

# HIGH SCHOOL SELECTION PROCESS HANDBOOK

## The Sequence of Events in Selecting a High School A Special Message to Students and Families

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The transition to high school was the most important topic of discussion at the Community Conversation program held on December 2, 2013 as well as in follow-up discussions. The Board of Education Strategic Plan for 2018-2022 and 2014-2018 has included the implementation of a more comprehensive process for helping our students to select a high school. –ASB

**Voluntown Elementary School  
Voluntown Public Schools  
Voluntown, Connecticut**

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Selecting a High School: Sequence of Events

**Activities**

Take time to review the information in this handbook about the Voluntown policies and rules that must be followed in making the selection of a high school.

Maintain grades, behavior, and attendance.

Visit all designated high schools.

Attend open houses at high schools.

Attend the High School Fair for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and families.

Attain information from high school personnel at visits to VES.

Schedule informational meetings with the school counselor to learn more about all designated high schools as needed.

Be mindful of application due dates.

Access forms for the application process in the main and school counseling offices.

After decision is made, notify the School Counselor and schedule, as needed, follow-through visits at the school.

Continue to review current school performance, upcoming high school requirements, personal goals, and update student success plan.

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A Special Message for Students and Families

Dear Students and Families:

Eighth grade is a time to visit the designated high schools and make a decision by December.

Students and parents will have access to information, especially on the various websites, to gain a better understanding about high schools. A schedule and permission form for a series of field trips to high schools will be sent home. After the visits, there will be time to review information and discuss the various options to make the best possible decision.

Eighth grade students will be asked to prioritize their choice(s) of high school(s). Ms. Goodwin, School Counselor, is available to answer any questions or discuss the different high schools. Our goal is to support students in choosing a high school that best fits their academic needs and future aspirations.

In the case of Killingly Agricultural Education Program and Ellis Tech or Norwich Tech, students will need to fill out an application by November. Acceptance, announced at a later date, is based on academic history, attendance, discipline record, special education needs, and the results of 7<sup>th</sup> grade standardized tests. Applications for the Marine Science Magnet High School and Quinebaug Middle College, the two magnet schools, are due in January/February and are based on a lottery system.

Griswold High School and Norwich Free Academy are considered our public high schools. Students do not need to apply; personnel from each school will visit Voluntown and assist in course selection.

Any student who receives special education services will finalize course selections and services at a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting with VES and high school personnel before the end of the school year.

Transportation is provided to each high school.

Emily MacEwen – School Counselor

Students - Designated High Schools

**Board of Education Policy #5111.11**

In accordance with the provisions of Section 10-33 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Voluntown Board of Education will designate a high school for Voluntown students who have completed the prescribed elementary course of study. The Voluntown Board of Education will pay all tuition costs and provide transportation to any child attending a designated high school provided that the designated high school can provide programs and services appropriate to the needs of the child or student who is qualified for, and requires, specialized instruction or services. As such, the Planning and Placement Team will make the high school placement of special education students, in accordance with state and federal statutes.

Attendance at high schools other than those designated by the Board of Education will be at the expense of the parents/guardians. Current Designation of Secondary Schools: Griswold High School, Ellis Technical, Killingly Agricultural Education, Norwich Free Academy, Norwich Technical, Marine Science Magnet High School, Quinebaug Middle College, and special education placements.

Regulation Approved: September 8, 1992  
Revised: April 10, 2014

VOLUNTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
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**Voluntown Board of Education Approved List of Designated High Schools**

The Voluntown Public School System provides daily transportation to and from the following high schools. During eighth grade, information is available regarding the application process, open house events at the high schools, and special programs at VES. Parents will be asked to sign field trip permission slips for eighth graders to participate in field trips to any designated high schools. Please check the web sites of the following schools for more detailed information about current program offerings.

**Griswold High School**

267 Slater Avenue, Griswold, CT 06351 (860-376-7640 or [griswold.k12.ct.us](http://griswold.k12.ct.us))

GHS offers a wide range of courses. College bound students can take advanced placement courses and have opportunities to earn college credit.

**H.H. Ellis Technical High School**

613 Upper Maple Street, Danielson, CT 06340 (860-412-7500 or [cttech.org/ellis](http://cttech.org/ellis))

Ellis provides up-to-date courses for both high school and post grad programs. The application is due during the first part of the year and the decision for acceptance is made by the first week of March. Students applying must also register at Griswold or Norwich Free Academy as a back-up choice.

**Killingly Agricultural Education Program**

79 Westfield Ave, Post Office Box 210, Killingly, CT 06239 (860-779-6675 or [killinglyschool.org](http://killinglyschool.org))

The program places an emphasis on agriculture and related fields. Written applications are due in November. Students applying must also register at Griswold or Norwich Free Academy as a back-up choice.

**Marine Science Magnet High School (MSMHS)**

130 Shennecossett Road, Groton, CT 06340 (860-446-9380 or [marinesciencemagnet.org](http://marinesciencemagnet.org))

The regional magnet high school, administered by LEARN, promotes rigorous learning with an emphasis on marine science. Written applications are due in January. The application does not guarantee admittance in the program as election is based on a lottery system. Students applying must also register at Griswold or Norwich Free Academy as a back-up choice.

**Norwich Free Academy**

305 Broadway, Norwich, CT 06360 (860-887-2505 or [nfaschool.org](http://nfaschool.org))

NFA offers a wide range of courses and offers extensive opportunities in art. College bound students can take advanced placement courses and have opportunities to earn college credit.

**Norwich Technical High School**

7 Mahan Dr., Norwich, CT 06360 (860-889-8453 or [cttech.org/Norwich](http://cttech.org/Norwich))

The application is due during the first part of the school year and the decision for acceptance is made by the first week of March. Students applying must also register at Griswold or Norwich Free Academy as a back-up choice.

**Quinebaug Middle College (QMC)**

742 Upper Maple Street, Danielson, CT 06239 (860-932-4100 or [eastconn.org/qmc](http://eastconn.org/qmc))

This regional magnet high school, administered by EASTCONN, offers an innovative educational experience. The application is due in February. Located in a new building on the Quinebaug Valley Community College campus in Danielson, students are provided with a democratic learning environment and the opportunity to earn college credits. Community service and internships are also available. Students applying must also register at Norwich Free Academy or Griswold as a back-up choice.

### Promotion and Retention Regulations:

Students shall be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement. Students who can reasonably be expected to meet the instructional/learning objectives at the next education level, on the basis of objective measures of academic proficiency, may be promoted.

Junior High School students (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders) must pass all their core subjects (Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, and English) and PE/Health with an average of 65% or better in order to be considered for promotion to the next grade level. Any student failing one or more subject(s) will not be considered for promotion. Students failing one subject must attend summer school for a maximum of five weeks in the subject area that they failed during the academic school year. The Voluntown Board of Education will provide the program at no cost. Failure to attend 90% of the summer school program and/or failure to achieve a 65% or better average in the failed subject during the summer program will result in retention.

Administration will notify students in writing by the end of the second marking period if they are in danger of failing. A certified copy of the letter signed by a Voluntown administrator will be mailed home to the parents at the end of the second marking period. Parents must sign and return the certified letter to the school within ten days. A meeting may be scheduled with the student, parent(s), administrator, school counselor, and the teacher(s) to plan a course of action that must be met to obtain success. The student, parent(s), school counselor, teacher(s) and administrator will sign a copy of the plan.

Promotion of Special Education students will be determined on an individual basis in conjunction with the IEP and PPT recommendations.

Students who are retained due to failure of a subject area will repeat the grade with an individualized program of study if they do not successfully complete summer school. It is important to realize these last three years at Voluntown Elementary School play a critical role in preparing you for making a successful transition into high school.

### Eighth Grade Graduation:

The Board of Education votes each spring to approve the date of graduation. This significant event allows the students to be officially recognized for their efforts at Voluntown Elementary School. Entering high school allows the student to learn about new rules, regulations, responsibilities and requirements. As students make the transition, they are required to carefully review information about their selected high school. There are many activities, responsibilities, procedures, and guidelines that continue in high school and our graduates still have a relationship with the Voluntown Public School System that provides full tuition and transportation to and from the seven (7) designated high schools.

### Special Education High School Tuition:

Students who have been identified through a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) process as needing supportive special education services based on an Individual Education Program (IEP) receive coordinated services through the office of the Director of Student Services for the Voluntown Public Schools (860-376-2325 ext. 115). It is important to note that our Director of Student Services attends each PPT (Planning and Placement Team) meeting and is directly involved with the coordination and implementation of high school special education programs.

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Transportation:

Voluntown supplies transportation to and from the above high schools. High school students must follow the rules and regulations of the Voluntown Public Schools. These rules are sent out to the students at the beginning of each school year by the transportation department. The bus drivers also keep students informed about safety and discipline on the bus. Questions regarding student transportation issues should be directed to the Transportation Coordinator at 860-376-2325, extension 122, or 860-376-9167. It is always important that students talk directly to their bus driver about any issues and/or concerns. The bus driver may be able to quickly resolve the problem.

Transfer Between High Schools:

The Voluntown Board of Education pays tuition for Voluntown students attending a designated high school. **Any transfer from one high school to another must be approved by the Voluntown Superintendent of Schools and must be done prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year**—the date when our tuition costs are determined. Transferring after this date is not permitted except under extenuating circumstances. Students are encouraged to work with their high school counselor if there are issues or concerns while they are in high school.

Student Transfers Between High School

**Board of Education Policy #5111.3**

The Voluntown Board of Education will be responsible for the payment of tuition for students enrolled in a designated public high school as of October 1st of a school year. Tuition payment shall not exceed that of a designated high school. The parents and/or guardians of any student wishing to transfer to another high school on and/or after that date shall be responsible for all tuition and transportation fees incurred.

The provisions of this policy pertain to the high schools designated as such by the Voluntown Board of Education.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statute Section 10 - 33

Policy Adopted: 12/10/91

Revised: 1/28/99, 11/13/01, and 4/10/14

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Residency:

It is extremely important that Voluntown Central Office, 860-376-9167, be notified immediately of any change in address or residency while attending high school. State guidelines require attendance at the appropriate school based on residency. When leaving the district, a withdrawal form must be completed at the high school. Parents will then register their child at the high school in their new town of residence. In the case where the Voluntown-designated high school does not change (for instance, if the family moves from Voluntown to Griswold or Norwich where the student is already a GHS or NFA student), it is extremely important to notify the central office as well as the high school's office of the address change, even if the student remains in that high school.

High School Advisory Council:

A High School Advisory Council was created to offer suggestions and input to improve and/or update the high school selection process, as well as inform sixth, seventh, and eighth graders about their responsibilities in this process.

## Questions to Consider when Choosing a High School

Choosing the right high school after middle school can be an overwhelming experience for some. This may seem like one of the most important decisions one will make, thus, it is important to choose a high school that fits your overall needs. Your school counselor and teachers are valuable resources to use in the high school search process and are available to assist you!

When completing your search, look at the questions to consider below and evaluate your preferences. These questions are good to ask during your high school visit or interview. After we visit the schools you will be asked to complete a persuasive essay that builds an argument about which school is best for you. It is important that you listen carefully during visits and presentations and keep an open mind even if you already have an idea of which school you want to attend.

### Admissions Considerations

- What are the criteria for admissions?
- Average test scores
- Middle School Courses (how rigorous do they need to be?)
- Interview
- Recommendation letters
- Extracurricular activities
- How many students applied last year, were admitted, and how many enrolled?
- When is the application deadline?
- When will I be notified of acceptance?
- Is there a wait list if I am not initially accepted?
- What does the transfer process look like?
- How many students stayed after freshman year?
- What types of orientation or special programs are offered to new students?
- What is the admissions process?

### Building Considerations

- What is the structure/organization of the building (grounds, buildings, classrooms, gymnasium, music rooms, art rooms, lunch, shops)?
- How far away is the school from home?
- What does the school lunch menu look like?

### Additional Considerations

- Strongest or most popular shops?
- Are there any volunteer opportunities?
- What is the faculty/student ratio?
- What clubs/activities/electives are offered?
- What sports are offered? What is the try out process?
- How many students go on to college, trade school, work, military?
- What is the size of school? The freshmen class? Individual classes?
- What is the academic level (difficulty)?
- What courses are offered (AP, college prep, study halls, electives)?
- Is there tutoring available?
- IEP or 504 accommodations/modifications?
- How does the school prepare you for life after high school?