



# Student Handbook

**2023-2024  
School Year**

*The Victor School provides all students with equal access to services, facilities, activities and benefits regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness.*

*The electronic version of the **Student Handbook** is available on the website reflecting the most current version and will contain any updates and amendments.*

*Please access our student handbook on our website at [www.jri.org/victor](http://www.jri.org/victor)*

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## The Victor School-Welcome!

*Greetings, Students and Families:*

*The Victor School, a therapeutic day school since 1989, provides services to students under the umbrella of the Justice Resource Institute's Day School Division. To learn more information about our parent company, you can visit <http://www.jri.org>.*

*Most often, students and families have found The Victor School when they felt unheard or misunderstood within other school settings. We often hear that solutions and options offered simply didn't fit, and students often felt unsuccessful despite their hard work and efforts. We believe our program is different. We will work with you to ensure your experience is a positive one.*

*Our program has been designed around the understanding that every student can succeed, and we provide students and their families with the tools to meet, and often exceed their goals. There are many supports available at TVS, and we encourage you to use them fully while you are with us. We are a training ground to help you strengthen skills and prepare for your next steps.*

*The Victor School strives to be a safe, respectful community where personal expression and growth are encouraged and celebrated. This Handbook was compiled to assist students, parents, guardians, and sending school districts in understanding the policies, procedures, services, and expectations within The Victor School that support our community. We encourage you to review the Handbook and our website [www.jri.org/victor](http://www.jri.org/victor) to learn more about our school services and culture, and contact us if you have any questions.*

*We are pleased you chose The Victor School, and look forward to working together with you on your individual goals!*



Wendy Rosenblum, Director



Heidi Factor, Director of Admissions

# 2023-2024 TVS Student Handbook

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## TVS Purpose: Mission, Vision, Philosophy, We Always Remember

### Mission

The Victor School exists to provide each student with challenging academics in a therapeutic environment rich with academic, social, emotional, and transitional skill development. We design our program around the core belief that students want to and can succeed, and we provide students and their families with the tools to meet, and often exceed, their goals and make their vision a reality.

### Vision

The Victor School provides a safe and accepting space for our community of learners, where diversity is celebrated, curiosity is fostered, and academic stretching and risk taking encouraged, with the goal of developing life-long learners. Students leave TVS better educated - academically with increased awareness about themselves, their learning styles, and are more socially connected and able, prepared for their next steps.

### Philosophy

We believe that students who are struggling with a challenge are still developing skills that could support them in managing the obstacle in a different way. At the heart of our school is the overarching Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS) philosophy of "Students do well if they can." We believe by developing these "lagging skills" our students will leave prepared to perform at his/her/their best not only at school, but in a variety of situations. School is an environment where teaching is inherent; teaching and practicing skills are an important part of The Victor School experience.

### We Always Remember

It is an honor to be invited along on each student's journey. Our team works closely and collaboratively with the families, students, school systems and collaterals that have instilled their trust in us.

## The Victor School Way

### **School's Services/Student Population**

The Victor School provides services to students between the ages of 12 and 22, (6th - 12th grade). While every student is their own individual, Victor students tend to have cognitive and academic strengths with at least average, and often well above average, intelligence. Many meet the criteria for giftedness, and perform at educationally accelerated levels. Students may have a specific learning weakness, such as Nonverbal Learning Disability, or a low processing speed in comparison with their other skills. Emotional symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, mania, or difficulties with social pragmatics have often interfered with their ability to learn in a traditional school setting. Some have missed significant amounts of school time due to hospitalization or non-attendance in previous settings.

### **Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS)**

The Victor School philosophy is based on the Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) approach (recently renamed Collaborative and Proactive Solutions), created by Dr. Ross Greene, a Ph.D. level psychologist who is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. The school enjoys consultation and training from Dr. Greene's team as part of our commitment to the CPS approach. Specifically, at the heart of our school is the overarching CPS philosophy of "Students Do Well If They Can." This phrase may sound simple, yet it is important. Students do well if they *can* -- not if they feel like it, or if they are motivated to, or if they want to. They do well if they have the resources and skills to manage the tasks and challenges put in front of them, at the moment they are being asked to perform. Looking at students through these "lenses" is an essential part of our programming.

Students who are struggling with a challenge, or who are not performing up to their abilities and potential are not doing so "on purpose"; rather, the school believes that these students are still developing skills that could support them in managing the obstacle in a different way. This belief system is important, as we believe that the explanation drives the intervention. For example, a student who gets stuck on a topic is not considered to be "stubborn"; instead, that student may have slower-developing cognitive flexibility skills. It is the belief of the school, in alignment with CPS philosophy, that developing these "lagging skills" will leave the student poised to perform at his/her/their best. School is an environment where teaching is inherent; teaching and practicing skills are an important part of The Victor School experience.

CPS encourages a joint understanding of clear expectations. When students have difficulty meeting expectations, CPS calls for a respectful and interactive process through which staff and students work collaboratively to seek out an effective solution or response to a given situation -- a process known as "Plan B." Being able to successfully resolve situations in which there is disagreement, misunderstanding, difference of opinion, or conflict is a life-long process that helps students to progress in the world as effective and productive young adults, and the process of resolving situations taught through CPS "Plan B" supports the development of organized, reflective, and flexible thinking as well as self advocacy, social and perspective taking skills.

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## Admissions Process

The Victor School partners with families, students, and districts throughout the admissions process. The school requires a formal referral packet, including recent testing, current IEP and progress updates from the most recent two reporting periods, transcript with current classes highlighted, recommendations, attendance history, and MCAS scores if applicable, as a first step to the admission process. These documents are reviewed internally by the Education and Clinical Directors as an initial screening, and appropriate candidates are invited to tour and interview with the school.

The interview process is designed to be flexible, allowing the prospective student to gain information he/she/they need in order to make the best decision possible. TVS provides an explanation of the school's purpose and services, policies regarding student and parent rights including student records, the health program including the procedures for providing emergency health care, in addition to the planning and implementation of the student's short and long term educational goals including recommendations for follow-up and/or transition plans.

Interviews are scheduled with a member of the Administrative Team (Ad Team) prior to admission with the prospective student, their family, and any other individuals they would like to join; the district is always welcome and encouraged to attend. The interview allows the opportunity for the student and their parents to see the facilities and meet staff and enrolled students. Families and local school districts, in alignment with DESE regulations, are provided with information specific to, but not limited to, the location and access of the school's Policy and Procedure Manual, First Aid protocols, emergency phone numbers, restraint policies and procedures, and emergency procedures which are detailed in this Student Handbook including: The most current version of the student handbook can be found on our website [www.jri.org/victor](http://www.jri.org/victor).

1. The Victor School's statement of purpose
2. The types of services provided
3. The Victor School admission criteria and Intake Process Policies and Procedures
4. Review of parent rights and involvement through our Parent Advisory Group; this group shall advise the school on matters that pertain to the education, health, and safety of students in our program.
5. The Victor School's health care process, including provisions for emergency health care and/or hospitalization
6. The Victor School Suspension Policies and Planning for both unforeseen and emergency terminations
7. Student Behavioral Support Procedures which align with the TVS philosophy of CPS and proper use of non-violent restraints as a method of support management, violence prevention, discipline, and management of harmful behavior by a student to himself/herself/themselves or others.
8. Activities around supporting and preparing student skill development and daily living skills
9. Contractual obligations with regard to payment of services: self-pay students only
10. School Dress Code
11. Daily Schedules
12. Treatment strategies
13. Religious Practices Policy
14. Visiting Policy
15. Name and telephone number of school contacts
16. Complaint Policy
17. Approved School Calendar
18. TVS Code of Conduct
19. Anti-Hazing policy and Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law, TVS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
20. Student and Parent Rights and student record policies, FERPA and record keeping policies
21. Statement of Non-Discrimination
22. Cell Phone policy and Acceptable use policy regarding internet and technology use

## Intake Process

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Once a student has been admitted to The Victor School, his/her/their parent or guardian will schedule and complete an intake procedure that will involve signing a number of forms for release and authorization of information and other documentation necessary for a student to begin at The Victor School. Additionally, as required by the DESE, documentation of immunizations, a dental examination, and physical examination (which includes vision and hearing screening for all students; postural screening for students between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade) within the last 12 months is necessary prior to admission to The Victor School. Our nurse is available to assist families in arranging any necessary exams or retrieving documentation of recent exams from students' doctors/dentists.

In addition, there are several forms that must be signed by the school district prior to a student starting at The Victor School. These include a current IEP and a placement page (a PL-1 form) indicating The Victor School as the current placement. These signatures indicate that the sending school is in agreement that The Victor School is the most beneficial place for the student to be educated at the present time.

### **Annual Forms**

There are certain forms signed at intake that must also be signed annually. These include:

- Emergency Medical or Health treatment by TVS staff and/or a local hospital
- Medication Administration consent by parents and physicians, at TVS for Over the Counter (OTC), PRN, and scheduled Prescription Medications during the school day
- Acknowledgement of the school's health and sexual education curriculum
- Notification of Policy and Procedure Manual location and accessible for review upon request
- Annual notification of parent's right to receive a copy of the TVS Physical Restraint Policy and Procedures which is provided within the school's Behavior Support Policies and Procedures and accessible in Addendum E of the student handbook.
- Acknowledgement of receipt of the school's official Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and Anti-Hazing Disciplinary Policy and Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law, MGL 269, section 17-19, Addendum D of the student handbook
- Acknowledgement of required comprehensive medical/physical/dental examinations and immunization records
- Student allergy update
- Updated medical plans
- Emergency contact information
- Acknowledgement of JRI's Notice of Privacy Practices
- Consent for local transportation by TVS staff
- Consent for internal publication and yearbook consent which includes school identification
- Acknowledgement of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Education policy
- Acknowledgement of the school's Parent Advisory Group (PAG), Complaint and Grievance policies
- Receipt of the current school year handbook which includes receipt of addendums A - E:
  - Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
  - Implementation and Protection of Pupil Rights Amendments
  - Rights and Responsibilities of Person's Served
  - Commonwealth of MA - Anti-Hazing Law
  - Policies and Procedures for Behavior Supports including restraint elimination policy and procedure
  - E-Cigarettes and Vaping
  - Lithium Battery Ingestion

### **SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION**

**The main number for the school is:**

**978-266-1991**

**The primary fax number is:**

**978-264-3800**

**All staff have email;** the formula for reaching someone on staff is as follows: First initial of first name, last name @jrischools.org. An example is: John Smith's email address would be [jsmith@jrischools.org](mailto:jsmith@jrischools.org).

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Each staff member has a four-digit extension; a dial-by-name directory is available at x 9 off the main menu of the phone line.

● Program Director	Wendy Rosenblum x 3622	<a href="mailto:wrosenblum@jrischools.org">wrosenblum@jrischools.org</a>
● Director of Admissions	Heidi Factor x 3602	<a href="mailto:hfactor@jrischools.org">hfactor@jrischools.org</a>
● Clinical Director	Shahn Knights x 3606	<a href="mailto:sknights@jrischools.org">sknights@jrischools.org</a>
● Education Director	Sarah Wirein-Rudy x3612	<a href="mailto:swireinrudy@jrischools.org">swireinrudy@jrischools.org</a>
● Milieu Coordinator	Kevin Bunnell x 3607	<a href="mailto:kbunnell@jrischools.org">kbunnell@jrischools.org</a>
● School Nurse	Wendy Whelan x 3603	<a href="mailto:wwhelan@jrischools.org">wwhelan@jrischools.org</a>
● School Support	Marisa Di Meo x 3601	<a href="mailto:mdimeo@jrischools.org">mdimeo@jrischools.org</a>

**The school's attendance line is: 978-266-1991 x3555.** Messages regarding absences, late arrivals, early dismissals, or any other essential information the school should have prior to starting the day should be left here. This number accesses a confidential voice mailbox which is checked by administration periodically throughout the day.

**Text Alert System** - The Day School Division uses the text alert system to communicate with parents/guardians regarding important notifications which may impact the school day, such as, educational updates, inclement weather, or in the moment information. **How to opt-in** to receive text message and voice message alerts from The Victor School:

Using your cell phone - text a message to: **22300**

text the word: **alert**

*Please note: If you have a text message plan, these messages will be included in that plan; otherwise, standard text message charges apply.* Once this is confirmed, you will be able to receive informational or priority messages from The Victor School. If you have any questions, please contact Marisa at [mdimeo@jrischools.org](mailto:mdimeo@jrischools.org).

### **The Victor School is a Smoke Free facility**

The JRI Day School program is a smoke free facility. Smoking, Vaping, E-cigg usage is not authorized on site, within the building or on school grounds. For more information, please refer to the [Day School Division Student Vaping and E-Cig Policy](#).

### **TVS Policy and Procedures and Emergency Postings**

In alignment with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, The Victor School has a Policy and Procedure Manual, a Health Care Manual, and Emergency Procedures for evacuation purposes and phone numbers for immediate contact. The manuals and postings are located in the reception area of the school and are available upon request. Please contact the school's attendance line or front office to schedule a time to review the TVS policies and procedures.



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## **Clinical Skills Coach**

Our clinicians are called Clinical Skills Coaches to highlight the primary goal of the clinical work at school: to provide individualized and group interventions to support students in managing social and emotional struggles so they can effectively access the curriculum. The student's Clinical Skills Coach (CSC) serves as the primary liaison between the school and the students' parents/guardians and collaterals; the CSC should be the first staff member contacted regarding any concerns about that student. The name of the student's CSC, email, and phone extension at The Victor School will be given to the student and his/her/their parent(s)/guardian(s) upon formal entrance to The Victor School. The CSC is responsible for coordinating and balancing the student's social and emotional needs with the student's educational plan in alignment with the IEP, supporting transitional progress, and serving as the primary liaison between school and home/collaterals. These goals are accomplished via case management support, crisis prevention and intervention, family meetings, daily skills groups and workshops, advisory team meetings, and regular check-ins with students. *It is important to highlight that the clinical services at The Victor School are not designed to replace outpatient therapies and supports.* The school's Clinical Skills Coaches are not available outside of regularly scheduled school days and hours, and cannot provide on-call support.

Our clinical team is composed of licensed and licensed-eligible clinicians who receive ongoing training in a number of interventions and supports. While Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS) is at the heart of our programming, expertise in the following is also available: Dialectic Behavior Therapy (DBT), Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions/Therapy (CBT), Trauma informed therapy - Attachment Regulation Competency (ARC), social pragmatics, and executive functioning.

The Victor School is committed to training new professionals. Toward this end, the school has relationships with Simmons College, Salem State College, and Boston University, and is fortunate to have Master's level student interns through various social work programs working on campus. The school does not assign these interns to a case without the family's permission. Interns are provided with significant individual supervision and participate in all group supervision meetings held by the full clinical team.

- **Check-ins/Coaching**

A student may access and utilize clinical support by asking for or scheduling a "check-in" to discuss any significant event that is relevant and impeding their ability to complete class work and use class time appropriately. Students are expected to remain in their classes until an appropriate coach is available to meet with them. Coaches meet with students to problem-solve in a collaborative manner and make appropriate plans to help the student become more productive in class. Emotional and mental health challenges are accommodated within the classroom setting in coordination with teachers and coaches based on a student's need as outlined in their IEP. Coaches will help students identify, learn, and develop healthy strategies for them to attend to their classroom responsibilities.

- **Family Meetings**

Clinical Skills Coaches serve as the primary contact for family members. However, coaches also work in tandem with the academic team. Parents will often hear from both the coach and students' teachers simultaneously. We encourage all families to meet, at least monthly, with their coach and to maintain weekly communication to monitor progress and troubleshoot areas as needed. With respect to schedule demands affecting families, some meetings may be held before or right after school hours, or via conference call. Each student and their family are active participants developing goals and evaluating progress on treatment plans on at least a quarterly basis with their coach.

- **Case Management/Collateral Contacts**

Clinical Skills Coaches work closely with outpatient treatment teams to ensure timely communication, as well as to coordinate treatment. Outpatient providers can include, but are not limited to: individual therapist, family therapist, psychiatrist, psychological testing administrators/providers, DMH workers, home based supports,

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and medical providers. TVS recommends that students have consents with an outside therapist and/or team permitting communication between the school, family and providers in place. Releases of Information are required for each outpatient provider prior to communication taking place. In general, students make more progress when there is communication between providers.

- **Clinical Coaching Goals**

The Clinical Team is focused on goals designed to support student progress and development in conjunction with each student's IEP:

1. To provide all students with a supportive school environment where new skills can be practiced safely.
2. To support continued development of the individualized, positive traits inherent in each student.
3. To promote incorporating self care and wellness into their daily schedules.
4. To encourage and support the development of tools and resources that students can access on campus and in the larger community.
5. To encourage and support the development of self advocacy and communication skills within individual students and the community as a whole.

Parents/guardians should always feel free to leave a voicemail for the student's CSC. Staff check their voicemail and email daily. Clinical team members are generally able to return all correspondence within 24 hours of receipt. Please note that at times clinicians are off-site at training or other meetings and their voice mail messages will be changed to reflect their schedule.

### **Academic Advisor/Advisory Teams**

Upon enrolling as a student at The Victor School, each student is assigned an Academic Advisor.

The Academic Advisor, a member of the teaching team, works closely with each of his/her/their students to become familiar with the student's learning style, strengths and needs, level(s) of academic proficiency in each content area, and the types of support the student might require to be successful in the classroom. Academic Advisors assist with writing goals and objectives for the academic component of each student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP). Academic Advisors prepare updated information for staff, parents/guardians, and collaterals regarding each student's academic progress and performance. They meet with students daily in a designated advisory period to review academic progress and to discuss progress on IEP goals. They also confer about the student's strengths and areas of challenge, and the accommodations that are in place in the student's IEP to assist the student's learning. The Academic Advisor then reports these conversations to the TVS team in a meeting designed to update on the student's progress and growth.

Academic Advisors work in partnership with Clinical Skill Coaches; each Advisory Team shares a caseload of students to facilitate the gathering and sharing of information. Thus, students have at least two identified "point" people with whom to discuss any concerns, academic or clinical, that arise. The partnership structure ensures that communication is efficient and targeted to a thorough understanding of each student's unique profile and needs.

The Academic Advisor is also the student's academic advocate, and attends Team meetings to present information on the student's present level of functioning and progress on IEP goals, suggest accommodations and future goals, and answer academic or classroom-related questions. The Academic Advisor is also the key contact person when parents have an educational question or concern. As your student's advocate, the Academic Advisor has a wealth of knowledge about each of his/her/their assigned students, and is available via email, phone, or attendance in family meetings provided they have at least one week's notice.

- **Communication with Teachers**

Teachers, due to the nature of their classroom commitments, have limited access to email or phone messages during the course of the day. Please allow up to 72 hours for a response should you leave a

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message for a teacher. Teachers update student grade progress approximately every other week. While in certain situations more regular updates may be warranted, for most students, the two week frequency for updates tends to provide the most accurate, representative information. Additionally, information parents regularly seek can often be found on Google classroom (current classwork and assignments) or on the most recent grade postings (noted above), including missing assignments and overall performance.

The Victor School does not have a set time for parent-teacher conferences. Instead, teachers are available to schedule phone meetings as requested by the parents. We respectfully ask that these appointments be scheduled one week in advance, and whenever possible, during times that teachers are not scheduled to be in the classroom.

### **Transition Support Services**

The Victor School's overarching belief in Collaborative and Proactive Solutions is strongly footed within the Transitions Component. Our philosophy, "Students do well if they can," drives our transition plan. Students benefit from the clear understanding of areas of strength that can be built upon to manage challenges that come their way, as well as continued development of lagging skill areas that may pose challenges as they transition into new environments, such as college or the workplace. Providing hands-on experiences and real-world exposure with practice through job shadowing, internship, college campus visits, guest speakers, volunteer experiences, and/or highly varied skill groups are foundational components of our programming. Our team works closely with parents, students, and collateral members of the team to design a comprehensive transition plan that supports the student in realizing his/her/their vision.

- **Guidance Meetings**

The Transitions Coordinator is available by appointment to meet with students and/or their families to focus on individual goals.

- **Skill Assessments**

TVS offers a series of standardized assessment tools: The Casey Life Skills Inventory, The Harrington O'Shea Career Decision Making Inventory, & The Study Habits and Skills Checklist. These are administered throughout a student's stay at TVS to maximize data and to demonstrate areas of growth and need.

- **Career Exploration & Skill Development**

TVS provides opportunities for students to meet professionals in a variety of career paths via Career Day, job shadows, and guest speakers. TVS also offers support for students in developing pre-employment skills, including resume building, job and application search, interview skills, and securing references.

- **College Exploration**

TVS hosts a College & Transitions Fair in the Fall with representatives from local colleges and other transitional programs. We also take field trips to local colleges where students have the opportunity to tour, participate in an information session, and eat lunch in the dining hall. Senior Seminar is a group that walks students through the college search and application process. For more details please contact the Transitions Coordinator for the "Guide to College Planning".

The TVS Transitions Program provides our students with individual and group supports and activities to work on their personal transitional goals.

### **Pods**

The school distinguishes middle schoolers, lower and upper classes of students by "pods." Students in grades 6-10th make up the Lower Pod, while students in grades 11-12+ are members of the Upper Pod. Students in 6-7th grade have less interactions with older members of their pods with respect to their specific developmental needs. Pods

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were developed to meet the unique needs of these grades, develop a stronger cohesion among similar peer groups, acknowledge the different social and academic needs, encourage friendships with similar ages of students, and provide a stronger network of clinical and educational access for each student.

**The Lower Pod** comprises students in middle school and early high school.

Students focus on:

- social development
- metacognitive and executive functioning skills
- emotional regulation, including setting and maintaining boundaries within friendships
- recognizing times that they are more likely to emotionally react, and learning how to change these reactions with specifically applied skills are all areas explored

As students develop, there is increased focus on social development, awareness, and skills to support regulating emotions and managing their individual needs. Students learn how to advocate for and access their accommodations, develop team building skills and cohesion. They also learn and practice skills to support the development of healthy lifestyles, make safe choices, and learn how their educational disability and emotional struggle impacts their learning profile both in and out of school. Students in the lower pod are involved in the design, preparation, and implementation of school-wide events throughout the school year, and attend anti-bullying, digital citizenship, and sex education programming. Parents are invited to forums and meetings that address the learning challenges and emotional struggles that impact both the students and their families.

**The Upper Pod**

Students focus on:

- post-high school planning that may involve college or career
- independent living skills, getting a driver's license and/or job, and job maintenance
- recognizing and developing their support system
- sharing experiences and problem solving as young adults with complex issues
- making healthy lifestyle choices are additional skills focused on in this group

Upper Pod students are invited to meetings that involve graduation planning, college tours, resume-writing workshops, and job interviewing skills. Students in the Upper Pod attend programming developed by the Transitions Coordinator that supports these goals. Upper Pod students attend anti-bullying, digital citizenship, and sex education programming, as well. Parents are invited to forums and discussions related to these topics. Other transition planning opportunities available to students in the Upper Pod may include:

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### **Driving & Off Grounds Privileges**

These privileges are a way for students to practice independent living skills and specific transitional goals in the community. Juniors and seniors are welcome to apply through their Advisory team.

### **Dual Enrollment**

College bound seniors may benefit from taking a college class and experiencing campus life while having support from TVS. We have a close relationship with Middlesex Community College, Bedford Campus, and have been successful in connecting a number of students with their first college course. For more details, please contact the Transitions Coordinator to request the "Dual-Enrollment Information Packet & Application."

### **Internship Programming**

The Victor School provides a work experience program that allows eligible students to volunteer in the local community gaining vocational training. Students are walked through the process of applying and interviewing in addition to being part of a job skills group where they develop interview and work readiness skills. TVS also offers a staff supported community service group for students who need more direct supervision.

### **PSAT & SAT**

TVS offers these tests on campus, with familiar staff administering them. PSATs are offered in October during school hours. SATs are offered in October, May, and/or August on a Saturday. See the Education Director for applications and deadline information.

### **Team Meetings**

Each year, every student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) is updated. During this meeting, the student's progress is discussed, and goals are updated and/or changed. In preparation for that meeting, each student will be asked to meet with his/her/their Advisory Team to discuss concerns and thoughts about the future. Students may also be asked to complete several surveys and/or questionnaires to assist us in transition or career planning, to aid our understanding of their learning style and/or strengths. Students are encouraged to attend their annual meeting to represent their views about who they are and what they think are appropriate goals for the upcoming year.

Sometimes, additional team meetings may be held throughout the year to check on the student's progress, discuss possible transition back to the sending school, or to talk about concerns. Students are encouraged to attend the team meetings to practice advocacy skills.

### **Skill Groups**

Therapeutic groups occur on a daily basis and are led by the clinical skills coaching team. Students choose among a host of group opportunities based largely on Michelle Garcia Winner's social thinking concepts. Skill groups are designed to address lagging skills in the areas of cognitive flexibility, abstract and inferential language, perspective taking, using verbal language appropriate to the situation, and relating to others with empathy, humor, and curiosity. In addition, skills groups help students examine a number of topics related to adolescence, friendships, parents, siblings, life transitions, and complexities of these relationships. Students learn to offer support, receive feedback, examine their roles in the situation, problem solve, and develop more complex social awareness.

Skill groups also introduce, reinforce, and stimulate student curiosity around new skills that can help them when they are feeling anxious, depressed, or overwhelmed. Students are encouraged to practice and use new skills and emerging skills throughout the school day to help them return to/or remain in classes. Skills groups cover a wide range of topics that help students learn new tools or reinforce coping skills through hobby development, health and wellness, social opportunities, community service, college prep, and independent living skills. The skills groups

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rotate every term and are often driven by student request and interest. These groups offer opportunities to focus on topics that may be more serious or pertain to specific situations, we ask that students understand the following:

### **Confidentiality**

Respect the confidentiality of information shared in the group setting, meaning: group issues are not to be discussed with students outside of group; however, students can discuss group topics with their individual clinician privately. Group facilitators reserve the right to share issues related to safety or an individual student's treatment plan/IEP as necessary. Safety issues, including those that occur outside of school, will not be kept confidential.

### **Respect**

Group members are asked to be on time for the group and remain in group until the end of the group session unless directed by their group facilitator. We also ask that students avoid behaviors that have the potential to separate themselves from the group community (ex: reading or listening to music in their ear buds, use of cell phone in any way).

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## **Nursing Services**

The services provided at The Victor School support our philosophy of health and wellness and reinforce preventative health care. The school nurse is on-site daily from 8:20 am to 3:00 pm. Permission to see the nurse during class time should be secured from a teacher. In order to maintain student privacy and confidentiality, the nursing office may be used by one student at a time, and is reserved for students who are ill, hurt or need medication administered.

## **Sickness**

The school strives to maintain a healthy environment for all members of the community. We respectfully ask that students who experience illness at home return to school after being fever- or vomit-free for 24 hours to help prevent the spread of germs, and that parents/guardians contact the attendance line with absence information. Similarly, students who exhibit these symptoms at school may be asked to recover at home. The nurse or designee will contact parents/guardians as necessitated by the symptoms observed.

## **Health and Medical Plan Management**

The school will coordinate with families, students, and doctors when allergy management and specific medical plans are required. These plans should be updated annually or at any time that a change occurs. The nurse ensures all staff are trained according to these plans, and oversee their implementation.

## **Annual Examinations, Immunization Record, and Screenings**

Parents/guardians are asked to submit updated physicals and dental screenings for students to the nurse, as they occur or on an annual basis. Upon Admission DESE requires the school to receive current copies of health exams and screenings (exams must have been conducted within 12 months of the date of admission to the program). These include physical exams, immunization records, dental exams, hearing, vision, and postural exams. For emergency admissions only, receipt of these exams and screenings may be received up to 30 days after the admission date. Annual health exams and screening updates are required to be sent to the school program upon renewal of admission each school year. The school collects immunization records and health screenings in alignment with DESE regulations. The nurse is able to provide the required hearing, vision, and postural screening should a doctor's visit not include these.

## **Medications**

Student medications (with few exceptions, see below) are kept locked and are dispensed only by the school nurse or a designated staff trained in the administration of medications. Medications are administered in alignment with required written documentation by the student's physician, clearly stating the name, dosage, time(s) of appropriate dispensation, and the prescribing doctor's name. Medications will continue to be administered unless documentation is provided by the physician noting changes, including discontinuation.

Students are monitored for side effects of medication, and students should inform the school nurse if any side effects are experienced.

Students requiring a rescue inhaler or epinephrine auto injector should carry these items with them due to the immediate nature of their use, given the school nurse has received all required documentation. As a general expectation, students are not permitted to carry their own medication with the exception of doctor authorized plans for rescue inhalers or epinephrine auto injectors. The nurse, in collaboration with the student, family, and advisory team, will develop plans to ensure this use is documented and appropriately supported by staff. In some instances, students, as part of a treatment or transitional plan, carry a dose of a medication on their person. The nurse will support the student in developing an administration plan in these instances. A doctor's order, as noted above, is required for all medications administered during the school day.

Parents/guardians should contact the nurse regarding any changes to a student's medication. This includes medication dosage or time changes, the addition of new medications, and the discontinuation of existing

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medications. As noted above, the school requires a doctor's order to administer or change the administration of medications. Doctor's orders must be updated annually (or when changes occur) and parents/guardians must provide annual consent for over-the-counter medications to be administered. The school keeps a stock of acetaminophen, ibuprofen, cough drops, and Tums/generic antacid which may be administered in alignment with signed annual physician's consent and doctor order.

We ask that students not transport medications to/from school. The nurse is available to support parents in making arrangements for medication transport.

### **Cutting/Bandages Policy**

Open wounds must be covered at all times on campus with respect to safety and hygiene. The school does not maintain a policy on healed scars from self-inflicted or accidental wounds, and is empathetic to the varying reactions that students may have to seeing these scars. Students come to TVS with a myriad of symptom histories, and have a myriad of reactions to various stimuli -- some students may be triggered seeing scars, others are triggered at having to cover theirs. One policy alone does not address all of these needs. The school works closely with students, families, and collaterals, and reserves the right to request that students cover any part of their person that is causing distress to the larger community. These decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, and shared with all involved parties.

### **Lithium Battery Ingestion Procedure**

In alignment with agency regulations, if a student has ingested a lithium battery, the school has a process on how to respond to this situation. Please see the [Lithium Battery Ingestion Procedure](#) for more information.

### **COVID Protocols**

The School is committed to the safety and health of all members of its community. In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, The Victor School developed protocols to help ensure the safety of its students, staff, and visitors. These policies are continually updated as CDC, State, and local Board of Health guidelines are updated, and can be found on the school's website or by contacting the school directly.

These policies have helped support the School maintaining in-person learning throughout the pandemic period. Should a situation occur where learning must be accessed remotely (such as due to a State mandated shift to remote learning, or in specific student instances where a student's Team has determined this need and reflected such in their IEP), all School rules remain in effect and are applicable to remote learners.



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### **Complaint/Grievance policy**

The School follows JRI's complaint and grievance policy which outlines a process to help ensure any concerns that may arise and are addressed in a timely manner. Any person, including any student, can express a complaint or grievance which will be explored by a Human Rights Officer in a timely manner. The complaint form and full procedure policy are found on the Student Rights board, or, alternatively, can be distributed to a student by any member of the staff team. Staff are committed to working with you to resolve any concerns that arise.

*The full complaint procedure policy is distributed to students and their families at the time of intake, and reviewed annually. If you would like another copy, please contact the school and one will be provided.*

## General School Policies

### School Calendar

The Victor School is a 12-month program. There are a total of 216 days divided between five academic terms. Any snow days taken during the year will be made up by the end of June. The annual school calendar is distributed with the Student Handbook to students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) at the initial interview and at intake; students, parents, sending school systems, and transportation companies are notified when the calendar is updated. The most current version of the school calendar and Student Handbook is available online at [www.jri.org/victor](http://www.jri.org/victor).

### Daily Routine

The school doors open to receive students at 8:20 a.m. The school is not able to admit students prior to 8:20 a.m. The school day begins promptly at 8:20 a.m. at which time all students are expected to be in class.

Class times may vary slightly during the course of the year, but are approximately 50 minutes long, with short passing periods in between. A current schedule of class times is available upon request, and an individualized schedule is provided to each student upon admission as well as at the beginning of each term.

A teacher-to-student ratio of at least one-to-eight is maintained at all times. The school is also approved for a teacher-to-aide-to-student ratio of one-to-one-to-twelve, although this model is not typically used. Students are expected to follow their schedule on a daily basis, and to participate in daily routines associated with being a student at The Victor School.

These routines include, but are not limited to:

- Arrive to classes on time and prepared, and leave when dismissed by the teacher
- Complete and submit assignments in a timely manner
- Participate in classroom activities and discussions
- Maintain appropriate civil, respectful, and thoughtful interactions with staff and other students at all times
- Maintain responsibility for books, backpack, or other belongings
- Respect rooms or spaces not designated for use or entrance by students
- Clean up after selves in the school kitchen and lunchrooms, bathrooms, cubby areas, classrooms, and offices and school grounds; Refrain from eating or drinking in the classroom unless with specific permission
- Refrain from cell phone/gaming device use during class and group time

In addition to these general expectations, some classrooms have additional class-specific expectations. For example, there are additional safety-related rules in the laboratory, and computer-related expectations in the classrooms.

Students are expected to attend all classes unless excused by staff. When a student needs to step out of a class to take five, retrieve something from his/her/their cubby, or to use the restroom, they are expected to obtain their teacher's permission prior to leaving the class.

There may be times when a student has a clinical issue that needs addressing during a class period. Students are encouraged to talk with their teacher about their needs, as teachers are trained in clinical aspects of the programming, and are often able to intervene effectively in the classroom and prevent loss of class time.

If this concern requires more immediate or out-of-class attention, the teacher will seek a support person for the student to work with until the clinician becomes available.

Learning to navigate differences is an essential skill that translates into the greater school environment. Students are encouraged to work with individual teachers to fully understand and follow the expectations set forth in each classroom.

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## Parent Advisory Group (PAG)

The Victor School maintains an active group of parents that meet to support the school community in a variety of ways. Parents come together to discuss areas of growth for the school, receive periodic updates and call together speakers who are experts in their field. Meetings are held virtually or on-site and allow parents the opportunity to share on matters that pertain to education, health, and safety of the students in the program.

## Meals and Food

Students are encouraged to bring lunches/snacks to school on a daily basis. Alternatively, students are able to order food, for delivery, through Acton Boxborough Regional High School. Students eat their lunch in the designated and supervised areas during the school lunch period. Food and beverages may not be consumed at other times, unless there is a specific food plan in place. With respect to allergy management, food is not permitted in classrooms, and sections of the lunch room have been designated as peanut-free.

## Resources

- **Library/resource room**  
The Victor School maintains a library, with reference materials, fiction, non-fiction, and resource books available for student access. Students are able to sign books out through their academic advisor. All books are due back prior to the end of each term.
- **Google Classroom**  
The school maintains a bank of Chromebooks for student use. Many classes use this resource extensively, and students can find assignments, class resources and contact information on the google classroom page for each teacher. Each teacher maintains a page at classroom.google.com and has a link to a calendar of assignments. Students are able to stay up-to-date with their classes when absent or otherwise miss class for any reason.
- **Student Portal via Gradelink**  
TVS is pleased to offer a portal that enables both parents and students to check student schedules, grades and status of assignments online in real time. Academic Advisors have more information about how to access this resource. The portal offers regular updates on student progress and has replaced mail-issued midterm grade reports. If you do not have computer access at home and need a printout, please contact the Education Director.
- **TVS News Updates**  
The school strives to re-highlight important calendar events and information twice a month on Friday through a community-wide email alert.

## Attendance - Absent, Tardy, Early Dismissal

Students are expected to arrive on time for school daily. An Attendance Line (978-266-1991 x3555) has been designated for calls relating to student attendance. Parents/guardians are encouraged to leave a message on this line prior to the student's absence. This line is checked regularly throughout the day, and calls will be returned if requested. Calls to this line can also be forwarded to a student's Advisory Team or other staff member, if requested. Students who are absent due to illness for three days or more are requested to return to school with a doctor's note.

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Attendance statistics are gathered in terms of “present” and “not present” rather than “excused” or “unexcused”. Specifically, attendance is essential in order for students to access the curriculum. Even excused absences can negatively impact a student’s success in this area. In general, students are at risk to fail a course if the minimum attendance standard of 75% is not met.

Students are expected to collect any missed work due to absences, and make arrangements with teachers for its completion.

- **Late Arrival/Early Dismissal**

School starts promptly at 8:20am. Students who arrive at school after that time must be signed in at reception prior to going to their classroom.

If a student has an appointment requiring that he/she/they be released early, or into the care of someone other than a parent/guardian, he/she/they must provide notice from their parent/guardian. We ask that parents enter the school to sign the student out at the time of release. Identification is required when persons other than parents pick students up from school.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

The Victor School provides notifications of school closures and delays via OneCall, a voluntary alert system that permits the school to send a text and/or voice mail directly to registered phones. Parents are encouraged to use both of these systems for updates.

- **Text Alert System**

TVS provides parents/guardians updates via text messages regarding situations that will impact the school day, such as inclement weather. There are times when The Victor School is open, but a student may not have transportation available due to the student’s home/local school system having canceled classes for a particular day. Parent/guardian discretion is encouraged when deciding to send a student to school in inclement weather.

### **Remote Access**

In response to closures of physical school buildings brought about by the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic, the School developed a system for remote learning, allowing virtual educational access to all learners. As our School reopened, remote learning remained an option for students who were not able to access school due to quarantine, or due to family choice. Since that time, in alignment with DESE regulations, the School is not able to offer remote learning except in the following circumstances:

- During periods of inclement weather where access to transportation may not be possible for some students, but where power outages are not an issue throughout the Commonwealth counties served by the School, a remote learning day may be offered to allow students access to the consistency, routine, structure, and supports inherent in a therapeutic school day. Notifications will be made via the One Call system on a case by case basis.

### **Religious Practices**

The Victor School does not subscribe to or instruct any particular religious or faith-based practices. In some history classes/electives, students may be taught about various religions and faiths, but are not instructed as to which religions to accept or practice. Students who observe/participate in specific religious practices during school time should have their parents/guardians discuss this directly with school administrators upon the student’s entrance to the school or at such time when it is necessary and appropriate.

### **Student Behavior and Support**

The Victor School has a full Student Behavior and Support policy which details our processes regarding crisis management and support. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulations require that

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private day educational programs develop physical restraint policies and procedures in accordance with the requirements of 603 CMR 46.00. The Victor School's notification of parent's right to receive a copy of the TVS Physical Restraint Policy and Procedures is provided within the school's Behavior Support Policies and Procedures accessible in Addendum E of this student handbook.

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## **Student Rights and Advocacy**

The Victor School equips students with leadership and community support skills which are incorporated in classroom, milieu, group and workgroup settings both on and off site through our appropriate community standards and code of conduct. Students are encouraged to provide demonstration of the appropriate community standards to participate in school sponsored events and opportunities on and off campus. These standards include but are not limited to:

- Demonstration of emotional control and stability
- Demonstration of consistent safety and adherence to the TVS Code of Conduct
- Possession of a positive disciplinary record for the current term, and previous term
- Demonstration of Self-Management and Advocacy skills
- Demonstration of social thinking concepts
- Avoidance of behaviors with the potential to separate themselves from the group community
- Demonstration of respect for community members
- Demonstration of ability to follow staff direction, coaching and support
- Accepting responsibility and feedback around personal choices.

## **Code of Conduct**

The school maintains a Code of Conduct to outline our plan to maintain an environment that is safe and conducive to academic learning, social and emotional growth, and overall well being. It is essential that all members of our community – staff, students, parents/guardians – partner together to support this plan. Specifically, we expect all members of our community to:

- Be respectful of all students and staff in person and via electronic means, regardless of a person's real or perceived race, religion, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, color, appearance, disability, national origin, ethnic group, or living status
- Contribute to a safe, orderly, kind, respectful school climate, free from distraction, bullying, hazing, harassment, discrimination, retaliation or negativity
- Share concerns or complaints with staff, who will support resolution openly and collaboratively
- Maintain strong school attendance, arriving to classes daily, on time, and prepared to learn, and avoiding learning distractions such as cell phones or gaming systems during class and group time
- Produce your own, best work product, citing sources when used
- Use the resources of the school to have any questions you may have answered, and to support the development of and forward motion on your goals
- Accept responsibility and feedback around personal actions
- Follow the school's technology, dress code, personal contact, and education/clinical/transition and nursing department policies

To ensure clarity, and with the goal of maintaining a safe, respectful learning community, the school prohibits the following; should the following occur, loss of school privileges, and disciplinary action, including suspension or termination from programming, may occur:

- Threatened or actual harm to, or unsolicited, unwanted contact with any member of the school community
- Theft or damage to school, staff, or student property
- Possession of drugs/cigarettes/tobacco or nicotine products/vaping products/weapons/lighters/potentially dangerous items on campus or school-sponsored events; these items will be confiscated and may be turned over to the police
- Leaving the campus, or off-site trips, without permission
- (Cyber)bullying, hazing, intimidating, or retaliating against any member of the school community
- Plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity
- Actions or events that interrupt the learning environment/disrupt the learning of other students
- Actions or events that do not align with the Code of Conduct expectations

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## Interventions and Responses

Every member of the school community is responsible for their actions and for maintaining appropriate community standards and the Code of Conduct. The following interventions are available to support students towards this end, along with individualized responses students may have in their IEP.

- **Taking Space/Sensory Breaks**

Students are encouraged to monitor their internal states and take short breaks from activities, as needed. The method of “taking five” is specific to each student. Some students prefer to take a short mental “vacation” while remaining in the class. Some students find that physical activity is helpful; others find that quiet alone time helps them to regroup. The school provides a number of tools in classrooms, clinical offices, and student spaces. Students who need to use a skill outside of the classroom should coordinate with their teacher.

- **Collaborative and Proactive Solutions: Managing an Unmet Expectation**

TVS believes that all students do well if they can -- not if they want to or if they feel like it. Inherent in this belief is that students want to do well; if something is not working, there is an obstacle in the way they lack the skills to overcome, making it impossible to perform at the level they would like. When a student does not meet an expectation, CPS offers three levels of interventions, as follows:

- **Plan A:** Plan A is a rigid, “imposing adult will” type intervention that occurs the most rarely at our school and is typically reserved for situations where safety is at risk.

- **Plan B:** Plan B is an opportunity to collaboratively figure out what might be making meeting the expectation so difficult at this time. The expectation doesn’t go away; fully understanding the expectations, the difficulty and finding a solution not yet thought of is the goal. The process of having the Plan B conversation is, in itself, an intervention that promotes empathy, problem-solving, perspective-taking, and organized, reflective thinking. All staff are trained in the CPS philosophy, and are able to work with the student to problem-solve. Students can request this intervention at any time, or it may be suggested/initiated by a staff member.

- **Plan C:** Plan C is a chance to planfully decide not to focus on a problem for right now, perhaps to allow for focus on another problem area, and to come back to it at a later time. Plan C is a thoughtful decision made with respect to the student’s goals.

- **Skills Coaching**

TVS staff are highly trained and able to assist students with a variety of skills coaching. Fully licensed clinical staff have diverse backgrounds which include problem-solving and general skills training. All staff are trained in Building Communities of Care (BCC) as a means of crisis prevention and intervention. Staff work closely with outpatient teams to translate any specific plans/rating scales to our milieu as appropriate. Skill development is also offered in group settings daily.

- **Natural Consequences**

There are times that repeated behavior can lead to natural consequences, which are developed via a staff team approach and are generally used in response to minor concerns. For example, a student who struggles to follow directions during outside lunch may be temporarily restricted to indoor lunch while a longer-term plan to address the problem is being developed.

- **Check-in/Coaching**

Students who are having difficulties that cannot be successfully managed in the classroom or in the moment can request, or may be asked to work with a member of the clinical team, who will provide coaching and problem-solving assistance. CPS is often used during this time. DBT and CBT skills are often also utilized

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during this time to assist with emotional regulation and distress tolerance. In addition, social skill training is provided, to support students in effectively communicating. Students should request a check-in through their teacher, who will contact an appropriate staff member and arrange a meeting. Check-ins are designed to be focused and goal oriented; students are encouraged to return to class as quickly as they are able.

- **Escort**

Typically, students move freely throughout the school. However, staff are available to escort students to and from classes, as well as to provide one-on-one support and coaching within the classroom setting as needs arise. Students are able to ask for this support themselves, and members of their treatment team can request this support on a student's behalf. Escort is designed to be a short, time-limited supportive intervention and is not punitive in nature.

- **Mediation**

Students who have difficulties in a specific setting or concerns involving specific individual(s) are candidates for mediation. During mediation, the student meets with the other involved party/ies, along with a member of the staff team (usually the student's clinician, academic advisor, or an Ad Team member) for additional problem-solving and support. Any staff is able to facilitate this intervention.

- **Reparation**

At times, following a disruption to the community or one of its members, a "repair" can be made to acknowledge the impact and move forward. Coaching and support around reparations is available from any member of the staff team.

- **Suspension**

Repeated violations of the Code of Conduct or significant violations to the Code of Conduct may result in suspension. Suspension is typically reserved for the most serious violations, or patterns of violations. A clinician or administrator will inform parents and students of the suspension once it has been determined. Students are responsible for obtaining all assigned coursework and completing it at home during the time of suspension and submitting it to their teachers upon re-entry to school. Students may be asked to attend a re-entry meeting accompanied by a parent or legal guardian on the day of their re-entrance to the school so additional planning may be made.

Suspensions that exceed 10 consecutive days within a school year, or suspensions that consist of a series of events that constitute a pattern of behavior will be discussed with the support of a full Team meeting. School Districts and supporting contacts to the student are invited to attend this meeting. The meeting will discuss the events and determine if the behavior is a manifestation of the disability. Based on the outcomes and team assessments the entire team will determine the intervention, support, or best suitable placement options of the student that will best meet their needs and goals.

### **Suspension Policy - additional info in Student Behavior Supports - Interventions and Response**

TVS will immediately notify the parents/guardians and school districts responsible for the placement of the student involved. Students will not be sent home unless there is a responsible adult available to receive the student.

Due to the severity of a suspension there are times students and/or families will be expected to attend a re-entry meeting within the school. These meetings are normally scheduled for suspensions of serious



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nature or for suspensions fewer than three consecutive days or five non consecutive school days within a school year. Re-entry meetings allow the opportunity to discuss the incident, the expectations, and evaluate the plans that need to be made and agreed upon prior to the student returning to school.

- **Termination**

In the rare instance that a student violates one of the most fundamental elements of the Code of Conduct, primarily physical violence, or bringing weapons and/or drugs on campus, termination and police involvement could occur. When termination is pursued, The Victor School follows the policies and guidelines outlined by The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and works closely with the student's sending school in determining the best course of action.

**Termination Policy - additional info in Student Behavior Supports - Interventions and Response**

The Victor Schools main priority is to support the student's vision, goals, and transition process. The Victor School has provisions for both planned or emergency terminations. Planned terminations provide the opportunity for parents, the district, and The Victor School to participate in an IEP review meeting which details a clear and specific termination plan for the student that shall be implemented no less than thirty days unless all parties agree to an earlier termination date. Emergency terminations occur when students present a clear and present threat to the health and safety of him/her/themself or others. Notice is provided to all parties and agreed upon by the school district, parents, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. TVS will not terminate any student without the school district's opportunity to hold an emergency Team meeting or to conduct other appropriate planning discussions prior to the student's termination from the school.

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## **Transportation to School**

Students are typically transported to school by transportation companies managed by the student's sending school system. The Victor School does not arrange for or oversee this transportation. Students and their families are encouraged to request a copy of the transportation company's handbook, and to follow all related expectations. Students' parents/guardians are responsible for communicating any transportation changes directly to the transportation company.

If a student's transportation is not being provided by the school system, parents/guardians are responsible for arranging and providing round-trip transportation to and from school on a daily basis. Students in this situation must be responsible for being on time and are expected to arrive at school on a timely basis.

As the bus companies are contracted by the sending school districts, all concerns and issues about the buses must be addressed directly with the bus company. If this does not resolve the issue, contacting either the sending school's transportation department or the out-of-district liaison is often a way to find a solution.

Students may be picked up by other individuals who are at least 18 years of age, with written approval from their parent/guardian. Email permission is not accepted. Identification will be required prior to releasing a student to anyone who is not a parent/legal guardian.

Students who wish to travel to school via other means (i.e., biking, walking) can apply for this privilege through their Advisory Team.

## **Off-Grounds Privileges**

Students are encouraged to take part in the school's off-grounds opportunities, whether it be gym classes, field trips, or other educational experiences. Typically, students who demonstrate appropriate community standards, consistent safety and adherence to the Code of Conduct are eligible for off-grounds activities. However, since the staff members have not yet had sufficient time to assess the safety of new students, students who have been enrolled at The Victor School for less than two weeks are restricted from off-grounds activities unless exceptions are made by the school's administrative team. Additionally, students involved in violations of the Code of Conduct in the week prior to an off site activity, or with active safety plans that do not translate off site require administrative approval to attend.

High school students with specific transitional goals, and who meet academic and emotional criteria, may be eligible for unsupervised off-grounds privileges. These privileges are typically available to students in grades 11 and 12, although exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis with parent and ad team approval. Students in grades 9 and below are not eligible. Formal guidelines and applications for this programming are available upon request.

## **Driving Privileges**

Older students – generally seniors – may request permission to drive to school if transportation issues occur (i.e. work schedule, doctor's appointments, other commitments), or as a part of a larger transition plan or goal. Students who wish to request driving privileges apply through their advisory team. Students (and their parents/guardians if they are under the age of 18) will be required to sign and date a written contract regarding driving safety and usage concerns as well as provide a copy of their license, registration, and proof of insurance before they will be allowed to drive to and from school. Student drivers must turn their car keys over once on grounds. Student driving privileges may be revoked if they do not follow their signed contracts.

## **Clubs/Groups - off site**

Students may be transported to physical education activities, local class field trips, or other activities outside the school in one of the school vans or staff vehicles. A permission form to transport students is signed and dated by the

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parent/guardian during the intake process. Staff and students are expected to observe TVS rules when in staff vehicles. Students and staff are expected to wear seat belts and to remain seated at all times. Students are not allowed to eat or drink in school or staff vehicles. Seating arrangements may be employed if needed for safety, at staff discretion.

### **Field Trips**

Staff members plan periodic field trips that align with subject matter taught in individual courses. Students who have received disciplinary action in the five days prior to the field trip are not eligible. Students new to The Victor School are generally not taken off-site until they have been enrolled for two weeks. (Please see the section entitled "Off-grounds Privileges" for more information). Students must also demonstrate appropriate community standards such as emotional control and stability, be safe, and pose no risk being off-site. This determination is made via careful consideration by the staff member conducting the field trip, the student's advisory team, and the school's administrative team. Staff decisions are final.

Permission slips are sent home with students for parent/guardian signature. All students must have a current permission slip on file signed by parents/guardians one week prior to a scheduled field trip in order to attend. Verbal permission/email permission slips cannot be accepted for field trips, and late permission slips are not accepted. Students who are 18 are able to sign their own permission slips. Field trips generally take place during regular school hours and staff members of The Victor School will transport students. Any differences to this standard are noted on the field trip permission slip.

### **Swimming/Water-Related Activities**

All students are required to have written consent from a caregiver/guardian to participate in any swimming/water-related activities. This includes the caregiver/guardian noting the student's swimming ability. Students are required to pass a swim test by a school-appointed certified lifeguard. The supervision ratio is subject to change based on each student's age, behavioral needs, medical needs, swimming proficiency, and type of activity.

Any activities that involve a boat will comply with any required federal, state, or local registration, and meet safety standards. All students and staff engaged in boating activities are required to wear personal flotation devices which are Coast Guard approved.

### **Personal Belongings**

Each student is provided with a cubby. Cubbies remain the property of The Victor School and are not locked. Students who bring in valuable items are encouraged to keep these items in their possession at all times. Lending and borrowing of personal items is discouraged. The Victor School and its staff are not responsible for personal belongings or money that students bring to school.

### **Search and Seizure**

Cubby searches may be conducted by staff at staff discretion and may occur if a safety or health concern arises. In addition, in order to protect the safety of the entire school community, staff may search students and their belongings at any time at school or on a school-sponsored activity if they believe the student may have an item or a substance that is potentially dangerous.

If staff suspects a student of having possession of potentially harmful items and/or illegal substances on their person, the student will be separated from the larger student community and have his/her/their items searched. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately. The police may be notified depending on the situation. Illegal items or substances will be submitted to the local police.

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## Restrooms

The school has male and female designated bathrooms on the lower level, each of which have three individual stall areas. Single-user all gender bathrooms are found on the upper level. Students are welcome to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity, in alignment with Massachusetts state law.

## Visiting Campus

Parents/guardians and sending school personnel are welcome on campus at any time. There are currently no organized “visiting hours” for visitors, guests, or parents/guardians. Instead, we ask that appointments be set up through a student’s Advisory Team. In order to best protect the safety of students and staff at The Victor School, visitors must sign in at our reception area and wear a “Visitor” badge while in the building at all times.

## Victor Cell Phone/Personal Electronic Device Policy-Middle School

The Victor School recognizes that access to personal devices is often the norm for our students. The Middle School is a cell phone free environment. Students are expected to either park their devices in reception, or leave them in their backpacks for the day.

Other devices (Kindle, tablet, etc) may be accessed during break time with teacher approval assuming the High School guidelines, noted below, are met.

## Victor Cell Phone/Personal Electronic Device Policy - High School

The School recognizes that access to personal devices (cell phones, smart watches, tablets, personal gaming systems) is often the norm for our students. **Access to these devices on campus is a privilege, not a right** and use of these devices is expected to comply with the following expectations and not interfere with students’ learning or progress, or the school’s functioning. The School reserves the right to restrict or suspend access to devices when the following guidelines are not met.

The school expects that students with phones/personal devices use them at appropriate times during the school day, use them in a respectful manner, and follow the additional expectations noted below. For 9th graders and above, devices may be used during passing periods, break times, and lunch. Middle School Students are expected to be device-free during school hours except when explicit exceptions are made with staff.

### ***Use of phones/devices are not permitted:***

- during class time
- during group or individual clinical coaching sessions
- in areas of the school designated, either temporarily or permanently, as cell-phone free zones
- for recording (audio, video, or photography) on school grounds or during any school-sponsored activity at any time without express prior permission. An example where permission might be given could be taking a picture of a white board to capture notes. ***Photos, videos, or audio of any member of the community is unconditionally prohibited.***

Use that is not aligned with these expectations, or which violates specific situations as noted below, will lead to restriction of phone/device use.

### The following violations will lead to restricted privileges:

- Using without permission/when not permitted during the school day
- Disrupting the learning environment for others (examples include sending messages to others during the school day)
- Interfering with class participation, group participation or attendance

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- Not responding to directions from staff around use
- Photographing, audio or video recording without express prior permission by staff of any member of the school community
- Sharing devices with a peer/other student or using another student/peer's phone/device
- Using devices of interactions/communication that constitute bullying, harassment or unkind interactions at school
- Setting up hot spots for self or others

Responses to these violations will include immediate loss of phone privileges for the remainder of the day. Patterns of misuse and/or multiple violations will lead to additional restrictions, up to and including:

- loss of use during specific periods of the day
- mandated "parking" of phone on provided charging stations in classes or in student-operated lockboxes in the front hallway
- Loss of phone privileges on campus for a period of time
- Loss of phone privileges altogether.

The School provides unlocked charging stations in each classroom and locked space in reception for the phone/device during school hours. These are available for student use and can be a supportive tool for students who find their phone to be a negative distraction during the school day.

If a student's phone privileges are restricted, the phone/device is expected to be turned in upon arrival and will be returned upon dismissal. Students who struggle to follow this plan may incur additional restrictions. Alternatively, students may choose to leave the item at home. A meeting with the student and advisory team will take place to develop a plan to address the concerning use, which may include additional support, a research project on the topic, or a student-specific plan to support the student in aligning with the School's use policy. A member of the administrative team will sign off on the plan prior to restoring phone privileges.

### **Student Acceptable Use Policy**

The School maintains computers and other devices with internet access for student use. The devices and network exist solely as a resource for educational, therapeutic and transitional purposes. This policy outlines the expectations for student use of these devices, with the goal of maintaining a safe community in cyberspace.

**Beliefs:** The School believes that the benefits gained from access to information within the internet's resources outweigh potential disadvantages. We make reasonable efforts to minimize risks that users may encounter objectionable material, but acknowledge that the material on the Internet is uncensored. We can make no guarantees that the information found on the Internet will be valuable, reliable or inoffensive.

Digital citizenship is built into the educational process and begins with this policy. Before access is granted to a student, the user must read and sign this agreement for acceptable use. This agreement is reviewed and re-signed annually, and these forms are kept on file at the school.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action in alignment with the Handbook/Code of Conduct, and may also include loss of computer/device/internet use on a temporary or permanent basis. Interventions may also include

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additional education and supportive procedures for students prior to returning to internet use at school. The School works with the local police department in instances where use of devices falls into a category of illegal behavior (hacking, pornography).

### Expectations:

1. Computer and network access is a privilege, not a right. The privilege may be revoked if violations occur.
2. Computer/device/internet use is at staff discretion and may occur only with staff permission.
3. The rules of the school apply to time on the internet/use of devices. Students are not permitted to use the network or account to bother, harass, or bully another member of the community, including to impersonate a member of the community. Seeking, accessing or downloading material that violates the Code of Conduct (harassing, sexually explicit, racist or offensive in nature) is not permitted.
4. Students should not download or add applications or apps to any device, or change settings on devices. Devices are to be handled with care at all times, and are not permitted to leave school grounds without express, prior written permission from staff.
5. Computers, the devices and the internet at School are designed to support academic/educational, therapeutic, or transitional activities and goals. These tools are not to be used for social networking, gaming, hobbies, commercial purposes, or other non-academic, non-transitional activities.
6. Students are issued a username and password, which should be kept secure and not shared with others. All use on school computers should be done with the assigned username and password. Students are not permitted to log in as other students, and are not permitted to harm, modify, or destroy data of another user.
7. Students are not permitted to use devices for recording or photographing other students, the school, or staff without specific consent and/or supervision as part of a class/elective.
8. Students are expected to appropriately cite sources from online.
9. Students are not permitted to connect personal devices to school computers, including flash drives, phones, and mp3 players. Students are not permitted to connect to school wifi without express, prior written permission from staff.
10. There should be no expectation of privacy on school computers, or with school-issued email accounts. Students should be aware that staff may monitor use.
11. Student computer use is limited to student computers. Students are not permitted to access staff computers/devices at any time for any reason.

### **Student Technology Use On Campus**

The school provides Chromebooks for each student to use while at school. Students are also issued a Chrome account that can be used from any Internet-connected device. The use of these tools allows for the most seamless communication with teachers and curriculum, and students are encouraged to use these tools. In some instances, students have assistive technology needs that require specific devices or programming not compatible with school devices, or need access to proprietary programming. In these instances, students may apply for wifi access through their advisory team. Wifi access is granted on a case-by-case basis in instances where educational, transitional, or emotional programming needs cannot be met by Victor devices. Students are not permitted to connect their own hardware to the school's network/wifi without permission, and are not permitted to generate their own wireless signals/create their own "hotspots" while in the building. The school maintains a full Internet Safety Policy which is reviewed and signed at intake and again annually.

### **iPhone/Cell Phones/iPads with Internet Access**

Students with phones that have Internet access are asked to turn these items off completely during classes and testing situations. Students who use their phones as personal organizers need to comply with the phone policy. Students

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should request permission prior to using this device for organizational purposes, and may be spot-checked by staff to ensure the device is being used for its stated purpose. Students with phones/devices that generate wireless signals are not permitted to create “hotspots” for other students. Each student has their own phone/computer privileges and restrictions set with their parents/guardians.

### **Musical Devices**

Students with i-Pods or MP3 players should not connect these products to school computers. Student music should be played at a volume that cannot be heard by others around them. As a general rule, MP3 players are not permitted to be used during class time. Each teacher has specific policies in this area.

### **Cameras and Video Cameras**

Students have access to digital cameras and video cameras on site for class-specific purposes. Students are not permitted to take pictures of any staff or student with personal recording devices while at school. This policy is with respect to student privacy and confidentiality, and is stated in response to feedback from parents and students.

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## **Dress Code**

The Victor School is a learning environment. To help maintain this environment, clothing is expected to be clean, within reasonable bounds of professionalism, and not hazardous to student health and safety. With this goal in mind, the following guidelines were developed with student input and are expected to be followed at all times by all members of the Victor community:

- Clothing and jewelry must be free from obscenities, nudity, violence, advertising or promoting alcohol or illegal drugs, words or symbols equated with hate or discrimination of others, and references to gangs.
- Clothing must cover a student's front, side and back torso and all undergarments
- Shoes must be worn at all times in accordance with Massachusetts state law.

Clothing that does not meet the above standards will need to be changed. Concerns about the Dress Code will be addressed by the Human Rights Officer or designee.

## **Personal Contact (PC)**

The following guidelines are expected to be followed in terms of PC:

- All PC is expected to be consensual and appropriate for school.
- Non-sexual, non-aggressive PC is permitted assuming both parties consent. Examples include handshakes, fist bumps, high-fives, side hugs.
- All PC is expected to take place in public areas of the school only. PC is not appropriate in classroom or group room settings.
- Sexual contact, aggressive contact, unwanted contact/contact without express permission, or contact which occurs in "private" areas of the school (bathrooms, unattended offices) are not permitted and may result in disciplinary action as aligned with the Code of Conduct.
- Examples of unacceptable touch behavior at school:
  - kissing and full-frontal hugging
  - horseplay or roughhousing
  - repeated requests for physical contact
  - seeking out unmonitored locations of the school for any PC
  - any contact that disrupts or interferes with class time and learning

Touch Contracts are available for any students needing assistance in setting specific limits around their own personal boundaries in general, or with specific students.

## **Smoking/Tobacco/Vaping Policy**

The Victor School campus and school-sponsored trips are tobacco free in alignment with state law. This policy applies to all students, staff, and visitors.

If a student is found smoking, or with cigarettes or other smoking implements/vaping and/or a lighter, the objects will be confiscated and disposed of. The Code of Conduct outlines possible disciplinary measures.



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## **Textbooks and Classroom Supplies**

At times, students are assigned textbooks, supplemental reading materials, and other class materials (i.e., digital cameras, calculators) for use in class. Students are responsible for these items, and are expected to treat these items with respect and care. Some items are to remain on grounds at all times; these items are highlighted by teachers, and include electronics. Other items, such as books, may travel to and from home to facilitate homework completion.

Books are due back at the end of each year or when the unit being studied is complete. Books and supplies that are not returned, or are returned damaged, are assigned a replacement fee. Books must be returned, or fees paid, prior to receiving report cards at the end of term four. There are no exceptions to this policy, and we appreciate your cooperation in advance.

## **Homework**

Homework is an important part of the school's programming, as it allows students the opportunity to practice and reinforce skills taught during the school day, as well as to practice developing skills with increased independence. Generally speaking, high school academic classes and academic electives assign homework daily; middle school academic classes assign homework every other day. Students with IEP accommodations around homework have individualized plans, supported by the Advisory Team.

While support and training are readily available, students are expected to take responsibility for their own success by using homework planners, in combination with Google Classroom, to ensure they have up-to-date information on class assignments. When students must be absent from class, they are expected to use these resources to stay on track with what their classmates are doing, and to find out from teachers what work has been missed. If students are unclear as to a specific homework assignment, it is their personal responsibility to discuss their concerns and questions with the teacher(s) involved before they leave The Victor School for the day. Students in middle school are supported to do so by homeroom teachers, who will assist in developing and maintaining a homework tracking system that works for the student.

Each teacher maintains a page at [classroom.google.com](https://classroom.google.com) and has a link to a calendar of assignments in the Student Portal. Students are able to stay up-to-date with their classes when absent or otherwise miss class for any reason, as well as remind themselves of their homework assignments, using this resource.

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## Education Support Services

### Academic Integrity

A core value of a school that seeks to maintain high standards is the intolerance of cheating in any form. Cheating undermines the integrity of the student as well as the school. Academic integrity is essential to a successful academic experience. The Victor School expects students to submit original work and to cite sources appropriately. Attempted academic dishonesty, even if unsuccessful, will be treated as an academic infraction.

While most students do adhere to the ethical practices discussed here, the following procedure was developed in an effort to foster, teach, and encourage appropriate ethical behavior for all students.

### I. Definitions

**A. Cheating:** An act or attempted act by which a student deceives, acts dishonestly, or misrepresents work that he/she/they have produced on an academic exercise; or attempts to, or assists another to misrepresent his/her/their work.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying work from another student
- Having another person complete work for a student
- Using unauthorized materials to complete an assignment
- Providing or receiving information about an exam

**B. Plagiarism:** The use of another's words, ideas, data, images, pictures, artistic productions, or other material as one's own work. This covers unpublished as well as published sources. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- Quoting another person's words, sentences, paragraphs, or entire work without acknowledgement of the source;
- Incorporating materials, such as but not limited to graphs, illustrations, graphics, etc., which are not the student's original work, without proper citation of the source and creator;
- Utilizing another person's ideas, opinions, theory, or structure without acknowledgement of the source;
- Copying another person's work (in whatever medium), even with acknowledgement of the source, without synthesizing or interpreting the information to reflect one's own thoughts and analysis of the subject.

**C. Fabrication:** The falsification of facts. Fabrication includes, but is not limited to:

- Making up a source
- Embellishing an event
- Changing a quote
- Creating a person
- Inventing a story

### II. Response

In alignment with the school's philosophy, The Victor School expects students to submit original work and to document sources appropriately. Attempted or completed violations of such, either through cheating, plagiarism or fabrication can lead to:

- Automatic failure of the test/project/assignment
- Make-up work or alternative assignments not necessarily offered
- Documentation of the incident in the student's file, and notification to the sending school
- Tutorial on academic integrity expectations/procedures may be required
- Repair to the community may be assigned, as appropriate
- Additional interventions may be developed on an individualized basis as indicated by IEP and/or repeated incidence

### Curriculum

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The Victor School's curriculum is rigorous, and is designed to prepare students for secondary or post-secondary schools, depending on grade level. The Victor School prides itself on the rigor of its curriculum, which is aligned with the Common Core Standards and which differs from public school curricula only in the differentiation of instructional methods used to meet the individual needs of students as outlined in their IEPs. The Education Director and advisory teams are available for support in determining a course load that supports each student's future goals.

In order to individualize the curriculum according to each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), The Victor School faculty receives ongoing training about the unique population that the school serves. The teachers acquire educational strategies and techniques in curriculum and instruction; learning needs, styles, abilities, disabilities, and challenges; and special education issues, interventions and best practices. Since the students' emotional issues can significantly impact their ability to access the curriculum, the teachers also participate in a considerable amount of clinical training, including understanding a wide variety of diagnoses and their various manifestations; the impact of medications, their side effects, and reporting changes in behavior due to dosage modifications; and how to determine which parts of a student's presentation are part of the student's disability and which are within his/her/their control.

### **Graduation Requirements**

Students follow the program of study and the graduation requirements of their sending schools. Our Education Department works very closely with each district's guidance department to ensure that each student's transcript is up-to-date, and that the student is being enrolled in the correct courses to move him/her/them toward graduation. Questions regarding graduation requirements should be directed to the Education Director.

### **Credits**

TVS awards credit on a per-term basis. Students in 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade do not accumulate credit toward the high school diploma. Successful completion of the core classes is considered critical to future success, especially for students returning to their sending school district for the high school years.

As TVS does not award diplomas, all credit reported by TVS is ultimately translated by the sending school onto an official transcript. It is important to highlight that some sending school districts award credit on a semester or year-long basis. As such, the final transcript for one school may average two quarters into one semester grade and credit, while another student's transcript may have quarterly or annual grades/credits.

The Education Director has this individualized information available. Students are encouraged to learn their sending school's policies and how these policies affect them. For example, a student who earns a 70% one quarter at TVS and a 95% another quarter may have an official school transcript that has a C and an A over two quarters, or may have a final semester long grade of 82%, or B.

### **Course Outlines and Descriptions**

TVS ensures that each high school student receives the coursework he/she/they need to complete the program of study from his/her/their sending school district, thus making him/her/them eligible to receive a high school diploma. The curriculum at The Victor School is challenging, and is designed to support student transitions to high school (for middle school grades) or college (for students in ninth grade and above). Course descriptions for each class taught at TVS are available, which include a general explanation, as well as specific concept and skill information.

### **Course Schedules**

#### *Grades 9 and above*

Each year, student schedules are developed based on the requirements of the student's sending school program of study. Each student follows his/her/their sending school district's credit requirements, and earns a diploma from that

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district. TVS does not issue its own diploma. Each school district has a minimum number of courses that comprise the graduation requirements for that district. When students arrive at TVS, their transcripts are examined to determine which graduation requirements have already been fulfilled. Since The Victor School offers a full high school curriculum, most arriving students can be placed in the next sequence of courses needed, according to their program of study. Each student is placed in a therapeutic group, which meets daily. Students are asked to select electives when such offerings will mesh with their other requirements, and those selections are honored whenever possible.

At times, a student's schedule may need to be changed. All changes must be coordinated through the Education Director. The process for initiating course changes is as follows:

- Requests for course changes are provided, in writing, to the Education Director, using the form designed for that purpose. The request must include the reason for the change being requested.
- In consultation with advisors and other staff, the Education Director ensures that the requested change remains aligned with the student's graduation requirements, and consults with the teaching team and the student's Advisory team prior to making any changes.
- Students and their families are informed of any schedule changes as soon as possible after making the request. Students are expected to continue to attend all classes into which they are scheduled until a class change request has been approved.

There are students who have partially transitioned back to their sending school, that is, they attend TVS part-time, and take a few courses at their home school. TVS works collaboratively with these school districts in scheduling these students appropriately.

### *Grades 6-8*

Students in the middle school grades follow a specific curriculum (aligned with the Common Core Standards and/or Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, depending on subject) designed to prepare them for successful transition to any high school curriculum. Each student takes four academic classes per day (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science). In addition, each student is scheduled in one group period, one arts class, and one PE class each day.

Students begin the day with a quick preview of that day's schedule and assistance to organize themselves with whatever materials or support they may need to meet that day's expectations. To support students in developing executive functioning skills, middle school students should expect to have homework in two subjects each night (alternating between the Humanities (ELA/Social Studies) and STEM (Science/Math), although some longer-term projects may require more than one night to complete.

### **Grading Practices**

Grading practices are defined in writing and distributed by each individual teacher at the beginning of each new course. This information includes classroom expectations as well as the teacher's grading policy. Classroom grades are calculated taking into consideration participation/student skills, homework, assignments/classwork and assessments (projects, tests, quizzes). Grading expectations may vary somewhat from class to class (i.e., a heavier weight to participation may exist in a debate class), but are clearly delineated and firm. The primary goal of grading is to provide students with feedback on their output throughout the course of the class.

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### **Physical Education**

Students are required by both state law and local policies to pass physical education in order to graduate. Students are expected to attend and participate in physical education classes. In order to be excused from PE classes, students must bring in a medical excuse, which must be approved by the school nurse. Medical excuses must have a start and stop date, or are to be updated quarterly. They are not retroactive and must be updated each school year.

### **Sequential Subjects**

Each advanced course in sequential subjects, such as mathematics, may be taken only if the preceding course in the sequence is passed with a final averaged grade of C or better. Any student with a C- or lower requires a written recommendation from their teacher for the next sequential class.

### **National Honor Society**

The school is also proud to qualify for a Chapter of the National Honor Society on campus. The school follows the NHS guidelines and criteria for membership applications and initiation. Interested students are directed to the Chapter Advisor for more information.

### **Arts Night**

The Arts department of The Victor School is a large part of our students' success. The school looks forward to our annual celebration to share with parents and families the growth and accomplishments of our students within the arts arena.

### **Back to School Night**

This night offers parents a glimpse into the day in the life of their student. Parents have the opportunity to meet the teachers and also meet other parents within the school.

### **MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System)**

All students in publicly funded schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are required to participate in MCAS testing. To earn a high school diploma, as of the date of this publication, students must pass the required number of MCAS exams, with the appropriate scores. The Victor School will offer MCAS in alignment with DESE requirements and scheduling.

### **Mid-Year and Final Exams**

As a general rule, classes for 9th through 12th graders hold mid-year examinations at the end of the first semester, and final exams at the end of the second semester. Final examinations are typically given in all high school grades, in all academic subjects. Examination periods mimic testing situations found in sending school settings. Tests are generally cumulative, and teachers spend a fair amount of time teaching study skills and reviewing the material to

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help students succeed at this task. As many of our students are college bound, we feel that even our youngest students benefit from the experience of final exams conducted in this manner, as it is good practice for SAT and other longer exams they will face in the future-forward.

### **Report Cards and Midterm Reports**

Student academic progress is reported quarterly for all students, at the end of the term when the final grade closes.

On each report card, the student receives a grade in each subject. Advisory team support is available to review reported grades as needed. Report cards are not released if the student has outstanding school property to return (i.e. chromebooks, wifi, textbooks).

Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to review the Student Portal regularly. Term grade reports are the only reports distributed by the school. If a hard copy of this information is needed at the midterm point in the term, or if computer access is not available at home, please contact the Education Director.

### **Transcript**

The TVS transcript includes letter grades for each term of each course taken at TVS. Transcripts are sent to the student's sending school to be translated onto that school's transcript. At graduation, the student will receive a transcript from the sending school, which issues the diploma. Transcripts, like report cards, cannot be released if a student has outstanding supplies belonging to the school. There are no exceptions to this policy.

### **Graduation**

Each year, The Victor School holds a formal graduation ceremony. The Victor community is invited to celebrate the sending forth of the graduates, as we commemorate their journeys with music, speeches, and awards. The graduation is a true highlight of the year, something not to be missed!

### **Hospitalized Student Policy**

From time to time, some students require hospitalization to address their emotional issues. While it is understandable that their education takes second place to their therapeutic needs at these times, it is still important that students access the curriculum as they are able.

While TVS works in a very flexible manner with the hospitals, and with each individual student, the following outlines the general policy and procedures that are followed:

Parents/guardians should provide the Educational/Transitional Support Specialist (x3611) with a contact person at the hospital, and must sign a release of information to allow the school to communicate with identified hospital staff. The Victor School will coordinate work distribution and collection during periods when a student is hospitalized.

Students who are hospitalized are provided with work by their TVS teachers through the Educational/Transitional Support Specialist. Hospitals may provide tutors or, in some instances, TVS may have teachers available to tutor students while hospitalized. Students are expected to return the completed work to the school in order to receive grades and credit. Teachers reduce the amount of work requested to the most essential parts of the curriculum.

### **Statement of Nondiscrimination**

The Victor School values diversity and is aligned with its parent company, JRI's, commitment to social justice. JRI is strongly committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for our employees and the people we serve. JRI does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, age, marital status or military status in treatment or employment at JRI, admission or access to JRI or any other aspect of the educational programs and activities that JRI operates. JRI is required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Age Act), and their respective implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Parts 100, 104, 106 and 110, not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, or age. Inquiries regarding the application of each of the aforementioned statutes and their implementing regulations to JRI may be directed to JRI Senior Vice President and General Counsel Mark Schueppert at 781-559-4900 or 160 Gould Street, Suite 300, Needham MA 02494 or to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, at (617) 289-0111 or [5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109-3921](#).

### **Emergency Procedures**

The Victor School maintains procedures for emergency evacuation, sheltering in place, and also trains in ALICE, a protocol to respond to an unlawful intruder. Drill procedures are reviewed school-wide at the beginning of each school year, and various drills occur at least monthly. Students are expected to follow all relevant procedures during a drill.

In addition to procedures to handle emergencies, The Victor School has developed a comprehensive disaster plan, which is located in the reception area. Should a serious emergency occur at the school, parents will be contacted through the school's alert system.

In emergency situations, emergency health care may be sought for students who have been injured and require more assistance than the school nurse can provide, or for students who have been judged to be at risk to themselves or others. In these instances, the student's parents are notified and consulted immediately. The school is able to coordinate with the local hospital and the local crisis team, both of whom are able to provide services outside of the realm of TVS.

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### Anti-Hazing Policy

The Victor School aligns fully with the Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law and the DESE reporting requirements and maintains the following policy regarding hazing. The Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law is attached as [ADDENDUM D](#) of this handbook.

The Victor School issues a copy of the Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law and the school's anti-hazing disciplinary policy to every student enrolled at our school, which covers every student group, student team, or student organization, including every unaffiliated student group, student team, or student organization.

The school files, at least annually by October 1st, a report with the DESE certifying:

- a) we comply with our responsibility to inform student groups, teams, or organizations, and every full-time enrolled student, of the anti-hazing law
- b) our adoption of a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing; and
- c) that our hazing policy has been included in our Student Handbook and is explained to and discussed with all students.

Hazing is defined by DESE as "...any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation."

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr33.html?section=all>

Students who engage in this behavior, either as organizers or as participants, will be subject to interventions in keeping with our Code of Conduct. Staff investigate any allegations of hazing, and investigations are overseen by the Human Rights Officer. If a case of hazing is proven to have taken place, either on or off school grounds, disciplinary action may be warranted, as outlined in the Code of Conduct. Oftentimes, education and skill building is involved regardless of disciplinary action.



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### **Bullying Prevention and Response Policy**

The Victor School strives to maintain a safe school community where diversity and difference are not only respected, but celebrated. The school prohibits unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber bullying, hazing, harassment, or retaliation following reports of bullying, in school, on school grounds, on school trips, or in school related activities. We align fully with the 2010 Massachusetts Anti-Bullying Law, and Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014, Amended Section 370 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws which furthers the original 2010 law in several areas. The school maintains a formal bullying policy, which has been submitted to and approved by the DESE. This policy is available on line at the website ([www.jri.org/victor](http://www.jri.org/victor)) and by request by contacting the school. It is also distributed at intake, and again annually. The following is a brief summary of portions of the longer policy that most directly impact students.

Bullying is defined as any repeated actions (verbal, physical, written, or electronic) of someone towards a target that causes a target to have fear of physical or emotional harm or damage to his/her/their property, or which creates a hostile environment at school or disrupts the school day. In 2014, the Amendment highlighted certain groups of students that could be more vulnerable to being targeted, and also noted that any staff employed by the school or district (including, but not limited to teachers, clinicians, case managers, the school nurse, administrators, assistants, bus drivers) as well as students could be aggressors. Plans are required to address both of these areas, and ours does. The school is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, and from retaliation following reports of bullying.

If a student feels they are being bullied, or sees bullying happening in our community, we ask that they report it. Students can talk to staff, file a complaint, leave a message on any staff line, or write a note and leave it with any staff member. Students can file anonymously, or use their name. The most important piece is to report what was seen or heard. All staff are required to report any instances of possible bullying directly to the Director, in real time -- that is, as they see it occurring. Staff also intervene in the moment to provide safety for all involved.

When reports about possible bullying are made, staff will first make sure involved students feel safe. Staff will work directly with involved students to determine what steps need to be taken to ensure safety; the student's voice is an important one in this process. Steps will also be taken to prevent retaliation against anyone who reported or witnessed the bullying. Keeping students safe is the number one priority.

Once student safety is in place, staff will take steps to learn more about the incident. This may involve talking to other students, talking to parents, looking at information provided to us. When all the data is collected, next steps can be determined. As noted in the Code of Conduct, bullying is a suspendable offense, and if warranted, disciplinary action may be taken. Oftentimes, education and skill building is involved regardless of disciplinary action.

The school keeps a record of all reports of bullying, and aligns with the requirements to report them (without student names) to the DESE as required in the 2014 Amendment. The school also continues to survey the community about the culture of the school, and shares these results with the school community. While it is our hope that any concern can be successfully resolved with our staff team, if a student/parent/guardian has a concern that they feel is not being adequately addressed, the DESE has several resources for this purpose. Specifically, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu), calls can be made to 781-338-3700, and more information can be found on-line at [www.doe.mass.edu/pgq](http://www.doe.mass.edu/pgq).

*A copy of our formal, DESE approved bullying policy can be found on line at [www.jri.org/victor](http://www.jri.org/victor). A hard copy is available upon request.*

## **ADDENDUM A**

### **The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act Massachusetts Student Records Regulations<sup>1</sup>**

## 2023-2024 TVS Student Handbook

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations (“Regulations”) together provide parents and eligible students (those who have reached the age of 14 or who have entered ninth grade) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. A general overview of those rights is provided below. Parents and students may obtain a complete copy of their rights under the Massachusetts Student Record Regulations by contacting The Victor School Director. The information is also located in the Parents Rights manual in reception.

(a) The **right to access** the student’s education records. Parents or eligible students should submit their request for access to The Victor School Director. Access is generally provided within ten days of a request. However, Massachusetts General Laws c. 71, §34H (“Section 37H”) law provides specific procedures that must be followed prior to release of records to a parent who does not have physical custody of a child. These procedures include submitting a written request and other documentation to the school Director on an annual basis. Information about these procedures can be obtained from the primary clinician.

(b) The **right to request amendment** of the student’s education records. Parents or eligible students should direct their request to The Victor School Director, clearly identifying the part of the record they wish to have amended, and why.

(c) The **right to consent to disclosure** of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA and the Massachusetts regulations authorize disclosure without consent. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests in the records. Such school officials include professional, administrative and clerical staff who are employed by or under agreement with our school and Public Schools and who need access to a record in order to fulfill their duties. The Victor School also discloses student records without parent/eligible student consent to officials of other private or secondary schools in which a student enrolls, or seeks, intends, or is instructed to enroll upon receipt of a request from such school officials.

The Victor School does not release directory information without consent. Directory information consists of the following: the student’s name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of athletic team members, class, participation in recognized activities and sports, honors and awards, and post-high school plans. In the event a parent or eligible student wants to request the release of any of the above information, the parent/eligible student may state that request in writing to The Victor School Director. Absent receipt of a written request, the directory information will not be released.

As required by federal law, the School routinely releases the name, address and telephone listing of secondary school students to military recruiters and to institutions of higher learning upon request. In the event a parent or eligible student objects to the release of any of the above information, the parent/eligible student may state that objection in writing to The Victor School Director. Absent receipt of a written objection from the parent or eligible student **[within two weeks from the date of the notice]**, this information will be released without further notice or consent.

(d) The **right to file a complaint** concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the regulations and laws governing student records. Complaints may be filed at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148. In addition, complaints relative to federal statutes and regulations governing student records may be filed with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 40 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington DC.

<sup>1</sup> [Note to school officials: This form has been prepared by Stoneman, Chandler & Miller to assist school districts in providing annual notice as required by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) at 20 USC §1232h and the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations at 603 CMR 28.00.]

<sup>2</sup> [Note to school officials: Section 9528 of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act of 1995 (20 USC §7908), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and 10 107), requires disclosure of directory information to military recruiters and institutions of higher learning unless the parent/eligible student objects.]

## ADDENDUM B

### Implementation of Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment 1

## 2023-2024 TVS Student Handbook

The Victor School adheres to the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA),<sup>2</sup> a federal law that affords parents of elementary and secondary eligible students (those who have reached the age of 18) certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include but are not limited to, the right to:

- *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)–
  1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
  2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
  3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
  4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
  5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
  6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
  7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parent; or
  8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of*–
  1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
  2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
  3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others. (This does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions.)
- *Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use –
  1. Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party;
  2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
  3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

## 2023-2024 TVS Student Handbook

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The Victor School has adopted these policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The Victor School will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The Victor School will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The Victor School will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this direct notification requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Student Privacy Policy Office

U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20202

updated: April 2020

## ADDENDUM C

### Justice Resource Institute

#### Rights and Responsibilities of Persons Served - The Victor School

*These rights and responsibilities extend to the parents/guardians in the case of those persons served in JRI programs who are minors, have legal guardians, or who are unable to understand their rights because of mental, physical or emotional limitation.*

#### Your Rights

1. You have the right to receive services regardless of race, creed, religion, sex, ethnicity, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, cultural heritage, national origin, source of financial support, homelessness, marital status, age, physical or mental disability or degree of disability or other such basis as may be prohibited by law.
2. You have the right to an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), reviewed at least quarterly by your multidisciplinary team. You have the right to have input into the development of your IEP as a member of the Team. You have a right to request a review of your IEP or to request an independent opinion from a consultant at your own cost.
3. You have the right to clear and effective communication about your treatment and rights and responsibilities. Staff will assist you in understanding these communications.
4. You have a right to know the qualifications of your providers and to request a change in provider (including clinical interns, all of whom are directly supervised by licensed providers) if necessary. You have a right to know any risks, side effects, or benefits of services and interventions. You have a right to know what alternative treatments are available to you.
5. You have the right to be informed about transition and discharge planning, and to provide input into these decisions as a Team member.
6. You have the right to refuse treatment.
7. You have a right to informed consent, and to refuse to be part of any study or research that is proposed to you.
8. You have a right to ask questions about these rights by contacting the school's Human Rights Officer or the Program Director. You have a right to present a concern or complaint of the care you receive, and the right to a response from the school. If you feel your concern or complaint has not been resolved with the school, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has a Problem Resolution System which can be reached at [www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/prs](http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/prs).
9. You have the right to know the cost to you of services you receive, the source of payment, and any limitations placed on the duration of services.
10. You have the right to be free from mental, physical, sexual and verbal abuse, neglect, excessive force, psychological or emotional abuse, retaliation, humiliation, exploitation, or hazing.

#### Your Responsibilities

1. You have a right to know what is expected of you while at school with JRI. You are provided with a copy of the school's Handbook and Code of Conduct, which describe these responsibilities.
2. You have rights to privacy and confidentiality, which are outlined in the JRI notice of Privacy Practices and the JRI Limits on Confidential Communication.
3. You have a responsibility to give correct and accurate information about your situation and problems, including what you have done in the past to address them. You have a responsibility to tell us if anything changes regarding your health or situation.
4. You have a responsibility to ask for help if you do not understand what we say about your care, rights or responsibilities.

## ADDENDUM D Anti-Hazing Law

### **Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Anti-Hazing Law**

#### **Chapter 269: Section 17. Hazing; organizing or participating; hazing defined**

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

#### **Chapter 269: Section 18. Failure to report hazing**

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

#### **Chapter 269: Section 19. Copy of Secs. 17 to 19; issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report**

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of postsecondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of postsecondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of postsecondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and

## **2023-2024 TVS Student Handbook**

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participants of hazing, and that such a policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

## ADDENDUM E Policies and Procedures for Student Behavior and Support

### **General Guidelines**

The Victor School has developed and implemented written behavior support policy and procedures consistent with updated (2016) regulations under 603 CMR 46.00. These policies and procedures address appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention.

Annually, these policies are reviewed, provided to all staff, and are available to parents/guardians of enrolled students. These policies include methods for preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior and suicide; a description and explanation of the school's methods used as alternatives to physical restraint; training requirements for staff; reporting requirements and follow up procedures; a description, including specific timelines, for receiving and investigating complaints regarding behavior support policies; procedures for implementing the behavior support reporting requirements; procedures which include the implementation procedures and making both written and oral notification to parents; a procedure for the use of time out.

These policies also include a statement that meals shall not be withheld as a form of punishment or behavior support, and that no student shall be denied or unreasonably delayed a meal for any reason other than medical prescriptions.

Individual student behavior plans, if required via IEP, are maintained in student records.

### **Procedures**

#### ● **A. Methods for preventing student violence, self-injurious behaviors and suicide**

The school provides a therapeutic milieu rich with clinical support and sensory tools, as well as high levels of supervision to prevent and respond to escalation in students. The school employs several methods to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide, as well as to de-escalate potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with individual students.

- a. During the intake process and ongoing during the course of enrollment, the school assesses students for risk factors including violence, self-injurious behaviors, and suicidality. Assessment is completed via discussion with student and parents/guardians, collaboration with collateral team members and the sending school district, and review of related testing and documents. The school maintains regular communication with parents/guardians, collateral team members and the sending school to support ongoing assessment of these areas. Individualized planning is implemented as indicated.
- b. Through observation of behavior and interactions at school, team discussions, and solicited feedback from parents and community care providers, the Victor School team is continuously informed and aware of stressors, interpersonal and family issues, mental health concerns, medication issues, and other situations that might increase the risk for harm.
- c. The school uses aspects of the Collaborative and Proactive Solutions approach as its primary means of student support. This approach is collaborative and strength based. The approach calls for the belief that students do well when they can; students experiencing difficulty do so because they lack the skills or the resources to overcome the obstacles in their way – they are not considered “stubborn” or “misbehaving.” As such, the intervention is skill development rather than consequence based. CPS supports skill development in a number of areas, including emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility, language processing, executive functioning, and social skills.
- d. In alignment with the preventative, skill building philosophy employed by the school, a number of traditional behavioral techniques are not employed. The school does not use point/level systems or rewards/token economy systems. Food will not be withheld as a form of punishment or behavior support. No student shall be denied or unreasonably delayed a meal for any reason other than a medical prescription.
- e. Students identified as being at risk for self-injurious behavior, suicide, or violence are immediately connected with their on-campus clinician for further planning, which could include use of tools individualized to their situation, one-on-one supervision, non-physical escort to and during classes and other activities, safety contracts, use of PRN in alignment with orders from their outpatient psychiatrist, emergency meetings with outpatient team supports, or psychiatric screenings as appropriate with respect to level of risk, student history, and individual treatment needs noted in IEP and treatment plan.
- f. The school works to be highly preventative in supporting, addressing, and preventing situations that could be potentially escalating for individuals or groups of students. Potential high risk times (such as holidays and anniversaries, exam periods) are identified for the group as well as for individual students and individual plans are made in conjunction with students, families, and outpatient teams. Similarly, changes in routine (including field trips or off campus activities) are previewed for students with expectations reviewed and preventative plans made as needed.



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- g. All staff are trained in JRI's Suicide Prevention and Awareness and Psychological First Aid trainings upon hire and annually. These training provide additional protocols and guidelines for preventing and responding to risk behaviors in students.
- h. The school's Handbook itemizes a number of options students may access to promote emotional regulation and to prevent situations that could escalate to the point of emergency restraint needing to be employed. Examples of these supports include taking space, using regulation skills, one-on-one staff support and coaching, regular team meetings, regular family meetings, and regular communication with outpatient providers. The Handbook also notes:
- i. The type and range of restrictions a staff member can impose for behavior that is unacceptable, including suspension and termination.

- The use of "taking space" (The Victor School does not use separation but has processes for supporting a student when she/he/they is having difficulty engaging in group or school activities); and
- The form of restraint used in an emergency, the behavioral interventions used as alternatives to restraint, and the controls on abuse should a restraint occur (603 CMR 46.00) (more detailed information found in 9.4 of the school's DESE manual); and
- Any denial or restrictions of on campus programs services.

- **B. Description of the school's alternative to physical restraint**

The Victor School remains committed to using restraint only in emergency situations of last resort when needed to protect a student and/or member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. The school uses Building Communities of Care (BCC) as a method of crisis prevention and intervention. BCC mirrors the school's highly preventative approach, and provides a framework for using information about the student's history, diagnosis, family and community systems, strengths, challenges, and developing skills, to create individualized treatment plans and interventions to prevent student dysregulation, including self-injury or violence. In addition to the model's standard tool kit, the model stresses individualization of treatment planning to inform all levels of school staff about parts of the day/tasks that may prove more challenging, so that interventions and supports can be put in place preventatively. The model also highlights areas where the student may be more likely to succeed, so these situations may also be woven into the student's day and week with regularity. All staff are required to complete the BCC training to ensure they proactively implement tools to maintain a therapeutic school environment and can manage possible crisis situations.

The school uses Collaborative and Proactive Solutions as its primary student support system, combined with high levels of supervision, close coordination with collaterals, and other behavior support responses (noted in Policy 9.1) to prevent and respond to escalation in students.

- **C. Description of the school's training requirements for staff**

The school provides behavior support training to all school staff within the first month of the school year. The training covers the behavioral support policies and the requirements when such procedures are implemented. For employees hired after the school year begins, behavior support training is provided and completed within one month of their date of hire. Staff is trained on the use and implementation of the behavior support policy at least annually. All staff are required to train in BCC, the school's restraint prevention and response method, annually, and are required to complete this training upon hire and before any direct contact with students.

- **D. Description of the school's reporting requirements and follow up procedures**

The school shares its written behavior support policies during the admissions process, at intake and then annually to all students, parents/guardians. The school maintains close communication with parents/guardians, collateral contacts, agencies involved with the care and/or placement of a student, and the sending school district and ensures they are aware of ongoing progress and any areas of concern, including incidents that occur. The JRI Incident Report form is used to communicate incidents that may occur. The school aligns with all federal and state reporting requirements.

Students work closely with their clinician for support, problem solving, planning and processing following any behavioral incident. Students are offered complaint forms as part of this debriefing process.

The Director or designee is responsible for ensuring timely follow up to all incidents related to restraint or the behavior support policies in alignment with related regulations.

- **E. Description, including timelines, of the school's procedure for receiving and investigating complaints regarding behavior support policies**

The Victor School welcomes feedback and takes complaints seriously; students and parents are encouraged in the complaint process should a concern arise. The school aligns with the JRI policies on complaint investigation and

## 2023-2024 TVS Student Handbook

resolution. Complaint forms are available on the Rights board available to students and from the Human Rights Officer. The Human Rights Officer as well as any staff member is available to assist anyone with completing the Complaint and Grievance Form. Staff are also expected to file the report on behalf of a student or parent should a complaint be expressed verbally.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Human Rights Officer will investigate all non-abuse issues and take corrective action where necessary within three business days; the Human Rights Officer may enlist support from another Ad Team member in conducting the investigation. A summary of the review process and the resolution findings as well as future actions or happenings regarding the complaint will be discussed with the individual who filed the complaint.

- **F. Description of the procedures to be followed for implementing the behavior support reporting requirements**

The school maintains regular communication with parents via a number of methods. Staff keep families informed of progress and any areas of concern specific to their student regularly. Parents/guardians and students are notified of the behavior support systems and related policies at intake and again annually.

The Director is available to meet with parents to address any questions or concerns, and is responsible for ensuring these procedures and communications are followed.

- **G. Description of the program's procedure for making both oral and written notification to a parent**

Parents/guardians are notified of incidents on the same day as the occurrence via phone, with follow up communication provided in writing/electronically within three (3) school days. The school aligns with all federal and state reporting requirements. The sending school district and any agencies involved with the care or placement of the student are also notified within the same timeframes. The DESE is notified immediately for relevant incidents (see 4.5 Immediate Notification for more details).

The Director or designee is responsible for ensuring timely follow up to all incidents related to restraint or the behavior support policies in alignment with related regulations.

- **H. Procedure for the use of Time Out**

The school does not utilize Time Out as a behavior support strategy. Students are able to take space and ask for support within the school, which is individualized to student needs. Students who engage in time away from the learning environment for any reason are continuously monitored and offered support; time away from learning is documented and addressed in alignment with procedures outlined in Policy 9.1a.

- **I. Additional policy implementations**

- Individual Student Behavior Plans, if required via IEP, are maintained in student records.
- Food will not be withheld as a form of punishment or behavioral intervention. No student shall be denied or unreasonably delayed a meal for any reason other than a medical prescription.

### Addendum G Day School Division E-Cigarettes and Vaping

#### General Guidelines and Procedures:

- A) The JRI Therapeutic Day Schools maintain this policy regarding the use of and presence of electronic cigarettes and vaping paraphernalia. This policy is distributed to each student and their parent/guardian at the time of admission to the school and serves as a formal notice to students, parents/guardians of the plan on how the day schools manage electronic cigarettes and vaping materials.
- B) The therapeutic day schools of JRI have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to the possession and use of E-cigarettes and vaping materials. No student shall be permitted to possess any vaping materials or paraphernalia while in any school building, while on school grounds or property, at any school-sponsored or school-related event, or at any other time that students are under the authority of school personnel.
- C) All vaping and E-cigarette materials found on school property and/or on students will be destroyed, with no exception. Students who engage in prohibited behaviors will be referred to a school administrator and consequences will be given in accordance with the student code of conduct. Students will be provided with health information related to the dangers of E-cigarettes and vaping.
- D) Parents/guardians, the school district and treatment teams will be notified of all violations and actions taken by the school.

### Addendum H Day School Division Lithium Battery Ingestion

#### General Guidelines and Procedures:

- A) The JRI Therapeutic Day Schools maintain this policy regarding the ingestion of lithium batteries. This policy is distributed to each student and their parent/guardian at the time of admission to the school and serves as a formal notice to students, parents/guardians of the plan on how the day schools manage lithium battery ingestion.
- B) If a student swallows any type of battery or places any type of battery in the ear or nose, the National Battery Ingestion Hotline will be called at 800-498-8666 immediately. Lithium and button batteries need immediate medical attention due to the safety risk involved.
- C) If any student swallows a lithium or button battery or the battery type is unknown, the student will be transported immediately to the closest emergency room for further assessment, regardless of the presence of symptoms.
- D) Student will not be allowed food or drink until an x-ray is completed to confirm the location of the battery. **Do not induce vomiting.**
- E) If the ingested object is obstructing the student's airway, CPR should be initiated per protocol by trained staff members until the airway is clear or EMS arrives.
- F) Parents/guardians will be notified immediately.

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## Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook, 2023-2024

The Victor School  
380 Massachusetts Avenue  
Acton, MA 01720  
978-266-1991

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In signing below, I verify that I have received and reviewed the Student Handbook for the 2023-2024 school year and have no questions at this time. Should any questions arise, I will contact my Advisory Team

Signatures:

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*The Victor School provides all students with equal access to services, facilities, activities and benefits regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness.*

*The electronic version of the **Student Handbook** as available on the website is the most current version and will contain any updates and amendments.*

*Please access our student handbook on our website at [www.jri.org/victor](http://www.jri.org/victor)*

*Please return this page, signed, to the school, attention Marisa DiMeo, no later than 7/5/2023.  
Thanks in advance!*