

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

STUDENT/FAMILY HANDBOOK

2016-2017

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

The goal of PVPA is to provide students with a supportive and challenging environment that is responsive to multiple learning styles, emphasizes learning through the arts, and integrates creative and critical thinking throughout the curriculum. Graduates of PVPA will emerge with a greater sense of self esteem, a direction for their individual creativity, and the ability to successfully meet challenges as life-long learners.

PVPA

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

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www.pvpa.org

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WELCOME TO PVPA

Dear New and Returning Students and Families,

We are excited to welcome you to the 2015-16 school year, our 20th year as a Commonwealth Charter Public School. This Student/Family Handbook is designed to communicate the values and expectations of our school. First and foremost, PVPA is a place that is based on respect and responsibility. We begin with the premise that everyone is worthy of trust.

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

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

Wishing you success and happiness in the year ahead!

Scott Goldman

Head of School

HISTORY

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

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

MISSION

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

VISION

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

VALUES

- ★ **Critical and Higher Order Thinking Skills:** These include searching for and evaluating sources, holistic analysis, the ability to ask appropriate questions, the capacity to evaluate and judge, and openness to outliers of thought and minority opinions. We value rigorous thinking and approaches to learning such as the recognition of connections between one's own life and the larger society, willingness to embrace paradox and ambiguity without rushing to conclusions, and an ability to recognize multiple perspectives—all of which are foundations for students' future education.
- ★ **Creative Thinking:** We value experimentation, risk-taking and mistake-making ("do not fear mistakes. There are none." Miles Davis) out-of-box and interdisciplinary approaches, collaboration with co-creators, divergent as well as convergent thinking, the ability to draw

from oneself material for creating and to make new and essential connections. Such skills are what many employers are seeking.

- ★ **A Passion for Inquiry and Self-Reflection:** We value the right to question assumptions and to demonstrate knowledge in a variety of forms. This passion is modeled by the outstanding educators at PVPA—teachers who, in their fields of expertise, are enthusiastic facilitators of student learning. Passion and learning go hand-in-hand and are compatible with rigorous standards and expectations of students.
- ★ **A Loving Community:** Students, faculty, families, administrators, board, people from various social classes, ethnicities, life experiences, and with a variety of learning styles are respected. We value all voices being heard when important decisions are made and expect community members to support the school’s mission and values. PVPA aspires to be a safe environment for students and encourages them to develop their own ideas and opinions.
- ★ **The Concept of School as One Part of a Larger Learning Community:** We believe that education goes on all the time and everywhere. We value our essential connections with the broader community and with artists in various disciplines. PVPA is committed to being part of a community of artistic organizations, where our approaches to education are shared, where our students present arts performances, where we both receive and give. We seek to enhance our visibility in the communities where our students reside and in other public schools.

CHARTER PRIORITIES

- **College Preparation**

PVPA is committed to the highest level of student achievement, and seeks to prepare all students for college. Our graduation requirements are aligned with common admission requirements for four-year colleges.

- **Academic Competence**

All students in grades 7-12 must earn at least Developing on all course objectives in order to earn credit for each course. Students must also work toward developing habits of work and learning, such as meeting deadlines. Students are encouraged to edit work and re-take tests so they may reach their highest level of proficiency.

- **Intensive Performing Arts Programs**

Students have access to course offerings each semester in theater, dance, music (vocal and instrumental), and visual arts/technical theater (stage design, lighting design, costuming, and

fine arts). PVPA provides students with an extensive array of performance venues, and all students are expected to actively participate in the arts programs.

- Individualized Attention

PVPA makes every effort to meet the individualized needs of each student. Our small class size, use of multiple learning styles, and variety of assessment tools all support students in reaching their highest potential.

- Integration Of Creative And Critical Thinking

The arts inform classroom teaching throughout the school. Integration of arts and academic disciplines supports the pursuit of excellence, both by increasing student interest and enthusiasm and by providing novel entries into intellectual realms that often remain untapped.

STRATEGIC PLAN VISION 2016-2021

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

Firstly, this plan identifies areas of growth in the domain of student supports. Specifically, we endeavor to provide students at all achievement and skill levels access to developmentally appropriate and rigorous curriculum as part of a cohesive 7-12, college preparatory program. This objective draws from lessons-learned and data gathered to ensure that all students have an outstanding learning experience. We will also continually evaluate and improve our academic and artistic curricula to stay focused on this goal of supporting students.

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

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

innovative in many respects, from our grading system to our arts integration, and we are eager to share these practices.

These three objectives are woven through all aspects of this strategic plan to illustrate their centrality to our collective vision of a passionate, creative, intellectually rigorous, and inclusive PVPA. We are an accomplished school that values every student, engages in progressive pedagogies, and offers a rich artistic experience. The 2016-2021 SAP moves us towards being exemplary.

To learn more, read [PVPA's 2016-2021 Strategic Action Plan](#).

HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

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

COMMUNICATION METHODS

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

Teachers/staff members are expected to respond within two school days after the initial communication. Please inform the appropriate administrator (below) if you do not hear back within this timeframe.

ELA & Math Teachers: Director of Academic Programs, Llama Maynard

Science, History, and World Language Teachers: Associate Dir. of Academic Programs, Jeanne Powers

Arts Teachers: Director of Arts Programs, Ann Biddle

Academic Support Teachers: Director of Academic Support, Brent Neilsen

School Counselors: Director of Student Affairs, Chris Fournier

FRIDAY NOTES/FACEBOOK/WEBSITE

Friday Notes, our online weekly newsletter, is every community member's source for timely information about upcoming events, reports on past events, helpful links, general news of the school, staff, and students, and links to other topics of interest. Friday Notes are sent via email to all families

and we strongly encourage families to review them weekly. If you are not receiving Friday Notes by email or would like to submit material for inclusion in Friday Notes, please contact Lisa Cappello at lcappello@pvpa.org. The PVPA Facebook, [PVPA - Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School](#), page is another means of communicating timely and general information, along with photosharing. If you are a Facebook user, please take a moment to “like” [PVPA’s facebook page](#) and join the conversation.

The PVPA website at www.pvpa.org is our go-to source for navigating a school year at PVPA. In addition to school contact information, detailed calendar listings, archives of Friday Notes, community notices and information, Board of Trustees meeting agendas and minutes, we include course descriptions, forms for parents (i.e., bus contracts, independent study forms, etc.), transportation information, and so much more. Please take a moment to visit our website and find out how it can help you through the school year. If you wish to submit material for the website please contact Scott Goldman, Head of School, at sgoldman@pvpa.org. Information should be relevant to the entire PVPA community.

HOMEWORK/ASSIGNMENTS/MISSING WORK

The PVPA Student and Parent Portals are by far the most effective way to stay on top of a student’s progress on homework completion, missing work, and assignment results. For more information about the portals, please see the “Portal Access” subheading further in the next page. See below the best practices to stay on top of the student’s academic progress:

Students:

- Keep your portal login information somewhere safe all year long. Students will be provided with the Student Portal login information at the beginning of the year.
- Log on to the Student Portal to view your current progress.
- Track assignments in a planner.
- Share your work with parents/guardians (assignments, handouts, checklists, etc.).
- Speak with your teachers directly, either in person or via email if you are having trouble.
- Request an extension if you may miss a deadline.

Parents/Guardians:

- Log on to the Parent Portal to view your child’s current progress.
- Check in with your student(s) regularly and ask to see completed assigned work.
- Provide appropriate time, space, and resources for students to complete assignments.
- Feel free to to communicate with teachers if there is a concern about school work.

- Encourage your student(s) to communicate directly with teachers.
- Contact your family's school counselor when needed to help support your student(s).

PARENT CONFERENCES/STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES

Twice during every school year, PVPA sets aside time for parents/guardians to schedule meetings with their student's teachers. These meetings provide opportunities to discuss successes and concerns, and make sure students are on track to meet graduation/promotion requirements. In addition, parents are encouraged to request additional in-person or telephone conferences by contacting individual teachers or the School Counselors. Additionally, students in grades 7 & 8 prepare and conduct their own student led conferences in June as a reflection on their learning that year.

PORTAL ACCESS

The Student and Parent Portals allow students and parents/guardians to monitor work completion and academic progress on a weekly basis.

Student Portal

In order to access the portal you must log in with the Student Portal login information provided at the beginning of the year. You can access the [Student Portal](#) through [PVPA's website](#) under the "For Students" tab. Under the same tab you'll also find the instructions on how to use the portal. If you are having trouble accessing the portal, please go to the Main Office or email tvreeland@pvpa.org.

In the portal students can review:

- their assignments for all of the courses of the year (Fall and Spring Semesters),
- the course objectives for each reporting term, and
- their report cards.

Parent Portal

In order to log on to the portal, you must create your account. You must have the unique access ID and access password for each of your students. This information will be emailed to parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year. You can access the [Parent Portal](#) through [PVPA's website](#) under the "For Parents" tab. Under the same tab you'll also find the instructions to log in to the portal. If you are having trouble accessing the portal, please call the Main Office or email tvreeland@pvpa.org.

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

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

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

PVPA has an automatic telephone messaging system that will notify you when school must close due to inclement weather or other emergencies. Closings and late openings are also posted on the PVPA website (www.pvpa.org). The following local television stations will list PVPA school closings or school delays: Channel 22 (WWLP) and Channel 40 (WGGB).

SCHOOL HOURS

Students should be picked up at the end of the day on or before the main office closing time. In the event of unforeseeable transportation problems, students are to wait in the main lobby of the school until their pick-up.

Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday: 7:30am - 4:30pm

Fridays and Paideia: 7:30am - 4:00pm

Summer's Office Hours:

Monday - Friday: 8:00am - 4:00pm

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCES AND TARDIES

Attendance is taken daily for each block that meets during a day. A parent/guardian must call the main office at 413.552.1580 and select option #2 to report or confirm an excused absence by 8:30 am. If your student is marked absent for the first block of the day, you will receive an automated phone call at 9:45 am. If the parent/guardian is unable to confirm the absence with the main office, the student's absence will be recorded as "unexcused" for the day. Any student who arrives late without signing in is presumed to be absent. If a student is going to be late or dismissed early, parents/guardians must check in at the main office, or call to report the expected arrival or dismissal time.

Being late to school affects a student's ability to participate fully in classes. Students with a history of tardiness will be invited to an administrative student/parent meeting to decide upon an appropriate written plan of action. Please refer to "Class Attendance and Participation" below for more information.

Late Arrival

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

Repeated Absence from School

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

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

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

Repeated Absence from Class

If a student is absent from class for more than 10% of the scheduled time (approximately five periods per semester and ten periods for a year-long course), administrators will notify the student and a

parent/guardian of the effect this has on the student's ability to earn credit in the course. This applies to all excused and unexcused absences. If a student misses more than half of the scheduled time during a period, the teacher is expected to mark this as a full-class absence.

If at all possible, the student and teacher work out a plan for the student to make up for the missed class time in alternate ways. If the student continues to be behind on work, a contracted plan ([Excessive Absence Agreement](#)) to make up for the missed instruction and participation, signed by the teacher, and cc'd to the student's parent/guardian, is expected when a student has missed eight (8) or more periods in a semester and fifteen (15) or more periods in a year-long course. *If a student does not meet the requirements of the contracted plan, the teacher must alert an administrator for review. In the case of unexcused absences, this review could result in a student being withdrawn from the course.*

DISMISSALS FROM CLASS AND SCHOOL

Parents/guardians are urged to exercise judgment when dismissing their student(s) from school. Parents/guardians must authorize any departure from the regular dismissal time, in writing, to the main office at the beginning of the school day. In case of an emergency, a parent/guardian may dismiss the student by phone. In this case, a note should be brought in when the student returns to school. During the school day, students who are dismissed from school may return to school on the same day only if they are dismissed for medical or dental appointments.

Please note:

- Students may not be dismissed to get food, run errands, meet friends, celebrate birthdays, work at a job, etc. On days with special school events scheduled, students will not be dismissed unless for medical or dental appointments.
- Students who are sick or feel bad, need to be seen by the nurse before contacting their parent/guardian. The nurse will call the parent/guardian to pick up their student.

Early Dismissal

Students who wish to have early dismissal in their schedule must fill out the [Early Dismissal/Late Arrival Permission Form](#) (found in the [school's website](#) under "Documents and Forms" on the "For Students" and "For Parents" tab), have a parent/guardian sign it, and return it to the Director of Student Affairs. Once the form is approved, students are required to leave school grounds at the arranged time and not return to school until the following school day, as agreed in the form. The only exceptions to this rule are: 1) the student was accompanied by a parent/guardian during the entire

dismissal; and 2) the students received permission from the Director of Student Affairs to return at 3:55pm for a faculty-supervised after-school activity.

Please note:

- If the person picking up the student is not the parent/guardian, the school needs notification from the parent/guardian of who will be dismissing the student. This can be done by a phone call to the main office, or sending a note for the main office with your student to school.

Early Dismissal for 18-Year-Olds

Students who are 18 years old and who live independently from their parent/guardian(s) may dismiss themselves from school due to illness after being examined by the school nurse, and for lunch, contingent permission from the Director of Student Affairs.

PARTICIPATION IN AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCES

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

SIGN-IN/SIGN-OUT

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

OFF-CAMPUS LUNCH PRIVILEGE

Only juniors and seniors who are 17 years old or older may apply for off-campus privileges. Students can drive themselves off campus providing they have a valid driver's license. Students who do not have a valid driver's license may only leave in a car with a student driver who is legally allowed to drive other students. The student needs to fill out the [Off-Campus Lunch Privilege Approval Application](#), have it signed by their parent/guardian and return it to the Main Office with a copy of their driver's license (as applicable). Approval requires a signature from the Director of Student Affairs (DSA). Once the application is signed by the DSA, a student is approved to leave for lunch. If the student receives a Written Warning or is on a Probation Contract, they will not be approved until the end of the Warning/Probation period. Students 18 years old must have a parent/guardian's signature unless the student lives outside of their parent/guardian's home. They would still need to submit the application to the Main Office.

Students can drive other eligible and approved students (one at a time) off-campus during lunch, only if they have submitted all documents required (signed Off-Campus Lunch Privilege Application and a

copy of their driver's license) to the Main Office and have been approved by the Director of Students Affair. Students who drive other students off-campus without the appropriate permissions will lose their off-campus privileges. Students who are on Written Warning or Probation contracts automatically lose off-campus privileges for the duration of disciplinary period. Please Note:

Parent/Guardian and Student Acknowledgement: By signing the application, the student and parent/guardian understand that are seeking approval for the privilege of leaving school grounds only during the lunch period, and that the approved student will obey all PVPA rules and regulations pertaining to Off-Campus Privileges. Furthermore, PVPA requires all students who receive off-campus privileges to return on time for class following lunch, to drive only one student off campus during lunch who has been approved to leave, and to obey all school and traffic rules while driving on and off school grounds.

You can download the [Off-Campus Lunch Privilege Approval Application](#) from the the school's website under Documents and Forms, or you can pick up a hard copy in the Main Office.

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND SCHOOL CULTURE

ACADEMIC/ARTS DEPARTMENTS

These departments include English Language Arts, Dance, History/Social Studies, Mathematics, Music, Science and Technology, Theater, Visual Arts and Technical Theater, and World Languages.

Course curricula at PVPA are based on the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core State Standards. Each course has a concise set of course objectives (sometimes referred to as “Learning Targets”) on which student learning is assessed.

Most classes are grouped heterogeneously (mixed levels). Teachers individualize instruction to the extent possible for students at all levels within each class. Students in any high school course who are working at the highest level may also elect to earn Honors Credit by contracting early in the semester/year with the teacher to complete additional assignments (see “Honors Credit” for more information). Some performing arts classes require an audition. See the PVPA [Course Catalog](#) (available on PVPA’s website at www.pvpa.org/catalog/home) for prerequisites, course descriptions, and other information.

If a student was home-schooled prior to attending PVPA, families are required to submit documentation that demonstrates the student’s grade level readiness for the accepted grade.

ACADEMIC INDEPENDENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Students at PVPA are given considerable academic freedom and independence compared to other schools. Some students find this challenging because they are not accustomed to having as much responsibility for themselves. Students should check with teachers periodically to assure they are working on schedule. Any student who anticipates or experiences difficulty with these expectations should meet with teachers and/or a school counselor to formulate a plan.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The PVPA community must have as its foundation an academically honest group of people. It is expected that students and all members of this community are responsible for acknowledging the work of others and only taking credit for the work that is solely their own. Below are definitions of important terms concerning this matter. Students who engage in any of the following examples listed below have violated the school’s Academic Integrity Policy.

- **Cheating** on exams, copying assignments, giving/receiving help on exams, tests, quizzes, and/or sharing work in any way not directly approved by teachers, are forms of academic dishonesty.

Examples are:

- Doing others' work for them.
- Receiving assistance or assisting others while an exam, test or quiz is in progress.
- Possessing or attempting to possess partial or complete copies of the exam, test or quiz.
- Sharing and/or receiving any written, verbal, or electronic information about an exam, test or quiz.

- **Plagiarism** is the representation of someone else's work, thoughts or ideas as your own. Students are responsible for citing the source of every quote, every paraphrased passage, and every summarized idea that is used in a research paper or essay. Examples are:

- Quoting or paraphrasing material without citing the source of the material.
- Buying and/or downloading all or part of a research paper, essay, or project from a website or other source.
- Submitting work done by another student as your own work.

Consequences For Violations of Academic Integrity

- **Cheating And Copying:**

- The student will receive no credit for the assignment. The student will need to complete an alternate assignment to show evidence of learning related to the class Course Objectives.
- The teacher will notify the student's parents/guardians of the incident.
- The teacher will notify the Director of Student Affairs and Head of School, who may take further disciplinary action, including a conference with the parent/guardian, student and a school counselor, and/or suspension.

- **Copying Homework:**

- On the first instance, a student(s) found to be copying, or allowing others to copy, a daily homework assignment will receive the consequence listed under "Cheating and Copying Consequences."
- Plagiarism:
 - The student will receive no credit for the assignment on the first incident. The student will need to complete an alternate assignment to show evidence of learning related to the class Course Objectives.

- The incident will be reported to the parents/guardians and the Director of Student Affairs.
- Subsequent incidents will result in a conference with the teacher, counselor, administrator, student and parents/guardians and further disciplinary action, including suspension, may be imposed.

NOTE: If a student and teacher cannot come to an agreement over whether a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy has occurred, the matter will be referred to the Director of Student Affairs, who will meet with the teacher and the student, and determine, based on the evidence presented, whether a violation has occurred.

ACADEMIC INTERVENTION: MATHEMATICS AND READING

Students at PVPA enrolled in Math 7, Math 8, Algebra, or Geometry who show evidence of significant gaps in prior knowledge or skills in mathematics will be scheduled for a structured intervention program: Math Support. Similarly, students in Grade 7 or Grade 8 whose reading skills are below grade level will be prioritized for a formal reading intervention program: Reading Workshop. All new students to PVPA will complete screening assessments in Math and Reading to determine if these intervention services will best support their needs.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT: IEP and 504 PLANS

The school follows an inclusion model for special education in most instances, meaning students are enrolled in heterogeneously grouped classes as much as possible. Academic support teachers coordinate implementation of special education plans (IEPs), and provide services outlined in those plans with assistance from apprentice teachers. Additionally 504 plans are developed and monitored through the Academic Support Department. Most students with IEPs have an academic support period built into their schedules. Please address questions about academic support services, IEPs, and 504 plans to our Director of Academic Support, Brent Nielsen (bn Nielsen@pvpa.org).

ARTS CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Arts Concentration Requirements can be found in the PVPA [Course Catalog](#) (available on PVPA's website at www.pvpa.org/catalog/home) through the link to the [PVPA Promotion and Graduation Requirements](#). Students who enter PVPA prior to 11 th grade are required to focus their arts study in one discipline by taking six courses, including three in specific areas. Concentration requirements (Updated as of July 2016) are listed below.

	DANCE	MUSIC	THEATER	VISUAL ARTS & TECHNICAL THEATER	FILM	MUSICAL THEATER
1	<i>Creative</i> Choreography Lab Dance Ed Lab (A) iMovie for Dance	<i>Theory</i> Music Mastery Advanced Music Theory Vocal Technique	<i>Creative</i> Playwriting <i>(concentration only if ELA credit)</i> Filmmaking 101 Directing Workshop Mock Trial (Intro or Competitive [A]) Assistant Director Spotlight: Theater in the Making*	<i>Design</i> Digital Design Concepts in Art & Design	<i>Design</i> Digital Design Concepts in Art & Design	<i>Vocal Music</i> Vocal Technique PVPA Musical (A) <i>(instructor discretion based on role)</i>
2	<i>Performance</i> Catalyst (A) Wofa (A) African Dance Hip Hop Dance Jazz Dance Adv. Technique Dance Technique Dance Ed Lab (A) Social Dance*	<i>Performance</i> Jazz Ensemble (A) Pop R&B Ens. (A) Rock Ensemble (A) Spectrum A Cap. (A) Orchestra African Drum 1 Wofa Drum (A) MAPS Songwriting* Revolution Band* Chorale*	<i>Performance</i> Mainstage Prod. (A) PVPA Musical (A) Acting (any level) Improvisation Musical Theater One-Act Play* Children's Theater* (7/8 only, 2015-16)	<i>Costuming, OR Lighting, OR Scenic (must take 2 in the same area)</i> <u>Costuming:</u> Costuming 1/2 Mask Making <u>Lighting:</u> Lighting 1/2 <u>Scenic:</u> Stagecraft 1/2 Scenic Design Scenic Painting	<i>Production</i> Filmmaking 101 Short Film Production Animation*	<i>Theater</i> Mainstage Prod. (A) Acting (any level) PVPA Musical (A) <i>(instructor discretion based on role)</i> One-Act Play* Children's Theater* (7/8 only, 2015-16)
3	<i>History & Connections</i> Dance Ed Lab (A) Dance DNA: Theory to Practice Dance Revolutions*	<i>History & Culture</i> Western Music Hist. Advanced Theory: Music of India African Drum 1 Wofa Drum	<i>Critique</i> Theater Critique Film Critique <u>Concentration only:</u> <i>Playing Shakespeare</i>	Props & Applied Sculpture	<i>Critique</i> Film Critique	<i>Dance</i> Any dance "performance" class PVPA Musical (A) <i>(instructor discretion based on role)</i>

		<i>Concentration only: 1960s Arts/Culture Latin Am. Arts/Cult.</i>				
4	<i>Dance Elective</i>	<i>Music Elective</i>	<i>Theater Elective</i>	<i>VA/TT Elective</i>	<i>Theater or VA/TT Elective or Advanced Music Theory: Film Scoring</i>	<i>History & Connections</i> Any "history," or "critique" course
5	<i>Dance Elective</i>	<i>Music Elective</i>	<i>Theater Elective</i>	<i>VA/TT Elective</i>	<i>Theater or VA/TT Elective</i>	<i>Music or Theater Elective</i>
6	<i>Dance Elective</i>	<i>Music Elective</i>	<i>Theater Elective</i>	<i>VA/TT Elective</i>	<i>Theater or VA/TT Elective</i>	<i>Music or Theater Elective</i>

* Not offered in 2015-16 (A) = Audition

COURSE EXPECTATIONS DOCUMENTS

During the first two weeks of classes, teachers provide and review with students the Course Expectations for each class. This document includes Course Objectives to be mastered. Students are expected to meet every objective in order to earn credit in a course (see Grading System Overview in [Appendix A](#)). Copies of [Course Expectations documents](#) are available on [PVPA's website](#) under the "For Students" tab, "Class Sites," on each teacher's posted website, or by contacting the main office.

COURSE REGISTRATION

2016-17 Registration Calendar

- *Late August*: Fall and spring schedules emailed to all returning students
- *September 1st through 15th*: ADD/DROP for the entire year (no spring add/drop)
- *September 24*: Grades 9-12, Last day to drop a fall or full-year course with no record of enrollment
- *November 4*: Grades 9-12, Last day to withdraw from a fall course
- *November*: SPRING AUDITIONS
- *January 26*: Grades 9-12, Last day to withdraw from a full-year course
- *February 16*: Grades 9-12, Last day to drop a spring course with no record of enrollment
- *March - April*: FALL/FULL-YEAR AUDITIONS
- *April 7*: Grades 9-12, Last day to withdraw from a spring course

- *April:* School counselor-supported course selection for current students. Procedures vary by grade, and information will be provided. Students and parents/guardians are required to review registration materials together prior to submitting final requests. All materials are available on www.pvpa.org.
- *April:* New 7th graders receive registration materials at orientation.
- *June – August:* Ongoing new student course registration

Scheduling Classes

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

Add-Drop Period

A two-week Add/Drop period occurs at the beginning of the fall semester. Procedures for communicating with School Counselors during the Add/Drop window are shared with all students and families at the start of the school year and must be followed.

Changes that are requested after the Add/Drop period require a special request process (see Schedule Change Requests outside of Add/Drop below), parent/guardian permission, and administrative approval.

Students may not enroll in a for-credit course after the first two weeks of the semester, except as an audit situation, due to the excessive number of missed classes.

Schedule Change Requests outside of Add/Drop:

School Counselors prioritize unexpected schedule change requests outside of the Add/Drop period according to the criteria listed below:

1. Academic Support recommendations and other Administrator recommendations
2. Students missing blocks from their schedule
3. Students with atypical schedule problems (ex. too many History and not enough English classes)--priority in order of seniority
4. Students changing a Reading Room or HW Support in order to TA or take an Off Site Course
5. School Counselor review of spring semester wait-listed classes if space becomes available

Any student who anticipates a needed schedule change related to these priorities should directly email their School Counselor to initiate the schedule change request. School Counselors will then ensure parent permission and request administrator approval.

Withdrawing From a Course

Students who drop a course after the first month of the course start date will receive a grade of “withdraw” for that course. “Withdraw” grades appear on high school transcripts. If a student drops a course after the withdrawal dates, the student will receive a grade of “attempted” for that course. “Attempted” grades appear on high school transcripts.

2016-17 Withdrawal Dates:

- Fall courses: September 23- November 4
- Full-year courses: September 23 - January 26
- Spring courses: February 17 - April 7

FIELD TRIPS/OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

Field trips/Off-Site Activities help PVPA students contextualize their learning and connect them to the wider community. When filling out registration documents online, parents/guardians have the opportunity to give blanket permission for their child(ren) to go on field trips/off-site activities within a 50 miles radius of PVPA. You can access and edit field trip/off-site activities permission preferences in the Parent Portal. The PVPA Blanket Permission covers local field trips/off-site activities in most cases. Parents/guardians may be asked to sign additional permission forms if students will travel out of the local geographical area or if the activity extends beyond the regular school day. All field trips/off-site activities are chaperoned by PVPA staff members and at times, parents/guardians. Field trips may require families to offset some of the trip’s costs. However, no student will be prevented for going on a field trip due to the cost of the trip.

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

GRADE 7/8 PROGRAM

All core 7/8 academic classes are organized by grade, while 7/8 Arts classes mix seventh and eighth grade students. Core academic classes are graded on a Pass/Attempted basis (see Grading System Overview in [Appendix A](#)). Specific teacher feedback is provided on all course objectives to communicate student learning and achievement.

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

Teachers, administrators, and school counselors are committed to working in collaboration to support the artistic, intellectual, emotional, and social development of students. To that end, teachers and school counselors meet regularly to discuss student performance, curriculum, assessment, instruction, and community. Students mix with other 7/8 students, and potentially with older students, during elective courses, community activities, and open mic.

7/8 Promotion Requirements

The 7/8 Promotion Requirements can be found below and also in the PVPA [Course Catalog](#) (available on PVPA's website at www.pvpa.org/catalog/home) through the link to the [PVPA Promotion and Graduation Requirements](#).

HUMANITIES (two blocks/year)	Study occurs in separate grade 7 and grade 8 formats, and includes English language arts and social studies/history.
MATHEMATICS (one block/year)	Study occurs in separate grade 7 and grade 8 formats. students interested in accelerating by placing out of a class should speak with the math department leader and school counselor.
SCIENCE (one block/year)	Study occurs in separate grade 7 and grade 8 formats.
ELECTIVES (20 cr./yr.)	Courses are generally worth 5 credits. See the course catalog for information. Arts requirements (below) are included in this category.
ARTS REQUIREMENTS	Over the two years of middle school (i.e., prior to entering 9th grade), all students must earn at least 5 credits each in dance, music, theater, and visual arts/technical theater. This requirement is waived for students beginning in

	the 8th grade, although we encourage students to try a variety of arts disciplines. This credit may be earned through Paideia courses.
PAIDEIA (4 credits/year)	Paideia is PVPA's January intersession program (full day = 4 credits)
PHYSICAL EDUCATION (2 cr./yr.)	Dance courses, and PE-based Paideia courses meet this requirement. Students may also complete this requirement outside of school by participating on a PVPA sports team (soccer or Ultimate Frisbee), or using the PE Alternate Credit form, which can be found at www.pvpa.org .
HIGH SCHOOL CREDITS IN GRADE 8	World language courses taken at PVPA in grade 8 are eligible for high school graduation credit. No other courses are eligible. Courses taken in grade 7 do not count toward high school graduation credits, as they are not acknowledged by Massachusetts state colleges and universities.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

PVPA uses a standards-based grading and assessment system in which student learning is measured using evidence related to set Course Objectives (sometimes called “learning targets”). Students are required to show evidence of skills and understanding related to each and every course objective to earn credit. Teachers indicate achievement levels for each objective on progress reports and final grade reports. A final grade point synthesizes student proficiency across all objectives in a course (see Grading System Overview in [Appendix A](#)).

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

PVPA's Graduation Requirements can be found below and also in the PVPA [Course Catalog](#) (available on PVPA's website at www.pvpa.org/catalog/home) through the link to the [PVPA Promotion and Graduation Requirements](#).

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

WORLD LANGUAGE (20 credits)	Two-year requirement must include courses in the same language. Independent study options are available for languages outside of those offered.
PERFORMING/VISUAL ARTS (80 credits [64 credits for 2017 graduates]) INCLUDING: ARTS CONCENTRATION (6 courses)	Includes concentration-area courses. Full-block class = 5 credits. See "Arts Concentration Requirements" for details. Non-typical pathways may be designed by speaking with the department leader and a school counselor.
PAIDEIA (4 cr. each year)	Full-day Paideia participation = 4 credits.
PHYSICAL EDUCATION (2 cr. each year)	Dance courses, PE-based Paideia courses, and PVPA sports team participation meet this requirement. Students may also complete this requirement outside of school using the PE Alternate Credit form, which can be found at www.pvpa.org .
ARTS INTERNSHIP (1 x 16 hours)	One project outside of school.
COMMUNITY SERVICE (1 x 16 hours)	One project outside of school.
SCHOOL SERVICE (1 x 16 hours)	One project in school.
INTERNSHIP/SERVICE (1 x 16 hours)	One additional project of the student's choice (see above).
COURSES TAKEN IN GRADE 8	World Language courses taken at PVPA in grade 8 are eligible for high school graduation credit. No other courses are eligible.

Early Graduation

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

HOMEWORK/HOMEWORK SUPPORT CLASS

Students should expect 3-4 hours of homework per week for academic classes. If a student is spending more than that amount of time, s/he should talk to the subject teacher or the student's school counselor. Online resources for homework assignments and materials are available for many courses.

Students in grades 7 and 8 who struggle with independent work completion will be enrolled in a section of Homework Support in order to receive instruction for study and organizational skills. Students in grades 9 and 10 who are also involved in after school activities are strongly encouraged to include a Homework Support in their schedules in which their work completion will be monitored. Students in grades 11 and 12 may enroll in one section of Reading Room Study, a less structured version of Homework Support. Students are strongly encouraged NOT to enroll in more than one block of supported study per semester, and are not allowed more than two.

HONORS CREDIT

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

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

INCOMPLETES

In the event a student does not complete course requirements within the timeframe of a course, a teacher may decide to designate the final grade as "Incomplete." The teacher is required to outline all required work/evidence in the final report and/or in a separate contract. The student is responsible to complete these requirements and submit them to the teacher by set deadlines. Upon completion, the teacher will officially change the final grade for the course. If a student does not complete the work by the teacher's new deadline (which cannot extend past the last day of the following semester), the final grade may be changed to Attempted unless other arrangements are made with the Director of Academic or Director of Arts Programs.

INTERNSHIP AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

PVPA's Internship and Service Requirements can be found in the PVPA [Course Catalog](#) (available on PVPA's website at www.pvpa.org/catalog/home) through the link to the [PVPA Promotion and Graduation Requirements](#).

All students in grades 9-12 are expected to complete one project for each year they are enrolled at PVPA with a minimum of 16 hours per activity. Students may not piece together hours from different 28 projects to fulfill the yearly requirement. Students attending PVPA for fewer than four years may see the director of school counseling for modifications to this requirement. See the [PVPA Promotion and Graduation Requirements](#) for more information.

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

- One (1) off-site PERFORMING ARTS INTERNSHIPS with a minimum of 16 hours working with a performing arts professional or organization.
- One (1) PVPA SCHOOL SERVICE PROJECT with a minimum of 16 unpaid hours. This may be in the form of providing support in school productions (ex. tech, props, pit band, etc.), recycling assistance, tutoring, teaching assistantships, working as school lunch server, or helping in the main office. Course credit requirements cannot be used for school service credit.
- One (1) off-site COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT with a minimum of 16 unpaid hours. A list of suggested community service organizations is available from school counselors.
- One (1) additional PERFORMING ARTS INTERNSHIP, PVPA SCHOOL SERVICE PROJECT, or COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT. See details above. Students must fill the Internship/Service Credit Record, available on PVPA's website under "Documents and Forms" on the "For Students" tab.

MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (MCAS) TESTING

PVPA is a public school and is required to follow all state regulations and procedures regarding standardized testing. We believe that there are many important ways to assess student learning and achievement in addition to the MCAS tests. MCAS test dates are published each year on the school's website at pvpa.org.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requires the following for all students to graduate:

- Meet or exceed a scaled score of 240 on both the Grade 10 English language arts and mathematics MCAS exams (or meet or exceed a scaled score of 220 on both the Grade 10 English language arts and mathematics MCAS exams and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) in the subject matter area(s) in which students did not meet or exceed a scaled score of 240)
- Earn a scaled score of at least 220 on one of the MCAS tests in Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics, or Technology/Engineering (PVPA students typically take the Biology test)

MCAS exams provide an opportunity for students to access the John & Abigail Adams Scholarship. This scholarship provides a tuition waiver for up to eight semesters of undergraduate education at a Massachusetts state college or university.

In order to be eligible for the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, Massachusetts public high school students must:

- score at the Advanced performance level on one of the three high school state assessment tests in ELA, Mathematics, or Science; AND
- score at the Proficient level or higher on the remaining two high school state assessment tests; AND
- have combined scores from the three tests that place them in the top 25 percent of students in the graduating class in their district.

Students who qualify for the scholarship will receive award letters and further information in the fall of their senior year.

MINIMUM CREDIT ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

High school students are required to be enrolled in at least 35 credits (7 courses) per semester with the following exceptions:

- Student has two or more blocks of Academic Support and/or Math Support
- Student has one block of Math Support and one block of Homework Support
- Student has one block of Academic Support, Math Support, or Homework Support AND must have early dismissal for a paid work position or recurring medical appointment
- Spring semester seniors who are on track to graduate must enroll in at least 30 credits (6 courses)

- Administrative approval

Course credits each semester may include PVPA courses, independent study credits, and/or off-site course credits. Students who do not have documentation of at least 15 credits per semester must be withdrawn from PVPA.

MULTIPLE LEARNING STYLES

PVPA recognizes that students learn in different ways. We support and encourage multiple learning styles in and out of our classrooms. Some of these learning styles are: tonal, linguistic, order and logic, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, object kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Students are encouraged to explore these styles and figure out which ones best fit their personal learning profile.

OFF-SITE COURSES AND INDEPENDENT STUDY OPTIONS

Students who wish to study a subject that is not regularly offered at PVPA may choose to pursue some alternate options. If the same course at PVPA does not fit within a student's schedule, the student may request permission to take a PVPA-offered course Off-Site. Please see the Arts Programs Director (for arts classes) or the Academic Programs Director (for academic classes) for initial project approval. Forms are available on www.pvpa.org, and must be finalized with signatures no later than the last day of add/drop each semester.

College Course Enrollment

Students may elect to take courses through accredited higher education institutions. A standard one-semester course generally translates into 5 PVPA credits. Any off-site coursework requires a documentation and approval process. Use the [Off-Site Course Contract](#), available on [PVPA's website](#) under "Documents and Forms" on the "For Students" tab, to document courses no later than the first week of a semester. Course descriptions and/or syllabi are required to ensure courses meet PVPA requirements. Course grades appear on PVPA transcripts as indicated on transcripts/grade reports (e.g., B+), do not follow the PVPA grading system, and are not averaged into the student's Grade Point Average. If opportunities arise for free courses, the PVPA school counseling department will inform eligible students. Students participating in off-site courses are allowed to leave the school for their classes and return afterwards in amendment of the attendance policies.

Each semester, Mount Holyoke College allows two PVPA students in 11th or 12th grade to enroll in a course free of charge. In the event of more than two qualified applicants, PVPA will conduct a lottery. Students are expected to arrange their PVPA schedules to accommodate the MHC class, and to provide her/his own transportation. Students are subject to MHC course registration policies and procedures,

and must complete the [Mt. Holyoke Course Application](#) & the [Off-Site Course Contract](#) if they wish to include these credits on the PVPA transcript.

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Enrolled in 11th or 12th grade at PVPA during the year in which the course is taken.
- Final grades of 3.6 or higher in at least two courses in the intended area of study.
- Documented successful completion of all PVPA courses taken at PVPA (i.e., no “No Credit,” or “Attempted” grades).
- No current disciplinary actions.
- Students who have already received a free MHC class will have last priority in the lottery.

Independent Study

Any independent study coursework requires a documentation and approval process. Use the [Independent Study Contract](#), available on [PVPA’s website](#) under “Documents and Forms” on the “For Students” tab, to document courses no later than the first week of a semester.

- Students may choose to engage in coursework outside of PVPA following the guidelines provided below. Independent study courses are not part of a student's daily schedule, even if the work occurs during school. All projects must follow the following guidelines:
- Projects/courses must be pre-arranged (not retroactive).
- This option is available only if PVPA does not offer the course (media, genre, level, etc.) and/or if it is impossible for the student to schedule the course.
- Goals outline new learning for the student.
- Projects/courses must be taught/advised by a qualified adult facilitator. PVPA administration may assess qualifications by requesting a resume and/or an interview.
- The quality and quantity of measurable evidence resulting from independent study is held to the same or higher expectations as other courses at PVPA.
- The appropriate department leader is responsible to do a final evaluation of all independent study work if the project supervisor is not at PVPA faculty member.
- When assigning credits, PVPA administration does an assessment of the expected workload (1 credit = 16 hours of work minimum).
- Reports about independent study projects are entered into the school’s database, on the same schedule as regular PVPA courses (mid-semester, final grade, etc.). The student is responsible to arrange for this written feedback.

Physical Education Alternate Credit

All students are required to earn two credits (32 hours) of Physical Education per year at PVPA, and must submit the [P.E. Alternate Credit Form](#). Activities must be documented in a log (see the [P.E. Alternate Credit Log](#) available on [PVPA's website](#) under “Documents and Forms” on the “For Students” tab), and must be supervised by an adult experienced in that activity. The supervisor MAY NOT be a parent, guardian or relative of the student. If students do not complete this P.E. requirement in a given year, then they lose eligibility for alternate credit in the following year and will be required to complete 4 credits for P.E. during the following year through enrollment in a PVPA course.

VHS Collaborative Online Courses

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts CPS offers students the chance to take online classes via the Virtual High School Collaborative (VHS). VHS courses follow a set academic calendar, but students can complete their work online at any time, day or night, as long as they meet their VHS teachers' specified due dates. Interested students should first take a survey that gauges their interest and commitment to independent learning. For more information, or to be considered for placement in VHS, email Deb Levheim, our Virtual High School Site Coordinator, at dlevheim@pvpa.org

PAIDEIA

At PVPA “Paideia” refers to a mid-year intersession offering students in all grades opportunities for unique learning experiences. Students and teachers develop Paideia programs that facilitate personal growth and development. Students select and focus on one or two programs of study from a variety of choices. For each year that a student attends PVPA, successful completion of a Paideia activity is a credit requirement. This entails attendance at minimum 85% of the class meetings and successful completion of all goals and products as set by the class leader. Students in good academic standing may apply to complete an independent study during Paideia, see the [Paideia Independent Study Contract](#).

PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT/ACCELERATED ACADEMIC PATHWAYS

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

- **WORLD LANGUAGE:** Students seeking to accelerate in world language must take a placement assessment to best determine a student's current level of fluency.

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

PRODUCTION LEADERSHIP AND TECHNICAL ROLES FOR STUDENTS

Students are encouraged to support PVPA productions on and off-site by taking on a variety of leadership positions and support roles. Stage Managers and Assistant Directors are generally expected to attend the course associated with the production, and earn PVPA arts credits. Students in technical support positions (e.g., lightboard operator, stagehand, assistant stage manager, wardrobe) are expected to participate in all technical rehearsals, performances, and strike, and may use this experience to earn school service credit or to help meet learning targets in a current technical theater course.

REPEATING COURSES

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

REPORTS: FINAL GRADE AND PROGRESS

A collection of reports from each course is emailed to students and parents/guardians four times per year: fall mid-semester, fall end-of-semester, spring mid-semester, and at the end-of-year. Some students may receive additional “Late Notices” indicating incomplete work that is beyond the due date. Except for the final report (end-of-semester for one-semester courses, or end-of-year for full-year courses), all narratives and credit levels indicate a “snapshot” of current progress only (grades are not averaged over the course of the year).

The PARENT PORTAL is the most effective way to track students’ progress throughout the year.

Date	Report	Who
Late October	Mid-Semester Progress Reports	All students

Early December	Late Notices (fall course withdrawal deadline is one week after Late Notice reports are issued)	Students not currently earning credit
Late January	Final Grade Reports for fall one-semester courses	All students
Late January	Mid-Year Progress Reports for full-year courses Late Notices (full-year course withdrawal deadline is the Thursday after spring semester begins)	All students
Late March	Mid-Semester Progress Reports	All students
Mid-May	Late Notices (spring course withdrawal deadline is one week after Late Notice reports are issued)	Students not currently earning credit
Late June	Final Grade Reports	All students

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

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

TRANSCRIPT REQUEST

Please email or call Lisa Clark, Student Records Coordinator, at lclark@pvpa.org or 413.552.1580 x216. Please include the student's name, last year of attendance at PVPA, and the name and address of the school to receive the transcript. Please allow one week for processing.

TRANSFERRING CREDITS

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

PVPA CODE OF CONDUCT

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

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Community members are responsible for:

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

For complete details on this matter please see Academic Integrity under the "Curriculum, Instruction and School Culture" earlier section.

CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (PEDs)

Students may not use cell phones or PEDs:

- In classrooms and in hallways when classes are meeting, including academic classes, arts classes, and Homework Supports.

Students may use cell phones or PEDs:

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

CLASS/ACTIVITY ATTENDANCE

Students are responsible for:

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

COMPUTERS/TABLETS

Students may use these devices for the following:

- Schoolwork (word processing, teacher-directed research).
- Digitally transferring schoolwork to and from home.
- Other uses as authorized and directly supervised by a staff member.

FIREARMS AND WEAPONS

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

CAMPUS BOUNDARIES/ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL AND VISITORS

Student community members are responsible for:

- Staying in adult-supervised areas in the building or outside (weather permitting) during non-class times in the school day.
- Staying on school property during the school day, unless accompanied by a parent or teacher.
- Obtaining parental consent prior to late arrival or early dismissal (unless living independently). Please find the [Early Dismissal/Late Arrival Permission Form](#) in the [school's website](#) under "Documents and Forms" on the "For Students" and "For Parents" tab.
- Obtaining prior approval for visitors, and follow the Visitors' Policy.

ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

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

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

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

PHYSICAL CONTACT AND PERSONAL SPACE

Community members are responsible for:

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

Community members may not:

- Engage in physical rough housing
- Harass anyone for any reason (See "Harassment Policy" and "Bullying Policy" in the next section, "Disciplinary Policies, Procedures and Processes").

- Have sustained intimate displays of affection and/or engage in sexual activity.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS (LANGUAGE, CLOTHING, BEHAVIOR)

Community members are expected to:

- Be honest.
- Interact with others in a civil and respectful manner.
- Avoid profanity and disruptive and distracting behaviors.
- Be aware of the effect their behavior has on others and be considerate of others' needs.
- Wear clothing that is safe and appropriate for school activities that will not offend or distract others.
- Listen and change their behavior if someone indicates they are uncomfortable.
- Say something to the person directly or an adult if they feel uncomfortable.

Community members may not:

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

RESPECT FOR THE SCHOOL BUILDING

Community members are responsible for:

- Following teacher discretion with regard to eating in classrooms and during class activities.
- Cleaning up classrooms after use, and leave them in good condition for the next group.
- Recycling and composting when possible.
- Respecting and cleaning up all common throughout the school campus (inside and outside)

Community members may not:

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

DISCIPLINARY POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES

BULLYING

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

CELL PHONES AND PEDs

Cell phone use during class period time will result in the phone or electronic device being confiscated until the end of the day. Students can retrieve confiscated phones in the Main Office, but rudeness on the part of the student towards the teacher who confiscated the phone will result in the phone being returned to a parent/guardian directly. We ask parents to request the school deliver messages to students only when absolutely necessary. Students are always able to make important calls to parents/guardians by using the school phone in the main office.

CHEATING, COPYING AND PLAGIARISM

Consequences for violating the Code of Conduct’s Academic integrity Policy are the following:

- The student will receive no credit for the assignment on the first incident.
- The student will need to complete an alternate assignment to show evidence of learning related to the class Course Objectives.
- The teacher will report the incident to the parents/guardians and the Director of Student Affairs.
- Subsequent incidents will result in a conference with the teacher, counselor, administrator, student and parents/guardians and further disciplinary action, including suspension, may be imposed.
- If a student and teacher cannot come to an agreement over whether a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy has occurred, the matter will be referred to the Director of Student Affairs, who will meet with the teacher and the student, and determine, based on the evidence presented, whether a violation has occurred.

COMPUTERS: ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR SCHOOL COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

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

Students may bring personal laptop computers and other portable devices (iPods, 'smartphones', etc.) for use in school. Again, these are to be used for legitimate academic purposes only, and their use is subject to the discretion of faculty and staff.

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

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

DISCIPLINE HEARINGS AND SUSPENSIONS

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

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

Verbal Warnings and Supervised Lunch

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

Written Warnings

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

Probation

Should the problem(s) continue, the parents/guardians and the student will be notified and the student will be placed on Probation. A school administrator will meet with the student and his/her parents to review the Probation terms and identify next steps. The document will clearly indicate next steps, including a temporary suspension from extracurricular activities, removal from the Reading Room study, and other similar privileges during the probation period. A written record of the agreement is maintained by the Director of Student Affairs for future reference.

Suspension

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

- The principal or designee may not impose a suspension as a consequence for a disciplinary offense without first providing the student and the parent oral and written notice, and providing the student an opportunity for a hearing on the charge and the parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing.
- The principal or designee shall provide oral and written notice to the student and the parent in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall set forth in plain language:

(a) the disciplinary offense;

(b) the basis for the charge;

(c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;

(d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal or designee concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing;

(e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;

(f) the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

- The principal or designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct a hearing without the parent present, the principal or designee must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The principal or designee is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal or designee has sent written notice and has documented at least two attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.
- Written notice to the parent may be made by hand delivery, first-class mail, certified mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal or designee and parent.

Short Term Suspension Hearing Requirements (10 Days Or Fewer)

- The purpose of the hearing with the principal or designee is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction. At a minimum, the principal or designee shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal or designee should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as set forth in 603 CMR 53.05. The principal or designee shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer

information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal or designee should consider in determining consequences for the student.

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

Long Term Suspension Hearing Requirements (10 Days or Longer)

- At a minimum, in addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following rights:
 1. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal or designee may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
 2. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense;
 3. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
 4. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; and
 5. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal or designee, and to receive a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or parent upon request. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the principal or designee shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.
- The principal or designee shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal or designee should consider in determining consequences for the student.

● Based on the evidence, the principal or designee shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension as set forth in 603 CMR 53.05, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The principal or designee shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or other method of delivery agreed to by the principal or designee and the parent. If the principal or designee decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:

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

Long-Term Suspension Appeal Process

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

DISCIPLINE FOR STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS HAVING SPECIAL NEEDS

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

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

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

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

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

DRUG FREE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear message to all people who attend, work in or visit the PVPA that the use, possession, or distribution of any drugs (other than those prescribed by a physician) will not be tolerated, and in fact, constitutes a violation of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 section 37H (See [Appendix E](#)).

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

The school will provide, without penalties, assistance to any student voluntarily seeking treatment or advice for a drug related problem. If a student voluntarily confides to a staff member that they have a

substance abuse problem, that staff member should refer the student to the Head of School.

Community programs will be identified for the student and the student will be encouraged to confide in their parent/guardian. Both the staff member and the Head of School must advise the student that there is no confidentiality protection under the law.

HARASSMENT POLICY

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

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

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

Verbal abuse may constitute harassment. No student should feel that parts of the school campus or any school-sponsored events are off limits because he or she will be subject to verbal harassment either by reason of gender or sexual orientation. Verbal abuse will be treated as a disciplinary infraction and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

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

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

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

HAZING

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

ILLEGAL ACTS

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

LASER POINTERS

Objects containing laser pointers have been shown to endanger the health and safety of others when used improperly and are not permitted on school grounds at any time.

SMOKING

In compliance with and according to Massachusetts General Law, PVPA a smoke-free campus. Non-students who are found smoking on the property will be asked to stop or leave. Student violations of this policy can span the range of a Written Warning to a suspension depending on the circumstances

and the frequency of the infraction. Student possession of any tobacco or smoking products is prohibited.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

ASBESTOS REPORT

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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

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

BOARD COMMITTEES

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

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

BOOKS

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

BUS TRANSPORTATION

In order to receive partial reimbursement for transportation costs from the state, Massachusetts public schools must offer transportation to every attending child. Because PVPA enrolls students from over

60 different communities, we determined that it was impossible to provide transportation to our entire student body. However, PVPA does offer bus transportation for a fee to a limited number of towns in order to accommodate families who find it difficult to carpool.

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

Students have the option to buy a school bus pass, available in the Main Office, for a single ride for the AM or PM rides. They can buy the school bus pass the same day or in advance of the day they need to take the bus.

CARPOOLING

Many families rely on carpools to transport their students to and from school. To assist our families in connecting with other families in their area, we have created a Google form available in [PVPA's website](#) under "[Transportation](#)" on the "For Parents" tab. When parents/guardians fill out and submit the form, the information automatically becomes part of a spreadsheet. A link to this spreadsheet is shared with other families who have also used the form. With the link the parent/guardian can check the spreadsheet anytime which will be automatically updated as new information is added. You can also edit your information on the spreadsheet if your situation changes. For more information, please visit the school's website under "Transportation" on the "For Parents" tab.

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

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

Contact Person: Scott Goldman, PVPA Head of School, 15 Mulligan Drive, South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075 (413.552.1580) or sgoldman@pvpa.org.

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

Appeal of the decision of the Head of School should be made by contacting Board of Trustees President Kim Hicks at the address listed above within 5 business days following notification of the decision from the head of School. Any original complaints concerning the Leadership Team Members should be made directly to the Board of Trustees President.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

Students are to be dropped off and picked up outside the main entrance area. The traffic flow around the school and through the parking lot is one-way and is planned to keep students safe at all times as well as to keep traffic moving quickly and efficiently. Handicap spaces, student pick-up spaces and thoroughway areas are clearly marked and must be followed at all times. **PARKING ON EITHER SIDE OF THE MAIN ENTRANCE DRIVEWAY OR ON ANY PART OF THE GRASS IS NOT ALLOWED AT ANY TIME.** These areas must be kept clear for traffic flow and to allow access for emergency vehicles. This rule is in effect before, during, and after school hours. Traffic and bus monitors are generally in place during pick up times. Please adhere to all rules and any directions made by the monitors.

FUNDRAISING: THE FRIENDS OF PVPA CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

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

As a 501(c)(3) organization, all donations to The Friends are deductible as charitable donations for federal income tax purposes. You can make an immediate gift by cash, check, or credit card (Visa or MasterCard). The Friends also accepts gifts of publicly traded stock, corporate matching gifts from your employer, and grants from private/family foundations. All donors to The Friends become members of The Backstage Club, PVPA's individual donor society or Community Producers, our corporate sponsors. For additional information or assistance with your contribution, please contact Mary Cantler, the Manager of Philanthropy, at 413.552.1596.

LIBRARY

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

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

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

LOST & FOUND

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

MASSACHUSETTS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

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

MASSACHUSETTS DESE CHARTER SCHOOL OFFICE

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

MEDICATION

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

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

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

OPEN HOUSE

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

POWER TOOL POLICY

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

SCHOOL LUNCH

PVPA partners with the South Hadley Public Schools' Food Service Department to offer lunches for all our students. The lunches are prepared at S. Hadley, brought to PVPA daily, and include an entrée, milk, fruit, and/or dessert. Alternate choices (salads, bagels, and assorted sandwiches) are available. The lunch fee per meal is \$2.75. The cost of a reduced lunch is \$.40. Families who are enrolled in certain government programs will be automatically certified to receive free lunch and will be notified of their "free" status before the start of school. Families who are not automatically certified can still apply for free or reduced status by filling out and returning the [Free & Reduced Lunch Application](#) found at the Main Office or at [PVPA's website](#) under "[Lunch](#)" in the "For Parents" or "For Students" tab.

The monthly Lunch Menu is available in the Main Office, posted on our website, and included in Friday Notes. Students wanting lunch (including those with free and reduced status) must fill out a menu and return it to the Main Office promptly before the date stated on the Menu. It can be sent via mail or scan it and email it to Miriel Cardona, mcardona@pvpa.org, or drop it off in the Main Office. Lunch will NOT be automatically ordered for any students. For more information, contact Miriel Cardona at 413.552.1580, ext. 110. For more information about the free and reduced lunch program and the application, contact Robin Fordham in the Business office at 413.552.1580, ext. 122, or go to [PVPA's website](#) under "[Lunch](#)" in the "For Parents" or "For Students" tab.

NOTE:

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

SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

Developed in collaboration with the South Hadley Police and Fire Departments, the PVPA School Safety Plan outlines a response for a range of potential emergency incidents. The plan is posted in each classroom and office throughout the building and we carry out safety drills along with fire drills.

SIBLING ADMISSIONS STATUS

Students who are siblings of currently enrolled PVPA students are given preference in the state-mandated lottery admissions process by being put at the top of our waiting list. If there are more sibling applicants than openings, a separate lottery is done among sibling applicants. Per MA charter school regulations, "siblings" is defined as sharing a common parent, either biologically or legally

through adoption. Sibling applicants must meet all application deadlines and requirements. Contact Amanda Melemed at 413.552.1580 ext. 114 or amelemed@pvpa.org for more information about the admissions process.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Student input is highly valued at PVPA, and they are encouraged to speak to teachers and administrators at any time if they have questions, concerns or suggestions. Students should be aware that staff and administration would support, when possible, implementation of their ideas. Also, each year students elect representatives as follows: three representatives from each grade, and one school-wide representative from the high school. These representatives meet weekly, and the representatives in grades 9-12 serve on the Board of Trustees.

STUDENT/FAMILY DIRECTORY

Parents/guardians who provide contact information for themselves and their PVPA students via the online form on the PVPA website are entered into the Student/Family Directory for the year. Families who have not submitted information will not receive a directory.

STUDENT RECORDS

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

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

After a student graduates or withdraws from PVPA, the parent/guardian is responsible to pick up permanent records or they will be destroyed after 7 years. On the date of graduation or withdrawal, the student's temporary records will be destroyed.

The Regulations Pertaining to Student Records were developed by the Massachusetts State Board of Education to ensure parents, students and former students of their rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment and destruction 55 of student records. The regulations have the force of law. A copy of the regulations is available for inspection in the main office or school counseling office.

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

VALUABLES

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

VISITOR POLICY

Visitors, including prospective students, ("Shadows") are limited in number to six per day. All visitors must be registered in the main office at least one day in advance. If visitors are currently enrolled in another school, they are required to notify that school. Visitors are not allowed during the first two weeks of a new semester, Paideia, special event days, Fridays, and after graduation. Upon arrival at PVPA, all visitors must sign in at the main office.

PVPA students in grades 9-12 are allowed one visitor per semester. Visitors must provide a Visitor's Agreement, signed by both the visitor and the visitor's parent/guardian. Visitor's Agreement forms are available in the main office. Students in grades 7/8 are allowed one visitor in the second semester. These visitors must have been accepted to PVPA or be on the waiting list for the current school-year. If you have questions about the Visitor Policy, see Chris Fournier or Amanda Melemed in the main office.

Visitors must at all times be accompanied by the assigned guide and must follow all rules in the PVPA Code of Conduct. Visitors who do not comply with the above will be escorted to the main office where arrangements will be made to have the visitor picked up from PVPA. Visitors who have been required to leave may not return for future visits.

WITHDRAWAL FROM PVPA

If a student plans to withdraw from PVPA, the student's parent/guardian must notify Lisa Clark, Student Records Coordinator, at 413.552.1580 x419 or lclark@pvpa.org. A Withdrawal Form signed by the parent/guardian is required to release student records. Records, including general records, health records, and special education records, if applicable, are then made available to parents for pick up in the main office.

APPENDIX A: PVPA Grading System Overview

Curriculum in each course is based on a set of course objectives centered on course content that indicate what students know and are able to do by the end of the course. Student proficiency with each course objective is reported on using the following system:

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

In order to earn credit, student evidence must be “developing,” “accomplished,” or “exemplary” on each and every course objective. Reports are based on a wide variety of evidence provided by each student, and involve teacher professional judgment. Later evidence is often weighted more heavily within each objective. Grade points are designed to match the commonly used Grade Point Average (GPA) system for easy translation to schools and institutions outside of PVPA. They synthesize student proficiency across all objectives based on relative importance using the following system:

GRADE	DESCRIPTION
4.0	Student provided “exemplary” evidence on many or all objectives
3.6	Student provided a mix of mostly “exemplary” and “accomplished” evidence on many or all objectives
3.2	Student provided “accomplished” evidence on many or all objectives
2.8	Student provided a mix of mostly “accomplished” and “developing” evidence on many or all objectives
2.4	Student provided “developing” evidence on many or all objectives
PASS	Student earned credit for a course graded on a credit/no credit basis
INCOMPLETE	Student has an agreed-upon extension to provide additional evidence related to course objectives

AUDIT	Student participated in the course on a not-for-credit basis
WITHDRAW	Student chose to drop the course prior to the withdrawal deadline (appears on transcript)
ATTEMPTED	Student provided “beginning” evidence or was missing evidence on some objectives and did not earn credit in the course (appears on transcript)

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

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

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

PVPA’s Habits of Work and Learning (HOWLs)

<p>PREPARATION: I am prepared for class and arrive on time with organized materials and any needed attire.</p> <p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student arrives to class on time. - Student has organized materials for class each day, and follows start-of-class routines.
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PARTICIPATION: I participate in my learning by engaging actively, contributing productively, and collaborating respectfully and safely. This means:

- Student focuses on learning/classwork and does not disrupt others' learning.
- Student practices active collaboration and engages in positive communication with classmates to further everyone's learning.
- Student remains present in class throughout the period (with occasional short breaks, as needed, or pre-arranged breaks as determined with school administrators).
- Student requests teacher permission before accessing electronics during class time.

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

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

Teachers should maintain documentation of student's completion of HOWLs-based tasks with a code of "Complete" or "Missing" or other teacher-determined notes, as needed.

HOWLs are reported on using the following system:

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

APPENDIX B: Samples Middle School and High School Course Guides

SAMPLE 4-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL COURSE GUIDE

Department	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
English Language Arts	English Language Arts 9	English Language Arts 10	2 semesters ELA Humanities	2 semesters ELA Humanities
History/Social Studies	United States History 1	United States History 2	1 or 2 semesters Social Studies Humanities	1 or 2 semesters Social Studies Humanities
Mathematics	Algebra 1 (Math 1)	Geometry (Math 2)	Algebra 2	Pre-Calculus
Mathematics (Accelerated)	Geometry (Math 2) (Algebra 1 in 8th)	Pre-Calculus with Advanced Algebra	Calculus or Elective	Calculus or Elective
Science	Environmental Science	Biology	Chemistry or Physics (Algebra 2 prereq. for Physics)	Chemistry, Physics or Elective OPTIONAL
World Language	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 OPTIONAL
Arts	8-10 credits/semester	8-10 credits/semester	8-10 credits/semester	8-10 credits/semester
Paideia	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits
Physical Education	2 credits	2 credits	2 credits	2 credits
Internship/Service	16-hour project	16-hour project	16-hour project	16-hour project

SAMPLE 2-YEAR 7/8 COURSE GUIDE

Department	7th Grade	8th Grade
English Language Arts	7th Grade Humanities	8th Grade Humanities
History/Social Studies	7th Grade Humanities	8th Grade Humanities

Mathematics	7th Grade Mathematics	8th Grade Mathematics or Algebra 1
Science	Life Science	Physical Science
Electives (Arts, World Language, PE)	Three courses per semester	Three courses per semester
Physical Education	PVPA Soccer, Ultimate Frisbee, Dance satisfy the PE requirement. Students can meet the PE requirement through documented and pre-approved out of school activities.	PVPA Soccer, Ultimate Frisbee, Dance satisfy the PE requirement. Students can meet the PE requirement through documented and pre-approved out of school activities.
Homework Support or Academic Support	As requested or required via an IEP	As requested or required via an IEP
Paideia	Paideia	Paideia

APPENDIX C: Discipline for Students Identified as Having Special Needs

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

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

- If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student may be disciplined according to the discipline policy in this handbook. The student will receive educational services during this period of suspension or exclusion. If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, then the school may still be able to implement an IAES (see ## 2 and 3 above). If the IAES is not possible, then the student will remain in his/her current placement, and the TEAM will arrange for a functional behavioral assessment (if one has not been conducted on the student) and the development or modification of a behavior intervention plan.
- The Head of School (or designee) will notify the Special Education Office of the suspendable offenses of a special needs student and a record will be kept of such notices.

APPENDIX D: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

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

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

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

Leadership Oversight and Accountability

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

Training and Professional Development

- In partnership with the Westfield State University Center for Teacher Education and Research we are working closely on professional development for educators and parent education. All PVPA faculty and staff members shall engage in an annual fall training that includes an overview of school policy, procedures on reporting, identification, and intervention techniques. These trainings have been developed in partnership with bully prevention expertise provided by Westfield State University's Center for Teacher Education and Research. Each annual PVPA staff

training will be developed with input from PVPA school counseling department, administration, and faculty/staff, informed by the latest research. It will further develop the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, respond, and report bullying incidents including but not limited to the following:

- Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate effective interventions to stop bullying.
- Information about the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among aggressor, target, and witnesses to bullying and the potential fluidity between target and aggressor status.
- Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment.
- Information on types of incidents PVPA students have experienced.
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying.
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.
- Information on responding to, reporting on, and tracking incidents.

Bullying Related To Students With Disabilities

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

Parent/Guardian Partnership and Access to Resources and Services

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

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

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

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

Student Partnership and Curriculum

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

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

Procedures For Reporting Suspected Bullying

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

Matters of bullying and retaliation will be approached with particular attention to discretion and confidentiality.

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

Anonymous Reporting For Bullying And/Or Retaliation

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

Investigation Procedures

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

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

Follow-Up Procedures In Incident Of Bullying/Retaliation Finding

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

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

Consequences For False Reporting

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

Notification Of Parent/Guardian Of A Target And Aggressor

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

Procedures For Restoring A Sense Of Safety For A Target

PVPA School Counselors and Head of School/designee will meet with the target student to assess needs and make sure that appropriate faculty is aware and vigilant in supporting the student. The Head of

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

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

Corrective Action And Strategies For Identified Aggressor

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

Protection of Others

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

Protection of Reporter/Witness/Bystander

All names of students who report incidents will be kept confidential. The Head of School or designee will follow up with the reporting student/s that provide information during an investigation and student/s that provide reliable information about an act of bullying and make sure he or she is supported through daily, weekly check in, as deemed appropriate to ensure that the student is safe and

supported for a determined length of time. The Head of School/designee will consider what adjustments, if any are needed to enhance the student's sense of safety and that of others as well. If so, the Head of School/designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately. Students and parents are asked to notify the school immediately if there has been an incidence of retaliation. The Head of School/designee along with School Counselor consult will refer student and families to appropriate local agencies for therapeutic and/or counseling services if recommended by school or requested by family.

Counseling And Referral For Target, Aggressors, And Others

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

Disciplinary Consequences

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

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

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

- causes physical and/or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
 - places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his or her own property;
 - creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
 - infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
 - materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of school.
- Cyber-bullying = bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication and includes:
- the creation of a Web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
 - the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the above conditions noted under Bullying definition.

- the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons.

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

Target = a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Relationship To Other Laws

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

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

APPENDIX E: Massachusetts General Laws Related to Weapons and Controlled Substances

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Sections 37H and 37H1/2

Section 37H

(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.

Section 37H1/2

(1) 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.

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.

(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.

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.

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.