experience is the shift from parent-led to student-led communication. Encouraging students to take the lead in communication helps them develop ownership of their experience and strengthens their ability to navigate challenges independently.

Topics your student should initiate with their on-site team:

- Any illness, injury, or need for medical support
- Logistical questions (e.g., where to buy school supplies, finding a pharmacy, navigating the city)
- Questions about academics, grades, faculty, or coursework
- Concerns related to housing, roommates, or classmates

Note: If a parent or family member reaches out about a student concern, our first step will typically be to encourage the student to connect directly with their on-site team.

Remember to refer to the communication plan you created with your student to keep in touch throughout the semester.

PARENT-INITIATED COMMUNICATION

We understand that situations may arise where it may be appropriate for a parent or guardian to reach out to Verto Staff. All parent contact is facilitated through the Dean of Students office.

Circumstances when parents should contact the Dean of Students Office on behalf of their student include:

- Emergencies at home that require help contacting/informing student
 - Example: Serious illness or death in the family
 - Urgent travel requests
- Significant medical/mental health risk that staff might not be aware of
- Major issues in the student experience that they would like leadership to be aware of

How to contact the Dean of Students Office

For non-emergencies:

Email: deanofstudents@vertoeducation.org

*Responses provided during office hours Monday-Friday, 9am - 5pm Eastern time.

Phone: The Verto Main Line: **+1 (971) 257-8918 option #4**

**Please leave us a message and we will call you back during office hours*

For emergencies:

Parent Emergency Line: This phone number is shared with enrolled Parents via VertConnect Portal near the start of the semester.

Note: Student Emergency Line: Each site has a local 24/7 emergency line, staffed by local Verto staff. Students will be given this number in pre-departure and Discovery Week. This line is **only for students** (not parents or guardians). If a parent calls the Student Emergency line, Verto staff have been instructed to politely end the call. This allows them to keep the line open and remain available for students who need help on-site.

STUDENT SELF-ADVOCACY:

Parent Testimonial

“

My daughter, Gabriella, developed a tremendous amount of independence during her time abroad in Florence. She really matured and learned to prioritize the things that were most important for her to continue her education at the University of Tennessee.

Gabby became more adept at multi-tasking and learned to navigate classwork, roommate time, taking care of an apartment, having fun, and traveling.

*There were times when she may have been a little nervous about something new, but **we asked questions** and tried to **coach her through problem-solving** as opposed to providing her with all of the solutions.*

*She learned how to **advocate for herself** with her professors, roommates, and even during a visit to the hospital emergency room.*

Honestly, she left New Hampshire as a kid and came home as an independent young woman. We are so happy with Gabby's Verto experience, and so is she!

Colleen B., Parent of Gabriella
Florence, Fall 2025
University of Tennessee, Knoxville



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HEALTH AND SAFETY

At Verto Education, the health, safety and wellbeing of our students is our top priority.

Our goal is to equip students with the knowledge, skills and resources to empower them to prioritize their health and safety during their time abroad so that they are able to fully engage in their classes, experiential learning activities and personal development.

Here are just a few of the ways Verto Staff will help set your student up for success as they journey abroad:

- A student **required pre-departure onboarding course and 4 live sessions** highlighting important safety protocols before departure
- In-depth coverage of medical resources and **emergency protocols** during our on-site Discovery Week at the beginning of each semester
- **Required registration** on a **safety app** for Verto staff and students to connect in the case of an emergency
- **24/7 emergency phones** answered by local staff in each Program Location and a US emergency phone line for parents
- An experienced and dedicated **Student Success Advisor (SSA)** who is familiar with local medical resources
- **Three personalized 1:1 meetings** with their SSA during the semester to offer personalized care and support
- Individual student enrollment with **AXA/Travel Assist Emergency Services** through **CISI Insurance**



INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

As full-time students, your student is expected to attend class, which can run Monday through Friday. However, in their free time on the weekend, they are welcome to travel.

Given that students take advantage of this exciting feature of studying abroad, we ask for your help to reinforce these independent travel guidelines that we share with students during pre-departure and Discovery Week (Orientation).

Missing class or experiential learning activities may lead to grade reductions, as outlined in the Attendance Policy on our [Policies page](#).

Student Communication Expectations:

- (Required): Input all Independent Travel in the **VertoSafe App**.
- Keep personal cell phone charged, and save the local Verto emergency phone number.
- Heed staff advice when planning independent travel to locations with travel advisory notes as indicated by the State Department. In some instances, our staff may advise students to NOT travel to certain regions.
- Communicate with their parents about their travel plans. We do not share independent travel plans with parents.

POLICIES AND FURTHER READING



VERTO POLICIES TO KNOW

For all policies, view our [Policies page](#)

Code of Responsibility - [Click Here](#)

Includes expectations of conduct, expectations surrounding participant/staff communication, and technology policies.

Attendance Policy - [Click Here](#)

Consistent attendance in class is critical for academic success, particularly during study abroad. Verto Education's attendance policies are created to ensure participants remain on track academically and achieve their post-Verto plans. Verto has the responsibility to ensure compliance with regulations set forth by our Academic Provider, NECHE accreditation, and immigration controls, which include attendance tracking to ensure participants meet requirements relevant to immigration status of the host country.

Community Living Policy - [Click Here](#)

Expectations regarding living in community in each of Verto's housing accommodations.

Academic Accommodations Policy - [Click Here](#)

All academic accommodations are identified and issued through our Academic Provider, the University of New Haven. If you have a participant with a disability, they may benefit from the support and services of the Accessibility Resource Center at the University of New Haven.

Enrolled participants who previously held an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Educational Plan, who would like to continue with reasonable accommodations while abroad, must request the accommodations through the Accessibility Resources Center at the University of New Haven.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY FOR CONTINUING STUDENTS

Currently enrolled students who want to continue their enrollment with Verto for an additional semester must meet the academic, behavioral, and financial eligibility requirements at the conclusion of the final grading period of their current semester of enrollment, as outlined in the [Academic Eligibility Policy - Continuing Students](#).

These criteria are established in partnership with Verto's academic provider, the University of New Haven. Please note that Verto's academic eligibility requirements may differ from those of our partner institutions. Students receive an email from Verto's Dean of Students within 1-2 weeks post mid-term grading with an update on their eligibility for the upcoming semester. This initial review is based on midterm academic performance.

Tip: Check-in with your student after midterm grades to find out how they're doing in their classes.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY FOR CONTINUING STUDENTS (CONT.)

Final academic, behavioral, and financial eligibility decisions for additional semester participants are made at the end of the term and communicated directly to students. Academic eligibility decisions are based on the following criteria:

- **2.0 GPA or higher:** Eligible to continue for an additional semester at the location of their choice.
- **1.5 – 1.99 GPA:** Eligible for Verto’s Academic Recovery Program (select locations only; students may be required to change program locations).
- **1.49 GPA or below:** Academically ineligible to continue.

Recommendation: Check-in with your student after final grades are released to learn about their grades and GPA.

For more information on eligibility requirements, communication timelines, the Academic Recovery Program, and possible impact to channel partner pathways, please review [Verto’s Academic Eligibility – Continuing Student Policy](#).

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT & INTEGRITY

Verto Education and the University of New Haven are committed to creating a learning environment built on honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, courage, and accountability. These values help ensure that every student has a fair opportunity to succeed and that the academic community remains strong and ethical.

Academic integrity is essential to:

- Ensuring students earn grades that reflect their own learning
- Promoting respect for others' ideas and work
- Preparing students for future academic and professional expectations

What Counts as Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes any behavior that gives a student an unfair academic advantage or misrepresents their work. Examples include:

- Cheating
- Collaboration/Collusion
- Non-permitted use of AI or other non-permitted resources
- Plagiarism
- Fabrication
- Facilitating Academic Misconduct
- Copyright Infringement

Please review Verto's [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) for more detailed guidelines and expectations regarding academic integrity and misconduct, as well as the process for addressing academic misconduct issues.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT & INTEGRITY (CONT.)

What Students Are Expected to Do

Students are responsible for:

- Completing their own work honestly
- Asking instructors when they're unsure about collaboration, citation, or AI use
- Following all course-specific expectations as outlined in their syllabus or other grading rubrics
- Responding truthfully during any academic misconduct review
- Taking responsibility and learning from mistakes

Possible Consequences: Consequences for academic misconduct depends on the severity and impact of the violation and may include:

- A zero on an assignment or exam
- Redoing work with reduced credit
- Failing a course
- Academic probation
- Removal from the program in severe or repeated cases

How Parents Can Support Their Student

Encourage your student to:

- Read their course syllabi carefully
- Ask questions to their instructors when unsure about expectations
- Use resources for writing, studying, and citation help
- Approach academic challenges early rather than turning to shortcuts

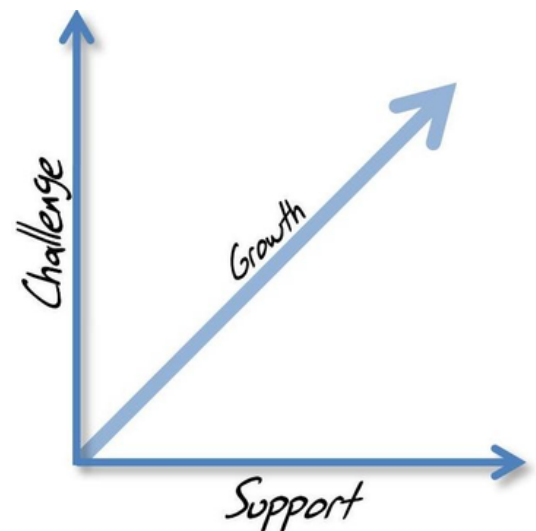
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: FOUNDATIONS

Compassionate Discipline

Compassionate discipline is a behavior management framework that balances accountability with empathy, focusing on growth rather than punishment. It emphasizes understanding the root causes of behavior, setting clear and consistent boundaries, and guiding students toward making better choices through reflection and support. By fostering trust and connection, compassionate discipline helps create a safe, respectful environment where students feel motivated to take responsibility and learn from their actions.

Sanford Challenge and Support Theory

This theory emphasizes that students grow most when they are appropriately challenged while also receiving the right level of support. Too much challenge without support can lead to frustration, while too much support without challenge can lead to stagnation. When both are balanced, students are empowered to stretch beyond their comfort zones, build resilience, and develop greater confidence and independence.



Adult Learner Theory

- **Self-direction:** Adult learners want ownership over their learning and decision-making.
- **Experience as a resource:** Adults bring prior knowledge and life experiences that shape how they learn.
- **Goal-oriented:** Learning is more effective when tied to personal, academic, or professional goals.
- **Problem-centered learning:** Adults prefer solving real-world problems over rote memorization.
- **Respect and collaboration:** Adults thrive in environments where they feel respected and treated as partners in the learning process.

FURTHER READINGS

- **The Anxious Generation** by **Jonathan Haidt** — Argues that phone-based childhood and the decline of free play have driven a mental health crisis in Gen Z. Useful framing for understanding what your student is bringing with them into college, and why their relationship with screens, social media, and independence may look different from yours at that age.
- **Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years** by **Karen Levin Coburn** and **Madge Lawrence Treeger**. Walks through the emotional and developmental arc of all four years, with practical guidance on roommate conflicts, homesickness, academic struggles, and the shifting parent role.
- **The Stressed Years of Their Lives** by **Anthony Rostain** and **Janet Hibbs**. Written by a psychiatrist and a psychologist. Specifically about mental health on campus and when to worry, how to talk about it, when and how to intervene. Pairs naturally with Haidt.
- **How to Raise an Adult** by **Julie Lythcott-Haims**. Former Stanford dean on the costs of overparenting and how to actually foster independence. Best read before drop-off if possible, but still useful after.
- **The Coddling of the American Mind** by **Greg Lukianoff** and **Jonathan Haidt**. Haidt's earlier book, focused on campus culture, fragility, and the "three great untruths" they argue have shaped this generation. Good context for the campus environment your student is walking into.

THANK YOU!

This Parent Handbook was truly a community effort, in typical Verto fashion. I want to give a special thanks to the Verto Parent Alumni that contributed their feedback, testimonies, and lived experiences to enrich this handbook and make it most useful for future Verto Parents.

I also want to thank all Verto Parents - you! - for entrusting our team to facilitate this transformative experience to study abroad for your student.

Many of us at Verto have personal experiences living and study abroad that have transformed us. We are privileged to accompany your student at such a pivotal and exciting point in their academic career and adult life.

Thank you - and Go Verto!

Matteo Travers
Community Manager

Parent Alumni Review Committee

Julie Arnold
Paula Averbach
Colleen Benvenuti
Shaunene Edwards
Chad Fulgham
Michael Jaffe
Michelle Korczynski
Maria Liskey

Karen Lynch
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Deleamar Rodrigues
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Christina Sumner Murphy
Stephanie Vander Els
Debbie Winter