



Student Handbook

2017-2018
School Year

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

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The Victor School-Welcome!

Greetings, Students and Families:

The Victor School is a therapeutic day school which exists within the larger agency of Justice Resource Institute. More information about our parent company can be found at <http://www.jri.org> and our school at www.jri.org/victor.

Most students come to The Victor School because other school settings have lacked the supports needed by our students for them to be able to work to their potential or to feel successful. Students often tell us they didn't feel like they fit into their last school. People didn't listen to them, or take their point of view into account. Solutions may have been offered that simply didn't fit. We believe our program is different, and will work with you to ensure your experience is a positive one.

We design our program around the understanding that students can succeed, and we provide students and their families with the tools to meet -- and often exceed -- their goals. There are many supports here, and we encourage you to use them -- use the program -- fully while you are with us; take advantage of all the opportunities available!

The Victor School strives to be a safe, respectful community where personal expression and growth are encouraged. 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 to contact the school 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, Assistant Director

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The Victor School—Vision / Mission / Philosophy

MISSION:

The Victor School exists to provide challenging, college-preparatory academics in a safe, respectful, 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 community is a close-knit, accepting, safe space that encourages individualization, expression of self, academic growth, and skill development of all members of its community. The multiple arms of the school work seamlessly together and in close collaboration with each student and his/her/their Team to provide an individualized blueprint to support the realization of that student's vision, the cornerstone of all planning. Students leave our school better educated – academically and about themselves and their learning styles; more socially connected and able; and prepared for their next steps.

PHILOSOPHY:

At the heart of our school is the overarching CPS philosophy of “Students do well if they can.” 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. We believe that developing these “lagging skills” will leave the student poised 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 VALUE:

Each other's individuality and differences

Kindness and respect

Each student's voice, through their Vision and ongoing collaboration around treatment and transition

Close relationships and strong collaboration with families, Team members and collaterals

An education that creates life-long learners and fosters curiosity

Using individualized skills to conquer challenges and meet goals

WE ALWAYS REMEMBER:

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

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Collaborative Problem Solving (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 can 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 lacking some 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 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 get along 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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The Victor School – Admission and Intake

Interview Process

At the initial interview, the student and his/her/their parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given a written listing of the step-by-step procedures, policies, and protocols that are involved with all aspects of the interview and intake process. The student and his/her/their parent(s)/ guardian(s) will be asked to sign a form indicating the date that they have received this information. This form will be maintained in the student's file only if they are accepted at and enroll in The Victor School. Otherwise, this form will be shredded and discarded.

Intake Process

Once a student has been admitted to The Victor School, his/her/their parent or guardian must 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 and postural screening for students in the 8th and 9th grade) within the last 12 months is necessary prior to admission to The Victor School.

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:

- Internet/Computer Use Safety Policy
- Receipt of Student Handbook Form
- Individual Rights and Responsibilities
- Medication Administration forms for OTC and/or prescription medication administered on campus, and required screenings
- Annual Consent form, which includes Internal Publication/Yearbook Consent, Emergency Medical Treatment Consent, Student allergy update, Student Transportation Release, Routine PRN Administration Consent, acknowledgement of the school's health and sexual education curriculum, and acknowledgement of receipt of Complaint/Grievance Policy and FERPA Privacy Notice
- Bullying Prevention and Response Policy
- Anti-Hazing Policy
- Acknowledgement of TVS policy and procedure manual as well as Health Care Manual being located in the reception area

Additionally, in alignment with DESE regulations, students are required to provide proof of annual dental and regular physical exams; the physical exam must include vision, hearing and, for students in the 8th and 9th grades, postural screening. Our nurse is available to assist families in arranging any necessary exams or retrieving documentation of recent exams from students' doctors/dentists.

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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 any particular staff person is as follows:

First initial of first name, last name, @jri.org

As an example, John Smith would have an email address of jsmith@jri.org.

Each staff member has a four-digit extension; phone lists are distributed annually. A dial by name directory is available at x9 off the main menu of the phone line.

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 goes straight to a voice mailbox which is checked periodically throughout the day.

The student's Primary Clinician serves as the primary liaison between the school and the student's parents/guardians and collaterals; the Primary Clinician should be the first staff member contacted regarding any concerns about that student. The name of the student's clinician and phone extension at The Victor School will be given to the student and his/her/their parent(s)/guardian(s) upon their formal entrance to The Victor School. Parents/guardians should always feel free to leave a voice mail for the student's Primary Clinician.

Staff check their voice mail 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 trainings or other meetings; their voice mail messages will be changed to reflect such. Teachers may require a longer delay in response time due to their commitments in the classroom; please allow 72 hours for a response. Teachers are available to participate in family meetings provided they have at least one week's notice.

Contacts

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Director | Wendy Rosenblum | 978-266-1991 x3622 |
| Assistant Director | Heidi Factor | 978-266-1991 x3815 |
| Clinical Director | Shahn Knights | 978-266-1991 x3853 |
| Education Director | Susan Woodin | 978-266-1991 x3844 |
| Asst. Clinical Director | Amy Davidson | 978-266-1991 x3809 |
| Assistant Ed Director | Matt Conroy | 978-266-1991 x3811 |
| Transitions Coordinator | Tia Savage | 978-266-1991 x3841 |
| School Nurse | Krystyna McCann | 978-266-1991 x3872 |
| Milieu Coordinator | Kevin Bunnell | 978-266-1991 x3540 |
| Human Rights Officer | Sharon Fors | 978-266-1991 x3847 |

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 before the end of the fourth term.

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 receive a copy any time the calendar is updated. The school calendar is also available on line at www.jri.org/victor.

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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) 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 one or more students towards a target that causes a target to have fear of physical or emotional harm or damage to his or her 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 (including, but not limited to teachers, clinicians, case managers, the school nurse, administrators, assistants) 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 from 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. You can file anonymously, or use your 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 bullying. 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, calls can be made to 781-338-3700, and more information can be found on-line at www.doe.mass.edu/pqa.

A copy of our formal, DESE approved bullying policy can be found on line at www.jri.org/victor. A hard copy is available upon request.

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Anti-Hazing 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 Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law and the DESE reporting requirements around such, and maintain the following policy regarding hazing.

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 as 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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The Victor School - Code of Conduct

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, 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
- Report observations of or concerns around actions that are not respectful, are unsafe, are unkind, or which could rise to the level of bullying, harassment, or threats
- Share concerns or complaints to staff, who will support resolution openly and collaboratively
- Maintain strong school attendance, arriving to classes daily, on time, and prepared to learn
- 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 forward motion on your goals.
- Respond to directions from staff respectfully
- Collaborate with staff around treatment planning, skill development, and goals
- Treat property belonging to the school or others with respect
- Accept responsibility and feedback around personal actions
- Follow the school's technology, dress code, and education/clinical/transition/nursing department policies
- Maintain a smoke-free, tobacco-free, drug-free and weapon-free campus

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 any member of the school community; unsolicited contact with any member of the school community
- Theft or damage to school, staff, or student property
- Possession of drugs/cigarettes/tobacco/ecigs/weapons/potentially dangerous items on campus or school-sponsored events
- Leaving the campus, or off-site trips, without permission
- (Cyber)bullying, hazing, intimidating, or retaliating against any member of the school community
- 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 the Code of Conduct. When an expectation is not met, it is often a signal that the student is struggling, and staff work collaboratively with students to understand the underlying concern and to develop appropriate interventions and responses to support the student and restore/maintain community functioning. The following interventions are available to support students towards this end, along with individualized responses students may have in their IEP.

- **Taking Five/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 such with their teacher.

- **Collaborative Problem Solving: 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 difficulty and finding a solution not yet thought of is the goal. The process of having the CPS 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 extensive training in DBT, CBT, meditation, relaxation, grounding and other anxiety management techniques, trauma-informed care including the ARC model, and problem-solving and general skills training. All staff are trained in CPI 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.

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- **Family meetings/collateral contact**

TVS clinicians hold family meetings weekly. Whether in person or via phone, these set times are opportunities for family members and TVS team members to work collaboratively with the student on any areas of need, and to celebrate areas of success. Teachers enjoy coming in to family meetings, but do require a week's notice in order to arrange for appropriate coverage of their class.

TVS clinicians work closely with a student's outpatient providers. This close coordination helps ensure the successful translation of any student monitoring or treatment plans onto the TVS campus and into the community at large. Releases of information are required in order for communication to take place.

- **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 direction 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 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 intervention and is not punitive in nature.

- **Mediation**

Students who have difficulties in a specific setting or with 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. The school offers In-House and Out-of-School suspension. During In-House Suspension, the student works outside of the larger community, instead working one-on-one with

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designated staff. School work is provided for completion outside of the classroom, and work is done to plan for a successful reintegration into the school community. Out-of-School 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.

- **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.

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 that will predictably upset or incite others or defame the beliefs or heritage of others, sharp items (i.e., safety pins) and references to gangs.
- Shorts and skirts should not be shorter than mid-thigh.
- Clothing must cover a student's torso and all undergarments, and should not be see-through or excessively tight.
- Shoes must be worn at all times in accordance with Massachusetts state law.
- Piercings should remain in place throughout the school day.

Clothing that does not meet the above standards will need to be covered up or changed. The Victor School maintains a small supply of t-shirts which students are able to use should they not meet dress code. Alternatively, parents will be expected to bring alternative clothing options to their student, or take their student home to change. At times, the school may have event-specific dress code requirements which are also expected to be followed. Concerns about the Dress Code will be addressed by the Human Rights Officer or designee.

Absences

Students are expected to arrive on time for school daily. An Attendance Line (978-266-1991 x3555) has been designated for these calls, and parents/guardians are encouraged to leave a message on this line prior to the 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 clinician 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.

Attendance statistics are gathered in terms of "present" and "not present" rather than "excused" versus "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 70% is not met. Each Term, this expectation translates to

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approximately 12 missed days of school or an individual class. Please see the “Educational Services” portion of this handbook for more information regarding the impact of non-attendance on grades and credits.

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 8:30am; students who arrive to school after that time must be signed in at reception prior to going to their classroom.

If a student has an appointment requiring that s/he/they be released early, or into the care of someone other than a parent/guardian, s/he/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.

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 8:30 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. Lunch is scheduled for approximately 20 minutes, after which classes resume. 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:

- Arriving to classes on time and prepared, and leaving when dismissed by the teacher
- Maintaining civil, respectful, and thoughtful interactions with staff and other students at all times
- Maintaining responsibility for their books, backpack, or other belongings
- Respecting rooms or spaces not designated for use or entrance by students
- Cleaning up after themselves in the school kitchen and lunchrooms, bathrooms, cubby areas, classrooms, and offices and school grounds

Students are expected to attend all classes unless excused by staff. When a student needs to step out of a class to take a break, 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 the clinical aspects of the programming, and are often able to intervene effectively in the classroom. Additionally, teachers may be able to set a check-in time with the Nurse, Case Manager, or a Clinician for a student, without interrupting classroom time. Additionally, Case Managers and Clinicians are often available to support students in the class environment.

If these methods are not effective, or if a student needs to leave the classroom to adequately address a clinical issue, the procedure for such is as follows:

- Students obtain permission from their teacher, who will assist the student in contacting a Case Manager.

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- The Case Manager is able to assist with problem-solving, provide coping skill coaching, and connect the student with a Clinician or Nurse as needed.

Emergency Procedures

The Victor School maintains procedures for emergency evacuation and sheltering in place. Drill procedures are reviewed school-wide at the beginning of each school year, and 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, such as one needing an evacuation, parents will be contacted through the school's email system as well as by telephone. School staff are also trained in ALICE, a system to respond to intruders at school, and ALICE drills are run with students throughout the year.

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 and outpatient team are notified immediately and consulted with. 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.

Complaint/Grievance policy

Any person, including any student, can express a complaint or grievance which will be explored by a Human Rights Officer in a timely manner. Bullying concerns can be turned in (anonymously, if preferred) on a complaint form, and will be investigated immediately. Complaint forms are found in each of the Case Manager offices, on the Complaint/Grievance board, or, alternatively, can be distributed to a student by any member of the staff team. Students are encouraged to first work with the parties involved with their complaint, and are offered support to do so. The full complaint procedure policy is distributed to students and their families at the time of intake and reviewed annually.

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 Records Specialist (x3802) 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 Resource Room teacher. 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 usually reduce the amount of work requested to the most essential parts of the curriculum. Students with very brief absences generally earn full credit for the term. Partial credit is awarded in specific, individual cases.

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Inclement Weather Policy

The Victor School always closes school when the Acton Public School System cancels school. **If Acton is closed or delayed, then The Victor School will also be closed or delayed.** There will not be any announcements specific to The Victor School on the radio or local news in these instances.

During inclement weather, there is the rare possibility that TVS may close when Acton does not. The Victor School's Attendance Line (978-266-1991 x3555) will be changed to note the closing of the school. If school releases early unexpectedly for this reason, TVS staff will notify parents and bus companies prior to the release.

There are times when Acton, and thus The Victor School, is open, but a student may not have transportation available to The Victor School if the student's home/local school system has cancelled classes for a particular day. In such cases, students are excused from school for the day. Parent/guardian judgment is encouraged when deciding to send a student to school in inclement weather.

Internet Safety

The Internet is a vast, global network linking computers around the world. Because of its enormous size, the Internet's potential is without imaginable boundaries. The Victor School maintains computers with Internet access for student use. The computers and network exists solely as a resource for educational (such as curriculum support), therapeutic (coping skill), and transitional (career development, college search) purposes. Responsible student use is built into the educational process, and begins with this policy, which outlines basic expectations to help keep each individual student, and the entire Victor community, safe in cyberspace.

The Victor School believes that the benefits students gain from access to the information within the Internet's resources outweigh any potential disadvantages. The school will make every reasonable effort to minimize risks that users will encounter objectionable material on the internet. Through education, supervision, and responsible use, we believe that the Internet can be used safely and effectively. However, there are no absolute guarantees this will happen. The school has developed a Computer/Internet Safety Policy, signed at intake and reviewed annually, to help support the goal of safe internet use within our community.

Some highlights of this policy include the following:

- Students are permitted on student computers, found in the library and academic classrooms. Students are not permitted on staff computers or other staff devices for any reason, at any time.
- Students are issued a login and password, which allows them to store their work under this account from any computer in the school. Due to concerns about viruses, flash drives are not permitted.
- Students who bring their own hardware (laptop, iPad) can request access to the school's wifi. Students are asked to not create their own wireless network or "hotspot" via cell phone. Use of hardware in the classroom is at staff discretion and subject to the same expectations of school-sponsored computers; specifically, these devices are to be used for academics, not recreation.
- Students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct when using computers; offensive, hurtful, racist, sexist, bullying material should be avoided.

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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 ABRHS. Upon entrance into the school each day, students should place their lunch in the student refrigerator or in their cubby. 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, medically-necessitated 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; all community members are expected to follow this rule.

Off-Grounds Privileges

Students are encouraged to take part in the school's off-grounds opportunities, whether it be gym classes, nature walks, field trips, or other educational experiences. Typically, students who demonstrate 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 Administrative Team. Additionally, students involved in violations of the Code of Conduct or with active safety plans that do not translate off site require Administrative Team 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 7 and 8 are not eligible. Formal guidelines and applications for this programming are available upon request.

Personal Belongings

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

The Victor School has item-specific policies for the following items:

- **Cell Phones – ninth grade and above**

Cell phones are welcome on campus, and students are expected to maintain appropriate use of these devices during the school day. Specifically, cell phones are not permitted to be used in classrooms or groups and must not disrupt the learning environment; some classes/testing situations require students to "park" cell phones during class periods. Students are permitted to check cell phones during passing periods and lunch times. Staff are available to support and coach students around responsible use.

Parents are asked to be cognizant of this expectation and help support the school by not engaging in text conversations with students during learning time. Staff are able to provide students with school phone access should a conversation need to occur.

Use that violates the above expectations, impacts the learning environment, or causes disruption of the school day will be dealt with on a case by case basis, and may result in the loss of cell phone privilege at school.

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- **Cell Phones – seventh and eighth grade**

Given the less-complete brain development of our middle school students – especially the components that enable individuals to control impulses and delay gratification – we require that any cell phones brought by students to school be checked in at the start of the school day; they will be kept in a secure location and returned at the time of dismissal. If a student is struggling to comply with this policy on a regular basis we may ask parents to keep the phone at home or turn off service during school hours.
- **Technology**

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 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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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.

Recognition

The school recognizes and celebrates student successes in a number of ways. Students are eligible for the following internal awards, which are issued on a weekly basis:

- "Wicked Smart" Award: recognizes academic achievement
- You Rock Award: recognizes an outstanding moment-in-time
- Spirit Award: recognizes outstanding community-wide interactions
- Intern Award: recognizes strong performance in an internship role

The following Academic Awards are earned by our students in grades 9-12 on a quarterly basis:

- Honor Roll: awarded to students who earn all A-B+ level grades while enrolled in at least four core academic classes
- High Honors: awarded to students who earn all A level grades while enrolled in at least four core academic classes
- Students participating in dual-enrollment at the community college may have three core academic classes at TVS if they are in good standing in the college program and otherwise meet expectations.

For those students in grades 7-8:

- Honor Roll: awarded to students who earn all A and B level grades (nothing below B-) in all of their daily classes (ELA, Social Studies, Math, Science, and Arts), and maintain passing levels of participation in Group and PE.
- High Honors: awarded to students who earn straight A's (nothing below A-) in all of their daily classes (ELA, Social Studies, Math, Science, and Arts), and maintain passing levels of participation in Group and PE.

Additionally, students are eligible for Student of the Quarter and Most Improved Student of the Quarter, awards that recognize outstanding all-around performance, and significant all-around improvement respectively.

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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.

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 are required to perform specific religious practices during school time should have their parent(s) or guardian(s) discuss this directly with school administrators upon the student's entrance to the school or at such time when it is necessary and appropriate.

Resources

- **Library/resource room**
The Victor School maintains a library, with fiction, non-fiction, and resource books available. Students are able to sign books out through their academic advisor. All books are due back prior to the end of each term. Books not returned must be replaced prior to report cards being released.
- **Google Classroom**
The school maintains a bank of Chromebooks in each classroom for student use. Many classes use this resource extensively, and students can find assignments, daily notes (when applicable), syllabi and contact information on the page for each teacher. Each teacher maintains a page at classroom.google.com and has a link to a calendar of assignments in the PowerSchool Parent/Student Portal. Students are able to stay up-to-date with their classes when absent or otherwise miss class for any reason.
- **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 on-site at least quarterly; scheduled meetings are highlighted on the school calendar, as well as through notices sent home in the weeks prior to meetings.
- **PowerSchool**
TVS is pleased to offer PowerSchool, a portal that enables both parents and students to check student grades and status of assignments online in real time. Academic Advisors have more information about how to access this resource. PowerSchool 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 Assistant Education Director.
- **Friday Flyer**
The school strives to re-highlight important calendar events and information each Friday through a community-wide email alert.
- **Education Director/Assistant Education Director**
The Victor School works with students to ensure that they are following their respective Program of Studies. The education department coordinates with the sending school's guidance department to make sure that The Victor School credits are translated correctly onto the sending school transcripts, so that the student is moving properly toward graduation. The TVS Education Director and/or Assistant Education Director is available for consultation with students and families by appointment.

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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 unisex 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.

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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 or not their own.

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. Illegal items or substances will be submitted to the local police.

Smoking/Tobacco 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 and/or a lighter, the objects will be confiscated. Cigarettes and lighters will be kept locked for two school days, available for parents to pick up; after that time, these items will be destroyed. For students over the age of 18, arrangements to retrieve these items may be made within the same time frame. Students will not be sent on school-sponsored transportation with these items.

Transportation Policies

- **Transportation to School**

Students are typically transported to school in vehicles supplied by sending school systems. 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 or 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.

- **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

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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 to their clinician or a case manager once on grounds. Student driving privileges may be revoked if they do not follow their signed contracts.

- **Use of School Vehicles**

Students may be transported to Physical Education activities, 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 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.

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 clinician.

In order to best protect the safety of students and staff at The Victor School, staff need to know who is in the building at all times. Therefore, we request that all visitors check in and sign in at our Reception Area and wear a "Visitor" badge while on grounds.

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The Victor School – Educational Services

Our Education Team Vision for our students:

Students will leave TVS having developed their skills in self-reflection and self-advocacy and will be poised to challenge themselves: using their individual strengths to take proactive risks, accept setbacks as chances for growth, and use lifelong learning opportunities, including academics, to achieve personal goals.

OVERVIEW

Educational Services

The Victor School is a learning community committed to developing well-educated, healthy, engaged students in a respectful, safe, supportive environment. TVS encourages students to put forth the effort necessary to acquire knowledge and develop academic habits of mind. The school maintains high expectations with a challenging curriculum. At the same time, The Victor School emphasizes the need for emotional health and stability.

Curriculum

The Victor School prides itself on the rigor of its curriculum, which is aligned with the Common Core Standards and/or the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, depending on subject, 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.

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.

School Goals

The Victor School has developed a set of goals that provide guidance and focus in serving the student population, which include:

1. To provide all students with a school safe from drugs, violence, and harassment, and a school culture that maximizes emotional safety, nurtures respect, upholds civil rights, and values diversity.
2. To differentiate instruction such that each student is given accommodations outlined in his/her/their IEP which address his/her/their individual learning style, and consider his/her/their strengths and areas of need.
3. To improve student performance in the content areas such that results are competitive with those of sending school districts as measured by MCAS and other assessments and other performance indices, and to move the results of state assessments (currently MCAS) toward proficiency in all subject areas.
4. To move each student toward transition to a less-restrictive setting or post-graduate plan by providing activities which consider individual needs.
5. To move each student toward his/her/their vision as outlined in the IEP, and to support each student's mastery of annual IEP goals; to support each student's steps towards meeting his/her/their graduation requirements.

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6. To encourage students and their families to become actively involved in the education process, through self-advocacy, participation in Team and other meetings, and other leadership/advocacy opportunities.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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 has/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

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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

Academic Advisor/Advisory Teams

Upon enrolling as a student at The Victor School, each student is assigned an Academic Advisor. The Academic Advisor 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 the Education Director and Assistant Education Director in writing goals and objectives for the academic component of each student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP), as well as to prepare updated information for the staff, parents/guardians, and collaterals regarding each student's academic progress and performance. Academic Advisors are also available to attend family meetings to discuss specific concerns, upon request.

More specifically, Academic Advisors meet with their assigned students several times weekly (during advisory period) to determine their academic progress and to discuss their improvement 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 entire faculty in a meeting designed to update all of the teachers on the student's progress and growth.

Academic Advisors work in partnership with Primary Clinicians; 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; some students may feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts with their Advisor rather than their Clinician, and vice-versa. 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, so can answer most inquiries. For the rest, the Academic Advisor will point the parent to the correct contact.

Attendance

In order for students to derive the maximum learning benefit from the curriculum, it is expected that they attend class consistently. Attendance is essential in order for a student to progress academically and

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therapeutically. Students are expected to attend school daily except when ill, and parents/guardians are encouraged to limit vacations/trips during scheduled school times.

Attendance statistics are gathered in terms of “present” and “not present” rather than “excused” versus “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 70% is not met. Quarterly, this expectation translates to *approximately* 12 missed days of school or an individual class. The school is available to work with families and students in terms of problem-solving any repetitive attendance issues that may arise (such as a standing doctor’s appointment that cannot be moved, missed portions of class due to family meetings) and working preventatively and creatively to ensure the curriculum is accessed in these infrequent instances. Similarly, students who miss extensive school due to hospitalization or documented medical excuses will work with the Administrative Team on appropriate, individualized plans to access the curriculum.

In general, however, students are expected to maintain at least 80% attendance both at school and in individual classes. Individual classes track attendance, which impacts the performance portion of the grade for that class. Students must be present in class for the majority of the class period in order to be counted as present for any given day. Students with “frequent breaks” as an accommodation are expected to plan for these breaks with their teachers to minimize the interruptions and time out of class, while also meeting their needs. Regular check-ins with clinicians or case managers should not be scheduled during class time unless absolutely necessary, and require prior teacher permission. At times, working outside of a classroom is appropriate; opportunities to complete work outside of class will be provided if, in the professional judgment of the teacher based on consultation with the student’s treatment team, doing so is in the best interest of the student and if the services guaranteed by the IEP can still be implemented in this manner.

Classroom Expectations

General expectations shared by every classroom include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Arriving to class on time
- Being prepared for class
- Completing and submitting assignments in a timely manner
- Maintaining appropriate civil, respectful, and thoughtful interactions with other classmates and staff at all times.
- Participating in classroom activities and discussions
- Following procedures regarding leaving the classroom for any reason
- Refraining from eating or drinking in the classroom unless with specific permission
- Refraining from using headphones in the classroom
- Refraining from using recreational materials (i.e., collectible cards/magazines, tarot cards, video games, iPods, cellular phones)

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 computer lab.

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

College Preparatory Curriculum

The Victor School’s curriculum is rigorous, and is designed to prepare students for secondary or post-secondary schools, depending on grade level. Students should be aware that, depending on the field of

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study that they may choose to pursue following high school, they may want to consider selecting additional courses in mathematics and science beyond their minimum requirements during their upperclassman years in order to better prepare them for college. The Education Director, Assistant Education Director, and Advisory Team are available for support in determining a course load that supports each student's future goals.

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 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, includes 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 or in-person meetings as requested by the parents. We respectfully ask that these appointments be scheduled two weeks in advance, and whenever possible, during times that teachers are not scheduled to be in the classroom.

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 or her sending school district's credit requirements, and earns a diploma from that sending school; TVS does not issue its own diploma. Each school district has a minimum number of courses that comprise the graduation requirements for that town. 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 clinician 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.

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7th and 8th grade

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. The schedule rotates; each class meets every 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. Two classes each day are scheduled to be fifteen minutes longer; in those classes, homework is assigned and time is set aside to look over and begin such assignments and seek any help needed to clarify expectations. Thus 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.

At the end of each day, students attend a fifteen-minute homeroom period which prepares them to transition home: assistance to organize materials, answer any remaining questions about homework or other classroom activities, review the day's events, etc. is provided.

Course Outlines and Descriptions

All classes taught at The Victor School are aligned with the Common Core Standards and/or Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, depending on subject. 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.

Credits

TVS awards credit on a per-term basis. 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 Assistant 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.

As noted above, partial credit is available for classes that meet less than five days a week, or as outlined in an IEP. Additionally, students who are absent from school for medical or emotional crises or hospitalizations are also eligible for partial credit.

Students in 7th and 8th 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.

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Declining A Diploma

On very rare occasions, a student may elect to decline his/her/their diploma because his/her/their transitional goals have not been met. The first step in doing this is for the parent (or the student, if over 18) to write a letter to the sending school district indicating that the student plans to decline the diploma, stating the reason (transitional goals/social-emotional goals, other have not been met).

This should be done as early as possible in the school year. The sending school may decline your request, and you will then need to produce documentation (quarterly progress reports, etc.) demonstrating that your child has not made appropriate progress.

While the sending school district may say they are declining your request and recommend graduation or different programming, the DESE regulations state that while there is a dispute, the student stays in place ("stays put") until the situation is resolved.

Educational Proficiency Plans (EPPs)

Students who earn 220-238 on their 10th grade English or Math MCAS are placed on an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP). This is a plan which monitors their progress as they continue to take English and/or math classes in 11th and 12th grade, and work toward proficiency. In order to fulfill the EPP, the student must remain in English and/or math for both 11th and 12th grade (depending on which subject the EPP plan is for), continue to earn credit in that subject, and take the final examination in that subject in both 11th and 12th grade. If a student fulfills these requirements, the principal can declare that the student has completed his/her/their EPP, has finished the requirements for MCAS, and is eligible for graduation.

Field Trips

Staff members plan periodic field trips that align with subject matter taught in individual courses. Students in good academic standing are eligible to participate. 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 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 academic advisor and primary clinician, and the 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 two days 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.

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 attendance, class work, homework, participation/citizenship, and projects/tests/quizzes. Grading expectations may vary slightly from class to class (i.e., heavier weight to participation in a debate class), but are clearly delineated and firm. Some students, based on their IEPs, may have alternative assessment options. Less frequently, and as required by special circumstances outlined in a student's IEP, the grading policy may be adapted.

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Credit is earned based on the student's success in accessing the curriculum. Class attendance and school attendance are the primary indicators of credit for most students. In some cases, as consistent with the IEP, students may also earn credit for work completed outside of the classroom. Except in special circumstances (i.e., hospitalization, significant illness), credit and grades are calculated at the end of each academic quarter.

Graduation

Each year, The Victor School holds a formal graduation ceremony. The entire 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!

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 toward the Assistant Education Director at extension 3811.

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, which may include the opportunity to complete homework assignments on campus with teacher assistance as needed.

While supports 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 and has a link to a calendar of assignments in the PowerSchool Parent/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.

Honor Roll

The criteria for earning academic awards are outlined for both middle-school and high-school students under "Recognition" on page 19 of this Handbook.

Internship Program

The school offers off-site internship opportunities for high school students in good academic standing and in alignment with individual student's transitional goals. This program allows our students to gain experience

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working in a job in the community. While internship sites are continually being developed in response to the ever-changing needs of our students, historically, students have interned in Acton, Boxborough, and West Concord at sites including day care centers, nursing homes, a camera store, horse barns, farms, fire and police stations, volunteer organizations, art camps, and music stores/recording studios.

The internship program can be individualized based on student and placement needs; typically, students attend between two and five days a week for two to four hours at a time. The internship program is available year-round; the 5th term typically holds the most available site placements due to community availability.

Make-Up Work

When a student misses school, he/she is/they are responsible for the missed work and is encouraged to make up the missed work. Students, not teachers, are responsible for making sure that make up work is completed, including tests and quizzes. Middle school students are supported in making arrangements to complete make-up work by their homeroom teachers. In general, all make-up work is due within one (1) week of return from absence, unless other arrangements have been made with the teacher. If students have been absent for five (5) or more days, a plan will be developed between the student and his/her/their teachers to make up the missed work within a reasonable amount of time.

It is expected that students and their families take vacations during school breaks. However, should a family take a vacation while school is in session, it is the student's responsibility to notify teachers at least two (2) weeks in advance, obtain assignments, and arrange with them a mutually agreeable time frame for the completion of any missed work, tests and quizzes. It is not the responsibility of teachers to provide individual tutoring to review missed work for students returning from vacation. Remember, students, not their teachers, are responsible for making sure that all work missed is made up.

If a student needs to make up missed work because homework was not turned in, or an assignment was not completed, he or she needs, or they need, to know the teacher's late assignment policy. Some teachers will only accept make-up work for one week, or while the chapter is still being taught. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of what assignments need to be completed, and how long the teacher will continue to accept them.

MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System)

All students in publically 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. Please see the chart below for specific information on exams and passing score information.

| Required MCAS | Passing Score Required |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| English Language Arts | 240, or 220 + EPP |
| Mathematics | 240, or 220 + EPP |
| High School Science* | 220 |

Note: EPP = Educational Proficiency Plan

*Science options include Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics, and Technology/Engineering; students may take different tests until they have successfully passed one.

Students are required to earn either a score of 240 on the English and Math sections of the MCAS exam, or meet or exceed a scaled score of 220 on both the Grade 10 ELA and Math exams and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP).

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Each EPP will include, at a minimum: a review of the student's strengths and weaknesses, based on MCAS and other assessment results; coursework, grades and teacher input; the courses the student will be required to take and successfully complete in grades 11 and 12; and a description of the assessments the school will regularly administer to determine if the student is moving toward proficiency.

Students who do not earn a passing score on an MCAS exam are provided additional opportunities to retake the test. English and Math MCAS retest sessions are scheduled twice per year. There is currently one Science retest session per year. Exact dates of the scheduled MCAS tests are also highlighted on the official school calendar, distributed separately.

Many students receive accommodations while taking the MCAS test. Each student's accommodations are developed by his/her/their Team and are listed in his/her/their IEP on the page labeled "State or District-Wide Assessments." MCAS accommodations might include having the test directions clarified, using a graphic organizer or a computer for the composition, or a math reference sheet for the math sections of the MCAS.

A few of our students who are unable to take the standard MCAS tests even with accommodations participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt). MCAS-Alt consists of a portfolio of specific materials completed independently by the student, although teachers may support the process. Evidence for the portfolio may include work samples, instructional data, videotapes, and other supporting information. The decision to participate in MCAS testing by compiling an MCAS-Alt portfolio is determined by the student's Team.

Mid-Year and Final Exams

As a general rule, classes for ninth through twelfth 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 given in all high school grades, in all academic subjects. Examination periods run approximately two hours and 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 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 future-forward.

In order to receive report cards (or, if applicable, diplomas) at the end of term four, students must return all textbooks and take care of all financial obligations, including those for lost textbooks, calculators, or other school-supplied materials. Ample warning of any missing items is given to effected students.

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.

The basic focus of physical education at TVS is to encourage students to participate and to develop an interest in a variety of physical activities, and to promote physical fitness. The emphasis is on physical activity and fitness, rather than on sports or prowess. Great skill or talent is not required to excel in PE. If students participate in the class activities and demonstrate a good attitude, they will do well in PE.

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.

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On each report card, the student receives a grade in each subject, along with comments by each teacher. In the rare instance that a mistake is found on a report card, students should take the report card to the appropriate teacher and have it corrected and signed. The report card should then be returned to the Education Director, who will adjust the mistake and reissue the report card and transcript.

Report cards are not released if the student has outstanding school property to return (i.e., text books). There is no exception to this policy.

Midterm reports have been replaced by PowerSchool, which offers regularly updated grade reports. Students and parent/guardians are encouraged to review this information regularly and to contact their student's Academic Advisor with any questions. 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 Assistant Education Director.

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. If a student received a D+ or lower in a course he/she/they can either:

- Improve his/her/their grade through Term 5 participation. The Term 5 teacher will then recommend fall placement based on the work produced during the 5th Term. OR
- The course may be repeated, following which the sequence may be resumed.

For example, the following are considered sequential subjects: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, advanced math (Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Statistics, etc.).

Student Supplies

All students taking a math class should purchase a graphing calculator. The TI-83 and TI-84 series calculators are appropriate and recommended. If you need assistance in securing this tool, please contact the school.

Students are provided with a list of supplies they need for classes at the beginning of the school year. At times during the year, teachers may require additional materials for specific projects or assignments.

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, or in understanding 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, Team meetings are held at other times throughout the year to check on the student's progress, to discuss possible transition back to the sending school, or to talk about concerns. As with the annual Team meeting, students are invited to attend these Team meetings and to advocate for themselves.

- **How to Call a Team Meeting**
Anyone—student, parent, staff member—can request to have a Team meeting at any time for any reason. To request a Team meeting, one calls the sending school district, and makes the request.

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It is also helpful to let our Assistant Education Director know that a meeting is being requested, so that we will expect a call from the district.

- **Requesting Evaluations**

A parent can request an evaluation by sending a request in writing to the sending school district. There are instances when a request will not be honored, such as when testing has been completed very recently. However, the sending school liaison should discuss these situations with the parent when s/he receives the letter of request.

Term 5

The Victor School is a 12-month program; that is, the school runs year-round. Students who attend TVS are expected to continue their education throughout the year, which includes participation during the school's 5th quarter, a six-week session that falls throughout July and August. While we understand that some students may be opposed to attending school in the summer months, each student's IEP notes the need for continuous, year-round progress to prevent regression in the student's ongoing academic and emotional development. The 5th quarter offers the same services, classes, and supports available during the other quarters. During the 5th quarter, students continue to recover credits or to gain extra credits so that they will have additional options in future semesters, to utilize our clinical staff for additional therapeutic growth and support; or to participate in an internship (work-study) program, or, in specialized situations, attend a college class via dual enrollment or design an independent study course -- which has included studying everything from vampires to global warming.

Textbooks and Classroom Supplies

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 in advance your cooperation.

Transcript

The TVS transcript includes letter grades for each term of each course taken at TVS. Credits earned at other schools are reported on a yearly basis, and as "pass/fail" only, because we have no way of verifying the standards and rubrics used to calculate these. 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 (i.e., text books). There are no exceptions to this policy.

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The Victor School – Nursing Services

The school nurse is on-site daily from 9am to 3pm and is available to administer medications and support in-the-moment student emergencies. 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 a medication administered.

- **Allergy Management**

The school will coordinate with families, students, and doctors when Allergy Management Plans are required. These plans should be updated annually, or at any time that a change occurs. The nurse ensures all staff are trained in any specifics of these plans, and oversees their implementation.

- **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.

- **Medications**

Student medications (with few exceptions, see below) are kept locked and are dispensed only by the school nurse or a designated staff who has been 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 given the immediate nature of their use. 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 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 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 consent.

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

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- Screenings and Immunizations

The school collects immunization records and health screenings in alignment with DESE regulations. Parents/guardians are asked to submit updated physicals and dental screenings to the nurse as they occur. The nurse is able to provide the required hearing, vision, and postural screening should a doctor's visit not include these.

- 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 symptoms observed.

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The Victor School – Transitions Programming

Vision

The Victor School Transitions Programming exists to provide each student with the skills, tools, experiences, practice, connections, and plans necessary to support them in developing, crafting, and taking confident steps towards their post-high school goals.

Philosophy

The Victor School's overarching belief in Collaborative Problem Solving is strongly footed within the Transitions Component. Students do well if they can, and benefit from 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 and practice through job shadowing, internship, college campus visits, guest speakers, volunteer experiences, and 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.

Transitional Services Menu

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 representatives from local colleges on campus for information sessions and also takes field trips to local colleges where students have the opportunity to tour, participate in an information session, and eat lunch in the dining hall. College Bound Seniors is a group that walks students through the college search and applications process. For more details please refer to the "Guide to College Planning"

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 and have been successful in connecting a number of students with their first college course. For more details please refer to the "Dual-Enrollment Information Packet & Application"

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Internship Programming

This is a work experience program that allows 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. They also develop 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 November and March on a Saturday. See the Education Director for applications and deadline information

Skill Assessments

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

Skill Groups

TVS offers ongoing skill development groups that focus on areas of transition. These groups offer students the chance to learn new skills, as well as to practice them over time, developing proficiency. Examples include: Show Me the Money, Welcome to 18, Naked Roommate, Cooking, Internship & Job Prep, and Healthy Relationships.

Extended Transitional Support Options

In some cases, a student's Team and family feels that some additional work is needed to meet social, emotional, or transitional IEP goals despite credits being completed. TVS offers "Additional Transitional Support Options: Term 5 and Semester".

**The Transitions Coordinator is available for individual coaching sessions with students and their parents/guardians. Please contact Tia Savage- tsavage@jri.org 978-266-1991 x3841*

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The Victor School – Clinical Services

Overview

The Victor School is home to bright students, many with above-average IQs, who have emotional or social issues that can interfere with their academic performance. Students may struggle with depression, anxiety, mania, social/attachment issues, or maintaining attention. They may have difficulties with transitions, or struggle with organization.

Our clinical team is comprised of licensed clinicians who receive ongoing training in a number of interventions, including Collaborative Problem Solving, Dialectic Behavior Therapy, cognitive-behavioral interventions, ARC, and social pragmatics. While each student is assigned a Primary Clinician (see below) the team works seamlessly together, providing each student with opportunities for problem solving, coaching, and support from each member of the clinical team on an as-needed basis and as consistent with his/her/their IEP.

The goal of the clinicians is to focus on each student's educational needs and goals and implement therapeutic techniques as needed to assist the student in reaching their educational potential. **The clinical team is not designed to replace outpatient therapy.** Clinicians offer therapeutic supports and techniques to supplement the outpatient work with students. Students are required to have an outside clinician or team unless their Team decided otherwise. This recommendation is made with respect to our students' needs that are most often complex and need additional supports outside of the school day. The TVS clinician is not available after school hours, on holidays, or during scheduled school breaks. Additionally, there is no on-call system in case of an emergency during these times. The clinical team prefers to work closely with the outpatient providers to support their work as well. This tandem approach helps to ensure that the needs of students and families can be addressed as seamlessly and in as timely a fashion as possible when additional supports may be needed.

Clinical Goals

The Clinical Team supports the school goals (see page 19-20). The Team is focused on the following goals, designed to support student progress and development in conjunction with each student's IEP goals:

1. To provide all students with a consistent, supportive school environment where new skills can be practiced safely.
2. To adopt a strengths-based approach, building on the individualized, positive traits inherent in each student.
3. To promote self care and wellness among students and staff.
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 skills and strong communication within individual students and the community as a whole.

Primary Clinician

Each student is assigned a Primary Clinician upon admission to The Victor School. The Primary Clinician is responsible for treatment planning in alignment with the IEP and supporting transitional progress, and serves as the primary liaison between school and home/collaterals. These goals are accomplished via case management, crisis intervention, family meetings, daily skills groups, and regular check-ins with students.

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- **Check-ins/Coaching**

A student may access and utilize clinical supports by asking for or scheduling a brief “check-in” to discuss any significant event that is relevant and troubling to them, and impeding their ability to complete class work and use class time appropriately. Students are expected to remain in their classes until an appropriate clinical team member is available to meet with them. The clinician/case manager and the student will problem-solve in a collaborative manner and make an appropriate plan to help the student to be more productive in class and in their academics in general while accommodating emotional factors. Occasionally, a teacher may decide that a particular student would benefit from a check-in; in this instance, a student may not return to class until both the teacher and the clinician are satisfied that a student is ready to re-enter the class based on his/her/their emotional stability and interactions. Brief check-ins are not designed to be therapy and keep a student from the classroom for an academic period. Occasionally this may happen, but it should be rare. Students are highly encouraged to problem-solve the specific issue and return to class. Clinicians will help students identify, learn, and develop healthy strategies for them to attend to their classroom responsibilities.

- **Family Meetings**

Primary Clinicians serve as the primary contact for family members. We encourage all families to meet weekly with their primary clinicians to maintain close communication about school and home progress as well as to stay connected to school services. With respect to schedule demands that many families experience, some meetings may be held before or right after school hours, or via conference call.

Each student and their family participate in developing their goals and evaluating their own progress on treatment plans on a quarterly basis with their Primary Clinician.

- **Case Management/Collateral Contacts**

Primary Clinicians 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, medical providers. Releases of Information are required for each outpatient provider prior to communication taking place.

- **Group**

Therapeutic groups occur on a daily basis and are led by a licensed member of the clinical team. Each student is assigned a group, which they attend daily. There are two types of groups: processing and skills groups. Processing groups are generally held twice a week, and skills groups are held three times a week.

Processing groups help students examine a number of topics related to adolescence, friendships, parents, siblings, life transitions, and the complexities of these relationships. Students learn to offer support, receive feedback, examine their roles in situations, problem-solve, and develop more complex social skill awareness.

Skills groups offer students an additional layer of self-awareness and development. Skills groups cover a wide range of topics that help students learn coping skills through hobby development, health and wellness, social opportunities, community service, college prep, and independent living skills. Some of the skills groups offered during a typical year have been: Music Appreciation; field trips to local museums and cultural programs; drama; volunteer service at the local food pantry; board games; arts-related classes such as working with wood, crafts, sculpting, sewing, candle-

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making; physical activities such as ice skating, horseback riding, team sports, hiking, yoga/mediation; and transition classes that include college living, welcome to 18, money management, debate, cooking, and SAGA. The skills groups rotate every term. Students often drive the skills group courses that we offer. These skills groups encourage students to explore new activities and challenge themselves in safe, fun, nurturing, and social contexts.

The purpose of therapeutic groups is to help students navigate the complexities of adolescence and transition to adulthood through the mutual aid and support of their peers. For this purpose such topics as self-care, wellness, DBT Skills, conflict resolution, self-advocacy, and distress tolerance/coping skill development are addressed during group throughout the school year. In addition, individual groups identify what they would like and need to focus on during their group time.

All therapeutic groups ask the following from their members:

Confidentiality

Respect confidentiality of information shared in group, meaning: group issues are not to be discussed with students outside of group; however, students can discuss group 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 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).

Pods

The school distinguishes middle schoolers, upper and lower classmen by "pods." Students in grades 9-10 make up the Lower Pod, while students in grades 11-12+ are members of the Upper Pod; students in grade 7-8 belong to the Middle School Pod. Pods 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 of each grade, encourage friendships with similar ages of students, and provide a stronger network of clinical and educational access for each student.

The Middle School Pod focuses primarily on social development, metacognitive and executive functioning skills, and emotional regulation. 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.

The Lower Pod focuses on social development, awareness, and skills. They learn how to advocate for and access their accommodations, develop team building skills and cohesion, develop healthy lifestyles and make safe choices, and 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, participate in team-building ropes course day, and attend anti-bullying 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 families.

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The Upper Pod focuses on post-high school planning that may involve college or career, independent living skills, getting a driver's license and/or job, job maintenance, recognizing and developing their support system, sharing experiences and problem solving as young adults with complex issues, and making healthy lifestyle choices. 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 programing developed by the Transitions Coordinator that supports these goals. Upper Pod students attend anti-bullying and sex education programing as well. Parents are invited to forums and discussion related these topics.

Master's Level Student Interns

The Victor School is committed to training new professionals. Towards this end, the school has a relationship with Simmons College, and is fortunate to have interns from their Social Work program working on campus. The school does not assign these interns to a case without a family's permission. Interns are provided with significant individual supervision and participate in all group supervision meetings held by the full clinical team.

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ADDENDUM A

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act Massachusetts Student Records Regulations¹

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 that 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 or Assistant 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.

¹ [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.]

² [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.]

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ADDENDUM B

The Victor School Policy on Implementation of Protection of Pupil Rights Amendments¹

The Victor School adheres to the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA),² a federal law that affords parents and 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. An overview of these rights follows:

a) Consent to federally funded surveys concerning “protected information.”

Schools must obtain written consent of the parent or eligible student prior to requiring the student to participate in a survey that is funded in whole or in part by a program of the United States Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (USDESE) if the survey concerns one or more of the following protected areas of information (“protected information survey”):

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 parent; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

b) Opt out of certain surveys and exams even if not federally funded. Parents and eligible students must receive notice of any of the following activities and have the right to opt out of them:

1. Any protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening that is 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;³
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information⁴ obtained from students for the purposes of marketing or selling or otherwise distributing the information to others.⁵

c) Inspect certain materials. Upon request, parents and eligible students have the right to inspect the following before the school district administers or uses them:

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Surveys created by a third party;
3. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
4. Instructional materials⁶ used as part of the educational curriculum.

d) Receive notification of the district’s policies on the PPRA. After consultation with parents, the Public Schools with assistance from The Victor School, has adopted the following policies to implement the PPRA:

Notice of Rights – The Superintendent will arrange for direct notice to parents and eligible students of this policy at the beginning of each school year, either through the U.S. Mail or e-mail, and will provide updates within a reasonable time period after any substantive changes. The Superintendent, with assistance from The Victor School, may also include notice of this policy along with other routine legal notices in one or more local newspapers.

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Notice of Activities – The Superintendent with assistance from The Victor School, will arrange for direct notice to parents/eligible students at least annually at the beginning of the school year of the activities or surveys identified in the PPRA that the Public School anticipates conducting. The Superintendent, with the assistance from The Victor School, will provide parents/eligible students with consent forms or the opportunity to opt a child out of activities, if applicable.

Inspection of Materials – Parents or eligible students who wish to exercise their right to inspect surveys and instructional materials as identified in the PPRA may do so by sending written notice to the **Superintendent of Schools or The Victor School Director**. The **Superintendent/Director** will respond to requests within ten calendar days. Opportunity for inspection of applicable materials will be provided at The Victor School or district administrative offices.

Protections of Student Privacy – The Superintendent, with the assistance of The Victor School, will insure that procedures are in place to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and in the collection, disclosure or use of personal information for marketing, selling or other distribution purposes.

Parents or eligible students who believe their rights under the PPRA have been violated may file a complaint within the district by contacting the Superintendent of Schools for your district or the Director of The Victor School. Complaints may be filed with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

¹ Note to school officials: This form of policy has been developed and adapted by Stoneman, Chandler & Miller LLP from information appearing on the United States Department of Education website at <http://www.ed.gov/offices> for use by Massachusetts public schools in complying with the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendments, 20 USC §1232h, hereinafter referred to as the "PPRA". The PPRA requires that schools receiving federal funds develop local policies "in consultation with parents" to provide for the district's compliance with the PPRA. 20 USC §1232h(c)(1).

² Note to school officials: The PPRA has often been referred to by the names of its authors, i.e., the "Hatch Amendment," "Grassley Amendment" and may now be referred to as the "Tiahrt Amendment" after Congressman Todd Tiahrt who introduced the amendments as part of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

³ Mass. Gen Laws §71, §57 requires schools to conduct physical examinations [of student] "to ascertain defects in sight or hearing, postural or other physical defects tending to prevent his receiving the full benefits of his school work and to ascertain physical defects of the feet which might unfavorably influence the child's health or physical efficiency."

⁴ Personal information is defined as individually identifiable information including a student or parent's first and last name; home address; telephone number; or social security number. 20 USC §1232h (c)(6)(E).

⁵ The requirements concerning activities involving the collection and disclosure of personal information from students for marketing purposes do 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, student or educational institutions, such as the following: college or other postsecondary education recruitment, or military recruitment; book clubs, magazines, and programs providing access to low-cost literacy products; curriculum and instructional materials used by elementary and secondary schools; tests and assessment used by elementary schools and secondary school to provide genitive, evaluative, diagnostic, clinical, aptitude, or achievement information about student; the sale by students of products or services to raise funds for school-related or educational-related activities; student recognition programs.

⁶ The term "instructional materials" is defined as instructional material that is provided to the student, regardless of format, including printed or representational materials, audio visual materials (such as materials accessible through the internet). The term does not include academic tests or academic assessments. USC §1232h(c)(6)(A)

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ADDENDUM C

Complaint and Grievance Notice

If you, as a student at The Victor School, or who receives services from a program of Justice Resource Institute, or any other interested party, including staff, parents, advocates, or other interested persons, have a complaint or grievance, you are encouraged to first discuss the matter with the staff involved.

It is important to note that complaints are not held against anyone making them in any way -- complaints are a valuable learning experience for the program, and do not result in retaliation or barriers to service for anyone who brings forward a complaint.

Staff will work with you to resolve the situation. Staff may involve their supervisor if that would be helpful. Within three school days, staff will inform you of any actions that will be taken.

If the complaint is not resolved at this level, or if you choose, a complaint may be made in writing by completing the JRI Complaint Form. Complaint forms can be found on the student rights board, in each Case Manager's office, or from the Human Rights Officer. You also may make a complaint by speaking to the Human Rights Officer.

You can write the complaint yourself, or describe it to any staff member, who can write it down for you. Completed complaint forms may be given to any staff or supervisor, who will ensure that they are given to the Human Rights Officer, who will then log the complaint and report it to the Program Director by the next school day.

The Human Rights Officer works closely with the Program Director to ensure that all program policies and practices are in keeping with the letter and the spirit of the human rights provisions of the state regulations for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Victor School has appointed Sharon Fors as Human Rights Officer. The Human Rights Officer or a member of Ad Team will investigate the situation and take corrective action where necessary within three business days. If the issues are not clear-cut, or require further investigation, it may be referred to the Program Director, Wendy Rosenblum. The Human Rights Officer will let you know about any decisions made. If you are not satisfied with the decision, you can appeal to the program's supervising Vice President, Jenn Miguel, within three days of receiving the response. This appeal will be resolved within ten working days and you will be notified of the decision. You also have the option of consulting with your attorney.

In addition, if you have a concern about the safety and quality of care provided at the school, that has not been resolved at the program level, you can contact the JRI Corporate office at the following address: JRI Corporate Offices, 160 Gould Street, Unit 300, Needham, MA 02494-2300 or the JRI Compliance Officer at cmcdermott@jri.org.

We look forward to working with you to resolve any concerns that may arise!

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

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook, 2017-2018

Student Name:

In signing below, I verify that I have received and reviewed the Student Handbook for the 2017-2018 school year. Should any questions arise, I will contact my Academic Advisor or Primary Clinician.

Signatures

Student: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

*Please return this page, signed, to the school,
attention Sharon Fors, no later than 7/5/17.*

Thanks in advance!