

# **The Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School**

**2020-2021**

## **Family Handbook**

**[www.mvpcs.org](http://www.mvpcs.org)**

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# *the* CHARTER SCHOOL

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Welcome to the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School, a public school that serves students ages 5-21 from all island communities.

The MVPCS is located in West Tisbury on State Road.

MVPCS is open to all students on a space available basis and will not discriminate because of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender identity, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language, or academic achievement.

## Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School to create a public school that will cultivate lifelong learners in a multi-aged, project-based setting. Within an environment that models **interdependence** as the foundation of society:

- The **individual** student will learn to direct their learning;
- The **group** will make decisions together and recognize the unique contributions of each member;
- The **community** will support and interact with the school body.

## The MVPCS Pillars

Freedom  
Democracy  
Cooperation  
Responsibility  
Respect  
Trust

## **Charter Schools**

A Charter School, as defined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts 601 CMR. 1.00, is a public school operated under a charter granted by the Secretary of Education.

Charter schools are funded by the average per pupil tuition payment of the sending district, an amount determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Charter schools are open to all students on a space available basis and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender identity, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language, or academic achievement.

## **A Brief History of the MVPCS**

The founders of the MVPCS came together because of their interest in education, their commitment to children, and the development of the Education Reform Act of 1993 which allowed for the creation of Charter Schools in Massachusetts. This group of Vineyard parents, teachers and community members led a series of community discussions to brainstorm and develop a vision for an alternative public school.

A Steering Committee met weekly for two years to research specific island needs, philosophy, structure, facilities, staffing, community involvement and budget, as well as the latest educational theories about how and why students learn. The first submitted proposal was returned from the state for additional clarification. A revised application was subsequently submitted.

On March 15, 1995, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education authorized the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School. Two years of hard work by a dedicated group of parents, educators and community members had won a new option for island families. On July 1, 1996 the MVPCS began its five year contract with the Commonwealth and each Board of Trustee member became a public agent of the state.

The MVPCS opened the doors on September 16, 1996. In June 2001, the founders' vision of a K-12 public school option for the families of Martha's Vineyard was fully realized with the commencement ceremony for the school's first graduating class.

## **School Rights**

*As identified by the students and teachers together during the very first days of the MVPCS*

Each person has the right:

1. To feel safe in mind, body and spirit.
2. To have personal property reserved for personal use, unless loaned or given to someone else.
3. To have needs, aspirations and responsibilities acknowledged and respected.
4. To be themselves as long as they are responsive to others.
5. To have a clean, tidy and vandalism free campus.

## **Educational Program and Philosophy**

At the core of the MVPCS educational program is the belief that self-directed learning is the deepest learning. With advisor and parents, each student develops a Personal Education Plan (PEP), custom-designed to fit the individual's needs, interests, and learning styles. The PEP becomes a continuous tool for goal setting, record keeping, and assessment.

Students will strive to become a self-directed learner through a program that is developmentally appropriate for them and which is aligned with the State of Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The aim is to prepare young people for further learning, productive employment, and responsible participation in society.

The school strives to help students understand their learning styles and nurture their personal interests. Community is equally emphasized. Every morning the entire school community meets on Main Street for Morning Meeting to hear announcements, sharing, and singing. Members of the Vineyard professional community are invited to participate as mentors in their fields or to teach weekly Artist-In-Residence classes. There are numerous opportunities for multi-age learning.

An environment of mutual respect is fostered where success is applauded and mistakes can be made during the daily learning process. Parents have the right to be informed of and have access to the course curriculum, teaching resources including course literature, and the qualifications of teachers.

## **The MVPCS Board of Trustees**

Charter schools operate independently of any school committee and are managed by a Board of Trustees. The Trustees, upon receiving a charter, are public agents authorized by the Commonwealth to supervise and control the Charter School.

The basic responsibilities of the Trustees are to ensure that:

- The school's academic program is successful, as measured by both internal and external assessments;
- The school's program and operation are faithful to the terms of its charter, including compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements;
- The school is a viable organization, which includes, among other things, that it is financially solvent and has a competent, professional staff.

### **MVPCS Board of Trustees**

Steven Nierenberg, President (2021)

Marc Favreau, Vice-President (2021)

Tim McHugh, (2022)

Christopher Anderson (2023)

Toni Kauffman (2023)

Claudia Ewing (2020)

Gregory Germani, Treasurer(2023)

Emily LaPierre (2021)

*Meetings are open to the public  
in accordance with Massachusetts open meeting law.  
<https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>*

## **Options in Education**

Options in Education, Inc. is a 501-c-3 nonprofit corporation committed to providing educational alternatives for the children of Martha's Vineyard. A goal for OIE is to sustain and keep the school financially sound as it becomes self-sufficient in achieving financial independence. OIE owns the building and grounds which it leases to the school.

The purposes of OIE are:

1. To support and promote innovative educational programs on Martha's Vineyard,

- especially for children;
2. To raise funds for a charter school;
  3. To eventually operate a summer program offering educational activities for children, and to create employment opportunities for young people.

### **Board of Directors**

Peter Steedman, President (Ex-Officio)  
Jonathan Chatinover Treasurer  
Lin Gallant, David Welch, Makenzie Brookes,  
Jennifer Knight, Laura Hern

### ***Ex-Officio Members***

Steve Nierenberg, MVPCS Board of Trustees

## **Parent Involvement**

In addition to meeting with teachers and creating PEP's, families are encouraged to contribute to the school through volunteering in a variety of ways. They can help support the classroom or serve on committees, provide lessons of special interest, mentor, assist with field trips, participate in "work projects", contribute to the Annual Drive, or teach in our Artists-In-Residence program.

The Charter School's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is active and engaged in activities throughout the year. The English Learners Parent Advisory Group (ELPAC) and the SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council) are active groups in the Charter School community.

The parent voice in school governance is important. While the Board of Trustees is responsible for policy making, the entire MVPCS community informs the decision-making. To this end, parents may choose to serve on Task Forces (which in turn make direct recommendations to the Board), serve on hiring committees, and/or communicate their suggestions via the Director. This input is valued as part of the community-building process and educational experience of the school.

Most parent concerns should be resolved through discussions with staff and the Director. The Conflict Resolution Policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees on January 16, 2002. It states:

*"The goal of the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School is to foster open, direct communication among all of our community members and the resolution of disagreements through discussion and consensus building. The Director is responsible for all concerns and issues involving staff, parents, and students. The Director will consult appropriate members of the community with the goal of*

*resolving concerns and issues. In the event that an issue remains unresolved, a community member or group may notify, in writing, the President of the Board, who will discuss the issue with the Director and, when it is appropriate, consult with other members of the community in an effort to resolve the conflict. The President may bring to the full Board issues, which are directly pertinent to Board responsibility. All parties involved in a dispute will be notified of decisions made to resolve it. A community member or group who feels that further action is necessary to resolve a matter may write to the Charter School Office, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.”*

Parents or students with identified disabilities, who feel that their rights were violated or ignored, can bring their grievances to the attention of the school’s 504 coordinator, Mr. Robert Louzan.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are an important part of the curriculum and all students are expected to attend. Field trip information will be distributed to parents or guardians in advance of the trip. All chaperones must abide by the rules set forth in the following letter.

*Dear Chaperones,*

*Thank you for volunteering to chaperone this field trip. We would like you to be aware of some guidelines that we ask everyone to be knowledgeable of while helping our students have a positive learning experience, and a safe and enjoyable trip. It is our hope that you enjoy this experience, as well. All chaperones need to undergo a CORI/SAFIs (overnights) check prior to serving as a chaperone.*

*All chaperones are to adhere to school policies outlined in the Family Handbook and the School’s Crisis Management Plan.*

*All chaperones represent the Charter School in all activities and interactions.*

*All chaperones are to be informed of and adhere to the responsibilities specific to this field trip as outlined by the classroom teachers.*

*All chaperones are to stay with the group of students to which they are assigned, and monitor them closely at all times.*

*Decisions are made based on the well - being of the whole group.*

*We are very grateful that you have given your time and care.*

*Thank you,*

*The Charter School Administration and Faculty*

## **THE “NUTS AND BOLTS”**

### **Advisors**

Each student is assigned an advisor who serves as the primary liaison between school and home. The advisor counsels students on classes, course selection, and opportunities offered by the



school. Opportunities include mentorships, electives and educational pursuits to address student interests, skills and abilities. As the student progresses through the school, the role of the Advisor changes to include counseling and supporting students in their different classes.

### **Birthdays**

We are happy to celebrate birthdays at the MVPCS by singing at morning meeting. Individual celebrations are to be off campus and after school. All invitations will be distributed outside of school.

### **Delayed School Opening/Cancellation of School**

On days when there may not be school or a delayed opening because of weather conditions or some other emergency, it is reported on major Boston television channels, WMVY 88.7FM, email, and an 'all school' text message.

### **Emails**

Please understand that the school email system is a public system. The emails received on the school email system are for professional purposes only, and can and will be shared with the appropriate professionals in the building. Private communications are not to be sent using the school email system.

### **Family Information - Residential and Mailing Addresses,**

#### **Phone Numbers and Email Address**

The school does not release the phone numbers, street addresses, mailing addresses, or email addresses of families or employees without permission of families.

### **Gifts**

The school discourages individual gift exchanges between teachers, parents and students.

### **Lunch Program**

Breakfast and lunch are served daily; breakfast is \$2.00 and lunch is \$3.75. Children at the MVPCS are entitled to use the national free and reduced breakfast/lunch program, if they qualify. Applications are available from the school. A la carte snacks are available for purchase. SNACKS ARE NOT INCLUDED in the free and reduced breakfast and lunch program. EVERYONE MUST PAY FOR SNACKS.

Friends and family of the MVPCS community may purchase an adult lunch for \$6.00. Everyone needs to sign up by 10:00 if they want lunch.

### **Personal Electronic Devices**

MVPCS has specific cell phone expectations. This will be discussed at PEPS. Upper school students and their parents will be asked to sign the Acceptable Use Policy, which is included at the end of this document. Please be aware that inappropriate use of phones includes (but is not limited to) photographs and videos taken without teacher approval, distributed and/or shared, accessing social media, inappropriate music, inappropriate comments on the device regarding others, and all games are not permitted during the school day, on school buses, and on field trips.

### **School Adjustment Counselor**

All students may have access to the School Adjustment Counselor. All counseling sessions and materials are available to all students.

### **School Hours**

School begins at 8:10 a.m. We welcome students into the classrooms beginning at 8:00. Morning meeting starts at 8:20 a.m. School ends at 3:10 p.m. Please note the 12:30 dismissal time for all half days. Students need to be involved in a special supervised program or activity if they are to remain after 3:15 p.m.

### **Visitor Policy and Procedure**

MVPCS welcomes visitors: students, teachers, parents, and interested community members. It is necessary to give advance notice of intent to visit and the purpose of the visit. All visitors must check in and out at the front office upon arrival and departure. Please call 508-693-9900 to arrange a visit.

## **Health**

### **Screenings**

Students aged 10-15 have a postural screening to detect any spinal abnormalities. The following assessments are mandated by the Massachusetts of Public Health.

- Eyesight evaluations will be done for grades K through 5 and once during middle school (6-8) and High School (9-12).
- Hearing tests will be done for grades K – 3 annually and once in grades 6 -12. Height, weight, and BMI are done in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10.
- SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment), is done in grades 7 and 10.

Please notify the school in writing if you wish your child to be excused from these screenings.

### **Medication**

Medication should be given at home if possible. If medication needs to be given during the school day, the nurse must be contacted to dispense medication prior to sending medication to school.

### **Wellness Policy**

The MVPCS Wellness Policy can be found on the school website at: [www.mvpcs.org](http://www.mvpcs.org)

### **Dentist**

The Vineyard Smiles dental program offers free exams to all students. Please sign up online at [www.MVHealthCareAccess.org](http://www.MVHealthCareAccess.org) or fill out an application with the school nurse.

### **Physical Exams**

A physical examination by a medical doctor and an up-to-date record of immunizations are required for all new students entering school and must be updated every four years. For a list of required immunizations, please visit <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/school-immunizations>. All students who have immunization exemptions must have **yearly** exemptions signed.

### **Sickness**

If your child is sick, please call the school by 9:00 a.m. to let the office know s/he won't be in school. A formerly ill child may return to school if s/he is fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicines, not vomiting for 24 hours, and/or has been on medication for 24 hours (if medication has been prescribed). If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse. When students are required to stay home or in a hospital due to a physician's written order for medical reasons the school provides school assignments to continue the student's education program without interference. Communication between the school, home and/or hospital is open and supportive.

## **Code of Conduct**

### **Discrimination and Harassment are prohibited**

The Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School conducts its programs and activities in conformity with state and federal laws that prohibit discrimination and harassment based on membership in legally protected categories. Those laws include Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, including the revisions to Title IX, in effect in August, 2020, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the IDEA, M.G.L.c.76, Sec. 5, M.G.L.,c.151B, and the American Disabilities Act. It is the policy of the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School not to discriminate and not to allow discrimination or harassment, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, immigration status, handicap, disability, or any other legally prohibited basis in any of its activities.

### **Complaint Process and Protocols**

The Director, or designee, will accept, investigate and attempt to resolve complaints alleging discrimination or harassment. When a complaint is brought to the attention of the Director, the investigation will begin immediately. All parties involved will be contacted and interviewed as part of the due process and a resolution will be determined. If it is determined that harassment or discrimination has occurred consequences may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and or legal action.

### **Code of Conduct**

The following offenses are prohibited in school and at school-sponsored activities and may result in in-school suspension, suspension from school and school-sponsored activities, emergency removal, or expulsion from school. All students are to receive due process and a hearing will be scheduled to discuss the offense with the Director/designee, student, and parents or guardians, the School Adjustment Counselor, the Administrator of Special Education and even legal counsel, if desired. After the period of suspension, a re-entry meeting may be held with parties

involved in the initial hearing. The school is responsible for providing educational services to students who are suspended or expelled and these services will be under the direction of the Director, designee, Administrator of Special Education (if applicable), and the student's advisor. General data will be collected and collated at the end of each school year regarding suspensions to better inform the school.

Our Pillars and School Rights, identified on page 3 and 4 of this Family Handbook, guide our actions as members of this school community. Any action that violates the Pillars and infringes on the School Rights of an MVPCS community member and therefore disrupts the learning environment is subject to, but not limited to, the following: conflict resolution, loss or privileges and/or suspension.

- 1. Swearing at, Physical contact, or Striking an Adult:** Any student who swears at, has physical contact with, or strikes an adult at a school-sponsored activity, regardless of time or location is subject to suspension or expulsion from school-sponsored activities regardless of time and location.
- 2. Smoking including vaping:** Any student caught smoking or having a tobacco product in his or her possession during school hours or at a school-sponsored activity, regardless of time or location, is subject to suspension from all school-sponsored activities, regardless of time or location.
- 3. Drugs and/or Alcohol:** Possession, use, purchase or sale of drugs, alcohol, drug paraphernalia or any controlled substance in any place or vehicle under school jurisdiction and at all school-sponsored activities, regardless of time or location, is prohibited and may result in suspension or expulsion. Attempted sale, purchase, or distribution of controlled substances, medicines, or remedies at school-sponsored activities, regardless of time or location, are prohibited and may result in suspension or expulsion from all school-sponsored activities, regardless of time or location. Appropriate authorities may be located.
- 4. Fighting and Physical Assault:** Fighting and physical assault are prohibited during school-sponsored activities, regardless of time or location. Students involved in fighting are subject to suspension. Students are advised to avoid fights and seek adult assistance. Physical assault may result in legal action.
- 5. Weapons:** Weapons (including guns, knives or any objects that can be used as a weapon) are not permitted at school-sponsored activities, regardless of time or location. Possession will result in long-term suspension or expulsion from school-sponsored activities, regardless of time or location.
- 6. Stealing:** Students stealing or caught stealing at a school-sponsored activity, regardless of time or location, are subject to suspension. Parents or guardians will be notified. The student will make full restitution to the affected party.
- 7. Truancy and Absenteeism:** Please see the attached *MVPCS Attendance Policy* on page 29.
- 8. Taunting, Bullying, Retaliation, and Psychological and Physical Assaults:** These behaviors toward a student or an adult during a school-sponsored activity, regardless of time or location, are prohibited and may result in suspension, expulsion or the contact of law enforcement. Students involved in such activities are subject to suspension, expulsion and the contact of law enforcement. The Charter School has a non-discrimination policy

that is consistent with the M.G.L.c.76, s.5 non-tolerance for harassment policy based on race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender identity, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language, or academic achievement or any other legally prohibited basis of any of its activities. The school's response to hazing is aligned with Chapter 269 of the Massachusetts general laws.

**9. Vandalism and Destruction of School Property:** These actions are prohibited and may result in the guilty person making full restitution to the Charter School and may result in suspension from school-sponsored activities, regardless of time and location.

10. Elopement.: Students who leave a classroom or campus without permission as subject to disciplinary action. If the school feels that the student is in danger, police may be notified.

### **Discipline Procedures including Suspensions and Expulsions**

The Director, or designee, is responsible for implementing responses to infractions of the Code of Conduct. A student who is suspected of violating a local, state or federal law while on school grounds, on the school bus or at a school activity will be reported to the Director, or designee. Legal guardians and the West Tisbury Police may be called to assist in processing the complaint.

Re-entry meetings may be scheduled after **in-school suspensions, suspensions, emergency removal, inpatient admissions, or expulsions** from school to assist the student's transitional return to school. These meetings may include the school adjustment counselor, student's advisor and Director, or designee, and any other person requested to join.

Modifications to the Code of Conduct will be provided to students determined to have a disability that directly impacts their ability to comply with the behavioral expectations of the school. Any modification applicable to the Code of Conduct will be documented in a student's I.E.P. or 504 plan. In the event that a student who has an I.E.P. or 504 plan accumulates ten (10) suspension days in a school year, a manifestation determination meeting is held with the Administrator of Special Education and all relevant personnel. If it is determined that the student's misconduct was related to his/her disability, the school will conduct necessary evaluations and the I.E.P./504 plan may be modified to reflect new/revised supports to meet the needs of the student.

The appeals process for suspensions from 1-10 days is not necessary as these are considered short-term suspensions. Parents/guardians may appeal to the Director, or designee, if they feel it is warranted. This can be accomplished by scheduling a meeting with the Director or designee. Suspension periods in excess of 10 days may be appealed in writing to the Director within five calendar days following the original decision.

### **Procedures of Suspension of Students with Disabilities**

1. A suspension of longer than 10 consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than 10 consecutive days but constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement.

2. Prior to a suspension that constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, the Team will convene:

- a. to develop or review a functional behavioral assessment of the student's behavior to modify a behavior intervention plan or develop an assessment plan;
- b. to identify appropriate alternative educational setting (s); and
- c. to determine the relationship between the disability and the behavior by making a "manifestation decision".

3. If the Team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the district may suspend or expel the student consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except that the district must still offer an appropriate educational program to the student with disabilities, which may be in some other setting.

4. Regardless of the manifestation determination, the district may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (as determined by the Team) for up to 45 days if:

- a. the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance while at school function; or
- b. the district provides evidence that the student is "substantially likely" to injure him/herself or others and a hearing officer orders the alternative placement; and
- c. the interim alternative education setting enables the student to continue in the general curriculum, to continue receiving services identified on the IEP/504, and provides services to address the problem behavior.

5. If the team determines that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability then the district takes steps (with the consent of the parent) to correct the IEP/504, the placement, or the behavior intervention plan.

6. The school district provides written notice to the parent of all rights to appeal and to an expedited hearing. If the parent chooses to appeal, during the appeal the student stays in the placement on the last accepted IEP/504 or the interim alternative placement, unless the parent and the school district agree otherwise.

Any student with an IEP/504 shall receive sufficient services for a free and appropriate public education after 10 days of suspension.

#### Massachusetts General Laws

##### Section 37H of Chapter 71:

- (a) Section 37H. The superintendent of every school district shall publish the district's policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students. Said policies shall prohibit the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel. Said policies shall further restrict operators of school buses and personal motor vehicles, including students, faculty, staff and visitors, from idling such vehicles on school grounds, consistent with section 16B of chapter 90 and regulations adopted pursuant thereto and by the department. The policies shall also prohibit

bullying as defined in section 37O and shall include the student-related sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan required by said section 37O. Copies of these policies shall be provided to any person upon request and without cost by the principal of every school within the district.

(b) Each school district's policies pertaining to the conduct of students shall include the following: disciplinary proceedings, including procedures ensuring due process; standards and procedures for suspension and expulsion of students; procedures pertaining to discipline of students with special needs; standards and procedures to assure school building security and safety of students and school personnel; and the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or violation of a student's civil rights. Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the department of education for informational purposes only.

(c) In each school building containing the grades nine to twelve, inclusive, the principal, in consultation with the school council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a student handbook setting forth the rules pertaining to the conduct of students. The student handbook shall include an age-appropriate summary of the student-related sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan required by section 37O. The school council shall review the student handbook each spring to consider changes in disciplinary policy to take effect in September of the following school year, but may consider policy changes at any time. The annual review shall cover all areas of student conduct, including but not limited to those outlined in this section.

(d) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, all student handbooks shall contain the following provisions:

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

(f) (b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(g) (c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

(h) After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

(i) (d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

- (j) (e) Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.
- (k) Districts shall report to the department of elementary and secondary education the specific reasons for all suspensions and expulsions, regardless of duration or type, in a manner and form established by the commissioner. The department of elementary and secondary education shall use its existing data collection tools to obtain this information from districts and shall modify those tools, as necessary, to obtain the information. On an annual basis, the department of elementary and secondary education shall make district level de-identified data and analysis, including the total number of days each student is excluded during the school year, available to the public online in a machine readable format. This report shall include district level data disaggregated by student status and categories established by the commissioner.
- (l) Under the regulations promulgated by the department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.

#### Section 37H1/2 of Chapter 71

- (m) Section 37H1/2. Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen of chapter seventy-six:
- (n) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.
- (o) The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.
- (p) (2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of



a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

(q) The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

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

#### Section 37H $\frac{3}{4}$ of Chapter 71

(s) This section shall govern the in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth of Massachusetts who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H1/2.

(t) The Director, or designee, acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall exercise discretion, consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process, and avoid using expulsion as a consequence until other remedies and consequences have been employed.

(u) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the Director, or designee, shall provide to the students and parents/guardians, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and the families primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the Director, or designee, for a hearing to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The Director, or designee, shall ensure that the parents/guardians are included in the hearing, provided that such meeting may take place without the parents/guardians only if the Director, or designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parents/guardians in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address the Director's, or designee's, duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents/guardians in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

(v) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the hearing, the Director, or designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than ten school days for a single infraction or for more than ten school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. For the purposes of this section, the term “out of school suspension” shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by the Director, or designee, to remove a student from participation in school activities for one day or more.

(w) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than ten school days for a single infraction or for more than ten days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion. The student and parent or guardian of the student shall notify the Director, or designee, in writing of a request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to seven calendar days. The Director, or designee, shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within three school days of the student’s request for an appeal; provided further, that the Director, or designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the Director, or designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The Director, or designee, shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within five calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be final with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

(x) No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is removed from an assigned school building.

#### Emergency Removal under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H¾

(1) Nothing in 603 CMR 53.00 shall prevent a principal from removing a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The temporary removal shall not exceed two school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall:

- (a) Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and the other matters set forth in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- (b) Provide written notice to the student and parent as provided in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- (c) Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the principal that complies with 603 CMR 53.08(2) or (3), as applicable, and the parent an opportunity to attend the

hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent.

(d) Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(2)(c) and (d) or (3)(c) and (d), as applicable.

(2) A principal may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

#### **Review of Discipline Data**

(a) All discipline data will be reviewed at the end of each school year including in-school suspension, out-of-school suspensions, emergency removals, and expulsions.

(b) All discipline data regarding special populations will be reviewed at the end of each school year.

#### **Review of Alternatives to Suspension**

(a) A review of alternatives to suspension will be undertaken at the end of each school year.

## **Anti-Hazing Policy**

Chapter 269 of the MA General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following three sections:

Section 17: Whoever is the principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than 1000 dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than 100 days, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

The term 'hazing' as used in this section and in sections 18 and 19, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property which willingly or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to 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.

Section 18: Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section 17 and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that person can do so without danger or peril to himself/herself or others, report such a crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$500.

Section 19: Each charter school shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school, and to every member, plebe, pledgee or applicant for membership in such group or organization. A copy of this section and sections 17 & 18 shall sign an acknowledgment stating that such group, organization or individual has received a copy of said sections 17 & 18.

Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education or in case of secondary schools, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school had adopted a disciplinary policy regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The board of regents and in the case of secondary schools, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

The Charter School's response to a reported hazing incident will include the following:

1. The Director, or designee, will investigate the reported incident
2. If the report is valid, the Director will contact the appropriate law enforcement
3. The Charter School will put in place safeguards and supports for the victim of hazing and reporter of the hazing incident.

### **District Policy- Bully Prevention and Intervention**

*MVPCS Policy: Bully Prevention and Intervention Revised: November, 2019*

The Board of Trustees of MVPCS is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying.

"Bullying" is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to themselves, or of damage to their property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school;
- or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- wire
- radio
- electromagnetic
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents/guardians and families are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school;

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the

school district if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school;
- and/or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

#### Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Director and/or their designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all school stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Director is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

#### Reporting

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

#### Investigation Procedures

The Director or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The Director or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-

bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the Director or a designee determines that bullying has occurred they shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the Director or designee shall consult with the school's resource officer or police liaison to determine if criminal charges are warranted.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Director or their designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Director or designee.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

### Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying, shall be prohibited.

### Target Assistance

The school district shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

### Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

#### Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the school district website.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended

Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO  
Commission

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

603 CMR  
[26:00](#)

M.G.L. [71:37O](#); [265:43](#), [43A](#); [268:13B](#);  
[269:14A](#)

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

### **LAWS and REGULATIONS**

*The following laws and regulations are required to be included in school handbooks in Massachusetts.*

#### **Section 37H of Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts**

*General Laws requires that the following additional regulations be inserted into the school handbook:*



Section 37H. The superintendent of every school district shall publish the district's policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students. Said policies shall prohibit the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel. Said policies shall further restrict operators of school buses and personal motor vehicles, including students, faculty, staff and visitors, from idling such vehicles on school grounds, consistent with section 16B of chapter 90 and regulations adopted pursuant thereto and by the department. The policies shall also prohibit bullying as defined in section 37O and shall include the student-related sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan required by said section 37O. Copies of these policies shall be provided to any person upon request and without cost by the principal of every school within the district.

Each school district's policies pertaining to the conduct of students shall include the following: disciplinary proceedings, including procedures assuring due process; standards and procedures for suspension and expulsion of students; procedures pertaining to discipline of students with special needs; standards and procedures to assure school building security and safety of students and school personnel; and the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or violation of a student's civil rights. Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the department of education for informational purposes only.

In each school building containing the grades nine to twelve, inclusive, the principal, in consultation with the school council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a student handbook setting forth the rules pertaining to the conduct of students. The student handbook shall include an age-appropriate summary of the student-related sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan required by section 37O. The school council shall review the student handbook each spring to consider changes in disciplinary policy to take effect in September of the following school year, but may consider policy changes at any time. The annual review shall cover all areas of student conduct, including but not limited to those outlined in this section.

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, all student handbooks shall contain the following provisions:

- (a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

(d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

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

(f) Districts shall report to the department of elementary and secondary education the specific reasons for all suspensions and expulsions, regardless of duration or type, in a manner and form established by the commissioner. The department of elementary and secondary education shall use its existing data collection tools to obtain this information from districts and shall modify those tools, as necessary, to obtain the information. On an annual basis, the department of elementary and secondary education shall make district level de-identified data and analysis, including the total number of days each student is excluded during the school year, available to the public online in a machine readable format. This report shall include district level data disaggregated by student status and categories established by the commissioner.

(g) Under the regulations promulgated by the department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.

### **Harassment / Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures**

Staff or students, who feel that they were harassed, sexually harassed, or abused by school personnel or students, as defined in MGL Chapter 151Cs I (e) and Title IX of the Federal Education Amendments of 1972 20 U.S.C. 1681, including revisions to Title IX regulations in effect in August, 2020, can bring their grievances to the attention of the school's Sexual Harassment / Harassment Officer and Title IX coordinator, Robert Louzan.

Harassment and/ or sexual harassment are unwanted and unwelcome behaviors that make a student feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Harassment and/ or sexual harassment are behaviors and/or words that create an environment that make learning difficult; make the victim feel afraid, ashamed, put down, helpless and/ or angry; may be repeated or may be very offensive on a one-time basis.

The person who is the target of sexual harassment / harassment and the one doing the harassing do not have to agree about what is happening. Sexual harassment / harassment are defined by the person being targeted. When a student complains about sexual harassment / harassment or a

sexually hostile environment, school officials will assess all of the facts and circumstances from that viewpoint.

The person being targeted can file a written formal complaint with the harassment officer if the behavior continues or involves physical assault (such as inappropriate touching). Physical assault should be reported immediately. If the person being targeted feels uncomfortable talking about the incident, he or she may ask any adult whom they like or trust to come to a meeting with the School Director, the President of the Board of Trustees and/or the sexual harassment / harassment officer.

Following an investigation the School Director, the President of the Board of Trustees and/or the sexual harassment / harassment officer shall decide what if any remedial action is necessary. In the case of a student, such remedial action may include disciplinary action consistent with school policy and state law and regulations. In the case of a non-student or an employee, the Director and/or Board President will decide on disciplinary action, which will be consistent with the individual contract of the employee. The Director and/or Board President will prepare a confidential report of the investigation that will be maintained in appropriate school department files. If appropriate the Director and/or Board President will notify the Department of Social Services and determine, with D.S.S., if the incident falls under the M.G.S. Chapter 119, Section 51A. The Director and /or Board President will also seek guidance from D.S.S. as to what further action is necessary.

### **STUDENT TO STUDENT HARASSMENT**

Harassment of students by other students will not be tolerated in Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School. This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, School property, on school buses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

Harassment prohibited by MVPCS includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, sex, creed, gender identity, gender expression, English proficiency, ancestry, homelessness, religion, color, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability. Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Harassment means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb or trouble students when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education or of a student's participation in school programs, or activities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis for decisions affecting the student, or;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning environment.

Harassment as described above may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal, physical or written (including texting, blogging, or other technological methods) harassment or abuse;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, or other school matter.
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student.

MVPCS will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment. The Director or designee will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment.

Retaliation against a student, because a student has filed a harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding, is also prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [151B:3A](#)

Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended

BESE regulation 603 CMR [26.00](#)

Adopted: 5/20/2020

## **Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School** **Graduation Requirements**

### **I. Passing the Tenth Grade MCAS**

*The student must meet the Commonwealth's performance expectations required on MCAS tests.*

### **II. Curricular Knowledge**

*The student must earn a minimum of:*

Four credits of English	Four credits of Math
Three credits of lab based Science	Three credits of Social Studies/History
Two credits of World Language	Two credits of Fine Arts
Four credits of Electives, one credit of which must be health	

*One credit is granted upon the successful completion of a year-long course. Half credits are granted upon the successful completion of a semester long class. With the agreement of the High School Faculty "credits" may also be earned through successful completion of other educational experiences. A student needs to successfully complete 29 credits to graduate from the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School.*

*\*\*\* Full English credit will be granted to ELL students receiving ELL instruction.*

### III. Portfolios

*Students must complete one portfolio per year of attendance at the MVPCS High School.*

*The portfolios will be created over an extended period of time through independent research and study, and/or through the student's course work, and will be related to the curriculum areas of English, Math, Science, Social Studies/History, Health/PE, World Languages, or the Arts. The student will discuss the work with a review panel. Student work will meet the criteria outlined by the portfolio requirements.*

### IV. Project Period

*Students must successfully participate in two Project Period courses per year of attendance except during senior year when there is one project period required.*

### IV. Community Service

*The student must complete one community service project during each year of High School.*

### V. Mentorships

*The student must participate in a mentorship experience during each year of High School.*

*The Graduation Committee, comprised of a Trustee, the Director, Assistant to the Director, High School Faculty member, one lower school Faculty member, and a parent, meets regularly to review each High School student's progress towards meeting the Graduation Requirements*

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## **Physical Restraint Policy**

Maintaining an orderly and safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School (MVPCS). The MVPCS is free from unreasonable use of physical restraint. Physical restraint is prohibited as a means of punishment, or as a response to destruction of property, disruption of school order, refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to students or others on or off campus. Physical restraint will be administered only when needed to protect a student or other students and staff from imminent, physical serious harm. Physical restraint will be administered by Safety Care trained staff members following the training procedures in the least intrusive manner possible and should be used to prevent or minimize harm to the student. If physical restraint is used the parent and/or guardians will be notified verbally and in writing by the Director or designee within 24 hours of the incident.

The school employs a variety of strategies to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior and/or suicide that include:

1. The adult-student advisor relationship
2. Daily adult-student advisor meeting times
3. Consistent and active availability of the School Adjustment Counselors
4. Positive and supportive adult-student interactions,
5. And, allowing student breaks during the school day.

Alternatives to the use of physical restraints include:

1. Close observation of student
2. Removal of student from large group setting to a more calm location accompanied by an adult or adults
3. And, removing obstacles in the near vicinity that could cause harm to an individual.

The school prohibits the use of medication restraint, mechanical restraint, prone restraint, and physical restraint inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.03 (1) (b), seclusion, and use of restraint inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00.

All complaints regarding physical restraint are to be brought to the attention of the Director, or designee, who will lead the investigation of all complaints. All witnesses to the activity leading to the complaint will be interviewed by the Director or designee including students, teachers, staff, and visitors. Parents and/or guardians of students involved in the incident will be informed verbally and in writing of the event. The Director or designee will ensure the implementation of the reporting requirements as required on the incident report.

The Physical Restraint Policy will be posted on the school's web site and students, parents and guardians will be directed to read and bring questions to then Director or designee. The implementation of the reporting requirements will follow the procedures as described in 603 CMR 45.06. The policy will be reviewed annually to look at data and documentation of the program's use of restraint as described in 603 CMR 45.06

MVPCS Policy: Physical Restraint of Students  
Revised: 2/19/2020

Adopted 5/20/2020

Website Location: Students

# **Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School**

**P.O. Box 1150**

**West Tisbury, MA 02575**

**Phone: 508-693-9900    Fax: 508-696-9008    [www.mvpcs.org](http://www.mvpcs.org)**

## **Acceptable Use Policy**

### **1. General**

Access to the MVPCS Networks is for educational use only.

### **2. Guidelines**

- a. Access is for educational use only.
- b. All users are to use responsible and ethical behavior while using the MVPCS technology.
- c. Access to MVPCS technology is only under teacher or staff supervision.
- d. Access and activity using MVPCS technology is subject to MVPCS policy and regulations, as well as applicable state, federal and international law.
- e. Unauthorized use of copyrighted material is prohibited.
- f. Users of the MVPCS technology are representatives of the MVPCS.
- g. The MVPCS reserves the right to examine all data stored in computers that are part of the school network and are using the school network.
- h. Use is restricted to the accounts assigned to you. Do not use accounts assigned to others.
- i. Upload and/or download programs only under the supervision and approval of a teacher or staff member.
- j. Interfering with any other person's work is prohibited.
- k. Users are responsible for their user accounts and the activities on those accounts.
- l. Users are not to search for or participate in any activities on the network that is threatening or contrary to educational pursuits.
- m. Any violation of network privileges will result in restrictions to the use of and access to MVPCS technology.
- n. Users may be held responsible for any financial costs incurred as a result of malicious or intentional actions that cause damage to any aspect of the network system.

### 3. **Student Licensing**

- a. MVPPCS makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing.

## **MVPCS Student Attendance Policy**

In an effort to adhere to state regulations regarding attendance, specifically M.G.L. Chapter 76 §1, the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School has adopted a Student Attendance Policy. Regular and consistent attendance is essential to learning, to improving the achievement of all students, to maintaining a respectful school climate and to a student's successful school performance. The goal of the student attendance policy is to promote consistent, daily school and class attendance. The expectation is that all students will not miss more than 14 days of school in the school year. A student who is truant, frequently absent or frequently tardy to school without an approved excused absence (listed below) is in violation of this policy.

- Student attendance will be taken in the morning by the Advisor and reported to the Front Office.
- Parents/Guardians must notify the front office to give notification of an absence by no later than the morning of the absence.
- If the school is not notified of an absence, the Front Office will contact the parent/guardian to verify absence.
- In instances of extended absence reportedly due to illness, the school may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justifiable.
- A note or email from the parent/guardian or the student's medical provider is due on the day that the student returns to school explaining the absence.
- A student who is truant, chronically absent or tardy will be referred to the Director. Charter School administration will review each matter and initiate corrective action which may include outside referral.

Excused absences may include:

- personal illness or quarantine;
- transportation issues;
- absences attributable to personal trauma; grieving, death in the family or serious illness in the family; relocation;



- observance or practice of a religious holiday; Teachers should, to the extent feasible, refrain from scheduling any important tests, culminating activities, and/or major papers/reports during religious holidays.
- medical appointments that absolutely cannot be made outside of school hours or counseling appointments;
- legal matters requiring a personal appearance;
- suspensions or expulsions in or out of school;
- college visits;
- weather so inclement as to endanger the health or safety of the child.
- Field Trips/ Mentorship/Project Period/Work employment (as approved by Administration).
- Suspension from School
- Athletics

\_Unexcused absences may include:

- Truancy from school or from individual classes or study halls;
- Trips not discussed in advance by the Director;
- Staying home to avoid school related activities;
- Leaving the school building during the school day without permission or signing out in the front office;
- Any other absence that is not excused or any excusable absence that is not reported by a parent/guardian by a telephone call or written note from a parent/guardian or the student's medical provider upon the student's return to school.

When a student is at school, the student is under the supervision of all teachers and school authorities. In order to leave early, the student must obtain permission from his/her parent/guardian and inform the Front Office, Advisor, Counselor or Nurse.

The Director also shall make a reasonable effort to meet with the parent/guardian of the student who has five (5) or more absences to develop action steps for student attendance. The action steps shall be developed jointly and agreed upon by the Director, the student and the student's

parent/guardian and with input from other relevant school personnel and officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing and nonprofit agencies, as appropriate.

Any student with an excused absence from school or classes will have the privilege of making up the class assignments, missed homework, quizzes, exams, papers, projects and other assignments. Any student with an unexcused absence may not have this opportunity. Attendance will be a factor in calculating High School grades.

*Adopted July 2019*

### **Compliance Officers and Specially Trained Staff**

\*Robert Louzan is the school's Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, Title IX Coordinator and Homeless Liaison. He can be reached by phone at (508)693-9900 and by mail at PO Box 1150, WT, MA 02575

\*\*Robert Louzan is the school's 504 Coordinator. He can be reached by phone at (508)693-9900 and by mail at PO Box 1150, WT, MA 02575.