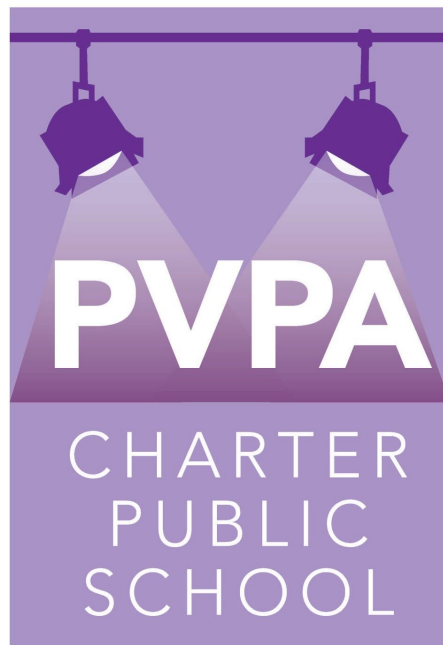


# 2018-2019

# Community Handbook



## **PVPA**

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

15 Mulligan Drive, South Hadley, MA 01075

413-552-1580 - [www.pvpa.org](http://www.pvpa.org)

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## WELCOME TO PVPA

### Dear New and Returning Students and Families,

We are excited to welcome you to the 2018-19 school year, our 23rd year as a Commonwealth Charter Public School. This Community Handbook is designed to communicate the values and expectations of our school. First and foremost, PVPA is a place that is based on respect and responsibility. We begin with the premise that everyone is worthy of trust.

At PVPA, each member of the school community is expected to treat others with compassion and respect. By taking responsibility for one's actions, we support others to make good decisions, and build a greater sense of individual and collective well-being. Students are strongly encouraged to take positive risks, volunteer, treat the school building with care, and explore their academic and artistic talents.

On a nuts and bolts level, the Community Handbook is a reference guide for students and parents/guardians to learn about the programs, policies, processes and procedures that we follow each day throughout the school year. Setting time aside at the very start of the school year to read the Community Handbook will help you navigate the school and create conversations at home with your children about charting a clear pathway to graduation and beyond.

Wishing you success and happiness in the year ahead!

*PVPA Faculty, Staff, and Administration*

### SCHOOL MAIN OFFICE HOURS

School Year	Monday - Thursday; 7:30am - 4:30pm Fridays; 7:30am - 4:00pm
Paideia (January 7-25, 2019)	Monday - Friday; 7:30am - 4:00pm
Summer	Monday - Friday; 9:00am - 3:00pm

*Please see "Student Supervision" section for additional information.*

## HISTORY

PVPA Charter Public High School (originally grades 9-12) was founded in 1996 as part of the Massachusetts Educational Reform movement. As a charter school, we were mandated to identify and facilitate innovations in educational methods that could impact positively on student learning, and to disseminate these practices to other public schools in the Commonwealth..

The middle school (grades 7- 8) program began in September 2004 and recognizes the unique developmental needs of younger adolescents in preparing them for transition into the PVPA high school program. As such, they will emerge with a greater sense of self-esteem, direction for their individual creativity, responsibility for their own learning, time management and organization, and the ability to successfully meet challenges as learners.

## MISSION

The Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School (PVPA) offers its students intensive exposure to the performing arts within the context of an excellent college preparatory curriculum.

## CHARTER PRIORITIES

- **College Preparation:** PVPA is committed to the highest level of student achievement, and seeks to prepare all students for college. Our graduation requirements are aligned with common admission requirements for four-year colleges.
- **Academic Competence:** All students in grades 7-12 must show evidence of at least “Developing” level skills and understanding on all course objectives in order to earn credit for each course. Students must also work toward developing habits of work and learning, such as meeting deadlines. Students are encouraged to edit work and re-take assessments so they may reach their highest level of proficiency.
- **Intensive Performing Arts Programs:** Students have access to course offerings each semester in theater, dance, music (vocal and instrumental), and visual arts/technical theater (stage design, lighting design, costuming, and fine arts). PVPA provides students with an extensive array of performance venues, and all students are expected to actively participate in the arts programs.
- **Individualized Attention:** PVPA makes every effort to meet the individualized needs of each student. Our small class size, use of multiple learning styles, and variety of assessment tools all support students in reaching their highest potential.
- **Integration of Creative and Critical Thinking:** The arts inform classroom teaching throughout the school. Integration of arts and academic disciplines supports the pursuit of excellence, both by increasing student interest and enthusiasm, and by providing novel entries into intellectual realms that often remain untapped.

## VISION

PVPA's vision is simple and dramatic. We seek to rediscover the synergies between creativity and critical thinking-between rhyme and reason, expression and inquiry, passion and knowledge-synergies that inspire our students to feel excitement, curiosity, engagement, self-confidence, and a true love of learning.

## STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2016-2021

The 2016-2021 Strategic Action Plan (SAP) builds on the foundation set by the previous plan. In continuing the school's growth and progress, we see three primary areas of focus: expanding our support for all students; improving communication and cultivating active inclusion; and spreading our efforts and innovations to the wider community through intentional outreach.

Firstly, this plan identifies areas of growth in the domain of student supports. Specifically, we endeavor to provide students at all achievement and skill levels access to developmentally appropriate and rigorous curriculum as part of a cohesive 7-12, college preparatory program. This objective draws from lessons-learned and data gathered to ensure



that all students have an outstanding learning experience. We will also continually evaluate and improve our academic and artistic curricula to stay focused on this goal of supporting students.

Our second objective - to improve communication and cultivate active inclusion - seeks to be continually responsive to the needs of all members of the PVPA community. Improving communication practices will ensure that all members of the community thrive and meaningfully contribute to the institution. Valuing, by actively seeking including, the diverse contributions of each member of our community is - and we hope will always be - central to who we are as a school.

Our last objective requires that we look beyond the scope of our own school building. We seek to build upon the momentum of our capital campaign to further solidify our financial viability and extend our community networks. We envision opportunities for other progressive educators to learn from our faculty and for our arts programs to partner with community organizations for mutual benefits. We are innovative in many respects, from our grading system to our arts integration, and we are eager to share these practices.

These three objectives are woven through all aspects of this strategic plan to illustrate their centrality to our collective vision of a passionate, creative, intellectually rigorous, and inclusive PVPA. We are an accomplished school that values every student, engages in progressive pedagogies, and offers a rich artistic experience. The 2016-2021 SAP moves us towards being exemplary. To learn more, read [PVPA's 2016-2021 Strategic Action Plan](#).

#### **Values Outlined in the 2016-21 Strategic Action Plan**

- **Critical and Higher Order Thinking Skills:** These include searching for and evaluating sources, holistic analysis, the ability to ask appropriate questions, the capacity to evaluate and judge, and openness to outliers of thought and minority opinions. We value rigorous thinking and approaches to learning such as the recognition of connections between one's own life and the larger society, willingness to embrace paradox and ambiguity without rushing to conclusions, and an ability to recognize multiple perspectives—all of which are foundations for students' future education.
- **Creative Thinking:** We value experimentation, risk-taking and mistake-making ("Do not fear mistakes. There are none." Miles Davis) out-of-box and interdisciplinary approaches, collaboration with co-creators, divergent as well as convergent thinking, the ability to draw from oneself material for creating and to make new and essential connections. Such skills are what many employers are seeking.
- **A Passion for Inquiry and Self-Reflection:** We value the right to question assumptions and to demonstrate knowledge in a variety of forms. This passion is modeled by the outstanding educators at PVPA—teachers who, in their fields of expertise, are enthusiastic facilitators of student learning. Passion and learning go hand-in-hand and are compatible with rigorous standards and expectations of students.
- **A Loving Community:** Students, faculty, families, administrators, board, people from various social classes, ethnicities, life experiences, and with a variety of learning styles are respected. We value all voices being heard when important decisions are made and expect community members to support the school's mission and values. PVPA aspires to be a safe environment for students and encourages them to develop their own ideas and opinions.
- **The Concept of School as One Part of a Larger Learning Community:** We believe that education goes on all the time and everywhere. We value our essential connections with the broader community and with artists in various disciplines. PVPA is committed to being part of a community of artistic organizations, where our approaches to education are shared, where our students present arts performances, where we both receive and give. We seek to enhance our visibility in the communities where our students reside and in other public schools.



## HOW CAN WE BE HELPFUL?

Updated August 2018

### **Executive Director**

General Advice and Support  
Family Concerns  
Strategic Plan Implementation  
Student Welfare  
Contractual Concerns  
Athletic Program  
Production Oversight  
Liaison to the Friends of PVPA

**Marc Kenen, [mkenen@pvpa.org](mailto:mkenen@pvpa.org), x218**

Board of Trustees Issues  
Policies and Practices  
School and Community Partnerships  
Harassment Complaints  
Suspension Appeals  
Fundraising/Donations  
Hiring Practices

### **Assistant Dean Of School Culture**

General School Information  
School Lunch Program  
Parent Volunteer Management

**Wendy Franz, [wfranz@pvpa.org](mailto:wfranz@pvpa.org), x110**

Attendance  
School Calendar  
Field Trips

### **Assistant Dean Of School Culture**

General School Information  
Staff & Student/Family Handbooks

**Chelsea JacksonJones [chelseaj@pvpa.org](mailto:chelseaj@pvpa.org), x114**

Attendance  
Alumni Relations

### **Admissions and Outreach Coordinator**

Admissions/Enrollment  
Student Group Outreach

**Amanda Melemed, [amelemed@pvpa.org](mailto:amelemed@pvpa.org), x104**

Student Visitors/Shadowing  
Tours

### **Marketing Coordinator**

Friday Notes  
Marketing Materials for Events  
All School Communications

**Lisa Cappello, [lcappello@pvpa.org](mailto:lcappello@pvpa.org), x226**

Social Media  
Press Releases

### **Dean of School Culture**

General Advice and Support  
Bullying Prevention  
Family Liaison  
Peer Mediation  
Equity Committee Chair  
School Culture Concerns

**Leigh-Ellen Figueroa-Starr [lfigueroa@pvpa.org](mailto:lfigueroa@pvpa.org), x219**

School Community Events  
Student Feedback  
Restorative Justice Policies and Practices  
School Group Leadership Oversight  
Diversity Mission and Diversity Plan  
NCCJ Programs: Bridges and Camp Anytown

### **Director of Arts and Academics**

General Advice and Support  
Family Concerns  
Arts/Academics Integration  
Grade Reporting  
Curriculum and Instruction  
Staff Collaborative Time  
Substitute Concerns

**Laura Davis [ldavis@pvpa.org](mailto:ldavis@pvpa.org), x118**

Course/Credit Concerns  
Standardized Testing  
Academic/Arts Policies and Practices  
Parent-Teacher Conferences  
Homework Support  
Staff Professional Learning  
Open House

**Director of Teacher Development**  
General Advice and Support  
Student Teachers  
Professional Development

**Zevey Steinitz, [zsteinitz@pvpa.org](mailto:zsteinitz@pvpa.org), x419**  
Curriculum and Instruction  
Mentor Program  
Supervision and Evaluation of Teachers

**Director of Student Services**  
Special Education  
Family Concerns  
Student Discipline

**Brent Nielsen, [bnielsen@pvpa.org](mailto:bnielsen@pvpa.org), x300**  
Section 504  
Policies and Practices  
Homeless and Foster Student Liaison

**School Nurse**  
Student Health Concerns

**Mary Colwell, [mcolwell@pvpa.org](mailto:mcolwell@pvpa.org), x120**  
School Health News

**School Counseling Department Leader**  
Career and College Planning  
Student Mental Health  
Academic Advising  
Graduation Requirements  
PSAT/SAT/ACT testing

**Kate Allen, [kallen@pvpa.org](mailto:kallen@pvpa.org), x243**  
Student Support (social, emotional, academic)  
Referrals to community resources  
Offsite Courses and Independent Studies  
College Admissions and Financial Aid

**Student Information System Data Manager** **Lisa Clark, [lclark@pvpa.org](mailto:lclark@pvpa.org), x216**  
Transcripts/Grade Reports  
Staff Information  
Scheduling  
Paideia

Student Biographical and Academic Records  
Registration  
State Reporting  
VHS Registration

**Community Outreach and Alumni Director** **Chris Fournier [CFournier@pvpa.org](mailto:CFournier@pvpa.org)**  
Community Partner Programs

Alumni Engagement

**Production Manager**  
Tech Week Schedules  
Production Donations

**tina padgett, [tpadgett@pvpa.org](mailto:tpadgett@pvpa.org), ex 147**  
Digital Production Library

**Box Office Personnel**  
Ticket Sales  
Ticket Reservations

Production Volunteer Oversight  
Merchandise/Concessions

**Chief Financial Officer**  
Billing/Accounts Receivable  
Employment Contracts  
Grants Management  
Human Resources  
Accounts Payable  
Benefits Administration

**Marcy Conner, [mconner@pvpa.org](mailto:mconner@pvpa.org), x124**  
Expense Reimbursements  
Budgeting and Financial Reporting  
Bus Registration and Transportation  
Purchasing/Procurement  
Payroll Management

**Accounting & Human Resources Assistant x122**

Bus Contract Billing  
Purchase Requests  
Benefits Information  
Payroll Processing

Deposits/Banking  
Student Fundraising  
Supply Orders  
Staff Attendance

**Facilities Manager**

Building Use Requests/Reservation  
Fire & Life Safety  
Building Security  
Phone and Access Control Systems

**John Kulas, [jkulas@pvpa.org](mailto:jkulas@pvpa.org), x125**  
Facility and Equipment Maintenance  
Grounds and Custodial  
Shipping & Receiving  
Code & Traffic Enforcement

**Technology Coordinator**

School Website Oversight  
GoogleSuite Administration  
Assistive Technology  
Long-Term Technology Planning

**Thom Vreeland, [tvreeland@pvpa.org](mailto:tvreeland@pvpa.org), x306**  
Student & Parent Access to PowerSchool Portals  
Wireless Network Administration  
Technology Support & Training

**Assessment Coordinator**

MCAS Testing  
ACCESS (for English Learners)

**Jackie Haley, [jhaley@pvpa.org](mailto:jhaley@pvpa.org), x419**  
Benchmark Testing (e.g., MAP)

**Department Leaders**

**English Language Arts**

Haley Pearl [hpearl@pvpa.org](mailto:hpearl@pvpa.org)

**History and Social Science**

Gary Huggett [ghuggett@pvpa.org](mailto:ghuggett@pvpa.org)

**Mathematics**

Joe Agron [jagron@pvpa.org](mailto:jagron@pvpa.org)

**Science**

Megan Murphy [mmurphy@pvpa.org](mailto:mmurphy@pvpa.org)

**World Languages**

Sasha Figueroa- Starr [sstarr@pvpa.org](mailto:sstarr@pvpa.org)

**Dance**

Felice Santorelli [fsantorelli@pvpa.org](mailto:fsantorelli@pvpa.org)

**Music**

Mara Levi [mlevi@pvpa.org](mailto:mlevi@pvpa.org)

**Theater**

Jorge Rodriguez [jrodriguez@pvpa.org](mailto:jrodriguez@pvpa.org)

**Visual Arts and Technical Theater**

Martin Bridge [mbridge@pvpa.org](mailto:mbridge@pvpa.org)

## 2018-19 MASTER SCHEDULE

### High School

### PVPA Master Schedule 2018-2019

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-9:45	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>
9:50-11:05	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b> 9:50-11:05 No Break
11:05-11:15	<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b>	
11:20-12:35	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b> 11:10-12:25
12:35-1:15	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	Lunch 12:25-12:50
1:20-2:35	<b>H</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>F</b> 12:55-2:10
2:40-3:55	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	Open Mic 2:15-2:50

Revised 7.18

### Middle School

### PVPA Master Schedule 2018-2019

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-9:00	7/8 <b>A</b> Advisory	7/8 <b>A</b> Advisory	7/8 <b>A</b> Advisory	7/8 <b>A</b> Advisory	7/8 <b>B</b> 8:30-9:25
9:00-9:40	7/8 <b>S</b> Studies & Supports	7/8 <b>S</b> Studies & Supports	7/8 <b>S</b> Studies & Supports	7/8 <b>S</b> Studies & Supports	
9:40-10:35	7/8 <b>B</b>	7/8 <b>B</b>	7/8 <b>B</b>	7/8 <b>C</b>	7/8 <b>C</b> 9:25-10:20
10:35-10:45	<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b> 10:20-10:35
10:45-11:40	7/8 <b>C</b>	7/8 <b>D</b>	7/8 <b>C</b>	7/8 <b>D</b>	7/8 <b>D</b> 10:35-11:30
11:40-12:35	7/8 <b>D</b>	7/8 <b>E</b>	7/8 <b>E</b>	7/8 <b>E</b>	7/8 <b>E</b> 11:30-12:25
12:35-1:15	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	Lunch 12:25-12:50
1:20-2:35	<b>H</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>F</b> 12:55-2:10
2:40-3:55	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	Open Mic 2:15-2:50

Revised 7.18

## CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

### ACADEMICS AND ARTS COURSES

PVPA departments include: English Language Arts, Dance, History/Social Studies, Mathematics, Music, Science and Technology, Theater, Visual Arts and Technical Theater, and World Languages. Course curricula in each department are based on the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core State Standards.

Most classes are grouped heterogeneously (mixed levels), and teachers individualize instruction to the extent possible for students at all levels within each class. Students in any high school course may also elect to earn Honors Credit by contracting early in the semester/year with the teacher to complete additional assignments (see “Honors Credit” for more information). Some performing arts classes require an audition.

### ARTS CONCENTRATIONS (HIGH SCHOOL)

Central to the mission of PVPA is exposure to an intensive arts education. The high school arts concentration requirement offers students the opportunity to choose a specific arts discipline on which to focus, while still providing plenty of flexibility to experience a range of arts disciplines. Students are required to focus their study in one discipline by taking six courses in the concentration, including three in specific categories. Students should confirm their arts concentration with their school counselor by the end of 10th grade. *The arts concentration requirement is waived for students who enter PVPA in 11th grade.*

In order to fulfill the arts concentration requirements, students are required to take at least one course within each sub-category of their chosen concentration as listed below, as well as additional elective courses in the concentration area. The course catalog contains relevant information each year about specific courses, and school counselors also have up-to-date information.

<b>Dance</b>	Creative	Performance	History/Connections	3 Electives
<b>Music</b>	Theory	Performance	History/Culture	3 Electives
<b>Theater</b>	Creative	Performance	Critique	3 Electives
<b>Visual Arts &amp; Technical Theater</b>	Design	Costuming x2	OR Scenic x2	3 Electives
<b>Musical Theater</b>	Vocal Music	Dance	History/Connections	Theater + 2 Electives
<b>Film</b>	Design	Production	Critique	3 Electives

Students interested in designing an alternative interdisciplinary arts concentration should contact the Director of Arts and Academics, Laura Davis, at [ldavis@pvpa.org](mailto:ldavis@pvpa.org).

### AUDITIONS

Some PVPA courses require auditions, and these are often associated with additional activities outside of class time, such as a dance company, or a theater production. Overall, auditions are considered important learning opportunities for all students, as well as relatively safe spaces in which to take risks. Audition schedules and requirements are posted well in advance to give students time to prepare. Specifics depend on the particular group or activity, but all auditions include clear expectations, criteria, and opportunities to receive feedback.

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

During the first two weeks of classes, teachers provide and review with students the Course Expectations for each class. This document includes Course Objectives to be mastered (sometimes referred to as “Learning Targets”). Students are expected to meet every objective in order to earn credit in a course (see “Grading System Overview” below). Copies of Course Expectations documents are available on teachers’ websites, or by contacting the main office.

## COURSE SELECTION

Each spring, students request courses with the help of their parents/guardians and school counselors for the following school year. All possible steps are taken to schedule students for their top choices. In the event a course is overenrolled, a lottery occurs with preference given to students by grade and credit requirements.

## COURSE REPORTS: PROGRESS AND FINAL

Reports are shared with parents/guardians on a regular schedule throughout the school year to communicate student achievement and/or to indicate areas of concern. In addition, teachers are expected to communicate concerns individually to parents/guardians and students when concerns arise (e.g., a pattern of missing assignments). Parents/guardians and students are also strongly encouraged to reach out to teachers at any time to discuss student progress. The PARENT PORTAL is the most effective way to track students’ progress throughout the year.

Progress reports only include information about standards that have been addressed to date, and for which assignments and classwork have provided opportunities for a body of student work that can act as direct evidence of the student's progress. For ongoing course objectives (e.g., those that are active throughout a yearlong course), teachers indicate progress that corresponds to what the teacher expects at that point in the year, even if additional progress toward the course objective is expected later.

### Reporting Schedule

Date	Code	Report	Students
Late October	M1	Mid-Semester Progress Reports	All students
Early December	L1	Fall Late Notices	ONLY students not currently on track to earn credit
Mid January	S1	Final Grade Reports (fall semester courses) and Mid-Year Progress Reports (full-year courses)	All students
Late March	M2	Mid-Semester Progress Reports	All students
Mid May	L2	Spring Late Notices	ONLY students not currently on track to earn credit
Mid June	S2	Final Grade Reports	Seniors
Late June	S2	Final Grade Reports	All students in grades 7-11



## EARLY GRADUATION

Students applying for early graduation must do so no later than September 15 of their 11<sup>th</sup> grade year. Applicants must meet all PVPA graduation requirements, and are only applying for permission to meet those requirements in a three-year time period. Applicants are required to submit a written proposal to the Executive Director, which must be accompanied by support letters from two academic teachers, one arts teacher, and one school counselor. These letters should indicate that the student is being recommended for an early graduation and should specifically comment on the student's ability to complete all the material in the three-year time period. Students under 18 years of age must accompany their application with expressed written permission from a custodial parent/guardian. Finally, the student must schedule a meeting to make an oral defense of the application. Please see a school counselor for more information.

## Grading System Overview

PVPA uses a standards-based grading and assessment system in which student learning is measured using evidence related to set Course Objectives (sometimes called "learning targets") that indicate what students know and are able to do by the end of the course. Students are required to show evidence of skills and understanding related to each and every course objective to earn credit. Teachers indicate achievement levels for each objective on progress reports and final grade reports. A final grade point synthesizes student proficiency across all objectives in a course.

**Student proficiency with each course objective is reported on using the following system:**

Exemplary	Student provided a body of evidence, which went beyond expectations for accomplishing the objective
Accomplished	Student provided a body of evidence, which met the objective
Developing	Student provided a body of evidence, which is approaching the objective
Beginning	Student provided some evidence related to the objective
Missing Evidence	Student did not provide enough evidence related to the objective

### **Grades and Credit**

In order to earn credit, student evidence must be "developing," "accomplished," or "exemplary" on each and every course objective. Reports are based on a wide variety of evidence provided by each student, and involve teacher professional judgment. There is no overarching mathematical formula such as averaging that determines a student's grade. Later evidence is often weighted more heavily within each objective. Grade points are designed to match the commonly used Grade Point Average (GPA) system for easy translation to schools and institutions outside of PVPA. They synthesize student proficiency across all objectives based on relative importance using the following system:

GRADE	DESCRIPTION
4.0	Student provided "exemplary" evidence on many or all objectives
3.6	Student provided a mix of mostly "exemplary" and "accomplished" evidence on many or all objectives
3.2	Student provided "accomplished" evidence on many or all objectives

2.8	Student provided a mix of mostly “accomplished” and “developing” evidence on many or all objectives
2.4	Student provided “developing” evidence on many or all objectives
PASS	Student earned credit for a course graded on a credit/no credit basis
INCOMPLETE	Student has an agreed-upon extension to provide additional evidence related to course objectives
AUDIT	Student participated in the course on a not-for-credit basis
WITHDRAW	Student chose to drop the course prior to the withdrawal deadline (appears on transcript)
ATTEMPTED	Student provided “beginning” evidence or was missing evidence on some objectives and did not earn credit in the course (appears on transcript)

**Honors Credit**

Students at PVPA earn Honors credit in 9-12 Arts and Academic classes when they have successfully completed an honors project and engaged in at least 20 hours of independent honors-level learning during a semester or 40 hours of independent honors-level learning during a year. Students are expected to earn a course grade of 3.2 or above in order to also earn Honors credit.

.4 grade “bump”	Graduates of the class of 2017, 2018, and 2019 will access a .4 grade “bump” upon successful completion of a planned Honors project.
3.2H, 3.6H, 4.0H	Graduates of the class of 2020 and beyond may receive a grade of 3.2H, 3.6H, or 4.0H. The “H” designates Honors. The 3.2, 3.6, and 4.0 designate the student’s grade for the course separate from the honors work.
Honors courses	PVPA offers some 11/12 courses that are designated as Honors in the course title. College admissions personnel automatically scale the grades from these courses, so there is no alteration to the student’s grade.

**Habits of Work and Learning (HoWLs)**

In addition to content-based course objectives, teachers also report on the same three Habits of Work and Learning (HoWLs) for each course to articulate school-wide expectations for all students. HoWLs are not used to determine a student’s final course grade (e.g., 3.2, 4.0, P, ATT), but are used to determine a variety of needed supports so that students can succeed in learning.

<p>PREPARATION: I am prepared for class and arrive on time with organized materials and any needed attire. This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student arrives to class on time.</li> <li>- Student has organized materials for class each day, and follows start-of-class routines.</li> </ul>
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<p>PARTICIPATION: I participate in my learning by engaging actively, contributing productively, and collaborating respectfully and safely. This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student focuses on learning/classwork and does not disrupt others’ learning.</li> </ul>
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- Student practices active collaboration and engages in positive communication with classmates to further everyone’s learning.
- Student remains present in class throughout the period (with occasional short breaks, as needed, or pre-arranged breaks as determined with school administrators).
- Student requests teacher permission before accessing electronics during class time.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY: I manage my school work by monitoring my assignment completion, meeting deadlines for assigned work and revisions, and/or successfully navigating the extension process if necessary. This means:

- Student plans ahead with any large assignment/projects to manage time so that work/practice is not put off until the last minute.
- Student plans ahead to ensure that all due dates/work for performances are prepared on time. Students request extensions in writing in advance of the due date (more than one day before an assignment is due).
- Student communicates with teachers regarding overdue work and revisions, including checking in when deadlines are missed or clarification is needed about expectations.
- Student utilizes available resources to support their success (e.g., online resources, teacher materials, librarian, Homework Support teachers, etc.)

HoWLs are reported on using the following system:

Always	Usually	Occasionally	Rarely/Never
Student consistently demonstrates this HoWL every day.	Student demonstrates this HoWL most of the time/almost always.	Student struggles with this HoWL on occasion or needs extra reminders to improve this habit from time to time.	Student does not demonstrate this HoWL consistently and needs frequent reminders and additional support to succeed in this habit.

**GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

PVPA graduation requirements are aligned with the state’s [MassCore framework](#) for college and career readiness. All students are required to meet the graduation requirements outlined below, plus meet state competency determinations (i.e., MCAS requirements) to earn a diploma from PVPA. Please contact a school counselor if you have any questions.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (40 credits)	Four-year requirement typically includes 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> grade ELA and four one-semester ELA electives in grades 11 and 12.
HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES (30 credits)	Three-year requirement typically includes 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> grade United States history, and history/social studies electives in grades 11 and 12. Two semesters total of United States history/American studies are required.
MATHEMATICS (40 credits)	Four-year requirement typically includes Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra 2. Students interested in accelerating by taking two classes in one year or placing out of a class should speak with the Math department leader and a school counselor. Credit is not earned for skipped levels.
SCIENCE (30 credits laboratory science)	Three-year requirement must include Biology AND either Chemistry OR Physics.

WORLD LANGUAGE (20 credits)	Two-year requirement must include courses in the same language. Independent study options are available for languages outside of those offered.
PERFORMING/VISUAL ARTS (64 credits, including ARTS CONCENTRATION of 6 courses)	Includes concentration-area courses. Full-block class = 5 credits.  See "Arts Concentrations" for details. Non-typical pathways may be designed by speaking with the Director of Arts and Academics.
PAIDEIA (4 credits each year)	Full-day Paideia participation = 4 credits.
PHYSICAL EDUCATION (2 credits each year)	Dance courses, PE-based Paideia courses, and PVPA athletics team participation meet this requirement. Students may also complete this requirement outside of school using the PE Alternate Credit form
ARTS INTERNSHIP (1 x 16 hours)	One project outside of school.
COMMUNITY SERVICE (1 x 16 hours)	One project outside of school.
SCHOOL SERVICE (1 x 16 hours)	One project in school.
INTERNSHIP/SERVICE (1 x 16 hours)	One additional project of the student's choice (see above).
COURSES TAKEN IN GRADE 8	World Language courses taken at PVPA in grade 8 are eligible for high school graduation credit. No other courses are eligible.

**Typical High School Course Pathways**

Department	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	10 <sup>th</sup> grade	11 <sup>th</sup> grade	12 <sup>th</sup> grade
<b>English Language Arts (ELA)</b>	ELA 9 (all 9 <sup>th</sup> graders take this)	ELA 10 (all 10 <sup>th</sup> graders take this)	2 semesters ELA humanities electives	2 semesters ELA humanities electives
<b>History/Social Science (SS)</b>	U.S. History 1 (fall) & 2 (spring)	U.S. History 3 (fall) & 4 (spring)	1 or 2 semesters History/SS electives	1 or 2 semesters History/SS electives
<b>Mathematics</b>	Algebra 1	Geometry (Students may elect to take Geometry and Algebra 2 concurrently to accelerate in math)	Algebra 2	Applied Math OR Pre-Calculus
<b>Accelerated Math (8<sup>th</sup> gr. Algebra 1)</b>	<i>Geometry</i>	<i>Algebra 2</i>	<i>Pre-Calculus</i>	<i>Calculus</i>
<b>Science</b>	Environmental Science (all 9 <sup>th</sup> graders enrolled)	Biology (all 10 <sup>th</sup> graders enrolled)	Science Electives (Chemistry OR Physics required for graduation - may be taken in any order, but <u>prior</u> credit in Algebra 2 required for Physics)	Science Electives (Chemistry OR Physics required for graduation - may be taken in any order, but <u>prior</u> credit in Algebra 2 required for Physics)
<b>World Language (Level 1 option in 8<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Level 1, 2, or 3 as appropriate	Level 1, 2, or 3 as appropriate	Level 1, 2, 3, or Intensive as appropriate	Level 2, 3, or Intensive as appropriate
<b>Arts</b>	2 courses/semester	2 courses/semester	2 courses/semester	2 courses/semester

	(consider concentration)	(consider concentration)	(consider concentration)	(consider concentration)
<b>Paideia</b>	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits
<b>Physical Education</b>	2 credits (typically in dance department)	2 credits (typically in dance department)	2 credits (typically in dance department)	2 credits (typically in dance department)
<b>Internship/Service</b>	16-hour project requires paperwork	16-hour project requires paperwork	16-hour project requires paperwork	16-hour project requires paperwork

## HABITS OF WORK & LEARNING (HOWLS)

In addition to our standards-based grading system, through which teachers report on evidence of student learning, PVPA asks teachers to report on each student's Habits of Work and Learning (HoWLs). While not reporting directly on learning in the subject matter, HoWLs are critical to every student's success in learning. When curriculum is designed and implemented so that all students can access learning (i.e., differentiated and/or modified curriculum), there is a direct correlation between student success in HoWLs and student success in learning.

There are three HoWLs that PVPA have identified and that are reported each marking period. They are:

- **PREPARATION:** I am prepared for class and arrive on time with organized materials and any needed attire.
- **PARTICIPATION:** I participate in my learning by engaging actively, contributing productively, and collaborating respectfully and safely.
- **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY:** I manage my school work by monitoring my assignment completion, meeting deadlines for assigned work and revisions, and/or successfully navigating the extension process if necessary.

## INCOMPLETES

In the event a student does not complete course requirements by the last day of a course, a teacher may decide to designate the final grade as “Incomplete.” The teacher is required to outline all required work/evidence in the final report and/or in a separate written contract. The student is responsible to complete these requirements and submit them to the teacher by set deadlines. Upon completion and satisfactory assessment, the teacher will officially change the final grade for the course. If a student does not complete the work by the deadline, the final grade may be changed to Attempted unless other arrangements are made with the Director of Arts and Academics. Due to state reporting requirements, all fall semester course incompletes must be resolved by February 1. All spring semester and full-year course incompletes must be resolved by July 10.

## INDEPENDENT STUDY

Any independent study coursework requires a documentation and approval process. Courses must be pre-arranged no later than the first week of a semester using the [Independent Study Contract](#). Based on Massachusetts reporting requirements, forms submitted after this deadline may be ineligible for credit. Independent study courses are not part of a student's daily schedule, even if the work occurs during school. If the course is provided through an accredited high school or college institution, please see “Off-Site Courses.” See “Paideia” for independent study options as well.

### All projects must follow the following guidelines:

- Goals outline new learning for the student.
- This option is available only if PVPA does not offer the course (media, genre, level, etc.) and/or if it is impossible for the student to schedule the course.

- Courses must be taught/advised by a qualified adult facilitator. PVPA administrators may assess qualifications by requesting a resume and/or a telephone interview. In addition, each course must identify a PVPA supervising teacher (unless the adult facilitator is a PVPA teacher).
- The quality and quantity of measurable evidence resulting from independent study is held to the same or higher expectations as other courses at PVPA.
- The PVPA supervising teacher is responsible to do a final evaluation of independent work with regard to the contract.
- When assigning credits, a PVPA administrator does an assessment of the expected workload (1 credit = 16 hours minimum). Generally, courses are not eligible for more than 5 credits per semester (a full-block course).
- Regular reports are entered into the school's database, on the same schedule as regular PVPA courses (mid-semester, final grade, etc.). The student is responsible to ensure this written feedback is provided to the PVPA supervisor by set deadlines.

## **INTERNSHIP AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS**

All students attending PVPA from grades 9 through 12 are expected to complete four projects with a minimum of 16 hours per activity. Students should make every effort to fulfill all 16 hours of each project at the same site or activity. Students attending PVPA for fewer than four years may speak to their school counselor for modifications to this requirement. Students must complete the [Internship & Service Credit Record](#) for each requirement, and submit it to their school counselor no later than June 1 each year.

ALL students who attend PVPA for four years are required to complete (in no particular order):

- One (1) on- or off-site ARTS INTERNSHIP with a minimum of 16 hours working with an arts professional or organization.
- One (1) PVPA SCHOOL SERVICE PROJECT with a minimum of 16 unpaid hours. This may be in the form of providing support in school productions (e.g., tech, props, pit band, etc.), recycling assistance, tutoring, teaching assistantships, working as school lunch server, or helping in the main office. Course credit requirements cannot be used for school service credit.
- One (1) off-site COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT with a minimum of 16 unpaid hours. A list of suggested community service organizations is available from school counselors.
- One (1) additional ARTS INTERNSHIP, PVPA SCHOOL SERVICE PROJECT, or COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT.

## **MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (MCAS)**

PVPA is a public school and is required to follow all state regulations and procedures regarding standardized testing. We believe that there are many important ways to assess student learning and achievement in addition to the MCAS tests. Students are expected to be in attendance at school on testing days. MCAS test dates are published each year on the school's website at [pvpa.org](http://pvpa.org) to allow families to plan ahead. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provides extensive, up-to-date information about MCAS and related topics on their website [HERE](#). Also see their parent/guardian information page [HERE](#).

Students educated with Mass public funds are required to participate in the statewide testing. If a student is absent on the "scheduled" day of testing, make-up testing must occur during the state's testing window. If the student is not present in school during this testing window and therefore does not take the test, the school is required to obtain medical documentation of the absence, note this reason in the student's test booklet, and keep this medical excuse document on file for three years. \*(There is a separate regulation 105 CMR 201.010 that pertains to students with a

concussion and the fact that they may be excused from testing only if it is determined that participation would impede the student's recovery.)

To graduate from high school, all students:

- must earn a scaled score of at least 240 on the grade 10 MCAS [ELA](#) and [Mathematics](#) tests, or earn a scaled score between 220 and 238 on these tests, or earn a score of Needs Improvement on a competency portfolio, and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP), and
- must also earn a scaled score of at least 220 on one of the high school MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) tests: Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics, or Technology/Engineering (PVPA students typically take the Biology test), or a score of Needs Improvement on a competency portfolio in one of these STE disciplines.

Two scholarships are available based in part on student performance on the MCAS English Language Arts and Mathematics tests:

- [The John and Abigail Adams Scholarship](#)
- [Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery with Distinction Award](#)

Students must take the regularly-scheduled Grade 10 MCAS tests to be eligible for these awards (i.e., not the re-tests). Students who qualify will receive award letters and further information in the fall of their senior year.

## MINIMUM CREDIT ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

High school students are required to be enrolled in at least 35 credits per semester with the following exceptions:

- Student has two or more blocks of supported study (e.g., Academic Support, Math Support, Study Skills, Homework Support). Self-directed study blocks are not considered “supported study.”
- Student has one block of supported study AND must have early dismissal for a paid work position or recurring medical appointment.
- Spring semester seniors who are on track to graduate must enroll in at least 30 credits (6 courses)

Course credits each semester may include PVPA courses, independent study credits, Virtual High School credits, and/or off-site course credits. Students must be enrolled in three (3) courses on-site at PVPA. Any exceptions to these requirements are subject to administrative approval. Regardless of the source, students who do not have documentation of enrollment in at least 15 credits per semester must be withdrawn from PVPA.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM - GRADES 7 & 8

In the PVPA middle school program, all core academic classes are organized by grade, while arts classes mix seventh and eighth grade students. Core academic classes are graded on a Pass/Attempted basis (see [Grading System Overview](#)). Specific teacher feedback is provided on all course objectives to communicate student learning and achievement.

Students are required to experience each of the four major arts disciplines prior to entering the 9th grade (students who begin at PVPA in grade 8 are exempt from this requirement). Students in grade 8 may enroll in a high school level foreign language class and begin earning graduation credit for that class. Students with IEPs are scheduled for Academic Support per the IEP. In addition, some students may be enrolled in a Math Support and/or Reading Workshop class. See below for a Sample 2-year 7/8 Course Program.

Teachers, administrators, and school counselors are committed to working in collaboration to support the artistic, intellectual, emotional, and social development of students. To that end, teachers and school counselors meet

regularly to discuss student performance, curriculum, assessment, instruction, and community. Students mix with other 7/8 students, and potentially with older students, during elective courses, community activities, and open mic.

**7/8 Promotion Requirements**

HUMANITIES (two blocks/year)	Study occurs in separate grade 7 and grade 8 formats, and includes English language arts and social studies/history.
MATHEMATICS (one block/year)	Study occurs in separate grade 7 and grade 8 formats. students interested in accelerating by placing out of a class should speak with the math department leader and school counselor.
SCIENCE (one block/year)	Study occurs in separate grade 7 and grade 8 formats.
ELECTIVES (20 cr./yr.)	Courses are generally worth 5 credits. See the course catalog for information. Arts requirements (below) are included in this category.
ARTS REQUIREMENTS	Over the two years of middle school (i.e., prior to entering 9th grade), all students must earn at least 5 credits each in dance, music, theater, and visual arts/technical theater. This requirement is waived for students beginning in the 8th grade, although we encourage students to try a variety of arts disciplines. This credit may be earned through Paideia courses.
PAIDEIA (4 credits/year)	Paideia is PVPA’s January intersession program (full day = 4 credits)
PHYSICAL EDUCATION (2 cr./yr.)	Dance courses, PE-based Paideia courses, and PVPA athletics team participation meet this requirement. Students may also complete this requirement outside of school using the PE Alternate Credit form
HIGH SCHOOL CREDITS IN GRADE 8	World language courses taken at PVPA in grade 8 are eligible for high school graduation credit. No other courses are eligible. Courses taken in grade 7 do not count toward high school graduation credits, as they are not acknowledged by Massachusetts state colleges and universities.

**Sample 2-year 7/8 Course Outline**

Department	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	8 <sup>th</sup> grade
English Language Arts	Humanities 7	Humanities 8
History/Social Studies	Humanities 7	Humanities 8
Mathematics	Mathematics 7 (or Accelerated Math 7)	Mathematics 8 (or Algebra 1)
Science (rotation)	Life Science OR Physical Science	Life Science OR Physical Science
Electives (Arts, Lang.)	3 courses per semester	3 courses per semester
Study Support (Math Support, Reading Workshop, Homework Support, Self-directed Study)	Teacher recommendation	Teacher recommendation
Academic Support	Based on IEP services, if applicable	Based on IEP services, if applicable

**OFF-SITE COURSES, DUAL COLLEGE/HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**

Students who wish to study a subject that is not regularly offered at PVPA—or take a course similar to one offered at PVPA when it does not fit within a student’s schedule—may choose to pursue an alternate option. Please see Laura Davis, Director of Arts and Academics, for preliminary approval. Any off-site coursework requires a documentation



and approval process. Required forms are linked below, and must be finalized with signatures no later than the first week of each semester. Other due dates apply.

### **Application for Free Mount Holyoke College Courses**

Each semester, Mount Holyoke College allows two PVPA students in grades 11 or 12 to enroll in a course free of charge. In the event of more than two qualified applicants, PVPA will conduct a lottery. Students are expected to arrange their PVPA schedules to accommodate the MHC class, and to provide their own transportation. Students are subject to MHC course registration policies and procedures, and must complete the [Mt. Holyoke Course Application](#) and the Off-Site Course Contract (see above) if they wish to include these credits on the PVPA transcript. Applications are due no later than May 10 (fall semester courses) and November 10 (spring semester courses). Students who have already received a free MHC class will have last priority in the lottery

*Applicants must meet the following criteria:*

- Enrolled in grades 11 or 12 at PVPA during the year in which the course is taken
- Final grades of 3.6 or higher in at least two PVPA courses in the intended area of study
- Documented successful completion of all PVPA courses taken at PVPA (i.e., no “Attempted” grades)
- No current disciplinary actions

### **Off-site Courses (e.g., College Courses, Dual Enrollment, Accredited High School Courses)**

Students may elect to take online or in-person courses through accredited educational institutions. A standard one-semester college-level course generally translates into 10 PVPA credits. A standard one-semester high school-level course generally translates into 5 PVPA credits. Use the [Off-Site Course Contract](#) to document courses no later than the first week of a semester. Course descriptions and/or syllabi are required to ensure courses meet PVPA requirements. Course grades appear on PVPA transcripts as indicated on transcripts/grade reports (e.g., “B+”), do not follow the PVPA grading system, and are not averaged into the student's Grade Point Average. Students participating in off-site courses are allowed to leave the school for their classes and return afterwards in amendment of the attendance policies.

### **VHS Collaborative Online Courses**

PVPA awards credit for completion of online classes through the Virtual High School Collaborative. VHS courses follow a set academic calendar, but students can complete their work online at any time, day or night, as long as they meet their VHS teachers’ specified due dates.

Before enrolling in a VHS course, students should consider whether the online VHS format is appropriate for them. Interested students should first take [this self-assessment survey](#) that gauges their interest and commitment to independent learning. Students who are successful in VHS courses typically have the following skills and attributes:

- Ability to meet firm deadlines
- Designate time at least five days per week to complete VHS coursework
- Strong organization skills
- High motivation and ability to complete school work independently

Students who would like to enroll in a VHS course at their own expense and receive PVPA credit may register for the course through the [VHS website](#), and then complete the Off-site Course Contract (see above) no later than June 1 (for fall courses) or December 1 (for spring courses).

Any student may elect to pay the fee to enroll in a VHS course. PVPA will pay the VHS fee ONLY if the student enrolls in a VHS course that is beyond the scope and sequence of courses available at PVPA (e.g., AP course, higher-level

sequential math course), and/or if the student is a senior with an unresolvable scheduling conflict that prevents taking a required course at PVPA.

Students who meet criteria for taking a PVPA-funded VHS course must complete these steps by June 1 (for the following fall) or December 1 (for the following spring).

1. Attend a VHS information session at PVPA (dates TBA).
2. Meet with their school counselor to discuss how the VHS course fits with their learning style, high school and post-secondary plans, and progress toward graduation. During the meeting, the student and school counselor fill out the PVPA Offsite Course Credit form, which the school counselor submits to the Director of Arts and Academics for approval and VHS course registration. Registration is confirmed via email with the student, parent/guardian, and school counselor

For more information, contact Lisa Clark, Student Information System Data Manager, at [lclark@pvpa.org](mailto:lclark@pvpa.org).

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION ALTERNATE CREDIT**

All students are required to earn two credits (32 hours) of Physical Education each year at PVPA, and must submit the [P.E. Alternate Credit Form](#). Activities must be documented in a log (a template is attached to the form), and must be supervised by an adult experienced in that activity. The supervisor MAY NOT be a parent, guardian or relative of the student. If students do not complete this P.E. requirement in a given year, then they lose eligibility for alternate credit in the following year and will be required to complete 4 credits for P.E. during the following year through enrollment in a PVPA course.

## **PAIDEIA**

At PVPA “Paideia” refers to a mid-year intersession offering students in all grades opportunities for unique learning experiences. Students and teachers develop Paideia programs that facilitate personal growth and development. Students select and focus on one or two programs of study from a variety of choices. For each year that a high school student attends PVPA, successful completion of a Paideia activity is a credit requirement. This entails attendance at minimum 85% of the class meetings and successful completion of all goals and products as set by the class leader. Students in grades 7 and 8 engage in core academic classes each morning, and Paideia electives each afternoon.

### **Paideia Independent Study**

Paideia Independent study is an option for students in good academic standing in grades 9-12. Students who receive a Late Notice in any class during the fall semester are NOT eligible (this requirement may be waived by administration due to extenuating circumstances). Paideia independent study projects must be prearranged and approved by the Paideia Independent Study Review Board that includes the Director of Arts and Academics, the School Counseling Department Leader, and other administrative team members. To apply, use the [Paideia Independent Study Form](#). Completed forms, with all required signatures, are due no later than November 15 each year for consideration. Students who are not approved will participate in the general Paideia registration process in December.

All independent study projects occur off-site. It is not possible to supervise students at PVPA when they are doing independent projects. As with all independent study projects, Paideia independent study goals outline new learning for the student. Paideia independent study projects must be taught and/or advised by a Project Supervisor who is a qualified adult facilitator (may not be a family member). If this person has not had a prior connection with the school in this capacity, we may conduct a telephone interview or request a resume to assess qualifications. The Project Supervisor must complete regular check-ins with the student during Paideia. If a student is planning on traveling

outside of western MA for their Paideia Independent Study, the Review Board must have documentation of a clear set curriculum or agenda from the organization which is facilitating the program within the travel.

To earn credit, students must produce an “end-product,” and share it with PVPA community members as appropriate. This could be a performance, artwork, portfolio, journal, photo album, slide show, presentation, or anything else that makes sense for your project. In addition, students submit a 1-2 page, typed personal reflection about the project as part of the evaluation, and the Project Supervisor completes a final narrative evaluation and recommends credit for the independent study work. The student is responsible to arrange for this written feedback. These three requirements are due no later than February 1 to Laura Davis, Director of Arts and Academics.

## **PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT AND ACCELERATED ACADEMIC PATHWAYS**

In select departments, incoming and currently enrolled students may demonstrate required skills and knowledge to waive standard pre-requisite courses. This process is typically addressed by the respective department leader.

- **WORLD LANGUAGE:** Students seeking to accelerate in world language must take a placement assessment to best determine a student’s current level of fluency.
- **MATHEMATICS:** Entering 7th and 8th graders who believe they are ready for Algebra 1 or Geometry will take a placement test. (Note: High school credit in math does not begin until 9th grade.)
- **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/HISTORY:** Students are not eligible to place out of the standard 9th and 10th grade courses prior to the 11th grade.
- **SCIENCE:** Students are not eligible to waive prerequisites in science.
- **ARTS:** Prerequisite waivers in arts courses are generally provided by the department leader.

## **REPEATING COURSES**

It is often appropriate for a student to take the same arts course more than once and receive credit for those courses. Teachers ensure that students demonstrate increased skill and independence over time. Students may not repeat an academic course for credit.

## **TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

High school students may earn school service credit as teaching assistants in an academic course for which they have already earned credit, or arts credit as teaching assistants in 7/8 arts classes. Students indicate interest in being a Teaching Assistant during the course enrollment process.

## POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE PARTICIPATION

Students who are absent for more than half of the school day may not participate in any after-school activity or performance unless they have received permission from a PVPA administrator.

### BOOKS

We value our books and want to make the most recent copies available to all our students. Except for workbooks that are individually purchased, all books must be returned at the end of each course, or within the specified library loaning period. Replacement costs will be charged for books not returned by June 30. If books are returned after replacements have been purchased, students may be reimbursed.

### BUS TRANSPORTATION

PVPA enrolls students from over 60 different communities, this fact is the reason why it is impossible to provide transportation to our entire student body and the reason why PVPA does not receive transportation funding from the Massachusetts Department of Education . However, PVPA does offer bus transportation for a fee to a limited number of towns in order to accommodate families.

PVPA provides the option of bus transportation to students via north and south routes on a fee for service basis. The fee is set annually as part of the school's budgeting process. There is a reduced bus fee for students who qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program. You can find the [Bus Schedule](#), Bus Application, and other information and documents in [PVPA's website](#) under Transportation on the "For Parents" tab. It's important to submit the bus contract as soon as possible, depending on your needs of transportation, to ensure your student's transportation to and from school. Parents will be invoiced monthly for bus contracts and accounts should be settled prior to the last day of each school year.

Students have the option to buy a school bus pass for a single ride for the AM or PM. They can buy the school bus pass the same day or in advance of the day they need to take the bus. Bus passes may only be purchased during breaks or at the end of the school day from the Main Office.

### CARPOOLING

Many families rely on carpools to transport their students to and from school. To assist families in connecting with other PVPA families in their area, we have created a form available in [PVPA's website](#) under "[Transportation](#)" on the "For Parents" tab. After filling out the form with what you are looking for/can offer, you will be shared a link to a spreadsheet. In the spreadsheet you can see the information for all other families who have filled out the form as well, and you can edit your information if necessary.

### CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Student participation in class is an essential component of student learning.

#### Repeated Absence from Class

If a student is absent from class for more than 10% of the scheduled time (approximately five periods per semester and ten periods for a yearlong course), administrators will notify the student and a parent/guardian of the effect this has on the student's ability to earn credit in the course. This applies to all excused and unexcused absences. If a student misses more than half of the scheduled time during a period, the teacher is expected to mark this as a

full-class absence.

If at all possible, the student and teacher work out a plan for the student to make up for the missed class time in alternate ways. If the student continues to be behind on work, a contracted plan to make up for the missed instruction and participation, signed by the teacher, and cc'd to the student's parent/guardian, is expected when a student has missed eight (8) or more periods in a semester and fifteen (15) or more periods in a year-long course. *If a student does not meet the requirements of the contracted plan, the teacher must alert an administrator for review. In the case of unexcused absences, this review could result in a student being withdrawn from the course without credit.*

## **COURSE WITHDRAWAL**

Students who drop a course prior to the withdrawal date window will have no record of the course on their transcript. Students who drop a course during the withdrawal date window will receive a grade of "Withdraw" for that course. "Withdraw" grades appear on high school transcripts. If a student drops a course after the withdrawal date, the student will receive a grade of "Attempted" for that course. "Attempted" grades appear on high school transcripts.

2018-19 Course Withdrawal Date Windows:

- Fall courses: September 27, 2018 – November 9, 2018
- Full-year courses: September 27, 2018 – February 1, 2019
- Spring courses: February 15, 2019 – April 10, 2019

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

Students are to be dropped off and picked up outside the main entrance area. The traffic flow around the school and through the parking lot is one-way and planned to keep students safe at all times, as well as to keep traffic moving quickly and efficiently. Accessible parking spaces, student pick-up spaces, and throughway areas are clearly marked and must be followed at all times. **PARKING ON THE WEST SIDE (Right side as you are pulling into the school) OF THE MAIN ENTRANCE DRIVEWAY OR ON ANY PART OF THE GRASS IS NOT ALLOWED AT ANY TIME.** These areas must be kept clear for traffic flow and to allow access for emergency vehicles. This rule is in effect before, during, and after school hours. Traffic and bus monitors are generally in place during pick up times as able. Please adhere to all rules and any directions made by the monitors. For a detailed map and more information about traffic flow and Drop-off / Pick-up policies & procedures, please go to the [Documents and Forms](#) page on the '[For Parents](#)' section of the [school website](#), or stop into the main office and request a hard copy.

## **EVENT TRANSPORTATION (E.G., FIELD TRIPS, ATHLETICS)**

School buses, public transportation, or transportation by a common carrier that is licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to provide charter services and is licensed for passenger transport by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration should be used when feasible for the transportation of students participating in athletic events, academic team events, co-curricular or extracurricular activities, and must be used for overnight travel and student travel that is scheduled between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m.

However, when such methods of transportation are not available or are not a reasonable means of transportation due to either the cost, number of students needing transport, and/or other reasons, private vehicles may be permitted to transport students to and from athletic events, co-curricular or extracurricular activities that fall within the academic day or extend the school day and that do not include overnight travel or travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m. provided all of the following conditions have been met:

- The activity has been approved by school administration.
- The driver of the vehicle being used to transport the students must undergo CORI checks in accordance with the Board of Trustees' Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) policy.
- The driver of the vehicle (including staff) submits evidence of current liability insurance with minimum coverage limits of \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 aggregate.
- The driver of the vehicle being used to transport the students submits a signed statement certifying that he/she is twenty-one (21) years of age or older, the vehicle is in good working order, properly licensed, and that he/she holds and possesses a valid drivers' license that has not been revoked or suspended, will follow state laws, and represents and warrants that he/she will indemnify and hold harmless PVPA and the PVPA Board of Trustees from all liability, loss, damage costs, claims and/or causes of action arising out of or related to his/her transportation of students in his/her vehicle and the owner of the vehicle agrees to assume all liability for any injury a student sustains while in the vehicle.
- A copy of the driver's license is provided to PVPA.
- Parents/guardians of students must sign an authorization and release form indicating consent for their child to be transported in an approved private vehicle.
- No school staff will be required to utilize a private vehicle to transport students to and from athletic events, academic team events, co-curricular or extracurricular activities.

All reasonable efforts will be made to facilitate student participation and access to an athletic team event, academic team event, co-curricular or extracurricular activity if their parent/guardian does not consent to having their child transported in the private vehicle of another parent/guardian.

## **FIELD TRIPS/OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES**

Field trips and off-site activities help PVPA students contextualize their learning and connect them to the wider community. When filling out PVPA's enrollment form online, parents/guardians have the opportunity to give blanket permission\* for their child(ren), which includes permission to go on field trips/off-site activities within the Pioneer Valley (Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin Counties). Parents/guardians may be asked to sign additional permission forms if students will travel out of the local geographical area or if the activity extends beyond the regular school day. All field trips/off-site activities are chaperoned by PVPA staff members and at times, parents/guardians. Field trips may require families to offset some of the trip's costs. However, no student will be prevented from going due to cost.

The PVPA teacher/staff member in charge of the field trip is responsible for communicating the details of the activity to all families. Any additional permission slips, fees, or documents required need to be signed and returned to the Field Trip Leader (teacher/staff member organizing the trip) at least one week prior the activity.

\*Blanket permission - signed during enrollment - also includes photography, taking part in research, and watching films (PG-13 and R)

## **OFF-CAMPUS LUNCH PRIVILEGE**

Students wishing to leave campus during lunch must fill out the Off-Campus Lunch Privilege Application (OCLPA), have it signed by their parent/guardian and return it to the main office with a copy of their driver's license (as applicable). Approval requires a signature from the Dean of School Culture. Students can drive themselves off campus providing they have a valid driver's license and an approved OCLPA. Students who do not have a valid driver's license may only

leave in a car with a student driver who is legally allowed to drive other students. Students 18 years old must have a parent/guardian's signature on the OCLPA unless the student lives outside of their parent/guardian's home.

Students can drive other eligible and approved students (one at a time) off-campus during lunch, only if they have submitted all documents required (signed OCLPA and a copy of their driver's license) to the Main Office and have been approved by the Dean of School Culture.

**Parent/Guardian and Student Acknowledgement:** By signing the application, the student and parent/guardian understand they are seeking approval for the privilege of leaving school grounds only during the lunch period, and that the approved student will obey all PVPA rules and regulations pertaining to Off-Campus Privileges. PVPA requires all students who receive off-campus privileges to follow all rules outlined in the OCLPA.

You can download the OCLPA from the the school's website under Documents and Forms, or you can pick up a hard copy in the Main Office.

## **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, TARDIES, AND ABSENCE**

### **Absences and Tardies**

Attendance is taken daily. A parent/guardian must call the main office at 413.552.1580 to report or confirm an excused absence no later than 8:30 am. If your student is marked absent for the first block of the day, and the school does not have record of a parent/guardian call, you will receive an automated phone call at 9:45 am. If the parent/guardian is unable to confirm the absence with the main office, the student's absence will be recorded as "unexcused" for the day. Any student who arrives late without signing in is presumed to be absent. If a student is going to be late or dismissed early, parents/guardians must check in at the main office, or call to report the expected arrival or dismissal time.

### **Dismissal**

Parents/guardians must authorize in writing any departure before the regular dismissal time to the main office at the beginning of the school day. In case of an emergency, a parent/guardian may dismiss the student by phone by speaking with an office staff member. A note must be brought in when the student returns to school.

- **Please note:** Students who need to go home sick must be seen by the nurse before contacting their parent/guardian. The nurse will call the parent/guardian to pick up their student.

### **Sign-in/Sign-out**

Students arriving late to school or leaving early must sign in or out in the main office. This can be done by using the kiosk or asking a main office staff person to do so for you.

### **Approved Late Arrival/Early Dismissal**

Students in grades 9-12 who have an approved late arrival in their schedule can arrive after the start of school without incident. In order to get approval, these students must fill out the Early Dismissal/Late Arrival Permission Form (found on the [school's website](#) under "Documents and Forms" on the "For Students" and "For Parents" tab), have a parent/guardian sign it, and return it to the Dean Of School Culture. Students still must sign in at the main office when they arrive, and get a late pass if necessary.

- Students who have late arrival/early dismissal and come to school during hours that they are supposed to be out will need to sign in as a visitor and stay in a supervised space until their on-school hours begin/end

- Only students who are 18 years old and **who live independently from their parent/guardian(s)** may dismiss themselves from school due to illness after being examined by the school nurse.
- Students who are 18 years old may sign themselves out for lunch, after a check-in with the Dean of School Culture.

### **Repeated Absence from School**

Students who accumulate more than fourteen (14) unexcused absences during the school year will be considered truant under MA state law. According to state guidelines, a student is considered absent if not present for at least half the hours that school is in session on a given day. Please see “Repeated Absence from Class” section below about the impact of repeated absences from an individual class more than 5 times in a semester.

Administrators, school counselors, and the Attendance Coordinator review student absences regularly. If a student has missed more than 10 days of school in a semester and there is not medical documentation on file with the school nurse, OR if a student has missed more than 4 consecutive days of school without parent/guardian communication, then these staff members will initiate a meeting with each other that may result in truancy report to DCF. Once this meeting has been held and an outcome has been determined, one of the administrators will clearly communicate with the Attendance Coordinator about how to document the student’s absence within the school’s database.

## **SCHEDULE CHANGES**

Students schedules for each school year (fall, spring, and full-year courses) are available at the start of school, and are based on requests from the prior spring for returning students. Limited schedule changes may occur during approximately the first week of the school year by signing up for a meeting with a school counselor. Detailed procedures are available at the start of school.

Changes to student schedules in all grades occur **ONLY** for the following reasons:

- Administrator recommendation (e.g., for IEP or 504 plan)
- Missing blocks
- Problems related to requirements (e.g., too many History/not enough English; no Homework Support, no PE). Priority to students in grades closest to graduation/promotion.
- Students in grades 9 through 12 wishing to adjust their schedules to reflect post-PVPA plans, or to meet post-secondary admissions requirements
- Adding a Teaching Assistantship approved by the teacher (form required)
- Adding an approved Independent Study or Off-Site Course (forms required)
- Opt out of a PVPA dance class (alternate PE forms submitted by June 26, 2018)
- New audition results

## **SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN**

Developed in collaboration with the South Hadley Police and Fire Departments as well as the Massachusetts State Police, the PVPA School Safety Plan outlines a response for a range of potential emergency incidents. The plan is posted in each classroom and office throughout the building, and may be viewed in person on school grounds. PVPA carries out Fire, Lock Down and Safety drills throughout the school year as required by state and local regulations.

## **SCHOOL LUNCH**

PVPA partners with the South Hadley Public Schools’ Food Service Department to offer lunches for all our students. The lunches are prepared at South Hadley High School, brought to PVPA daily, and include an entrée, milk, fruit, and/or dessert. Alternate choices (salads, bagels, and assorted sandwiches) are available. The lunch fee per meal is



\$3.00. The cost of a reduced lunch is \$.40. Families who are enrolled in certain government programs will be automatically certified to receive free lunch and will be notified of their “free” status before the start of school. Families who are not automatically certified can still apply for free or reduced status by filling out and returning the [Free & Reduced Lunch Application](#) found at the Main Office or at [PVPA’s website](#) under “[Lunch](#)” in the “For Parents” or “For Students” tab.

The monthly Lunch Menu is available in the Main Office, posted on our website, and included in Friday Notes. Students wanting lunch (including those with free and reduced status) must fill out a menu and return it to the Main Office (with payment if not approved for free lunch) before the date stated on the Menu. It can be sent via mail or scan it and email it to Wendy Franz, [wfranz@pvpa.org](mailto:wfranz@pvpa.org), or drop it off in the Main Office. Lunch will NOT be automatically ordered for any students as PVPA pays for the lunches and will order only the amounts requested by students. Invoices will be sent to families at the beginning of each month and should be paid in a timely manner. For more information about the free and reduced lunch program and the application, contact Wendy Franz at 413.552.1580, ext. 110, or go to [PVPA’s website](#) under “[Lunch](#)” in the “For Parents” or “For Students” tab.

**NOTE:**

**Lunch cancellation policy:** If a family cancels a student lunch before 4:00 p.m. the day prior (4 p.m. Friday for a Monday lunch), then the student account will not be charged. We can not issue credits for student lunches that were not cancelled in a timely manner, as PVPA is required to pay for all lunches ordered, regardless of whether the lunch is received by the student.

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES: FUNDRAISING AND TABLING**

Any student group that would like to set up a table to support a specific activity (e.g., information sharing, fundraising) first must receive permission from an Assistant Dean of School Culture, who then will schedule it on the Master Calendar. Any student activities that involve a desire to fundraise would additionally need to be approved by the Executive Director\*.

\*Teacher/Staff advisors to student groups that intend to engage in fundraising activities must complete a Fundraising Permit and submit this to the Executive Director for approval. A copy will be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer. The form can be found under “Documents and Forms” by logging-in to the website under the “For Staff” tab.

Following approval, the Business Office will notify the Faculty/Staff advisor and arrange for a cash box for the activity. After each event, the Advisor must ensure that students return the cash box to the Business Office. Additionally, at least every two weeks during fundraising events the staff Advisor needs to report to the Business Office to prepare deposits, including rolling coins if needed.

If a fundraising event takes place during a weekend or a time when school is not in session, it is the responsibility of the teacher/staff member to complete a Deposit Form (found on the website) and bring the form and all money to the Business Office on the first Monday following the event. It is also the responsibility of the teacher/staff member to communicate this policy to students and parent volunteers who may be participating in the fundraising event.

## **STUDENT SUPERVISION OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS**

### **Early Arrival**

Students should not be dropped off before 7:30 am. Between 7:30 am and 8:00 am they must wait in the main lobby until all stairwell doors, elevators and East Annex corridor will be unlocked and opened.

### **Late Pick-up**

Students must be picked up at dismissal time unless participating in a supervised, school-sanctioned activity that begins immediately after school ends (see “After-school Activities” below). In the event of unforeseeable transportation problems, students must wait in the main lobby where they can be supervised by PVPA staff.

### **After-school Activities**

Students who are participating in a school sanctioned activity that does not start immediately after school are required to leave school grounds at scheduled school dismissal times, and to return at the scheduled activity start time. The only exception is when families have been notified that staff supervision will be provided during this time. Other students who are not part of the after-school activity (e.g., siblings, carpool participants) are expected to be picked up at normal dismissal time unless prior arrangements are made with PVPA staff members. PVPA does not assume responsibility for students outside of supervised, school-sanctioned activity time.

### **TECHNOLOGY: ACCEPTABLE USE**

PVPA maintains a network of computers for in-school use by students, staff, and guests. These are to be used only for legitimate academic or school business purposes. Each student is issued an individual account for computer use at the school, which includes an email and online document storage account (parents of children under the age of 13 may opt out of online accounts). Students are expected to keep their passwords strictly secret. Students may not use or tamper with another person’s account or password.

Students may bring personal laptop computers and other portable devices (iPods, ‘smartphones’, etc.) for use in school. Their use is subject to the discretion of faculty and staff, and students must still adhere to the guidelines laid out in the School Culture section under the heading [Internet Access](#).

In accordance with our legal obligations under the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), PVPA maintains a content filtering system to block obscene, pornographic, or otherwise inappropriate content on all network devices, including students’ personal devices while they are connected to the school wireless network. Anyone who deliberately attempts to connect to inappropriate sites, whether explicitly blocked or not, or who otherwise uses PVPA’s computer and network resources in a manner that violates the Code of Conduct, will be subject to disciplinary action.

At the discretion of staff, PVPA may lend laptops to students when appropriate. Any student using a loaner laptop from PVPA will be subject to all the above restrictions at all times, whether connected to PVPA’s network or elsewhere.

### **TRANSCRIPT REQUEST**

Please complete this online [Transcript Request](#) for each official transcript you need at least one week before the transcript is needed. A Transcript Request is not necessary for colleges that use the Common Application. For more questions, please contact Lisa Clark, Student Information Systems Data Manager, at [lclark@pvpa.org](mailto:lclark@pvpa.org).

### **TRANSFERRING CREDITS**

Course credits earned at other schools prior to enrollment at PVPA may be eligible for transfer. In most cases, standard high school level academic courses meet PVPA graduation requirements. Decisions are made by PVPA administrators, and are based on course syllabi and curricula. Courses taken prior to 9th grade do not meet PVPA graduation requirements, except for world language courses taken in 8th grade that cover material that matches PVPA course content.

If a student was home-schooled prior to attending PVPA, families are required to submit documentation from their

sending district that demonstrates the student's grade level readiness for their accepted grade.

## **VALUABLES**

PVPA has no student lockers. Students are advised to leave valuable items at home. If a student must bring these items to school s/he should be aware that PVPA is not responsible for theft or loss. Students should keep all personal belongings in their care at all times.

## **VISITORS**

PVPA students in grades 8-12 are allowed one student visitor per semester. PVPA students should pick up a Visitor's Agreement in the main office, and have it signed by their parent/guardian, by the visitor, and by the visitor's parent/guardian. Visitor agreements must be submitted two weeks in advance; otherwise they will not be considered for approval. Students in grade 7 are allowed one student visitor in the second semester only. These student visitors must have been accepted to PVPA or be on the waiting list for the coming school-year.

The number of student visitors is limited to six per day, Monday-Thursday. Visitors are not permitted during the first two weeks of a new semester, Paideia, special event days, Fridays, and after the graduation date.

Upon arrival at PVPA, all visitors must sign in at the main office. Visitors must be accompanied by their assigned guide and must follow all school rules and the PVPA Code of Conduct. Visitors who do not comply may be asked to leave and will not be allowed to return for any future visits. If you have questions about the Visitor Policy, please contact the main office staff.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM PVPA**

If a student plans to withdraw from PVPA, the student's parent/guardian must notify Lisa Clark, Student Information Systems Data Manager, at [lclark@pvpa.org](mailto:lclark@pvpa.org) or by calling the main office. A withdrawal form signed by the parent/guardian is required to release student records. Records, including general records, health records, and special education records, if applicable, are then made available to parents for pick-up in the main office.

## STUDENT SERVICES

The Office of Student Services at PVPA conducts evaluations to determine eligibility for Special Education Services and is responsible for the implementation of Section 504 Accommodations Plans and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students who are determined eligible for special education services. Academic support teachers coordinate implementation of special education plans (IEPs), and provide services outlined in those plans with assistance from apprentice teachers. Additionally 504 plans are developed and monitored through the School Counseling Department.

Special education instruction for students with IEPs is delivered in Academic Support classes by special education teachers, while more general support with assignment completion and organization is offered in Homework Support classes. Please address questions about academic support services, IEPs, and 504 plans to our Director of Student Services, Brent Nielsen ([bn Nielsen@pvpa.org](mailto:bn Nielsen@pvpa.org)).

### ACADEMIC INTERVENTION: MATHEMATICS AND READING

Students at PVPA enrolled in Math 7, Math 8, Algebra, or Geometry who show evidence of significant gaps in prior knowledge or skills in mathematics will be scheduled for a structured intervention program tailored to the mathematics content. Similarly, students in grades 7 or 8 whose reading skills are below grade level will be prioritized for a formal reading intervention program called Reading Workshop. All new students entering 7th and 8th grade complete screening assessments in mathematics and reading to determine if these intervention services will best support their needs. Intervention service determinations are made collaboratively by teachers, department leaders, the director of arts and academics, and the director of student services (if applicable).

### HOMEWORK SUPPORT

Students in Homework Support are provided time during the school day to complete classwork and homework. The students work in a structured classroom setting with a teacher present. Students use this time to complete homework or revisions both individually or in small group settings. Students are able to access support from the teacher in the classroom with regard to curriculum, organization, communication with curriculum teachers, and other issues.

### MEDICATION

Students are not allowed to carry medication in school unless arranged with the school nurse. Certain non-prescription medication is available with written parental permission. If a student needs to take any medication at school, a Medication Order, which can be obtained from the nurse, must be completed. For more information, you can contact the school nurse Mary Colwell, at her extension 120 or by email [mcolwell@pvpa.org](mailto:mcolwell@pvpa.org).

### SCHOOL COUNSELING

PVPA's School Counseling Department supports and guides all PVPA students in achieving academic success, career and college readiness, and social and emotional well-being. In order to do this, the School Counseling department offers a program tailored to each grade, including classroom lessons, individual or small group meetings, and other events and activities.

We believe that all students have the right to be respected, to be treated with dignity, and to access a school counseling program which advocates for equity and the well-being of all students. We are committed to working with all students in a way that affirms their identities and validates their experiences, and to collaborating with families, teachers, and other providers in support of students.

### **Confidentiality**

School counselors do not discuss information shared during meetings with students without the student's permission, except if the student is at risk for harming self or others, or at risk of being harmed. In those cases, school counselors take immediate action to ensure the student's safety, and that may include sharing information with others. School counselors do not disclose disciplinary history or criminal history information during college admissions processes.

### **School Counseling Caseloads**

PVPA has three school counselors. One school counselor works with the 7th and 8th grades. Students in grades 9 through 12 are assigned to a school counselor based on year of graduation, and continue to work with the same school counselor throughout high school.

### **Contacting Your School Counselor**

School counselors are available in person, by email, and by phone.

### **Appointment Request**

Students who need to discuss a confidential issue or who need an in-depth conversation with a school counselor should request an appointment. Whenever possible, students are expected to schedule appointments during studies, support blocks, breaks, or lunches. Students are expected to get teacher permission before missing class time for a counseling appointment.

Students may request an appointment by

1. Emailing their school counselor. Students should write "Appointment Request" in the subject line of any email appointment request.

Appointment Request Email Template:

Subject line: Appointment Request

Body of email:

Hi (Counselor's Name),

I'd like to schedule an appointment with you to talk about (brief description of topic).

I am available this week during (support block, study, lunch, break, and days of the week).

Thank you,

(Student's name)

2. Filling out an Appointment Request form (available in the Main Office) and putting it in their counselor's mailbox in the Main Office.

Counselors make every effort to respond to appointment requests within one school day. School counselors respond to appointment requests by email. Students who use paper appointment request forms will still receive a response by email, and should make sure they are checking their email regularly.

### **Students Seeking Support During the School Day**

Students who are experiencing emotional distress and need support are encouraged to seek help from the school counselor. Students who feel they need to see the school counselor during class time should get permission from the teacher before leaving class to go to the School Counseling Office. Teachers confirm that a student has permission to go to the school counseling office by calling the school counselor or sending the student with a pass.

Students are expected to follow sign-out procedures when leaving class to go to the School Counseling Office. If a student with an urgent concern arrives at the School Counseling Office and the school counselor is not available, the student should go to the Main Office and let the Main Office know that they need to speak with a student support person, or ask their teacher to contact the Main Office to request support for the student.

**Any student who feels at risk for harming self or others, or who is at risk for being harmed, should seek help from a faculty or staff member immediately.**

**Any student who believes that another student is at risk for harming self or others, or is at risk for being harmed, should seek help from a faculty or staff member immediately.**

### **School Counseling Referrals**

Parents and guardians concerned about their student's academic, social, or emotional well-being are encouraged to contact the student's school counselor by phone or email. The school counselor works with the student and family to determine the appropriate response or next steps to address the concern.

### **SELF-DIRECTED STUDY**

Students in Self-Directed Study have demonstrated independence in successfully completing work, submitting assignments in a timely manner, and seeking help or communicating with teachers as needed. Self-Directed Study is supervised by a teacher who is available to answer questions if needed. Students in Self-Directed Study are expected to arrive at Self-Directed Study in time for the start of the block, when attendance will be taken. Students remain in the Self-Directed Study unless they are attending an approved meeting or activity elsewhere. In that case, students should confirm with the Self-Directed Study teacher before leaving.

### **STUDY SKILLS SUPPORT**

Study Skills Support is a course that is designed to help students learn how to manage their time and complete their school work on schedule. Students will learn how the brain operates when it comes to learning new material; how to utilize a planner properly and how to develop study skills to prepare for Summative Assessments. They will also engage in self-regulation exercises designed to help them with emotional control and develop executive function strategies. All students in grade 9 will be enrolled in a section of Study Skills in the fall semester.

## SCHOOL CULTURE

### STUDENT LEADERSHIP, GROUPS, AND ACTIVITIES

Students have multiple opportunities to be deeply engaged in the PVPA school community beyond their classroom-based experiences, including participation in Student Council, National Honor Society, Affinity Groups, and Student Clubs.

#### Student Council

Student Council is made up of 3 representatives from each grade. Grades 8-12 hold elections in the spring and grade 7 holds elections the first week of school. Student Council serves as a critical student advisory for school policy and procedure, administrative decisions, and school culture. All Student Council members receive training as Peer Mediators.

Student Council representatives plan community projects, grade projects, Spirit Week, all-school events, school dances and leads fundraising for class events/trips. Student Council representatives grades 9-12 send 1 rep to sit on the Board of Trustees; Board student reps who are 18-years-old hold full membership on the Board.

#### National Honor Society

The PVPA chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) is first and foremost a community service organization comprised of students who embody the qualities of scholarship, service, leadership, and character. As an NHS member, students work with peers and a council of teachers to make a positive impact on the PVPA community and the world. Students are encouraged to apply once a year to become a member of the PVPA chapter of the National Honor Society; membership is restricted to PVPA juniors and seniors.

#### Affinity Groups

PVPA has four affinity groups: Asian Student Union, Black Student Union, Gender and Sexuality Diversity (GSD) and Latinx Student Union. The purpose of these affinity groups is to educate, celebrate and support both within and outside these identities. Affinity groups host an all-school mic during their affinity month and work together to produce and direct Unite Fest, an all-school event celebrating identity and culture.

#### Student Clubs

PVPA currently has two student clubs: PeaceJam and Feminist Coalition

PeaceJam is an international organization whose mission statement is "to create young leaders committed to positive change in themselves, their communities, and the world through the inspiration of Nobel Peace Laureates who pass on the spirit, skills, and wisdom they embody". PeaceJam leads action projects throughout the year to meet this mission.

Feminist Coalition supports the positive growth of women and girls.

### PRODUCTION LEADERSHIP AND TECHNICAL ROLES FOR STUDENTS

Students are encouraged to support PVPA productions on and off-site by taking on a variety of leadership positions and support roles. Stage Managers and Assistant Directors may be expected or asked to attend the course associated with the production, and earn PVPA arts credits. Students in technical support positions (e.g., light board operator, stagehand, assistant stage manager, wardrobe, soundboard & projections operator, props master, etc) are expected to participate in all technical rehearsals, performances, and strike, and may use this experience to earn school service

credit, honors credit or to help meet learning targets in a current technical theater course. Students can learn more details about these opportunities in the Student Theatre Handbook.

## **PVPA CODE OF CONDUCT**

Each year all members of the PVPA community review the code of conduct. PVPA students and all members of the school community are held to the standards listed below while on school grounds, at all PVPA-related activities and events, on field trips, and on school busses. The consequences for violating the Code of Conduct are outlined in the "Disciplinary Policies, Procedures and Processes" section.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Community members are responsible for:

- Doing their own work and not taking credit for work done by someone else. Students must put their thoughts in their own words, and cite all outside sources of information.

### **CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (PEDs)**

Students may not use cell phones or PEDs:

- In any classroom without teacher permission and in hallways when classes are meeting.

Students may use cell phones or PEDs:

- During non-instructional time (before school, during break, lunch, and passing periods) unless it distracts or interrupts other students, teachers, parents or faculty members.

### **CLASS/ACTIVITY ATTENDANCE**

Students are responsible for:

- Attending all scheduled classes and activities while at school.
- Being on time for classes and other scheduled activities, and to enter quietly if late.
- Utilizing the passing period to get ready for the next class.
- Asking permission of an adult in charge to leave during class/activity times and using the sign-out sheet.

### **INTERNET ACCESS**

PVPA students need to recognize the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of living, learning and working in an interconnected digital world. They should act and model their Internet behavior in ways that are safe, legal and ethical, including:

- Cultivating and managing a digital identity and reputation, while being aware of the permanence of their actions in a digital world;
- Engaging in positive, safe, legal and ethical behavior when using technology, including social interactions online or when using networked devices;
- Demonstrating an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property;
- Managing their personal data to maintain digital privacy and security.

### **FIREARMS AND WEAPONS**



Community members may not possess weapons (both legal and defined as illegal by Massachusetts and Federal law) on school property, on school busses and vans, and at off-campus school-sponsored events.

#### CAMPUS BOUNDARIES/ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL AND VISITORS

Student community members are responsible for:

- Staying in adult-supervised areas in the building or outside (weather permitting) during non-class times in the school day.
- Staying on school property during the school day, unless accompanied by a parent or teacher.
- Obtaining parental consent prior to late arrival or early dismissal (unless living independently).
- Obtaining prior approval for visitors and following the Visitors' Policy.

#### ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

Community members may not, on school grounds or at school-related events:

- Possess, consume, and distribute illegal drugs or alcohol.
- Possess or distribute prescription drugs. (Any student requiring access to prescription drugs must have authorized approval from a parent/guardian/ physician and the school nurse. All authorized prescription drugs are secured in the school health center and administered by the school nurse).
- Smoke or vape.

**Community members are responsible for removing themselves from any situation involving illegal substances including physically leaving the area if possible and reporting it to a trusted adult. (See “Drug Free Environment Policy”)**

#### PHYSICAL CONTACT AND PERSONAL SPACE

Community members are responsible for:

- Respecting people's bodies and physical space.
- Saying something (to the offender or an adult) if they feel uncomfortable.
- Understanding and changing their behavior if someone indicates discomfort or offense.

Community members may not:

- Engage in physical rough housing
- Harass anyone for any reason (See "Harassment Policy" and "Bullying Policy" in the next section, "Disciplinary Policies, Procedures and Processes").
- Have sustained intimate displays of affection and/or engage in sexual activity.

#### RESPECT FOR OTHERS (LANGUAGE, CLOTHING, BEHAVIOR)

Community members are expected to:

- Be honest.
- Interact with others in a civil and respectful manner.
- Avoid profanity and disruptive and distracting behaviors.

- Be aware of the effect their behavior has on others and be considerate of others' needs.
- Wear clothing that is safe and appropriate for school activities that will not offend or distract others.
- Listen and change their behavior if someone indicates they are uncomfortable.
- Say something to the person directly or an adult if they feel uncomfortable.

Community members may not:

- Make offensive remarks or gestures regarding race, gender identity, gender expression, religion, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, appearance, and abilities.
- Disrespect others' beliefs and opinions, no matter how different they may be from one's own.
- Touch, use or take someone else's property without prior permission from the owner.
- Intentionally harm anyone, or attempt to harm, either physically or emotionally, both in person and through electronic communication.

#### RESPECT FOR THE SCHOOL BUILDING & PROPERTY

Community members are responsible for:

- Following teacher discretion with regard to eating in classrooms and during class activities.
- Cleaning up classrooms after use, and leave them in good condition for the next group.
- Recycling and composting when possible.
- Respecting and cleaning up all common areas throughout the school campus (inside and outside)
- Using school-owned technology in an appropriate and responsible manner, which includes: handling devices with care; avoiding food and drink while using devices; and returning technology to the appropriate storage location.

Community members may not:

- Mark school or private property with graffiti.
- Cause intentional damage to school or private property such as books, furniture and equipment.
- Remove supplies and/ private property from any location without prior permission.
- Have food and/or drink near computers, musical instruments, in the dance studios, music studios, the theaters, around costumes, or tech equipment.

## **DISCIPLINARY POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES**

### **BULLYING**

Bullying is defined as “any repeated and ongoing incidents that endanger the physical or mental health of any student or other person.” All faculty and staff are mandated reporters, and PVPA will share the results of its investigations with the South Hadley Police Department if an act of bullying has occurred. Please see [Appendix B](#) to review PVPA’s Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

### **PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING**

- This policy defines plagiarism as the intentional and deliberate copying of another piece of work and submitting the work as one’s own original work.

- This policy defines cheating as copying assignments, giving/receiving help on assessments (exams, tests, quizzes, projects, etc.), and/or sharing work in any way not directly approved by teachers.
- If a student is aware that another student has plagiarized or cheated, they are expected to notify their teacher or another PVPA faculty/staff member, who will communicate the information to the Dean of School Culture.

### **Consequences for Violations of Academic Integrity**

The teacher will refer the incident to the Dean of School Culture. The Dean will address each case individually, using the following steps:

- 1) The first time that a student is suspected of plagiarizing the student's parents/guardians will be notified and a meeting will be organized between the Dean, the teacher, the parents/guardians and the student.
- 2) The student will need to complete the work or an alternate assignment to a satisfactory level. The plagiarism/cheating work will receive no credit.
- 3) The student will complete an additional project (approved by the teacher) reflecting on the seriousness of cheating and/or plagiarism. When the additional reflection project is completed the student may be eligible to earn credit on the original assigned work.
- 4) After completion of all the steps above, the student and teacher will write and sign an agreement. The teacher will send a copy of the agreement to the Dean of School Culture.

The second time that a student plagiarizes:

- 1) The Dean of School Culture and the Executive Director will meet again with the student, teacher and parents/guardians.
- 2) Disciplinary consequences will be determined in consultation with the Executive Director.

**NOTE:** Plagiarism can have very long-lasting, harmful consequences later in life. All instances of cheating and plagiarism are handled with the gravity and seriousness that they deserve, holding the student accountable for academic dishonesty and supporting the student in understanding the importance of academic integrity.

### **DISCIPLINE HEARINGS AND SUSPENSIONS**

Effective July 1, 2014, MA public school laws and procedures regarding student suspensions from school were changed in order to:

- limit the use of long-term suspension as a consequence for student misconduct until other consequences have been considered and tried as appropriate;
- promote engagement of a student's parent in discussion of the student's misconduct, and options for responding to it;
- assure that every student who is expelled or suspended, regardless of the reason for suspension or expulsion, has the opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of suspension or expulsion;
- keep schools safe and supportive for all students while ensuring fair and effective disciplinary practices.

### **Verbal Warnings and Supervised Lunch**

When problems first arise at PVPA pertaining to a student's behavior, such as tardiness to class, skipping class, using inappropriate language, speaking disrespectfully, etc., teachers and administrators will communicate directly with students to clarify expectations. For students in grades 7, 8, and 9, administrators may assign "supervised lunch" as a consequence for the concerning behavior.

## **Written Warnings**

When problems first arise at PVPA pertaining to a student's behavior, such as tardiness to class, skipping class, using inappropriate language, speaking disrespectfully, etc., a meeting with the school staff, parents/guardians and the student is held. The meeting will define the problem, identify possible solutions, agree on the solution, and the consequences for a students who does not abide by the agreement. A written record of the agreement is maintained by the Dean of School Culture for future reference.

## **Suspension**

Notice of Suspensions and Hearings except as provided in 603 CMR 53.07 (EMERGENCY REMOVAL):

- The principal or designee may not impose a suspension as a consequence for a disciplinary offense without first providing the student and the parent oral and written notice, and providing the student an opportunity for a hearing on the charge and the parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing.
- The principal or designee shall provide oral and written notice to the student and the parent in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall set forth in plain language:
  - (a) the disciplinary offense;
  - (b) the basis for the charge;
  - (c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
  - (d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal or designee concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing;
  - (e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
  - (f) the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;
- The principal or designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct a hearing without the parent present, the principal or designee must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The principal or designee is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal or designee has sent written notice and has documented at least two attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.
- Written notice to the parent may be made by hand delivery, first-class mail, certified mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal or designee and parent.

## **Short Term Suspension Hearing Requirements (10 Days Or Fewer)**

- The purpose of the hearing with the principal or designee is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction. At a minimum, the principal or designee shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information.

The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal or designee should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as set forth in 603 CMR 53.05. The principal or designee shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal or designee should consider in determining consequences for the student.

- Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal or designee shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.
- The principal or designee shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as provided in 603 CMR 53.13(1). The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

#### **Long Term Suspension Hearing Requirements (10 Days or Longer)**

- At a minimum, in addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following rights:
  1. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal or designee may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
  2. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense;
  3. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
  4. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; and
  5. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal or designee, and to receive a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or parent upon request. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the principal or designee shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.
- The principal or designee shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal or designee should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- Based on the evidence, the principal or designee shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension as set forth in 603 CMR 53.05, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The principal or designee shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or other method of delivery agreed to by the principal or designee and the parent. If the principal or designee decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:
  1. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;

2. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal or designee;
3. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
4. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as provided in 603 CMR 53.13(4)(a);
5. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal or designee's decision to the Executive Director but only if the principal or designee has imposed a long-term suspension. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language:
  - 5.1. the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the Executive Director within five calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the Executive Director an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven additional calendar days; and that
  - 5.2. the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the Executive Director decides to reverse the principal's or designee's determination on appeal.

#### **Long-Term Suspension Appeal Process**

- A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the principal or designee shall have the right to appeal the principal's or designee's decision to the Executive Director.
- The student or parent shall file a notice of appeal with the Executive Director within five calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the Executive Director an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven additional calendar days. If the appeal is not timely filed, the Executive Director may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.
- The Executive Director shall hold the hearing within three school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven additional calendar days, in which case the Executive Director shall grant the extension.
- The Executive Director shall make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The Executive Director shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and Executive Director to participate. The Executive Director shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- The Executive Director shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The Executive Director shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent upon request. The Executive Director shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.
- The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal or designee's hearing for long-term suspension under 603 CMR 53.08(3)(b).
- The Executive Director shall issue a written decision within five calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(3)(d)1. through 4. If the Executive Director determines that the student

committed the disciplinary offense, the Executive Director may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal or designee, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal or designee's decision.

- The decision of the Executive Director shall be the final decision of the school district, charter school, or virtual school, with regard to the suspension.

## **DISCIPLINE FOR STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS HAVING SPECIAL NEEDS**

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this Handbook. Chapter 71B of the Mass. General Laws, formerly known as Chapter 766, requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation TEAM to have special needs and whose individualized program is described in an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Please review these provisions in [Appendix A](#).

## **DISCIPLINE FOR STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A DISABILITY AND PROVIDED WITH A 504 PLAN**

Students are expected to meet the expectations for behavior identified in this Handbook. A student on a Section 504 plan may be disciplined like any other non-disabled student. However, if the student is going to be suspended for ten (10) or more consecutive days, expelled or suspended for more than fifteen (15) cumulative days (and there is a change in placement as a result), then a manifestation determination review shall be conducted. The student's 504 team shall convene, and answer two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:

- Is the misconduct the result of failure to implement the student's 504 plan?
- Is the misconduct caused by, or does it have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability?

A summary of the manifestation determination review will be written and a copy provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible after the review, but no later than five (5) school days after the review.

## **DRUG FREE ENVIRONMENT POLICY**

PVPA does not tolerate the use, possession, or distribution of any drugs (other than those prescribed by a physician); non-prescribed drug use constitutes a violation of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 section 37H (See [Appendix C](#)).

PVPA will discipline students in a tiered response with regards to illegal substances depending on whether a student is under the influence, in possession, in possession with intent to distribute and or a combination of two or more of the above. Responses may range from a short term suspension to expulsion.

The school will provide assistance to any student voluntarily seeking treatment or advice for a drug related problem. All PVPA employees are mandated reporters and will disclose information shared by students about drug use with the appropriate administration and counselors, to enable the student to receive needed help.

## **HARASSMENT POLICY**

Students that are found to have engaged in the delivery of disrespectful messages, offensive remarks, and/or gestures in any format (verbal, physical, electronic) related to gender, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity, race, religion, national origin, disability, physical features, or any other protected class are subject to disciplinary actions.

## **HAZING**

Massachusetts General Law makes it clear that hazing is illegal. Hazing is defined as “any conduct or method of initiation into a student organization which fully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person.” Each member of a student group at PVPA is made aware of what hazing is and the disciplinary consequences for engagement in such an activity.

## **ILLEGAL ACTS**

Illegal infractions may involve notification of the police or other governmental agencies. Infractions include bullying, hate speech, vandalism, larceny, sexual harassment, assault, hazing (as an organizer, participant, or observer), possession and/or use of alcohol or drugs, possession of dangerous objects including knives and firearms, setting false alarms, bomb threats, unauthorized use of computer networking systems, tampering with computer equipment or resident programs and files, and any other illegal acts. Disciplinary action for illegal acts may include actions up to and including expulsion from school.

## **ITEMS DISRUPTIVE TO SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

Any objects which interfere with the daily implementation of the school’s mission, create an unsafe learning environment, or endanger the health and safety of others are not permitted on school grounds at any time. These items include, but are not limited to: laser pointers, Heelys (sneakers with wheels), skateboards, and razor scooters.

## **POWER TOOL POLICY**

All students who will use power tools, either through a class (VAPA) or as part of a tech crew, must have a parent or guardian sign an Acknowledgement of Risk Form. Parents and guardians of students enrolled in VAPA classes must have forms signed and returned by the end of the Schedule Change period at the start of the year. Students using this equipment without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

It is the goal of the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School to promote a community that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual Harassment of staff and/or students occurring in the school or in other school-related settings is unlawful and will not be tolerated. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

**Definition:** “Sexual harassment” is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment or status as a student.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting him or her, or for the awarding or withholding of favorable employment or academic opportunities, evaluations or assistance, or other verbal or physical conduct related to gender when such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the individual’s performance at work or in study by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment in which to work or learn.

Verbal abuse may constitute harassment. No student should feel that parts of the school campus or any school-sponsored events are off limits because he or she will be subject to verbal harassment either by reason of gender or



sexual orientation. Verbal abuse will be treated as a disciplinary infraction and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

**Complaints:** If any community member believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment, the member has the right to file a complaint with our organization. This may be done in writing or orally. To file a complaint you may do so by contacting: Marc Kenen, Executive Director, PVPACPS, 15 Mulligan Drive, South Hadley, MA 01075, 413.552.1580 or leave a message for Melinda Winter, President of the Board of Trustees, also at the main office 413.552.1580. (See Complaint and Resolution Process below.)

**Investigation:** When a complaint is received, the school will promptly investigate the allegation in a fair and expeditious manner. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. Our investigation will include a private interview with the person filing the complaint and with witnesses. We will also interview the person alleged to have committed sexual harassment before we have completed our investigation. We will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the results of that investigation.

**Disciplinary Action:** If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has been committed by one of our community members, we will take action as is appropriate under the circumstances. Such action may range from counseling to termination from community membership or employment and may include such other forms of disciplinary action, as we deem appropriate under the circumstances.

## **SMOKING AND VAPING**

In compliance with and according to Massachusetts General Law, PVPA is a smoke-free campus. In addition, smoking products and vaping is also prohibited. Non-students who are found smoking or using vaping products will be asked to stop or leave. Student violations of this policy can span the range of a Written Warning to a suspension depending on the circumstances and the frequency of the infraction. Student possession of any form of tobacco, smoking products, or vaping products is prohibited.

## **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

### **COMMUNITY DAY**

This event happens in the fall semester and is one of two student-led workshop days. All students are invited to create and lead morning workshops for the student body that offer education, recognition and support of different ethnic and social identities. The afternoon includes an all-school open mic, games and activities. Community Day is a celebration of the many diverse backgrounds and experiences of the entire PVPA community.

### **OCTOBERFEST**

A day around the end of October - students and staff members are invited to dress in costume. There is an afternoon festival with games, activities, food, etc.

### **OPEN HOUSE**

An annual open house for parents/guardians is held in the early fall. This is an opportunity for parents/guardians to meet their students' teachers and get basic information about curriculum. If parents/guardians have more specific questions or concerns, please contact teachers directly to set up time to talk another day. You can call the Main Office, 413-552-1580 ext. 112, or you can visit our website for more information.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN CONFERENCES**

Twice during every school year, PVPA sets aside time for parents/guardians to schedule meetings with their student's teachers. These meetings provide opportunities to discuss successes and concerns, and make sure students are on track to meet graduation/promotion requirements. In addition, parents are encouraged to request additional in-person or telephone conferences by contacting individual teachers or the school counselors.

Sign-up for conferences happens through a third-party web application named Pick-A-Time. Instructions for the use of this system will accompany the notification email that the school sends out in advance of sign-ups. Any questions about technical difficulties with this system should be directed to the Technology Director.

### **STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES**

As school approaches its end in June, students in grades 7 and 8 prepare and conduct their own student-led conferences as a reflection on and celebration of their learning over the course of the school year. Families are invited to schedule an appointment to participate in this event with their student. As with Parent/Guardian Conferences, sign-up happens digitally over Pick-A-Time, and instructions will be provided when appropriate.

### **UNITY DAY/FIELD DAY**

This event typically occurs in June. The morning of this day is one of two student-led workshop days and focuses on Unity. All students are invited to create and lead workshops that offer positive, fun opportunities to meet and spend time with different students and teachers. The afternoon focuses on fun Field Day activities and includes a cookout/potluck, games, etc. The Middle School team organized their own field day as well for the first time in 2018.

## HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Direct communication between students, teachers, administrators, and parents/guardians is essential to student success at PVPA. Home-to-school communication is as important as school-to-home communication. This document outlines the most effective methods, and what to do if communication is not working. Students with specific accommodations stated in IEPs or 504 plans may have different or additional strategies.

### **Communication Guidelines**

Teachers/staff members are expected to respond within two school days after the initial communication. Please inform the Director of Arts and Academics, Laura Davis, if you do not hear back within this timeframe from: *ELA and, Mathematics, Science, History, World Language, and Arts Teachers*. Please inform the Director of Student Services, Brent Nielsen, if you do not hear back within this timeframe from: *Academic Support Teachers, School Counselors, Adjustment Counselors, School Psychologist, and School Nurse*.

### **Effective Communication Methods**

- E-MAIL is generally the most efficient means to communicate between home and school. We understand that some families (and teachers/staff members) do not have Internet access at home, and make every attempt to make accommodations. *Most* PVPA staff members have email addresses that follow this format: firstinitiallastname@pvpa.org (Example: jsmith@pvpa.org).
- TELEPHONE calls are also effective. The main office number is 413.552.1580, and community members may leave a voicemail message. Except for emergencies, it is not possible to speak directly with a teacher during class time.

### **Friday Notes**

Friday Notes, our weekly newsletter, is every community member's source for timely information about upcoming events, reports on past events, helpful links, general news of the school, staff, and students, and links to other topics of interest. Friday Notes are sent via email to all families and we strongly encourage families to review them weekly. If you are not receiving Friday Notes by email or would like to submit material for inclusion in Friday Notes, please contact Lisa Cappello at [lcappello@pvpa.org](mailto:lcappello@pvpa.org).

### **Facebook**

The PVPA Facebook page, [PVPA - Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School](#), is another means of communicating timely and general information, along with photosharing. If you are a Facebook user, please take a moment to "like" PVPA's facebook page and join the conversation.

### **School Website**

The PVPA website, [www.pvpa.org](http://www.pvpa.org), is our go-to source for navigating a school year at PVPA. In addition to school contact information, detailed calendar listings, archives of Friday Notes, community notices and information, Board of Trustees meeting agendas and minutes, we include course descriptions, forms for parents (e.g., bus contracts, independent study forms, etc.), transportation information, and so much more.

If you wish to submit material for the website please contact Marc Kenen, Executive Director, at [MKenen@pvpa.org](mailto:MKenen@pvpa.org). Information should be relevant to the entire PVPA community.

## STUDENT & PARENT PORTAL ACCESS FOR HOMEWORK/ASSIGNMENTS/MISSING WORK

The PVPA Student and Parent Portals are by far the most effective way to stay on top of a student's progress on homework completion, missing work, and assignment results. The Portals allow students and parents/guardians to monitor work completion and academic progress on a weekly basis.

### Portal Access

STUDENTS: To access the Portal you must log in with the Student Portal login information provided at the beginning of the year. You can access the [Student Portal](#) through [PVPA's website](#) under the "For Students" tab. Under the same tab you'll also find the instructions on how to use the portal, including a new video tour. If you are having trouble accessing the portal, a school counselor, office staff, or the Technology Director, Thom Vreeland ([tvreeland@pvpa.org](mailto:tvreeland@pvpa.org)), can help.

In the portal students can review:

- All course assignments
- Course objectives
- Report cards.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS: To access the Portal, you will be provided login information by our Technology Director, Thom Vreeland ([tvreeland@pvpa.org](mailto:tvreeland@pvpa.org)). You can access the [Parent Portal](#) through [PVPA's website](#) under the "For Parents" tab. Under the same tab you'll also find the instructions to log in to the portal, including a new video tour. If you are having trouble accessing the portal, please email Thom Vreeland at [tvreeland@pvpa.org](mailto:tvreeland@pvpa.org).

Besides monitoring your student's work, the parent portal can also be used to update the following information:

- Blanket permissions: This allows you to change the permission preferences for your student(s) (e.g. field trip permission, movies permission, etc.).
- Contact information: You can update your contact information, so we have the latest changes on record (e.g. change in address, telephone number, email address, etc.)
- Permission to pick up: You can tell us who is allowed to pick up your student(s) from school.

## SCHOOL CLOSINGS

PVPA has an automatic telephone and email messaging system that will notify you when school must close due to inclement weather or other emergencies. Closings and late openings are also posted on the front page of the PVPA website ([www.pvpa.org](http://www.pvpa.org)). The following local television stations will list PVPA school closings or school delays: Channel 22 (WWLP).

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

### ASBESTOS REPORT

The Asbestos Report, as required by AHERA (Asbestos Hazard Response Act), is on file at PVPA.

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The PVPA Board of Trustees is the school's governing authority and is legally and ethically responsible for the school. Specifically, the Board is responsible for ensuring the school's faithfulness to its charter by:

- Establishing and reviewing policy
- Strategic planning
- Financial oversight
- Hiring and evaluating the Executive Director
- Being accountable to the public
- Adhering to all laws and regulations governing Commonwealth Charter School

### BOARD COMMITTEES

The Finance Committee plays the critical role of developing the school's annual budget and the capital budget. The committee advises and assists the Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer.

The Governance Committee generally oversees the health of the Board of Trustees. It guides the Board and monitors goals and strategic plans, assesses needs for personnel and skills on the Board, performs an annual review of Board performance, helps with the agenda and long-term goals, plans and executes the annual orientation and Board retreat, and maintains by-laws and Board handbook.

### COMPLAINT AND RESOLUTION PROCESS: TITLE I, ADA, SEXUAL HARASSMENT UNDER TITLE VII AND TITLE IX

PVPA does not discriminate against any individual covered by inclusion under various Federal laws, and specifically enumerated under Title I, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 1972 Educational Amendments. Should any complaints arise under the auspices of these Federal requirements and informal resolution, described elsewhere in this Handbook fails, the following is the step-by-step process for resolution.

Contact Person: Marc Kenen, PVPA Executive Director, 15 Mulligan Drive, South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075 (413.552.1580) or [MKenen@pvpa.org](mailto:MKenen@pvpa.org).

Problem Resolution System Intake Form (PRSIF). Forms can be obtained from the main office at the address listed above. PRSIF should be submitted within 14 days of the occurrence of the incident preceding the complaint, or within 14 days of when the complainant should reasonably have been aware of the incident. Response in writing from the Executive Director will occur within 5 business days of receipt of the PRSIF.

Appeal of the decision of the Executive Director should be made by contacting Board of Trustees President Geoff Sumi at the address listed above within 5 business days following notification of the decision from the Executive Director. Any original complaints concerning the Leadership Team Members should be made directly to the Board of Trustees President.

## **FUNDRAISING: THE FRIENDS OF PVPA CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL**

The Friends of PVPA is an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization created to support and advance the mission and programs of the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School. It achieves these goals through fundraising activities, public outreach, and by mobilizing resources from the PVPA community of families and alumni.

As a 501(c)(3) organization, all donations to The Friends are deductible as charitable donations for federal income tax purposes. You can make an immediate gift by cash, check, or credit card (Visa or MasterCard). The Friends also accepts gifts of publicly traded stock, corporate matching gifts from your employer, and grants from private/family foundations. All donors to The Friends become members of The Backstage Club, PVPA's individual donor society or Community Producers, our corporate sponsors. For additional information or assistance with your contribution, please contact Marc Kenen, PVPA Executive Director..

## **LIBRARY**

The mission of the PVPA library is to help students become productive citizens and participants in a rapidly changing global society. We can do this through:

- Developing and maintaining a diverse collection of materials in various media that is responsive to multiple learning styles and which supports the curricular and personal needs of students, faculty, and staff.
- Developing users who are information and technology literate, who are effective users of information, who are independent learners and critical thinkers, and who exhibit social responsibility.
- Maintaining a facility that is conducive to both formal and informal learning.
- Fostering a life-long love of reading. The PVPA library offers students space and resources to work independently and collaboratively on academic and personal learning.

There are computers for everyday tasks such as word processing and Internet research. A variety of content-specific databases allow students twenty-four hour access to scholarly articles. The print collection is constantly growing to provide reliable research materials and high-interest fiction. The library is open from 8:30AM to 4:00PM Monday through Thursdays and 8:30AM to 3:00PM Fridays. Students may check out books and CDs for three weeks. Overdue books do not accumulate fines, but a student may not check out additional materials if s/he has overdue items. Students must pay to replace lost or damaged items.

## **LOST & FOUND**

There is a Lost & Found area in the connector hallway between the two wings of the school for misplaced items such as clothing, notebooks, lunch boxes and backpacks. Anything left at the end of each calendar month or before school vacations is automatically donated. Contents of any lunch boxes left in this area will be emptied as needed. Students should check this area regularly for their missing things. Small valuables such as eyeglasses, keys and cell phones are held in the main office.

## **MASSACHUSETTS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION**

The Massachusetts Charter Public School Association's mission is "to serve, support, and advocate for Massachusetts charter public schools as they strive to achieve the goals of their charters." The MCPSA's website has information for teachers, parents and administrators at [www.masscharterschools.org](http://www.masscharterschools.org).

## **MASSACHUSETTS DESE CHARTER SCHOOL OFFICE**

Information regarding charter school legislation may be obtained from the Massachusetts DESE Charter School Office located at 75 Pleasant Street, 5th floor, Malden, MA 02148 or by calling 781.338.3227 or faxing 781.338.3220. You may also go to the website: [www.doe.mass.edu/charter](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter), or email [charterschools@doe.mass.edu](mailto:charterschools@doe.mass.edu).

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

Per MA General Laws, Chapter 76: Section 5, PVPA is open to all students, on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, mental, or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language, or academic achievement.

## **SIBLING ADMISSIONS STATUS**

Students who are siblings of currently enrolled PVPA students are given preference in the state-mandated lottery admissions process. If there are more sibling applicants than openings, a separate lottery is done among sibling applicants. Per MA charter school regulations, a “sibling” is defined as sharing a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption. Sibling applicants must meet all application deadlines and requirements. Contact [admissions@pvpa.org](mailto:admissions@pvpa.org) for more information about the admissions process.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

A parent/legal guardian or any student who is at least 14 years old has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. Student Records shall be provided as soon as practicable and within ten days after the initial request. Upon request, copies of any information contained in the student record shall be furnished to the eligible student or the parent/legal guardian. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the cost of reproduction, may be charged. However, a fee may not be charged if to do so would effectively prevent the parents/legal guardians or eligible student from exercising their right, under federal law, to inspect and review the records.

603 CMR 23.07 (4) (g) states that PVPA can provide student record access to another school, without family permission, if the student is transferring to that school.

The student record consists of the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript contains your name, address, and your birth date; the name, address and telephone number of your parents or guardians; course titles; grades (or the equivalent when grades are not applicable); grade level completed and the grade completed. The temporary record consists of all the information in the student record, which is not contained in the transcript. This information may include your standardized test scores, extracurricular activities in which you took part and evaluations by your teachers, counselors, or other school staff. A school health record, which gives a general profile of your health, is included. The temporary record shall not contain any anonymous information and will be destroyed after graduation.

After a student graduates or withdraws from PVPA, the parent/guardian is responsible to pick up permanent records or they will be destroyed after 7 years.

The Regulations Pertaining to Student Records were developed by the Massachusetts State Board of Education to ensure parents, students and former students of their rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment and destruction of student records. The regulations have the force of law. A copy of the regulations is available upon request.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS ACCESS TO SCHOOL RECORDS: Per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (or FERPA), non-custodial parents retain full rights of access to their children's student records unless the school has been provided with evidence that these rights have been specifically revoked.

## **STUDENT DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

In accordance with 603 CMR 23.07 (4) (a) of the Commonwealth's Education Laws and Regulations, PVPA may only release 'Directory Information' to third parties without the written consent of the student or parent:

A parent or student may request that they be excluded from the release of Directory Information by sending such notice to the Student Information System Data Manager, Lisa Clark ([lclark@pvpa.org](mailto:lclark@pvpa.org)).



## APPENDIX A

### Discipline for Students Identified as Having Special Needs

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this Handbook. Chapter 71B of the Mass. General Laws, formerly known as Chapter 766, requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation TEAM to have special needs and whose individualized program is described in an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

- Students with Special Needs may be suspended for up to ten (10) consecutive days, and may also be suspended in excess of ten (10) cumulative days, as fully outlined under M.G.L.c. 71B, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Such suspensions may be carried out without any further or additional process.
- Suspensions or exclusions in excess of ten (10) consecutive days or ten (10) cumulative days may also occur, provided that the conduct for which the student is being disciplined is not a manifestation of his/her disability, and the District provides educational services which will allow the student to access the general curriculum and to make progress toward his/her goals.
- The IDEA and M.G.L. c. 71B allow school personnel to move a student with disabilities to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days, if that student is in possession of a dangerous weapon at school or a school function or on school property, is in possession or uses a controlled substance or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function or on school property, or inflicts serious bodily injury on a person, including him/herself. The appropriate interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the IEP TEAM. The IDEA and M.G.L. c. 71B also allow school personnel the option of asking a hearing officer or a court to move children with disabilities to an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 school days, if they are substantially likely to injure themselves or others in their current placement.
- When a special needs student has been suspended for more than ten (10) consecutive or cumulative days in a school year, such that a substantial change in placement is occurring or will occur, the IEP TEAM will meet to conduct a manifestation determination. Relevant members of the TEAM meet for the manifestation determination, and they answer two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:
  - Is the misconduct the result of failure to implement the student's IEP?
  - Is the misconduct caused by, or does it have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability?
- A summary of the manifestation determination review will be written and a copy provided to the Parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible after the review, but no later than five (5) school days after the review.
- If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student may be disciplined according to the discipline policy in this handbook. The student will receive educational services during this period of suspension or exclusion. If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, then the school may still be able to implement an IAES (see ## 2 and 3 above). If the IAES is not possible, then the student will remain in his/her current placement, and the TEAM will arrange for a functional behavioral assessment (if one has not been conducted on the student) and the development or modification of a behavior intervention plan.

- The Executive Director (or designee) will notify the Special Education Office of the suspendable offenses of a special needs student and a record will be kept of such notices.

## APPENDIX B

### Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Statement: PVPA is a public school and community that prohibits bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation against those reporting accurate and credible incidents. The Bullying Intervention Plan is an approach to addressing bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation. PVPA is committed to working with students, staff, families, and law enforcement and the community at large to prevent issues of violence and inequity through prevention, intervention, and education.

Any action within our community that creates an environment of continued harassment compromises the very fabric of our community. The PVPA learning community is among the most geographically diverse in the Bay State, with students, parents, faculty, staff, and Board members representative of 59 different towns and cities. Our diversity is an opportunity for all of us to learn from many different perspectives and join together around common goals. The responsibility rests with each member in our community to actively cultivate a community dedicated to inclusivity, equity, and the promotion of individual growth, with the goal of maximizing one's potential for educational growth. PVPA's efforts continue to be directed at purposely building community. PVPA looks forward to working with families to support these efforts.

In the spirit of preserving and strengthening the bridges in our community, PVPA adopted the following policy in accordance with the Massachusetts General Law Chapter 92 "An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools."

#### Leadership Oversight and Accountability

- The Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School (PVPA) leadership team plays an integral role in ensuring the safety of all PVPA students and community members. The Executive Director and designee through working closely with the PVPA School Counseling Department team and Faculty/Staff, will report the total number of complaints, investigations, verified acts, and any trends of bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, and retaliation quarterly to the PVPA Board of Trustees.

#### Training and Professional Development

- In partnership with the Westfield State University Center for Teacher Education and Research we are working closely on professional development for educators and parent education. All PVPA faculty and staff members shall engage in an annual fall training that includes an overview of school policy, procedures on reporting, identification, and intervention techniques. These trainings have been developed in partnership with bully prevention expertise provided by Westfield State University's Center for Teacher Education and Research. Each annual PVPA staff training will be developed with input from PVPA school counseling department, administration, and faculty/staff, informed by the latest research. It will further develop the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, respond, and report bullying incidents including but not limited to the following:
  - Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate effective interventions to stop bullying.
  - Information about the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among aggressor, target, and witnesses to bullying and the potential fluidity between target and aggressor status.
  - Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment.
  - Information on types of incidents PVPA students have experienced.

- Information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying.
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.
- Information on responding to, reporting on, and tracking incidents.

### **Bullying Related To Students With Disabilities**

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the Individual Education Plan (IEP) Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

### **Parent/Guardian Partnership and Access to Resources and Services**

PVPA shall make available on our website a range of materials relevant to bullying, cyber-bullying, and Internet safety. The materials will be collected from Westfield State University, the PVPA School Counseling Department, and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The PVPA website resources will be updated annually to reflect the latest research and materials to further support families and students. Parent/Guardians will annually receive an overview of the bully prevention curriculum used at PVPA and materials guidance to further reinforce the bully prevention curriculum at home.

The PVPA Student/Parent Handbook, which must be signed by each parent/guardian and student will include the PVPA Bully Prevention and Intervention Plan.

PVPA shall annually hold a parent education event that shall include but not be limited to the following topics:

- The dynamics of bullying
- Online safety and cyber-bullying
- An overview of the school policy and procedures on reporting, investigation, follow-up and guidelines on when to involve local law enforcement.
- An overview of bully prevention curriculum used by PVPA and specific direction in supporting and reinforcing in school efforts towards bully prevention.
- PVPA parents/guardians will be encouraged to access PVPA resources and the DESE resources to further support bully prevention efforts.
- PVPA parents/guardians will be reminded annually that PVPA's school counseling department serves as the primary resource in assisting families and students in identifying therapeutic and counseling services outside of school for students.

### **Student Partnership and Curriculum**

The PVPA student community will play a critical role in creating a safe environment for all students. Student voices will be represented in bullying prevention curriculum planning discussions to share input with administration and faculty on meaningful ways to integrate bullying prevention curriculum into the school. PVPA utilizes and integrates Bully Prevention curriculum for students in grades 7-12. The program approach involves working with individuals, classrooms, the entire school, as well as parents and communities, to successfully address bullying prevention in schools.

Through working with the PVPA student council and the larger student body, the PVPA administration will gather qualitative data on students' experiences at PVPA and the intersection with bullying and harassment to analyze and track the current climate of the school. Included in our beginning of year orientation, students will be given an overview of the PVPA policy, procedures, reporting, and bully prevention education. As we understand our needs better, we will identify and include programs that respond to student input.

### **Procedures For Reporting Suspected Bullying**

Each member of the PVPA community (students, staff, parents and guardians) is obligated to report any incident of bullying or retaliation. PVPA faculty and staff are required to report any incidents that may constitute bullying or retaliation. Students are strongly encouraged to share incidents with a report that may be made anonymously. It is important that any student who feels that he or she is being bullied and/or harassed should share this with a PVPA staff/faculty member immediately. Each PVPA Staff and Faculty member is trained to accept reporting forms. Please refer to the PVPA Incident Report Form which is also available in electronic form at [www.pvpa.org](http://www.pvpa.org). PVPA is clear that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student or students solely based on an anonymous report. Matters of bullying and retaliation will be approached with particular attention to discretion and confidentiality.

Incidents should be reported to the Executive Director or designee immediately. Upon receipt of such a report the Executive Director or designee shall promptly conduct and complete an investigation into the allegations within 1 to 5 school days. The Executive Director or designee will track all reporting.

### **Anonymous Reporting For Bullying And/Or Retaliation**

The anonymous reporting form is available online at [www.pvpa.org](http://www.pvpa.org), through PVPA School Counselors, and in the PVPA Main Office. Persons submitting the form should make clear the first and last names, dates, place, and witnesses. This form when completed may be handed to any PVPA faculty/staff member and/or brought to the main office directly where the Executive Director/designee will follow the investigation procedures. All faculty and staff are well versed in investigation, disciplinary response, and follow up so that if they are contacted they can respond with those facts alone and refer parent to Executive Director/designee. Students and parents are informed annually of the anonymous reporting protocol through the student handbook, open house, new student orientation and grade meetings.

### **Investigation Procedures**

Witnesses (students, bystanders, parents, teachers, staff) will be interviewed promptly after an allegation has been made to gather important information for a determination in the investigation. After the information has been gathered, the Executive Director/designee will make a decision as to whether or not bullying/retaliation has occurred and/or if it is conflict, harassment, misunderstanding, or false reporting.

- PVPA Executive Director/ designee will be prompt and sensitive to confidentiality regarding the use of names and details.
- Procedures for the investigation, disciplinary action, support, and follow up will be gone over thoroughly with parents/guardians and the involved students.
- If the incident is determined to be an act of bullying all involved students (target, aggressor, reporter, bystanders) will be notified and parents/guardians of all parties will be called.
- Following the outcome, Executive Director/designee and appropriate faculty/staff will monitor all those involved daily/weekly as deemed appropriate to make sure that no retaliation occurs.
- Administration will take appropriate disciplinary actions. (See below)

## **Follow-Up Procedures In Incident Of Bullying/Retaliation Finding**

- Notification of the parent/guardian of a student's involvement in a bullying/retaliation incident and an outline of the consequence, follow-up, support, and/or further consequences for future incidences.
- Notification of the parent/guardian of the target, aggressor, and reporter identifying school response taken.
- If students involved in the incident are from more than one school district, PVPA will promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school district(s) so that they may take appropriate action.
- Local law enforcement will be notified in cases of harassment, physical threats/assaults, violation of civil rights, or any behavior determined to be criminal.
- PVPA will inform parents/guardians of right to pursue criminal charges when applicable. Incidents Of Retaliation

Any retaliation will be investigated to determine if the behavior/incident is conflict, bullying, or harassment. If retaliation is found to have occurred school disciplinary protocols will be followed, the tiered response and formal reporting process will result. Appropriate disciplinary measures will be taken accordingly to support targeted student and corrective action for the aggressor.

### **Consequences For False Reporting**

Student/s determined to have engaged in false reporting of an incidence of bullying and/or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action in a tiered response.

### **Notification Of Parent/Guardian Of A Target And Aggressor**

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Executive Director or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of the procedures for responding to it. The Executive Director/designee will clearly state the steps that will be taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. The Executive Director/designee will discuss details of disciplinary action with the parents of the student who, upon investigation it has been determined, has engaged in aggressive behavior. All other inquiries (teachers, parents of target, community members, board members) will only involve referring to, and further awareness of, the PVPA discipline protocol and follow-up.

### **Procedures For Restoring A Sense Of Safety For A Target**

PVPA School Counselors and Executive Director/designee will meet with the target student to assess needs and make sure that appropriate faculty is aware and vigilant in supporting the student. The Executive Director/designee will consider what adjustments, if any are needed to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. The target student will be monitored and supported through daily, weekly check in, as appropriate to ensure that student is safe and supported. PVPA will have an identified safe space in the school for the student. The Executive Director/designee will stay in contact with the parents/guardians through a determined period of time to ascertain whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the Executive Director/designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately. Students and parents are asked to notify the school immediately if there has been an incidence of retaliation.

Any student identified to have been a target will be assessed by Executive Director/designee with School Counselor consult to determine if outside support and counseling is recommended. Executive Director/designee with School Counselor consult will refer families to appropriate local agencies for therapeutic and counseling services.

## **Corrective Action And Strategies For Identified Aggressor**

The Executive Director/designee will follow discipline procedures as outlined in the PVPA Code of Conduct as the basis for consequences related to bullying. The Executive Director/designee will consider what adjustments, if any are needed to protect the safety of identified target, aggressor, and others as well. The aggressor student will be monitored and supported through daily, weekly check in, as appropriate to ensure that student is has met the requirements of the corrective action. Any student identified to have engaged in the aggressor role will also be assessed by Executive Director/designee with School Counselor consult to determine if outside support and counseling is recommended. Executive Director/designee along with School Counselor consult will refer families to appropriate local agencies for therapeutic and/or counseling services.

## **Protection of Others**

PVPA will maintain confidentiality for reporters, witnesses, targets, and aggressors – The names of any student involved will only be shared with appropriate staff/faculty as deemed by Executive Director/designee. The names will not be shared with other teachers, parents, or community members.

## **Protection of Reporter/Witness/Bystander**

All names of students who report incidents will be kept confidential. The Executive Director or designee will follow up with the reporting student/s that provide information during an investigation and student/s that provide reliable information about an act of bullying and make sure he or she is supported through daily, weekly check in, as deemed appropriate to ensure that the student is safe and supported for a determined length of time. The Executive Director/designee will consider what adjustments, if any are needed to enhance the student's sense of safety and that of others as well. If so, the Executive Director/designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately. Students and parents are asked to notify the school immediately if there has been an incidence of retaliation. The Executive Director/designee along with School Counselor consult will refer student and families to appropriate local agencies for therapeutic and/or counseling services if recommended by school or requested by family.

## **Counseling And Referral For Target, Aggressors, And Others**

PVPA's school counseling department in consult with Executive Director/ designee will serve as the primary resource in determining when outside support services will be utilized and in assisting families and students in identifying therapeutic and counseling services outside of school.

## **Disciplinary Consequences**

PVPA will use the Discipline Procedures as outlined in the PVPA Code of Conduct as the basis for consequences related to bullying with attention to balancing discipline with teaching appropriate behavior. (See Discipline Section)

## **Definitions of Aggressor, Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, Retaliation, Target Aggressor = a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.**

**Bullying** = the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical and/or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his or her own property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;

- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of school. Cyber-bullying = bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication and includes:
  - the creation of a Web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
  - the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the above conditions noted under Bullying definition.
  - the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons.

**Retaliation** = any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment by a current student or former student directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses, or has reliable information about bullying.

**Target** = a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated. Relationship To Other Laws

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H1/2, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.



## APPENDIX C

### DISCIPLINE HEARINGS AND EXPULSIONS

#### Massachusetts General Laws Related to Weapons and Controlled Substances Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Sections 37H and 37H1/2

##### Section 37H

Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Executive Director..

Any student who assaults the Executive Director, administration, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Executive Director.

Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing the charges and the reasons and evidence for expulsion before the expulsion takes effect. The notice shall also notify students and families of students of the opportunity for a hearing, including date, time and location; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses and cross-examine witnesses presented by the school at said hearing before the Director of Student Affairs. After said hearing, the Director of Student Affairs may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Director of Student Affairs to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

If the Director of Student Affairs decides to expel the student after the hearing, he/she shall give written notification at the hearing to student and parent of student of the right to appeal, the process for appealing the expulsion and of the opportunity to receive educational services. The Director of Student Affairs shall also inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing to receive education services at the time the student is expelled.

The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Executive Director in writing of his/her appeal. The Executive Director must hold the appeals hearing within 3 days of receipt of the appeal. The student has the right to have parents and counsel present, the right to present oral and written testimony and the right to confront witnesses presented at a hearing before the Executive Director. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section. The expulsion will remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing.

The Executive Director shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Director of Student Affairs, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The Executive Director shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of school district with regard to the expulsion.

The Executive Director shall inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing to receive education services at the time the student is expelled. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a specific school district staff member to arrange services.

Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

### **Section 37H1/2**

Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the Director of Student Affairs of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said Director if said Director determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the Director of Student Affairs in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such Director determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The said student shall be notified in writing the charges and the reasons and evidence for expulsion before the expulsion takes effect. The notice shall also notify students and families of students of the opportunity for a hearing, including date, time and location; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses and cross-examine witnesses presented by the school at said hearing before the Director of Student Affairs. After said hearing, the Director of Student Affairs may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Director of Student Affairs.

If the Director of Student Affairs decides to expel the student after the hearing, he/she shall give written notification at the hearing to student and parent of student of the right to appeal, the process for appealing the expulsion and of the opportunity to receive educational services. The Director of Student Affairs shall also inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing to receive education services at the time the student is expelled.

The expelled student shall have five days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Executive Director in writing of his appeal. Executive Director must hold the appeals hearing within 3 days of receipt of the appeal. The student has the right to have parents and counsel present, the right to present oral and written testimony and the right to confront witnesses presented at a hearing before the Executive Director. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section. The expulsion will remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing.

The Executive Director shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Director of Student Affairs, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The Executive Director shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of school district with regard to the expulsion.

The Executive Director shall inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing to receive education services at the time the student is expelled. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a specific school district staff member to arrange services.

Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

**\*\*\*Disclaimer: The handbook is not a contract between the student/parent and the school, and PVPA has the right to make changes at any time.\*\*\***