



The Mountain School at Winhall

Family Handbook 2023 - 2024

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GREETINGS FROM OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Mountain School Families,

Welcome to an exciting new school year at The Mountain School at Winhall! Our tight-knit community is devoted to fostering a love of learning. Nestled amidst Vermont's stunning mountains, our school provides a unique environment where students thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

At MSW, education extends far beyond the classroom walls. We believe in embracing the great outdoors, where hands-on experiences and the beauty of nature bring lessons to life. Our students embark on adventures that build character, resilience, and a deep understanding of the world around them.

As a family-oriented school, we cherish the partnership between home and school. Your unique perspectives and diverse talents enrich our community, creating an inclusive and supportive atmosphere that nurtures every child's potential.

Our dedicated team of educators, staff, and administrators is passionate about cultivating a vibrant and engaging learning environment. We are committed to empowering students as critical thinkers, compassionate leaders, and active contributors to a better future.

This handbook is a valuable guide throughout the academic year, offering essential information about our school's values, policies, and opportunities for your child's holistic growth.

As we embark on this adventure together, let's embrace challenges and triumphs with an open heart and a sense of camaraderie. The Mountain School at Winhall is not just a school; it is where memories are made, and lifelong friendships are forged.

Thank you for entrusting us with the privilege of nurturing your child's future. I am eager to witness the transformations ahead as we embark on this journey together.

With warmest regards,

Margaret Schlachter
Head of School
The Mountain School at Winhall

SECTION 2: MISSION/VISION/VALUES

VISION STATEMENT

Our students develop the courage and resourcefulness to pursue a passionate and fulfilling path that leaves the world better for tomorrow.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our purpose is to establish an academic foundation of curiosity, confidence and competence while practicing kindness to oneself, the community, and nature.

VALUES:

- Creative Learning
- Caring Community
- Individual Growth
- Kindness
- Inclusivity
- Respect
- Integrity

SECTION 3: BACKGROUND & HISTORY

ACCREDITATION

MSW is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and is an independent school approved by the Vermont State Board of Education.

HISTORY OF OUR SCHOOL

In the spring of 1998, the citizens of Winhall voted to close their existing public elementary school and support the establishment of an independent community day school, maintaining a high-quality education choice for its local residents.

The Mountain School at Winhall (MSW) was created on Town Meeting Day on March 3, 1998, and it opened its doors to just under 40 students that fall. The citizens also voted to close Winhall Elementary, the town's public school, that same day. The newly formed Mountain School primarily served students in Winhall and Stratton, choice districts, but also accepted private tuition students for other local towns. Nestled in some of Vermont's most beautiful regions, the school has continuously offered an exceptional educational program from its first year of operations, leveraging its access to the outdoors to extend the learning beyond the school walls.

The establishment of an independent school presented an opportunity to provide a high level of academic excellence for all students in the town at a cost that was significantly lower per pupil, more manageable to taxpayers (per-student costs dropped by several thousand dollars that very next year) and held accountable by an independent board of governors, the Board of Trustees.

Through the years, The Mountain School at Winhall has been home to hundreds of students in the region and continues to this day to provide an educational program of excellence to support the growth of the whole child. It now operates with approximately 50 students in grades K-8 and remains progressive in its approach to actualize the potential in each child within a joyful school environment.

GOVERNANCE

The Mountain School at Winhall is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is responsible for hiring and evaluating the Head of School; setting policy and budgetary guidelines for the Head of School, including setting tuition levels; conducting annual evaluations of the school; and taking the lead in fundraising. The Head of School manages the school on a day-to-day basis. Concerns of the daily operations are to be taken directly to the Head of School. Concerns with the Head of School or the Board as a whole are to be taken directly to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Parents/guardians may contact the Board of Trustees by emailing to: boardoftrustees@themountainschool.org.

SECTION 4: ACADEMICS

At The Mountain School, students learn through a thematic, integrated, problem-based curriculum that is both rigorous and standards-based. Research shows that students learn better when they are able to make connections across disciplines and to their world. Our curriculum integrates learning activities together - from Language Arts to Science to Art to Technology - in a teacher-created, comprehensive curriculum aligned to MSW's standards. All students (K-8) study the traditional core courses: Humanities (Language Arts (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) and Social Studies)); Mathematics (Grades Kindergarten – 6 utilizes the ThinkMath! Curriculum and Grades 7-8 use Holt McDougal's Pre-Algebra & Algebra programs to prepare for high school math); and Science. In addition to these core subjects, all students participate in Forest Classroom (K/1)/OWLS (2-8), Fitness class, and STEAM.

FACULTY OFFICE HOURS

Students and/or parents should coordinate office hours with respective teacher(s). This is time set aside for students who may benefit from extra help or support from the teacher and is directly coordinated with families. Transportation is provided home by the family.

HOMEWORK

The Mountain School at Winhall does believe in homework that extends and reinforces learning and is not just "busy work." Effective homework is important for several reasons:

- It provides practice time for newly learned skills.
- It provides Parents/Guardians an opportunity to observe and assist in student work.
- It extends students' thinking beyond the learning of the class
- It prepares students for future learning.
- It promotes self-discipline and responsibility

The amount and type of homework given will be based on what is developmentally appropriate for each grade. In general, these are the homework expectations, however, there are instances, where the teacher will communicate special assignments that do not fit these expectations:

K-2: daily reading with families and Think Math! Challenges

3-4: daily reading with families and Think Math! Challenges, occasional literacy assignments. HW should take roughly 20 - 30 minutes.

5-6: Think Math! Challenges, reading, writing and science assignments. HW should take roughly 30 - 45 minutes.

7-8: Math, reading, writing and science assignments. HW should take roughly 45 minutes to an hour.

Students who are absent are responsible for obtaining and completing their assignments in a timely manner (typically the number of days absent). If there is an extended illness, teachers,

parents, and the student will confer about missed work and set reasonable expectations for completing assignments.

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS

The academic year is divided into trimesters. At the middle of the first two trimesters, parent – teacher conferences are scheduled. The first conferences will take place in October, and the second in February. At the end of each semester, progress reports and grades are distributed to each family. Parents and faculty are encouraged to request conferences with each other throughout the school year, as necessary, for the successful progress of any student.

Students in grades Kindergarten - grade 4 receive skills checklists including a personalized comment. Students in grades 5 – 8 receive teacher comments, letter grades and/or effort grades. Letter grades are based on a student’s academic performance.*

- A+ = 97 - 100%
- A = 94 - 96%
- A- = 90 - 93%
- B+ = 87 - 89%
- B = 84 - 86%
- B- = 80 - 83%
- C+ = 77 - 79%
- C = 74 - 76%
- C- = 70 - 73%
- D+ = 67 - 69%
- D = 64 - 66%
- D- = 60 - 63%
- F = 59% or Below

**The school is currently working on a more proficiency-based assessment system that will be phased in over the next two years. This approach more clearly outlines areas of mastery and growth for each subject for each student.*

Upper School Retake Policy (Grades 4-8)

Across grade levels, The Mountain School at Winhall is committed to establishing a student's positive educational foundation that will lead them to successful years ahead in secondary schools and beyond. Because of this, we encourage students to do their best on every assignment while also allowing them opportunities to build upon their work in a balance of holding students accountable for their actions. Because of this, all teachers of the Upper School at MSW (Grades 4-8) will allow students to make up or redo assignments based on the following criteria.

- Tests, quizzes, and other assessments can be retaken or corrected once for up to half of the total points lost. For example, if you scored 10/20 you would be allowed to make up

5 points for a final score of 15/20.

- PACK (Positivity, Accountability, Community, and Kindness) points which teachers may attach to homework, classwork, or other assignments, are not allowed to be made up and will be accommodated for an excused absence.
 - This encourages students to put in their best effort and behavior each day during class and builds PACK for students over their time at MSW.
- Homework, classwork, projects, and other assignment's due dates can be extended by the number of days a student was absent. Other extensions can be given but at an individual teacher's discretion.
- Longer-term assignments or projects in science, STEAM, or other courses may not be able to be replicated outside of the classroom, and in turn, a substitution may be created to replace it at the teacher's discretion.

Longer-term time away from school will require advocacy by the students to reach out to their teachers and do their best to stay on track with what the teacher posts on Google Classroom during that time. When the student returns to school, they should plan to meet with the teacher and review assignments that they were not able to complete while they were away. Students have one school day per day they are absent to complete any missing assignments.

STUDENT RECORDS/RECORD REQUESTS

The Mountain School maintains confidential student records in accordance with Vermont state, federal, and FERPA regulations. The office staff maintains these records and teachers have access to the records of students enrolled in their own classroom. Each parent has a right to inspect and review their child's educational records. All record requests must be signed and submitted to the office in writing. The office manager is responsible for sending the completed packet of records, recommendations, and health information to a new school.

Upon graduation or matriculation to a new school The Mountain School at Winhall sends all files to the new school as part of the transition. The school maintains records in accordance with State retention standards (1 V.S.A. § 317a). Any records that need to be destroyed are shredded in accordance with state, federal, and FERPA regulations by the Head of School or designated records custodian.

In the event of a permanent school closure, all records of current students would be passed along to their new school or destroyed in accordance with state, federal, and FERPA regulations.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TRANSITION

The Mountain School at Winhall supports graduating students as they transition into middle school. Students are encouraged to visit various public and private schools that they may be interested in attending. The Mountain School at Winhall assists families in transferring all academic records to their new school.

FIELD TRIPS

Throughout the year, field trips may be scheduled in connection with classroom studies. Parents will need to sign an annual blanket field trip permission form for all trips and other activities away from the school. Off-campus overnight field trips may be taken by students in grades 5-8. Behavioral expectations follow students to all field trips. MSW reserves the right to remove a child from any field trip if they are not following behavioral expectations. Fees paid will not be refunded if a child is removed for behavioral reasons.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The Mountain School at Winhall has been approved to serve students in all categories of disability. All Special Education/504 students must be approved for placement at The Mountain School at Winhall by the sending Supervisory Union (the Local Education Agency - LEA) and MSW. The LEA, as required, and MSW will meet the needs of students as defined in federal and state laws and regulations and provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to these students in the least restrictive environment, all as determined by the IEP or 504 plan, that will allow all students to benefit educationally. The LEA is ultimately responsible for the evaluation, identification, and education of special education and students eligible for Section 504 services, as well as the creation and implementation of all IEPs and 504 plans as per the agreement between the LEA and MSW.

The Mountain School at Winhall provides a continuum of special education and 504 services. In addition to case management we provide direct specialized instruction, one-to-one support, classroom accommodations, consultation with the classroom teachers and related service providers, and support for our eighth-grade students transitioning into high school. Services are provided as set out in the student's IEP/Section 504 Plan and the Special Education or 504 agreement with the LEA.

Parents should contact the Special Education Director or the Head of School for additional information if they feel their child may need services.

All students are encouraged to participate in MSW's co-curricular activities. Any accommodation for that purpose will be provided according to the student's IEP or 504 Plan. Please contact the Special Education Director for that purpose. MSW will make modifications as needed to ensure accessibility.

SECTION 5: ENROLLMENT & ATTENDANCE

ENROLLMENT

The Mountain School serves students in the towns of Stratton and Winhall and beyond. MSW invites children from any community to apply for admission. MSW has rolling enrollment. During the admissions process, the school considers academic performance and potential, level of maturity, personal interests, and the family's support of the mission and vision of The Mountain School. In the admission of students, the awarding of scholarships, and/or other financial assistance, MSW does not discriminate in any way based upon a student's or family member's actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, creed, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, age, military/uniformed service or veteran status, disability, or other legally protected classification.

The Mountain School at Winhall is not obligated to re-admit any child who has been previously enrolled and subsequently withdrawn from the School. Parents or guardians wishing their child to be considered for re-admission must complete a new application for enrollment.

STUDENT ABSENCES

Frequent absences interrupt the continuity of the instructional process. Families are asked to work around the school calendar when planning routine doctor/dentist visits or vacations as much as possible. Should a family consider a trip during school hours, parents are asked to submit a written request to the office, stating the dates of the absence as far ahead as possible, to determine how the child's learning program might be handled while away from school. The best practice is to submit the request at least five days in advance. Families should also inform the student's homeroom teacher of a planned absence. Families who provide less notice should understand that students may be expected to complete missed work upon their return to school.

If a student will have an unplanned absence, parents are asked to call or email the school office that morning between 8:00-8:30 a.m. Emails can be sent to frontdesk@themountainschool.org. If it is necessary for a child to leave school early, a note

should be sent by the parent in the morning stating the time of pick-up and reason for early dismissal. If a student accumulates 10 absences, the HOS will notify the family. If a student accumulates 20 absences, the HOS will arrange a meeting with the family to determine the student's eligibility to advance to the next grade level. Our school is also legally bound to follow VT truancy laws for excessive absences.

ABSENCES FOR WINTER SPORTS

Nestled in close proximity to the access road to Stratton Mountain, we understand that some families seek to have their students involved in winter sports programs that may impact regular attendance at the school. Any family who is considering such an arrangement should make an appointment with the Head of School well in advance of the winter season to discuss the individual components of the proposed plan and to address how loss of instructional time will be addressed so that the student does not fall behind in academic studies.

STUDENT TARDINESS

The first part of the day can be the most important time of the day for students. Arriving on time allows a student to visit with peers and staff members, be a part of morning routines, and start the day without feeling rushed or behind. Students are allowed to enter their homeroom at 8:20 a.m. Students will be counted as "tardy" after 8:40 a.m. Should a student arrive on a school bus after 8:40 a.m., or if there is inclement weather, students will not be counted as tardy. If a student is consistently tardy, the HOS will arrange a meeting with the family to discuss expectations.

STUDENTS ATTENDING ANOTHER SCHOOL OR PROGRAM

MSW supports students getting a full education utilizing a variety of Vermont resources, which sometimes means attending a ski or boarding school or other program during the Winter months. When these situations happen with students from our sending towns, the town tuition will be divided on a 40% and 60% basis: the other school/program will receive 40% and MSW will retain 60% of the tuition. The reason for this is that MSW is often providing the curriculum, maintaining grades and records, and holding a spot for the student. This only applies for the time of year when the student is at the other school/program. When the student is at MSW, MSW receives 100% of the town tuition for those days. In the case of private pay students, individualized arrangements will be made with the Head of School.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

All students are expected to dress appropriately for school and school functions, and to give proper attention to personal cleanliness. Students and their parents are responsible for acceptable student dress. Students who violate the student dress code shall be required to modify their appearance by covering, removing, or replacing the inappropriate item(s). The Head of School shall be the sole arbitrator of what is appropriate, reasonable, distracting, and/or disruptive. Parents will be notified if their child repeatedly fails to comply with the dress code. Further disciplinary action may be taken if the student fails to comply with the dress code.

A student's dress, grooming, and appearance shall always:

1. Be safe, appropriate, and not disrupt, distract, or interfere with the educational process.
2. Include footwear at all times; footwear that is a safety hazard, i.e. flip flops will not be allowed.
3. Exclude items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous, or denigrate others on account of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or other legally protected classification.
4. Exclude items that promote, endorse, advertise and/or display the use of alcohol, tobacco, weapons, or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities.

A student shall not:

1. Wear hats (except for religious headwear) or hoods indoors.
2. Wear spaghetti straps. All shirts must be at least two inches wide across at the shoulder.
3. Wear pajamas.
4. Wear revealing clothing in general. Parents are asked to send their children dressed modestly and appropriately for a professional setting.

SECTION 6: WELLNESS

LUNCHEES AND SNACKS

All students are provided the opportunity to eat a snack each morning and lunch around noon. The school does not have a daily hot lunch program. Parents interested in this option should contact the office manager. Other than those who purchase pizza, all children must bring bag lunches and their own utensils and water bottles. Families are encouraged to send nutritionally balanced lunches and snacks with their children every day. Please do not send candy, soda, coffee, sports drinks or caffeinated drinks of any kind. Refrigeration is not available for lunches or snacks. Out of respect for parent choices and food safety, sharing of food between students is not allowed. MSW does allow the sharing of food during special celebrations. Parents should notify the office and their child's homeroom teacher of any dietary and/or health needs concerning their child.

RECESS

MSW has recess for all students grades K-8. Recess provides physical and social exercise and relaxation. MSW attempts to have outdoor recess as much as possible. Students will only stay inside for recess if it is raining or below 10 degrees outside. **Parents should send their children to school dressed appropriately for the weather, and assume students will be going outside. Students who are not dressed appropriately for weather conditions will have to remain indoors in a quiet supervised study hall.**

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Various after school activities are scheduled throughout the year (e.g. athletics, yoga, art classes, music lessons, clubs, and more). Descriptions and details of specific programs are provided through the front office. These programs vary in cost and time. Please check emails and letters home from the office.

Behavioral expectations follow students to all after school programs. MSW reserves the right to remove a child from any program if s/he is not following behavioral expectations. Fees paid will not be refunded if a child is removed for behavioral reasons.

Qualified parents/guardians interested in teaching an after-school activity or sport are more than welcome. MSW looks for individuals with an area of expertise that would appeal to elementary and/or middle school students. Interested individuals should contact the Head of School. All adults conducting an after-school activity are required to be fingerprinted before teaching an activity.

MEDICATION

Students may not keep any medications, prescribed or over the counter, in their possession at school; all such medication should be given to the front office staff upon arrival at school, in the original prescription container, along with instructions enclosed from a physician and a signed permission from parents to administer it. Medications for specific conditions such as allergies, bee stings, etc. that should be kept at school in case of emergency, should be given to the office at the beginning of the year with specific instructions enclosed from a physician as well as a signed parental consent to administer the medication. Families should notify the front office staff of any changes in medication throughout the school year.

RESISTANCE THROUGH UNDERSTANDING

Grade 7 & 8 students at The Mountain School at Winhall may participate in the Collaborative's Refuse-to-Use Program. Refuse-to-Use is a substance-abuse education program for area students in grades 7-12. In exchange for participation in Resistance Through Understanding, students may choose to receive a free season pass to Stratton Mountain, Riley Rink, or the Viking Nordic Center.

JISP

During the winter months all students in grades K - 6 may participate in JISP (Junior Instructional Ski/Snowboard Program) one afternoon each week. JISP begins in January and ends in March.

Behavioral expectations follow students to Resistance Through Education, JISP, sports, and all other school programs. The Mountain School reserves the right to remove a child from any program if s/he is not following behavioral guidelines. Fees paid will not be refunded if a child is removed for behavioral reasons.

SECTION 7: BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

At the Mountain School at Winhall, every student has the right to an excellent and equitable education. Our highest goal is to create and maintain a safe and positive learning community. In order for this to happen, each student at MSW must have respect for:

- 1) themselves
- 2) their peers
- 3) MSW staff members
- 4) school policies and rules
- 5) the school environment

MSW considers student discipline to be a form of direct instruction by teachers and administrators involving an individualized approach to conflict resolution on a case-by-case basis. The School's approach is designed to be responsive to students in elementary and middle school grades. The Head of School and the Assistant Head of School may be involved in any such situation, and each situation is treated as its own event. The School considers this approach to be its comprehensive plan for responding to student misbehavior, as mandated by 16 V.S.A. § 1161a.

This comprehensive plan follows the model of Restorative Justice, in which:

- Students take ownership of their behaviors
- Students understand the impact of their behaviors upon the community
- Students make amends for their behaviors.

See below "Section 10: Policies" for a complete list of MSW policies, including those related to bullying, hazing, and harassment.

SECTION 8: ROUTINE AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

THE SCHOOL DAY, ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Students are allowed to enter their homeroom at 8:20 a.m. The school instructional day begins promptly at 8:40 a.m. with Community Gathering or Class Morning Meeting. Students may arrive between 8:20 and 8:40 a.m.. Parents will pull up to the front of the school to be greeted by school personnel and enter the building. We ask that parents do not enter the building at this time. Homeroom teachers will be in classrooms welcoming students. The regular school day ends at 3:20 p.m. Students will be picked up the same way, where parents will pull up to the front of the school and their child will be waiting accompanied by school personnel. Pick up is between 3:20-3:40 p.m.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The school uses an automated alert system to contact all families should the school be closed due to an emergency, e.g., bad weather. Students may also be dismissed during the school day if an emergency arises. If an early dismissal is required, the parent/legal guardian of a student will be called to arrange for transportation for the student. If the school is unable to contact a parent or legal guardian, the "contact person(s)" listed by the parent on the student's Emergency Closing of School Form will be called to retrieve the student.

STUDENT SIGN-IN/OUT

To maintain the safety and well-being of the students in our learning community, parents and guardians must check in with the front office staff if arriving after 9:00 a.m., and if leaving before 3:20 p.m. We want to be sure that all students are accounted for at all times.

VISITS TO THE SCHOOL

All persons, including parents, who come into the school during school hours are expected to check with the office and sign in when they enter the building. All visitors should sign-out upon departure. Visitors are not to enter any classroom without an appointment or escort. We ask that visitors be considerate of work areas and try to avoid interruptions of work flow when in the school.

SAFETY DRILLS

In accordance with state and federal laws, as well as MSW policies, MSW has established procedures for emergencies. Students practice safety drills at least once every other month.

The Head of School will conduct drills so students are able to leave the school building or perform other procedures described in the school's emergency preparedness plan, or both, in the shortest possible time and without panic or confusion. MSW keeps records of all drills that will be available upon request for review.

LOCKED DOOR

To help ensure the safety of all children, exterior doors will remain closed and locked throughout the day with the exception of arrival/dismissal or times that large groups of students are supervised as they move in and out of the school building.

RIDING THE BUS

The Mountain School at Winhall does not offer busing and has no authority or involvement in the transportation of students to or from school. It is the policy of the Winhall and Stratton School Boards to provide transportation for resident pupils of the Winhall and Stratton School Districts to The Mountain School at Winhall. The Winhall and Stratton School Boards are responsible for determining the bus routes. Any parent with special requests should contact the Winhall or Stratton School Board. Copies of bus routes and bus policies are usually available in August and may be obtained through the Winhall or Stratton School Board.

Any parent or guardian who wants their child to get off the bus at an approved location other than their designated stop must contact the front office staff. This contact must be made with the school on each occasion. The school will communicate with the bus driver. Any student accompanying a friend on the bus must have their parents contact the front office.

All students and parents are reminded that public transportation is a privilege granted to students and is subject to the observance of the rules of the transportation provider. The most important factor in bus transportation is safety. The School Board Directors will not hesitate to suspend bus riding privileges of any student who is disrespectful, unsafe, or who does not comply with the rules of the transportation provider.

SECTION 9: COMMUNICATION

At The Mountain School at Winhall, we strive to have outstanding communication with our families. We ask for a positive, productive two-way relationship to make each child's educational experience the best it can be.

DAILY CONTACT

The school office is formally open from 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., but it is common for the administrators to have extended hours. Please call, email, or stop by at any time with questions, to share ideas, or for assistance. We are happy to assist you.

REGULAR COMMUNICATION

There are three main types of communication for our families. They are:

1. All-school messages
2. Grade or level-specific messages
3. Individual student/parent messages

The school will use the following types of communications: emails, website postings, regular postal mailings, and phone calls.

Examples of important communications are:

- News this Week - a weekly email from the front office
- Classroom News - a monthly email from the homeroom teacher
- Letters from the Head of School - periodic emails from the Head of School

STAFF EMAIL

Each staff member of The Mountain School at Winhall is provided with a school email address to allow families regular contact with their child's teachers. All email addresses are found on the website. Please email staff members only at those email addresses. MSW staff will respond to emails within 24 hours unless this time extends over a weekend or school holiday. In that case, the staff member will respond by the following Monday or directly after the holiday.

WEBSITE

Please refer to the website (www.themountainschool.org) in order to retrieve updated information (including information relating to an emergency), events, classroom assignments, teacher email addresses, activities, photographs, forms, the school calendar, and more.

STUDENT CELL PHONE USAGE

The Mountain School at Winhall values personal connections and the power of in-person communication. Our campus is a cell phone free environment for all students. All cell phones and other electronic devices as outlined in our technology policy should be left at home or turned into the front office at arrival and returned at dismissal. Should a student need to contact a parent or guardian, they must go to the school office and make contact with the assistance of the school office staff. Should a parent need to contact their child(ren) they should call the school office.

Students may not send text messages to school employees, except for reasons of safety, e.g., communication during a school field trip.

SECTION 8: PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

OUR FAMILIES

The School believes that our students' families are a valuable and integral part of our learning community. Our parents need to be committed and involved in the success of their children and MSW by working together with the school and the community at large.

Each family is expected to contribute to the school in the following ways:

- Partner with the School to enhance their child's education
- Attend parent teacher conferences and school events
- Be a positive and active member of the MSW community
- Support fund-raising initiatives of the school through volunteerism and donations as much as reasonable for each family.

PAYMENTS TO THE SCHOOL

All payments for tuition, activities, field trips, food, etc. must be submitted to the front office in a timely manner. Families may make payments to the school via cash, check, or credit card. There will be a \$30 fee for any returned check. Please contact the office staff with further questions.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

The MSW Board of Trustees sets tuition annually. Families unable to pay the full cost of tuition may apply for tuition assistance. Families are offered tuition assistance based on their ability to pay and the amount of money available. Reach out to the Head of School to inquire about tuition assistance.

Tuition Assistance comes from MSW's Student Scholarship Fund, which is funded through the school's fundraising initiatives. MSW asks families to support all fundraising events to help provide tuition assistance to our families in need.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ACTIVITIES

The Mountain School at Winhall wants to provide equity for every student. Any family in need of assistance for any school-sponsored activity should contact the Head of School. This request will be confidential.

SECTION 9: TECHNOLOGY

Connectivity is provided all throughout academic campus spaces. We believe that the internet is a tool that can be used for study, exploration, and communal enjoyment. The Mountain School at Winhall offers 1:1 technology for students in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade for educational purposes. Chromebooks are the only technology device that students will have connected to wifi. It is the joint responsibility of school personnel and the parent or guardian of each student to educate the student about his/her responsibilities, to establish expectations, and to monitor student behavior when using technology.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Standards

ICT use at The Mountain School at Winhall is a privilege open to all students, though a student who inappropriately or illegally uses ICT during their time at The Mountain School at Winhall may lose their ICT privileges. All school rules apply to ICT use, including appropriate language rules.

During the academic day, ICT may be used for academic purposes (defined as direct use for a school assignment) only.

To uphold the safety of our community, we ask that all MSW students report security threats, safety risks, and ICT violations to a teacher or administrator. School administrators and employees may monitor ICT use to help ensure that the uses are secure and conform to these policies. Administrators reserve the right to examine, use and disclose data found on any ICT, including student equipment and online accounts, and may use this information in disciplinary actions and to furnish evidence of crime to law enforcement.

Any deliberate attempt to alter, disrupt or bypass the school's network, computer configurations, or security features will be treated as vandalism of school property. Students and their family will be responsible for financial damages resulting from tampering with school ICT.

We ask that students leave the following items at home or turn them into the main office upon arrival:

- Any 3G, 4G, and LTE devices (even if the sim card has been removed)
- Walkie-talkies or other active or passive communication devices
- Network equipment and devices (such as routers, switches, and ad-hoc devices)
- Game consoles (examples: Xbox 360, PS3, etc.), televisions, stand alone gaming devices, and
- gaming computers

If a student is unsure whether a device or its use violates the rules, we encourage them to open a dialogue with their advisor or the Head of School.

- Students in grades 2-4 are not permitted to bring their Chromebooks home, unless given special permission. Students in grades 5-8 will be permitted to bring their Chromebooks home.
- Chromebooks may only be used for educational purposes. While the school maintains an internet firewall and strict allowances on the devices, students should not attempt to bypass these allowances and should only be on sites that are designated by the teachers and administrators. Unacceptable sites include, but are not limited to, gaming and social media.
- The school utilizes a threat assessment software program, Gaggle on student created work in the Google suite for grades K through 8 as well as iBoss to monitor and restrict student internet browsing.
- Chromebooks need to be handled with care, particularly when being taken to and from school. If the Chromebook is damaged at school or at home, the family is liable for all repair and replacement costs.
- Students should not communicate with one another on the devices, unless permitted by the teacher on a specific platform.
- Students should not load personal software or programs onto the devices.
- Students agree not to send, access, submit, publish, display, or print over the school's internet and Chromebooks, any infringing, defamatory, abusive, obscene, profane, threatening, offensive, or illegal material.
- The use of the school's technology resources is not private. Students should not expect that files stored on or transmitted via the Chromebooks will be confidential. All digital transmissions are subject to monitoring by faculty, staff and officials. Digital storage is the school's property, and as such, network administrators and their designees may review files and communications to maintain system integrity, ensure the safety and security of students, and verify that students are using technology responsibly.

If any of the above expectations are violated, this will result in disciplinary action. This may include removal of the device from the student's use, probation or suspension.

SECTION 10: SCHOOL POLICIES – STUDENT AND OPERATIONAL

E. BUSINESS AND NON-INSTRUCTIONAL OPERATIONS

E-1 EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Head of School may order the delay, early dismissal, or closing of school on a short-term basis where there exists a serious threat to students or staff. Such emergencies may be caused by such circumstances as weather conditions, equipment breakdown, bomb or other threats, or health problems. In all cases, notification will be given to the staff and parents according to a predetermined plan. The Board Chair will be notified as soon as possible by the Head of School when school is closed for non-weather emergencies.

E-2 SAFETY OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

The Head of School shall develop procedures to insure the maintenance of facilities, paying particular attention to the following:

- Safe conditions in the building and on the grounds;
- Safe supervision practices, especially in activities presenting potential hazards; and
- Safety education and counseling where appropriate.

The Board of Trustees and the school staff are not guarantors of student safety, and the school does not owe students a duty of immediate supervision at all times and under all circumstances.

E-3 SCHOOL LOCKDOWN

It is the policy of the Mountain School at Winhall to respond quickly and effectively to any threat to the safety of its students and staff. As a result, it has adopted provisions that its personnel are directed to follow in order to prepare for, respond to, and follow-up on the trespassing of any non-approved or identified person or persons on school grounds.

E-4 TOBACCO PROHIBITION

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall to prohibit the use of tobacco on school grounds in accordance with state law. This ban extends to any student, employee or visitor to the school, and applies at all times, whether or not school is in session. Students are, furthermore, prohibited from possessing tobacco products at all times while under the supervision of school staff or at school sponsored activities. All references to tobacco include the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cig or e-cigarette), personal vaporizers (PVs), electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and other vaporizers. All tobacco use, including chewing or dipping tobacco, is prohibited.

E-5 LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGY POLICY

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall to comply with all the requirements of federal

and state laws, including 16 V.S.A. § 563, and to establish and maintain the necessary procedures to ensure such compliance. It is the intent of the School to ensure that students who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, evaluated, and provided with appropriate educational services.

The School recognizes that students may be disabled if they have a history of one or more life-threatening allergies. Any such history should be documented with a written statement from the respective student's physician identifying the life-threatening allergy(ies), the signs and symptoms thereof, possible accommodations, and the appropriate medication. Upon receiving such a statement and a parental request, the School will make reasonable accommodations for the student pursuant to its written procedures.

The Mountain School at Winhall also acknowledges that, while the risks of exposure to allergens cannot be eliminated in the school environment, those risks can be reduced by implementing planning and appropriate procedures.

The School will assign an employee to, on an annual basis:

- 1) inform parents of students with life-threatening allergies and life-threatening chronic illnesses of applicable provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and other applicable federal statutes, state statutes, federal regulations, and state rules;
- 2) inform appropriate school staff of their responsibilities; and
- 3) provide necessary training to carry out those responsibilities.

The persons responsible for implementing this policy are the Head of School and Assistant Head of School.

E-6 HARASSMENT/HAZING/BULLYING

Statement of Policy

The Mountain School at Winhall ("MSW" or the "School") is committed to providing all of its students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect.

It is the policy of MSW to prohibit the unlawful harassment of students based upon the student's or his/her family member's actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, creed, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, age, military/uniformed service or veteran's status, disability, or other legally protected classification. Harassment may also constitute a violation of Vermont's Public Accommodations Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and/or Title IX of the federal Education Amendments Act of 1972.

It is also the policy of MSW to prohibit the unlawful hazing and bullying of students. Conduct

that constitutes harassment or hazing may be subject to civil penalties under state law.

The School will address all complaints of harassment, hazing, and bullying according to the procedures accompanying this policy, and shall take appropriate action against any person – subject to the jurisdiction of the Head of School – who violates this policy. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit discipline of a student for conduct which, although it does not rise to the level of harassment, bullying, or hazing as defined herein, otherwise violates one or more of the School’s disciplinary policies or the School’s code of conduct.

Privacy Considerations. Under this policy, the privacy of the Complainant, the accused individual, and the witnesses shall be maintained consistent with MSW’s obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with laws governing the disclosure of student records or other applicable discovery or disclosure obligations.

Response to Complaints. The scope of the School’s response to a harassment/ hazing/bullying complaint may depend upon whether a student or parent of a student reporting the misconduct asks that the student’s name not be disclosed to the alleged wrongdoer, or that nothing be done about the alleged harassment/hazing/bullying. In all cases, the investigator will discuss confidentiality standards and concerns with the Complainant initially. MSW will inform the student that a confidentiality request may limit the school’s ability to respond. The School will remind the student that retaliation is prohibited and that if he or she is afraid of reprisals from the alleged wrongdoer, the School will take steps to prevent retaliation and will take strong action if retaliation occurs. If the student continues to ask that his or her name not be revealed, the School will take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the student’s request as long as doing so does not prevent the School from responding effectively to the harassment/hazing/bullying complaint and preventing harassment/hazing/bullying of other students. MSW will evaluate the confidentiality request in the context of its responsibility to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students. The factors the School might consider in this regard include the seriousness of the alleged harassment/hazing/bullying, the age of the student targeted, whether there have been other complaints or reports of harassment/hazing/bullying against the alleged wrongdoer, and the rights of the accused individual to receive information about the accuser and the allegations if a formal proceeding with sanctions may result. If information about the incident is contained in an “education record” of the student alleging the harassment/hazing/bullying, as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g, the School will consider whether FERPA prohibits it from disclosing information without the student’s consent.

Disclosure of Discipline Imposed. Federal privacy laws prohibit disclosure of any discipline imposed under this policy unless the parent/guardian of the accused student and/or the accused eligible student (18 years or older) consents to such disclosure, pursuant to 34 CFR Part 99.30.

Notifications. All notifications made under this policy and the underlying procedures shall be subject to state and/or federal laws protecting the confidentiality of personally identifiable

student information. Pursuant to 34 CFR Part 99.30, a School Administrator may seek the consent of the parent/guardian of the accused student in order to inform the Complainant of any disciplinary action taken in cases where the school determined that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, bullying, or other misconduct occurred. Only if the parent/guardian or eligible student provides a signed and dated written consent may the School disclose personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

Reporting to Law Enforcement Authorities. Information obtained and documented by the school administration regarding the school's response to notice of student conduct that may constitute hazing, harassment, and/or bullying may constitute an "educational record" regarding the student or student(s) involved as defined by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Accordingly, such information may not be disclosed to law enforcement authorities without prior parent approval (or approval of the accused eligible student) except in response to a lawfully issued subpoena, or in connection with an emergency if disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

Document Maintenance. The Head of School or his/her designee shall assure that a record of any complaint, its investigation and disposition, as well as any disciplinary or remedial action taken following the completion of the investigation, is maintained by MSW in a confidential file accessible only to authorized persons. All investigation records created in conformance with this policy and procedures, including but not limited to, the complaint form, interview notes, additional evidence, and the investigative report, shall be kept by the Equity Coordinator, Designated Employees, and MSW for at least six (6) years after the investigation is completed.

Definitions.

For the purposes of this policy and the accompanying procedures, the following definitions apply:

"Bullying" means any overt act or combination of acts, including an act conducted by electronic means, directed against a student by another student or group of students and which:

- is repeated over time;
- is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; and
- (i) occurs during the school day on the School's property, on a school bus, or at a School-sponsored activity, or before or after the school day on a school bus or at a School-sponsored activity; or
- (ii) does not occur during the school day on the School's property, on a school bus or at a School-sponsored activity and can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's right to access educational programs.

"Complaint" means an oral or written report of information provided by a student or any person to an Employee alleging that a student has been subjected to conduct that may rise to the level of harassment, hazing, or bullying.

“Complainant” means a student who has provided oral or written information about conduct that may rise to the level of harassment, hazing, or bullying, or a student who is the target of alleged harassment, hazing, or bullying.

“Designated Employee” means an Employee who has been designated by the school to receive complaints of harassment, hazing, and bullying.

The following Employees of MSW have been designated by MSW to receive complaints of harassment/hazing/bullying pursuant to this policy and 16 V.S.A. §570a (a)(7), 16 V.S.A. § 570b(7), and 16 V.S.A. § 570c(7) and under federal anti-discrimination laws:

Head of School
Margaret Schlachter
Mountain School at Winhall
9 School Rd,
Bondville, VT 05340
(802) 297-2662
mschlachter@themountainschool.org

Assistant Head of School
Joe Frigo
Mountain School at Winhall
9 School Rd,
Bondville, VT 05340
(802) 297-2662
jfrigo@themountainschool.org

“Employee,” for purposes of this policy only, includes any person employed directly by or retained through a contract of employment with MSW, a Trustee, a student teacher, or an individual who has entered into a volunteer agreement with the School.

“Equity Coordinator” is the person responsible for implementation of Title IX (regarding sex-based discrimination) and Title VI (regarding race-based discrimination) for MSW students and for coordinating MSW’s compliance with Title IX and Title VI in all areas covered by the implementing regulations with respect to students. The Equity Coordinator is also responsible for overseeing implementation of MSW’s policies against harassment, hazing, and bullying of students. This role may also be assigned to Designated Employees with respect to students.

“Harassment” means an incident or incidents of verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct, including any incident conducted by electronic means, based on or motivated by a student’s or a student’s family member’s actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, creed, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, age, military/uniformed service or veteran’s status, disability, or other legally protected classification, that has the purpose or effect of objectively and substantially undermining and detracting from

or interfering with a student's educational performance or access to school resources or creating an objectively intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Harassment includes conduct as defined above and may also constitute one or more of the following:

- 1) Sexual harassment means unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which includes sexual violence/sexual assault, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, and includes situations when one or both of the following occur:
 - Submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education, academic status, or progress; or
 - Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as a component of the basis for decisions affecting that student.

Sexual harassment may also include student-on-student conduct or conduct of a non-employee third party that creates a hostile environment. A hostile environment exists where the harassing conduct is severe, persistent or pervasive so as to deny or limit the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program on the basis of sex.

- 2) Racial harassment means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived race or color, and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, racial slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or visual material, and taunts on manner of speech and negative references to cultural customs.
- 3) Harassment of members of other protected categories means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student's or his/her family member's actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, creed, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, age, military/uniformed service or veteran's status, disability, or other legally protected classification, and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or visual material, taunts on manner of speech, and negative references to customs related to any of these protected categories.

“Hazing” means any intentional, knowing or reckless act committed by a Student, whether individually or in concert with others, against another student: (a) in connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with the School; and (b) which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, endangering the mental or physical health of the student.

The definition of hazing shall not include any activity or conduct that furthers legitimate

curricular, extra-curricular, or military training program goals, provided that:

- The goals are approved by the School; and
- The activity or conduct furthers the goals in a manner that is appropriate, contemplated by the School, and normal and customary for similar programs at other educational institutions.

With respect to Hazing, **“Student”** means any person who:

- Is registered in or in attendance at MSW;
- Has been accepted for admission at MSW; or
- Intends to attend MSW during any of its regular sessions after an official academic break.

“Notice” means a written complaint or oral information that harassment, hazing, or bullying may have occurred that has been provided to a Designated Employee from another Employee, the student allegedly subjected to harassment, hazing, or bullying, another student, a parent or guardian, or any other individual who has reasonable cause to believe the alleged conduct may have occurred. If the School learns of possible harassment, hazing, or bullying through other means, for example, if information about harassment, hazing, or bullying is received from a third party (such as from a witness to an incident or an anonymous letter or telephone call), different factors will affect the School’s response. These factors include the source and nature of the information; the seriousness of the alleged incident; the specificity of the information; the objectivity and credibility of the source of the report; whether any individuals can be identified who were subjected to the alleged misconduct and whether those individuals want to pursue the matter. In addition, for purposes of violations of federal anti-discrimination laws, Notice may occur when an Employee of the School, including any individual who a student could reasonably believe has the authority or responsibility, knows or in the exercise of reasonable care should have known about potential unlawful harassment, hazing, or bullying.

“Organization” means a fraternity, sorority, athletic team, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or other similar group, whose members primarily are students at an educational institution, and which is affiliated with the educational institution.

“Pledging” means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.

“Retaliation” is any adverse action by any person against a person who has filed a complaint of harassment, hazing or bullying or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the complaint. Such adverse action may include conduct by a School Employee directed at a student in the form of intimidation or reprisal such as diminishment of grades, suspension, expulsion, change in educational conditions, loss of privileges or benefits, or other unwarranted disciplinary action. Retaliation may also include conduct by a student directed at another student in the form of further harassment, hazing, bullying, intimidation, and/or reprisal.

“School Administrator” means a Head of School or his/her designee, an Assistant Head of School, and/or the School’s Equity Coordinator.

“Student Conduct Form” is a form used by students, staff, or parents, to provide, in written form, information about inappropriate student behaviors that may constitute harassment, hazing, or bullying.

Reporting Complaints of harassment, hazing, or bullying

- 1) **Student Reporting:** Any student who believes that he/she has been harassed, hazed, or bullied under this policy, or who witnesses or has knowledge of conduct that he/she reasonably believes might constitute harassment, hazing, or bullying should promptly report the conduct to a Designated Employee or any other school Employee.
- 2) **School Employee Reporting:** Any school Employee, as defined in the policy above, who **witnesses conduct** that he/she reasonably believes might constitute harassment, hazing, and/or bullying shall take reasonable action to stop the conduct and to prevent its recurrence and immediately report it to a Designated Employee and immediately complete a Student Conduct Form.

Any school Employee **who overhears or directly receives information** about conduct that might constitute harassment, hazing, or bullying shall immediately report the information to a Designated Employee and immediately complete a Student Conduct Form. If one of the Designated Employees is a person alleged to be engaged in the conduct complained of, the incident shall be immediately reported to another of the School’s Designated Employees or to a School Administrator.

- 3) **Other reporting:** Any other person who witnesses conduct that he/she reasonably believes might constitute harassment, hazing, or bullying under this policy should promptly report the conduct to a Designated Employee.
- 4) **Documentation of the report:** If the complaint is oral, the Designated Employee shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing in a Student Conduct Form, including the time, place, and nature of the alleged conduct, the identity of the Complainant, alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses. Both the Complainant and the alleged perpetrator will have the right to present witnesses and other evidence in support of their position.
- 5) **False complaint:** Any person who knowingly makes a false accusation regarding harassment, hazing, or bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion with regard to students, or up to and including discharge with regard to Employees. There shall be no adverse action taken against a person for reporting a complaint of harassment, hazing, or bullying when the person has a good faith belief that harassment, hazing or bullying occurred or is occurring.

- 6) Rights to Alternative Complaint Process for Harassment: In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission
14-16 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
(800) 416-2010 or (802) 828-2480 (voice)
(877) 294-9200 (tty)
(802) 828-2481 (fax)
Email: human.rights@state.vt.us

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office
U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921
(617) 289-0111 (voice)
(877) 521-2172 (tdd)
(617) 289-0150 (fax)
Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

Responding to Notice of Possible Policy Violation(s)

Upon Notice of information harassment, hazing and/ or bullying may have occurred, the Designated Employee shall:

- 1) Promptly reduce any oral information to writing, including the time, place, and nature of the conduct, and the identity of the participants and Complainant.
- 2) Promptly inform the Head of School or their designee of the information;
- 3) If in the judgement of the Head of School or their designee the information alleges conduct which may constitute harassment, hazing, or bullying, the Designated Employee shall, as soon as reasonably possible, provide a copy of the policy on harassment, hazing or bullying and these procedures to the Complainant and the accused individual, or, if either is a minor, cause a copy to be provided or delivered to their respective parent or guardian.

Upon **initiation of an investigation**, the Designated Employee shall:

Notify in writing the parents/guardians of both the Complainant and the accused individual that:

- an investigation has been initiated;
- retaliation is prohibited;

- all parties have certain confidentiality rights; and
- they will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.

Investigating Harassment, Hazing, and/or Bullying Complaints

Initiation of Investigation – Timing.

Unless special circumstances are present and documented, such as reports to the Department for Children and Families (“DCF”) or the police, the designated employee, no later than one school day after notice to a Designated Employee, initiate or cause to be initiated, an investigation of the allegations, which the designated employee reasonably believes may constitute harassment, hazing, or bullying.

Investigator Assignment.

The Designated Employee shall assign a person other than the Designated Employees to conduct the investigation. No person who is the subject of a complaint shall conduct such an investigation.

Interim Measures.

It may be appropriate for the School to take interim measures during the investigation of a complaint. For instance, if a student alleges that he or she has been sexually assaulted by another student, the School may decide to place the students immediately in separate classes and/or transportation pending the results of the School’s investigation. Similarly, if the alleged harasser is a teacher, allowing the student to transfer to a different class may be appropriate. In all cases, MSW will make every effort to prevent disclosure of the names of all parties involved – the Complainant, the witnesses, and the accused – except to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation. In all cases where physical harm has resulted and/or where the targeted student is known to be expressing suicidal ideation, or experiencing serious emotional harm, a safety plan will be put in place. Safety plans must also be considered in cases where the targeted student is known to have difficulty accessing the educational programs at the school as a result of the inappropriate behavior. “No contact” orders, or their enforcement, may also be appropriate interim measures.

Due Process.

16 V.S.A. § 1161a requires approved independent schools to use “standard due process” in its discipline plan. The rights established under Title IX must be interpreted consistent with any federally guaranteed due process rights involved in a complaint proceeding, including but not limited to the ability of the Complainant and the accused to present witnesses and other evidence during an investigation. MSW will ensure that steps to accord due process rights do not restrict or unnecessarily delay the protections provided by Title IX to the Complainant.

Standard Used to Assess Conduct.

In determining whether the conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the investigator shall consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context

in which the alleged incidents occurred. The Complainant and the accused will be provided the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence during an investigation. The investigator will also consider the impact of relevant off-campus conduct on the school environment where direct harm to the welfare of the school can be demonstrated or the conduct can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's equal access to educational programs. Whether a particular action constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.

Completion of Investigation – Timing

No later than five school days from the filing of the complaint with the Designated Employee, unless special circumstances are present and documented, the investigator shall submit a written initial determination to the Head of School or their designee.

Investigation Report

The investigator's written report should include a statement of the findings of the investigator as to whether the allegations have been substantiated, and as to whether the alleged conduct constitutes harassment, hazing, and/or bullying. The report, when referencing student conduct, is a student record and therefore confidential. It will be made available to investigators in the context of a review conducted by either Vermont AOE or investigations of harassment conducted by the Vermont Human Rights Commission or U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights.

Review and Final Determination

The Head of School or their designee will review the investigator's report and, within two days of receiving it, issue a determination as to whether the findings of the investigator support his or her conclusion and whether there has been a violation of the School's Harassment/Hazing/Bullying Policy.

Notice to Students/Parents/Guardians

Within five school days of the Head of School or their designee's determination, the Designated Employee shall notify in writing both the Complainant and accused individual (or, if either is a minor, inform their respective parent or guardian) that:

- the investigation has been completed;
- the Head of School or their designee has determined that a policy violation occurred (and which policy term was violated, i.e., harassment, hazing, and/or bullying) or that no violation occurred.
- Notify the Complainant Student – or if a minor, his/her parent(s) or guardian – in writing of the Complainant's rights to:
- an internal review by the School of its determination as to whether harassment, hazing, or bullying occurred;
- request an Independent Review, within thirty (30) days of the final determination, of the School's "final" determination as to whether harassment, hazing, or bullying occurred or (although a "final" determination was made that harassment, hazing, or bullying indeed

occurred) the school's response to that conduct was inadequate to correct the problem; and that the review will be conducted by an investigator to be selected by the Head of School from a list developed by the Agency of Education;

- (if a claim of harassment is substantiated) file a complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission and/or the federal Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.

Notify the accused student's parent(s) or guardian in writing of the accused student's right to appeal as set forth in Section V of these procedures.

Violations of Other Policies

In cases where the investigation has identified other conduct that may constitute a violation of other school disciplinary policies or codes of conduct, the investigator shall report such conduct to the Head of School or their designee for action in accordance with relevant school policies or codes of conduct.

Responding to Substantiated Claims

Scope of Response

After a final determination that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying has been committed, the School shall take prompt and appropriate disciplinary and/or remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the harassment, hazing, and/or bullying and prevent any recurrence of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying and remedy its effects on the victim(s). In so doing, the MSW Student Conduct and Discipline Policy and Procedures may provide guidance, but the specific procedures set out here will be followed to the extent they are inconsistent with the Student Conduct and Discipline Procedures. For example, the appeal process set out in these procedures will apply in cases involving expulsions for harassment, hazing, and bullying. In determining an appropriate response to a substantiated claim, the following should be considered:

Potential Remedial Actions

Remedial action may include but not be limited to an age appropriate warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension, and/or expulsion of a student, and warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension and/or termination of an Employee. A series of escalating consequences may be necessary if the initial steps are ineffective in stopping the harassment, hazing, and/or bullying. To prevent recurrences, counseling for the offender may be appropriate to ensure that he or she understands what constitutes harassment, hazing, and/or bullying and the effects it can have. Depending on how widespread the harassment, hazing, and/or bullying was and whether there have been any prior incidents, the School may need to provide training for the larger school community to ensure that students, parents and teachers can recognize harassment, hazing, and/or bullying if it recurs and know how to respond.

School Access/Environment Considerations

MSW will also make efforts to support victims' access to MSW's programs, services and activities and consider and implement school-wide remedies where appropriate. Accordingly,

steps will be taken to eliminate any hostile and/or threatening environment that has been created. For example, if a female student has been subjected to harassment/bullying by a group of other students in a class, the School may need to deliver special training or other interventions for that class to repair the educational environment. If the School offers the student the option of withdrawing from a class in which a hostile environment/bullying occurred, MSW will assist the student in making program or schedule changes and ensure that none of the changes adversely affect the student's academic record. Other measures may include, if appropriate, directing a bully/harasser to apologize to the affected student. If a hostile environment has affected the entire school or campus, an effective response may need to include dissemination of information, the issuance of new policy statements or other steps that are designed to clearly communicate the message that the school does not tolerate harassment and/or bullying and will be responsive to any student who reports that conduct.

Hazing Case Considerations

Appropriate penalties or sanctions or both for organizations that (or individuals who) engage in hazing, and these may include revocation or suspension of an organization's permission to operate or exist within the institution's purview if that organization knowingly permits, authorizes, or condones hazing.

Other Remedies

Other remedies may include providing counseling to the victim(s) and/or the perpetrator(s) and additional safety planning measures for the victim(s).

Retaliation Prevention

It is unlawful for any person to retaliate against a person who has filed a complaint of harassment or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the harassment complaint. A person may violate this anti-retaliation provision regardless of whether the underlying complaint of harassment is substantiated.

MSW will take reasonable steps to prevent any retaliation against a student who makes a complaint of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying (or was the subject of the alleged conduct), against the person who filed a complaint on behalf of a student, or against those who provided information as witnesses. At a minimum, this includes making sure that the students and their parents, and those witnesses involved in the school's investigation, know how to report any subsequent problems and making follow-up inquiries to see if there have been any new incidents or any retaliation.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

At all stages of the investigation and determination process, school officials are encouraged to make available to Complainants alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation, for resolving complaints. Certain considerations should be made before pursuing alternative dispute resolution methods, including, but not limited to: (1) the nature of the accusations (for example, face-to-face mediation is not appropriate for sexual violence cases), (2) the age of the Complainant and the accused individual, (3) the agreement of the Complainant, and (4) other

relevant factors such as any disability of the target or accused individual, safety issues, the relationship and relative power differential between the target and accused individual, or any history of repeated misconduct/harassment by the accused individual.

Post Determination Reviews

Rights of Complainants

Internal Review for Complainant of the Head of School's Determination as to the Allegations of Harassment, Hazing, and/or Bullying

A Complainant or parent of a Complainant may request an internal review by the Head of School of their designee's determination (following investigation) that harassment, hazing, and/or bullying has not occurred via written request submitted to the Head of School. All levels of internal review of the designee's determination, and the issuance of a final decision, shall, unless special circumstances are present and documented by MSW, be completed within thirty (30) calendar days after review is requested.

Independent Reviews for Complainants of Final Harassment, Hazing, and/or Bullying Determinations

A Complainant may request an independent review within thirty (30) days of the School's determination if she/he (1) is dissatisfied with the final determination as to whether harassment, hazing, and/or bullying occurred, or (2) believes that, although the designee's determination was made that harassment, hazing, and/or bullying occurred, the School's response was inadequate to correct the problem.

The Complainant shall make such a request to the Head of School within thirty (30) days of a final determination. Upon such request, the Head of School shall promptly initiate an independent review by a neutral person and shall cooperate with the independent reviewer so that she/he may proceed expeditiously. The review shall consist of an interview of the Complainant and relevant school officials and a review of the written materials from the school's investigation.

Upon completion of the independent review, the reviewer shall advise the Complainant and school officials in writing: (1) as to the sufficiency of the School's investigation, its determination, and/or the steps taken by the school to correct any harassment, hazing, and/or bullying found to have occurred, and (2) of recommendations of any steps the School might take to prevent further harassment, hazing, and/or bullying from occurring. A copy of the independent review report shall be sent to the Secretary of Education.

The reviewer shall advise the student of other remedies that may be available if the student remains dissatisfied and, if appropriate, may recommend mediation or other alternative dispute resolution. The independent reviewer shall be considered an agent of the school for the purpose of being able to review confidential student records. The costs of the independent review shall be borne by MSW. The School may request an independent review at any stage of the process.

Rights to Alternative Harassment Complaint Process

In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission
14-16 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
(800) 416-2010 or (802) 828-2480 (voice)
(877) 294-9200 (tty)
(802) 828-2481 (fax)
Email: human.rights@state.vt.us

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office
U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921
(617) 289-0111 (voice)
(877) 521-2172 (tdd)
(617) 289-0150 (fax)
Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

Rights of Accused Students

Appeal. Any student determined to have engaged in an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying may appeal the School's determination and/or any related disciplinary action(s) taken, directly to the Head of School. The Head of School shall conduct a review on the record. The standard of review shall be whether the determination that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying has been committed constitutes an abuse of discretion by the Head of School's designee. Appeals should be made to the Head of School within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the notice of the School's determination that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying has occurred and/or any announced discipline. The Head of School shall set the matter for a review hearing as soon as practicable, but not later than 30 days from receipt of the appeal filing.

Accused Student/Appellant Access to Investigative Reports/Findings Subject to the Privacy Considerations outlined in the above policy, MSW will make available upon request of the accused student/appellant, any relevant information, documents, materials, etc., related to the investigation and/or related to any decision made after appeal that can be redacted and de-identified in compliance with the requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 99. For those documents that cannot be provided due to the requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 99, when the accused student/appellant seeks a review on the record before the Head of School, a Designated Employee may seek the consent of the parent/guardian of the targeted student, or

the accused eligible targeted student (if 18 or older, the targeted student has the ability to consent), in order to inform the accused student of the findings which gave rise to the school's determination that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying occurred. Before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, the parent/guardian or eligible student must provide a signed and dated written consent.

Reporting to Other Agencies

Reports to Department of Children and Families When a complaint made pursuant to this policy includes allegations of child abuse, any person responsible for reporting suspected child abuse under 33 V.S.A. 4911, et seq. must report the allegation to the Commissioner of DCF. If the victim is over the age of 18 and a report of abuse is warranted, the report shall be made to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living ("DAIL") in accordance with 33 V.S.A. 6901 et seq.

Reports to Vermont Agency of Education If a complaint is made in an independent school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the Head of School is encouraged to report the alleged conduct to the Secretary of Education.

Reporting Incidents to Police in Response to a Subpoena or in an Emergency

- First Hand Reports. Subject to the Privacy Considerations outlined in the School's harassment/hazing/bullying policy, nothing in this policy shall preclude persons from reporting incidents and/or conduct witnessed first-hand that may be considered to be a criminal act to law enforcement officials.
- Hazing Incidents. It is unlawful to (1) engage in hazing; (2) solicit, direct, aid, or attempt to aid, or abet another person engaged in hazing; or (3) knowingly fail to take reasonable measures within the scope of the person's authority to prevent hazing. It is not a defense in an action under this section that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity. Hazing incidents will be reported to the police in a manner consistent with the confidentiality rights set forth above in this section.
- Continuing Obligation to Investigate. Unless instructed otherwise by the authorities, reports made to either DCF or law enforcement shall not be considered to absolve the school administrators of their obligations under this policy to pursue and complete an investigation upon receipt of notice of conduct which may constitute harassment, hazing, and/or bullying. Any such reports, however, may justifiably affect the timing of the initiation of an investigation by the School.

Disseminating Information, Training, and Data Reporting

Disseminating Information Annually, prior to the commencement of curricular and co-curricular

activities, MSW shall provide notice of this policy and procedures to students, custodial parents or guardians of students, and staff members, including references to the consequences of misbehavior contained in the plan required by 16 V.S.A. 1161a. Notice to students shall be in age-appropriate language and include examples of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying. At a minimum, this notice shall appear in any publication of MSW that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for MSW.

Student Training The Head of School or his/her designee shall use his/her discretion in developing age-appropriate methods of discussing the meaning and substance of this policy with students to help prevent harassment, hazing, and/or bullying.

Staff Training The Head of School or his/her designee shall ensure that teachers and other staff receive training in preventing, recognizing and responding to harassment, hazing, and/or bullying.

Legal References:

Title V, Section B, 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 et seq.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d

Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.

Family Education Rights Privacy Act; 20 U.S.C. 1232g

Public Accommodations Act, 9 V.S.A. 4500 et seq.

Education, Classifications and Definitions, 16 V.S.A. 11(26); (30)(A);(32)

Education , 16 V.S.A. 140(a)(1); Education, 16 V.S.A. 166(e)

Education, Bullying, 16 V.S.A. 570c

Education, Harassment, Hazing and Bullying, 16 V.S.A. 570

Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. 570a

Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. 570c

Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. 570f

Education, Hazing, 16 V.S.A. 570b

Education, Hazing, 16 V.S.A. 570f

Education, Discipline, 16 V.S.A. 1161a

Education, Suspension or Expulsion of Pupils; 16 V.S.A. 1162

Child Abuse, 33 V.S.A. 4911 et seq.

DAIL, 33 V.S.A. 6901 et seq., all as they may be amended from time to time

Washington v. Pierce, 179 VT 318 (2005).

E-7 NONDISCRIMINATION

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall not to discriminate on the basis of a student's or his/her family member's actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, creed, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, age, military/uniformed service or veteran status, disability, or other legally protected classification

in the administration of its educational programs, activities, services, and access provided to its students and applicants and to the public, in accordance with applicable requirements of state and federal laws. The School will make reasonable accommodations to students and members of the public with disabilities. Special education is provided to eligible students, in coordination with the student's school district.

Title VI, Title IX, and Nondiscrimination Grievance Procedures

As set out in the School's Nondiscrimination Policy, included in this Family Handbook, MSW does not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, services, and access provided to its students and applicants or to the public on the basis of race, color, ancestry, national origin, creed, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, age, military/uniformed service or veteran status, disability, or other legally-protected classification.

The Equity Coordinator and Grievance Officer coordinates the School's efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, and other nondiscrimination laws or regulations (not including the Americans with Disabilities Act, see the School's Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability Policy).

Any student or parent with a concern about discrimination on the basis of race, color, ancestry, national origin, creed, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, age, military/uniformed service or veteran status, disability, or other legally protected classification should utilize the procedures set out in the School's Harassment/Hazing/Bullying Policy for expressing a concern or making a complaint (except that the procedure for independent review is not applicable to this type of complaint). These procedures constitute MSW's grievance procedure for discrimination complaints based on the protected classes listed in the School's Nondiscrimination Policy.

Questions, concerns, or complaints by an applicant, student, or parent/guardian concerning the implementation of this Equal Opportunity Policy, including with respect to Title VI and Title IX compliance, should be addressed to:

Margaret Schlachter, Equity Coordinator and Grievance Officer
The Mountain School at Winhall
9 School Rd.
Bondville, Vermont 05340
(802) 297-2662
mschlachter@themountainschool.org

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability Policy:

The Mountain School will not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission, access, participation, or employment in its programs and activities (including vocational education) to the extent provided by law.

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability Procedures

Student and parent inquiries regarding the School's Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability Policy, the filing of grievances, and requests for copies of grievance procedures under this policy should be directed to Joe Frigo, who shall be known as the Americans with Disabilities Act/Section 504 Coordinator, and who can be contacted at:

Joe Frigo, Assistant Head of School
The Mountain School at Winhall,
9 School Rd.
Bondville, Vermont 05340
(802) 297-2662
jfrigo@themountainschool.org

The 504 Coordinator for all employees, parents/guardians, volunteers, or members of the public shall be the Head of School, Margaret Schlachter, who can be reached at (802) 297-2662 or mschlachter@themountainschool.org

Complaints about discrimination on the basis of handicap or disability may be made by following the School's Harassment/Hazing/Bullying Procedures. These procedures serve as the school's grievance procedure for purposes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Inquiries concerning the application of non-discrimination policies may also be referred to the Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, J.W. McCormack Post Office and Court House, Room 222, Boston, MA 02109-4557.

Nondiscriminatory Policy School Branding

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall to provide welcoming, positive, and inclusive learning environments for all students by prohibiting the use of discriminatory school branding, which undermines the educational experiences of members of all communities and perpetuates negative stereotypes.

The Head of School or designee shall:

1. periodically review and provide recommendations for necessary updates to the nondiscriminatory school branding policy as necessary;
2. assist the Board of Trustees in its review of the school's branding to ensure compliance with the policy following any school branding changes or updates to the policy;
3. assist the Board of Trustees in ensuring the prohibition of school branding that directly or indirectly references or stereotypes the likeness, features, symbols, traditions, or other characteristics that are specific to either:

- a. the race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity of any person or group of persons; or
- b. any person, group of persons, or organization associated with the repression of others;

Complaints

An individual may request an opportunity to appear before the Board of Trustees for purposes of presenting the complaint, relevant facts, and further explanations. The board shall hear the complaint in a fair and just manner. The Board shall render a decision within 45 days of the hearing.

If the individual is unsatisfied with the Board's decision, the individual may appeal the decision to the Secretary of Education. Appeals shall be filed within 30 days of the school board's decision by sending a written notice of appeal to the Agency of Education.

F. STUDENTS

F-1 STUDENT ADMISSION

The Mountain School at Winhall is an independent school serving students from the towns of Winhall and Stratton, as well tuition-paying students from other communities.

Acceptance of all students to whom we can provide appropriate educational services will be based upon the child's desire to learn and the parent's support of the School and its curriculum.

The admissions process includes the completion of a written application, site and classroom visits when feasible, parental interviews, and other required documentation as outlined in the admissions procedures. This process will assist both the parents and MSW in making an appropriate and informed decision.

In the admission of students, the awarding of scholarships, and/or other financial assistance, MSW does not discriminate in any way based upon a student's or family member's actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, creed, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, age, military/uniformed service or veteran status, disability, or other legally protected classification in the provision and administration of its education programs, activities, services, and access provided to the public, in accordance with and to the limits of applicable requirements of state and federal laws. MSW complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as well as other applicable state and federal laws with respect to accommodating individuals with disabilities. The school provides special education to eligible students in accordance with the School's special education approval from the State of Vermont, state and federal legal requirements, the School's policies, and in coordination with the student's school district.

F-2 STUDENT RE-ADMISSION

The Mountain School at Winhall is not obligated to readmit any child who has been previously enrolled and subsequently withdrawn from the School. Parents or guardians wishing their child to be considered for readmission must complete a new Admissions Application and Readmission Waiver Request Form and forward that request to the Head of School. Exceptions to this policy will be considered by the Head of School on a case-by-case basis.

F-3 ENROLLMENT

Parents or legal guardians of children who have successfully completed MSW's admission process are required to enroll their child(ren) within 15 days of notification of acceptance. Enrollment will be considered complete with the submission, to the Admission office, of all required paperwork and any monies due to MSW at the time of enrollment. Failure to meet this deadline relieves MSW of any obligation to hold a place for that child(ren).

F-4 RE-ENROLLMENT

The parents or legal guardians of currently enrolled children will be offered the opportunity to re-enroll their children annually for the following school year. Re-enrollment is conditioned upon timely submission of the Re-Enrollment Contract, Tuition Authorization (if applicable), and acceptance by the Head of School. Parents or legal guardians who fail to submit re-enrollment forms by the date set by the Head of School will be considered to have withdrawn their children from The Mountain School at Winhall effective at the end of the last school day of that school year. MSW bears no obligation to hold a place for child(ren) once the child(ren) has withdrawn. Parents or guardians who subsequently wish to send their child(ren) to MSW are required to apply for readmission (See Readmission Policy).

F-5 SCHOOL TUITION POLICY

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall that all private pay students adhere to the tuition payment schedule in effect at the time of enrollment.

The school shall issue an invoice for each payment approximately two weeks prior to the date due. Second notices shall be issued should the payment not be made within two weeks of the date due. If the payment is not made within 30 days of the date due, a third invoice will be sent, as well as a letter from the Business Manager. If payment is still not made, the Head of School shall be notified and will speak with the parent/guardian to determine why the payment has not been made, and when the payment will be made.

At the beginning of each school year, any student with an outstanding tuition balance will not be permitted to start to attend school until the tuition balance is paid or until the Head of School reviews and approves the student's attendance. Once admitted, students shall not be expelled during the school year for non-payment of tuition. The Business Manager, Head of School, and the Board shall take all steps necessary to ensure collection of all monies owed. For public-tuitioned students, it is MSW's policy that each student's parents execute the Proof of Residency and Tuition Authorization Form, which will serve as notice to the sending district and a request for a tuition voucher. Parents are ultimately responsible for payment of tuition.

F-6 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Policy

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall to set high expectations for consistent student attendance, in accordance with Vermont law and in order to facilitate and enhance student learning. Legal pupils between the ages of 6 and 16 who are enrolled in the school are required to attend school for the full number of days that school is held unless they are excused from attendance as provided in state law.

Attendance Procedures

VT State Law, Title 16, section 1121, requires children to attend school until age 16. School attendance is critical to successful school performance. It is important that students be in school on all scheduled school days, except for excused absences. **Excused** absences are defined as illness, religious holidays, death in a family, unavoidable medical treatments, school sponsored trips or other reasons receiving prior approval of the Head of School. All other absences will be considered to be **unexcused**.

MSW URGES PARENTS TO OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES:

- 1) Parents should make every effort to have their child(ren) attend school, on time, every day.
- 2) Parents should make all best efforts to schedule medical, dental, or other appointments for their children outside the school day.
- 3) Families should take trips and vacations during the summer vacation and the school recess periods during the school year.
- 4) If for some reason, a student's long-term absence is unavoidable, MSW does not expect its teachers to replicate the academic work that will be missed during the student's absence. The teacher may choose to substitute an alternative assignment to be completed during the absence and/or provide make-up work upon the student's return to school. It is the student's responsibility to complete all alternative assignments or make-up work. If a vacation needs to be taken during school time, the parent must inform the Head of School, Office Manager, and homeroom teacher at least two weeks in advance to allow the school to consider any alternative assignments that might be appropriate to be completed during the absence.
- 5) Parents should call the school (297-2662) as early as possible to report a student's absence and communicate the reason for the absence. If the parent does not call the school, the school will contact the parent at home or at work to ascertain the reason for the student's absence.

F-7 STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Policy

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall to maintain a safe, orderly, civil, and positive learning environment. In order to ensure that the school is free from disruptive misconduct, a system of classroom and school management practices, supported by consistent, clear, and fair disciplinary procedures, will be utilized. The goal of this policy is to create an environment where the rules for student behavior are clearly stated and are understood and accepted by students and staff. This policy is to be applied in conjunction with the school's overall discipline plan developed pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 1161a.

It is also the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall to emphasize the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports in order to avoid the use of physical restraint or seclusion to address targeted student behavior. MSW will not resort to seclusion or physical restraint unless a particular student's IEP provides for it as part of a behavioral management plan.

Student Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each student to contribute to a safe and productive learning environment in the school by demonstrating respect and consideration for fellow students and adults. This includes complying with all policies and rules of conduct of MSW and individual classrooms.

Administrative Responsibilities

The Head of School, in consultation with the educational staff, implements an overall discipline plan pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §1161a.

The plan includes clear guidelines for student behavior. The guidelines for student behavior include prohibitions against the possession by students of knives, weapons, and dangerous instruments while at school – or at any location, where (a) direct harm to the welfare of the school can be demonstrated; or (b) where the misconduct can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's equal access to educational programs – and allows disciplinary action up to and including expulsion for violations of the prohibition against knives, weapons and dangerous instruments. Behavioral expectations, and the consequences of misconduct, are stated in this Family Handbook and other publications distributed to students and parents/guardians.

F-8 PROCEDURES: STUDENT CONDUCT

The rules of conduct will be distributed to, and discussed with, all students at the beginning of each school year in accord with procedures stated in the school discipline plan. Copies of the handbook will be provided to parents or guardians in a manner determined by the Head of School. The Head of School may ask that parents sign a form indicating that they have reviewed the rules of conduct with their children. When new students enroll during the school year, they and their parents will be given copies of the rules of conduct as part of the pre-enrollment process.

Misconduct

State law requires that alleged misconduct constituting *bullying*, *harassment*, and *hazing* be addressed by the procedures set out in Vermont statutes. Specific sections in this Handbook describe those procedures. Generally speaking, however, all forms of student misconduct must be dealt with under each school's Discipline Plan, and MSW's plan is as follows:

Discipline Plan

- 1) The Mountain School at Winhall's approach to classroom management and response to disruptive behavior, including the use of alternative educational settings, is to provide students with clear guidelines as to student behavior and to use consistent, clear, and fair disciplinary procedures;
- 2) the School provides information and training to students in methods of conflict resolution, peer mediation, and anger management;
- 3) the School has procedures in place for informing parents of the school's discipline policies, for notifying parents of student misconduct, and for working with parents to improve student behavior;
- 4) the School's response to significant disruptions, such as threats or use of bombs or weapons is clearly set out in specific policies relating to any significant disruptions;
- 5) the School ensures that all staff and contractors who routinely have unsupervised contact with students periodically receive training on the maintenance of a safe, orderly, civil and positive learning environment. The training shall be appropriate to the role of the staff member being trained and shall teach classroom and behavior management, enforcement of the school's discipline policies, and positive youth development models;
- 6) the School provides a description of behavior on and off school grounds, included in the MSW Family Handbook, which constitute misconduct, including harassment, bullying, and hazing, particularly those behaviors which may be grounds for expulsion, as well as a description of misconduct which, although serious, does not rise to the level of harassment or bullying as those terms are defined therein; and
- 7) the School adheres to standard due process procedures for suspension and expulsion of a student.

The Head of School or his or her designee shall be responsible for carrying out discipline procedures conforming with the following guidelines.

- 1) A student may request a meeting with the Head of School or his or her designee to review any disciplinary action, other than a suspension or expulsion, affecting the student. If

requested, the Head of School or designee shall hold an informal meeting to review the incident and to hear the views of the student and any other persons who may have information that the Head of School or designee believes to be relevant in the circumstances. The Head of School or designee shall issue a prompt decision to the student, which may be oral or written. Except as otherwise provided in this policy, the decision of the Head of School will be final.

- 2) Suspension or expulsion of students shall be imposed in accordance with state and federal law and regulations and the following rules and procedures:
 - A. The Head of School or his or her designee may assign a student to in-school detention for any infraction of school rules. As provided in the school's overall discipline plan, students assigned to in-school detention will be provided with reasonable opportunities to complete academic assignments and to benefit from counseling or other activities designed to bring about improvements in their behavior.
 - B. A student who poses an immediate danger to persons or property or a significant threat of disrupting the academic process of the school shall be removed from the school or to a place within the school determined by the Head of School or his or her designee to be sufficiently secure to ensure the safety of students and school personnel and the continuation of the academic process. The Head of School or his or her designee shall notify a parent or guardian of a student who is removed from school without undue delay. If the parent, guardian, or other responsible person designated as an emergency contact by the parent or guardian cannot be notified, the student will be detained at school or at another safe and secure setting for the remainder of the school day.
 - C. No student will be removed from school for more than the remainder of a school day unless the student and his or her parents are given an opportunity for an informal hearing pursuant to paragraph "G" of this policy. When immediate removal of a student is necessary prior to a hearing, the hearing shall be held as soon as possible following the removal.
 - D. The Head of School or his or her designee may suspend a student from school for misconduct occurring on or off school grounds.
 - E. The Head of School may, in accordance with 16 V.S.A. §1162, expel a student for misconduct on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity when the misconduct makes the continued presence of the student harmful to the welfare of the school.
 - F. The Head of School may suspend a student or expel a student for misconduct: (a)

not on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity where direct harm to the welfare of the school can be demonstrated; or (b) not on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity where the misconduct can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's equal access to educational programs. In accord with the overall discipline plan developed under 16 V.S.A. § 1161a, suspension or expulsion may be imposed for misconduct not on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity where direct harm to the welfare of the school can be demonstrated.

- g. Except as provided in paragraph B above, prior to any suspension or expulsion, the student and his or her parent or guardian shall be given an opportunity for an informal hearing with the Head of School or his or her designee. If such an informal hearing is requested, the student and his or her parent or guardian must be given notice of the charges, an explanation of the evidence against the student, and an opportunity for the student to tell his or her side of the story.

Restraint and Seclusion

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall to emphasize the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports in order to avoid the use of physical restraint or seclusion to address targeted student behavior. MSW will not resort to seclusion or physical restraint unless a particular student's IEP provides for it. A legal pupil who has a disability or is suspected of having a disability, and is eligible for special education services or Section 504 services may be removed from his or her current educational placement for disciplinary reasons for more than 10 consecutive days, or for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year only in accordance with the Vermont State Board of Education Rules 4313 or 4312. The Head of School, with the agreement of a special education administrator, may impose short-term disciplinary sanctions on special education students as provided in Vermont State Board of Education Rule 4313. The Head of School and coordinator of special education will develop additional procedures as needed to govern the discipline of students with disabilities.

F-9 FIREARMS

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of MSW to comply with the federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994 and state law requiring school districts to provide for the possible expulsion of students who bring firearms to or possess firearms at school. It is further the intent of the School to maintain a student discipline system consistent with the requirements of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Vermont State Board of Education rules.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the terms "firearm" "school" and "expelled" shall be defined in administrative procedures developed by the Head of School. The definitions shall be consistent with definitions required by state and federal law.

Sanctions

Any student who brings a firearm to school, or who possesses a firearm at school, shall be brought by to the Head of School for an expulsion hearing.

A student found by the Head of School after a hearing to have brought a firearm to school shall be expelled for at least one calendar year. However, the Head of School may modify the expulsion on a case by case basis when it finds circumstances such as, but not limited to:

1. The student was unaware that he or she had brought a firearm to school.
2. The student did not intend to use the firearm to threaten or endanger others.
3. The student is disabled and the misconduct is related to the disability.
4. The student does not present an ongoing threat to others and a lengthy expulsion would not serve the best interests of the pupil.

At the discretion of the Head of School and administration, an expelled student may be afforded limited educational services at a site other than the school during the period of expulsion under this policy.

Policy Implementation

An expulsion hearing conducted under this policy shall afford due process as required by law and as developed by the Head of School or his or her designee.

The Head of School shall refer to the appropriate law enforcement agency any student who brings a firearm to a school under the control and supervision of the school district. The Head of School may also report any incident subject to this policy to the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services.

The Head of School shall annually provide the Secretary of Education with descriptions of the circumstances surrounding expulsions imposed under this policy, the number of students expelled, and the type of firearms involved.

F-10 HEAD LICE

The psychological, social, and economic impact of head lice infestations can create a problem in the community. Recognizing that a sizable number of cases exist from time to time, The Mountain School at Winhall will take the necessary measures to reduce the loss of instructional time for those students involved.

Procedures

1. Any staff member, parent/guardian, or volunteer who suspects head lice shall report this immediately to the Head of School or his/her designee.
2. Any student identified by the Head of School or designee as having lice and/or untreated nits shall be sent home for treatment as soon as possible.
3. Any student with actual identifiable lice shall be immediately removed from the classroom. The Head of School or designee shall contact the parent immediately and

request that the student be taken home for treatment.

4. All children in the same classroom as an identified active case (untreated nits or actual lice) shall be examined by school personnel. All siblings and close contacts of the child within the school shall be examined and appropriately handled.
5. Verbal contacts as well as written instructions for treatment will be made with the family of each case.
6. All students removed from school because of untreated nits or actual lice shall be readmitted to school after the first treatment with a signed statement or verbal confirmation from the parent/guardian stating that initial treatment has been completed.
7. Each re-entering student shall be examined by school personnel to look for evidence that the treatment was performed.
8. If the number of cases is considered to be an outbreak, appropriate administrative personnel may temporarily suspend activities conducive to close person to person contact as recommended by the Head of School or designee.
9. The Head of School or designee shall review with the staff the diagnosis, treatment and control plans.
10. The Head of School will initiate educational programs regarding the control of lice for students as necessary.

F-11 STUDENT MEDICATION

Any student who is required to take prescribed medication during the regular school day or during school sponsored activities must comply with the following regulations:

1. Prescription medication may be given by the Head of School or designee upon written orders from a physician, and upon written request of a student's parent or guardian. The physician's order must detail the name of the drug, dosage, time interval the medication is to be taken, diagnosis and reason for giving. Medication must be brought to school in a container labeled by the pharmacy or physician and stored in a secure, locked storage place in the office.
2. Please refer to the School's policy on Life-Threatening Allergies for the School's policy and procedures concerning student medication for that purpose.
3. Non-prescription medication must be accompanied by a written request from the parents or guardian of a student bringing such medication to school. Medication must be left in the custody of the Head of School, the Office Manager, or his/her designee. For general medications made available to students and kept on hand in the office (i.e. ibuprofen), students must also have a "Medication Authorization" form on file in the office.

F-12 REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

All school employees, including student teachers, shall immediately (within 24 hours) report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Head of School and to the Department of Children and

Families (DCF) on Vermont's Child Protection Line at 1-800-649-5285.

All school employees, including student teachers, must make an initial report to the Head of School and Adult Protective Services within 48 hours when they have a reason to suspect that a vulnerable adult has been abused, neglected, or exploited. The report shall be made by the Head of School or his/her designee to Adult Protective Services by calling: 1-800-564-1612 or 802-241-3918. Vulnerable adults include anyone 18 years old or older who is a resident of a licensed residential facility or psychiatric unit, or someone who has received personal care services in their home for at least one month. *A vulnerable adult may also be an adult with a physical, mental, or developmental disability (including infirmities of aging), that interferes with their ability to provide for their care without assistance or that impairs their ability to protect themselves from abuse, neglect or exploitation.*

School contractors who regularly work with students are also mandated reporters.

Suspicion means the school employee or contractor has reasonable cause to believe that such abuse, neglect, or in the case of a vulnerable adult, exploitation has occurred. This does not mean that the employee must be convinced the abuse, neglect, or exploitation occurred; only that it might have occurred. Any doubts the employee may have shall be resolved in favor of reporting the suspicion.

Volunteers are also required to report immediately to the Head of School concerning any suspicion of child abuse or neglect or any suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult.

An employee making a report of abuse, neglect or exploitation, as described above, to DCF or to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living ("DAIL"), shall also report the information to the Head of School. Upon receiving a report from a school employee, the Head of School or designee shall remind the reporter of his or her legal responsibility to further report immediately to DCF or APS and will arrange to have the employee assisted in this process, as appropriate. (If the Head of School is the person suspected of abuse then the in-school report shall be made to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.)

If an employee is unsure concerning his or her obligation to report to either DCF or DAIL, then the employee shall seek the advice of the Head of School or designee.

F-13 STUDENT ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall that no student shall knowingly or unknowingly possess, use, sell, give or otherwise transmit, or be under the influence of any illegal drug, regulated substance, or alcohol on any school property, or at any school sponsored activities away from or within the school. It is further the policy of the School to make appropriate referrals in cases of substance abuse.

F-14 SEARCH AND SEIZURE

1. Desks, lockers, textbooks, and other materials or supplies loaned by the school to students remain the property of the school, and may be opened by school employees for cleaning, maintenance, or emergencies. When prohibited items are found in the course of routine cleaning or maintenance, or in the case of emergency, they will be confiscated and a report will be made to the Head of School who will determine whether further investigation is warranted.
2. School property may also be searched by school employees upon reasonable suspicion on the part of the Head of School that a law or school policy is being violated or that there is a safety issue. Searches of school property in the possession of students will not extend to areas or items not reasonably calculated to aid in the enforcement of specific policies or laws.
3. Searches of students' property may be conducted if there is reasonable cause to believe that a breach of school policy or law is being committed or that there is a safety issue. Search of a student's property or items brought to school will be conducted by a school employee and, whenever possible, in the presence of another school employee.
4. Searches of a student's clothing will be conducted only with the permission of the student. If the student agrees to the search, the person in parental relation to the student will be notified of the search. If the student does not agree to the search, a person in parental relation to the student will be contacted to obtain permission for the search. A person in parental relation always has the right to be present at a search of a student's clothing and should be offered that opportunity.

F-15 FERPA POLICY

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over the age of 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. Mountain School at Winhall complies with FERPA rights and affords the following rights as a matter of law and school policy:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Headmaster a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Headmaster will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the Headmaster, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for

amendment. Additional information regarding hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school district official in performing his or her tasks; or the superintendent or other supervisory union administrator of a student's home school district's supervisory union. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. "Directory information" will be provided without parental or student consent by Mountain School at Winhall, at its discretion, to third parties unless the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student (age eighteen or older) informs the Head of School in writing that any or all of the information designated below should not be released without prior consent.
5. "Directory information" means information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to, the student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and the most recent educational agency or institution attended.
6. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

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

F-16 STUDENT ASSESSMENT

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall to maintain an assessment system that

continuously evaluates student learning and links curricular, professional development, and budgetary decisions directly to the need for increased student performance.

The goal of student assessment is to understand how students are performing in relation to school curriculum and standards and personal growth. Based on student assessment information, teachers, administrators and parents will work together to design and implement strategies to meet the needs of individual students as well as the School's overall goals for student achievement.

Students will be assessed regularly throughout the school year and from year to year. Assessments will measure student performance against standards adopted by the School. The results of student assessments will guide the School in: decisions about instruction, professional development, educational resources and curriculum; and reporting to the public on student performance measures and progress.

State Comprehensive Assessment System

The Head of School will administer the assessment instruments chosen by the School, or others as required. All students in the School will be assessed except for those students with a disability or limited English proficiency whose education plans exempt them. Students who are unable to participate in required state assessments will be given an alternate assessment.

F-17 INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS

Policy

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall to provide an interscholastic athletic program for boys and girls to complement and supplement their educational programs. All interscholastic athletics will comply with the Vermont Principals Association's rules and regulations. All school-sponsored activities will be under the ultimate control of MSW, and will comply with all policies and procedures of the School unless otherwise stated.

Concussions

The Head of School will ensure that MSW has a concussion management action plan that describes the procedures the School will take when a student athlete suffers a concussion. The action plan includes policies on:

- A. who makes the initial decision to remove a student athlete from play when it is suspected that the athlete has suffered a concussion;
- B. what steps the student athlete must take in order to return to any athletic or learning activity;
- C. who makes the final decision that a student athlete may return to athletic activity; and
- D. who has the responsibility to inform a parent or guardian when a student on that school's athletic team suffers a concussion.
- E. The action plan shall be provided annually to each youth athlete and the athlete's parents or guardians.

- F. Each youth athlete and a parent or guardian of the athlete shall annually sign a form acknowledging receipt of the information provided and return it to the school prior to the athlete's participation in training or competition associated with a school athletic team.

Participation in athletic activity.

A coach shall not permit a youth athlete to train or compete with a school athletic team if the athlete has been removed or prohibited from participating in a training session or competition associated with the school athletic team due to symptoms of a concussion or other head injury until the athlete has been examined by and received written permission to participate in athletic activities from a health care provider licensed pursuant to Title 26 and trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and other head injuries.

F-18 PUPIL PRIVACY RIGHTS

It is the intent of the Board of The Mountain School at Winhall to comply with the provisions of the federal Protection of Pupil Privacy Rights Amendment (PPRA) governing the administration of certain student surveys, analyses, or evaluations funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education.

Definitions

As used in this policy, the following terms shall mean:

"Invasive physical examination" means a medical examination that involves the exposure of private body parts or any act during such examination that includes incision, insertion, or injection into the body, but does not include a hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening.

"Personal information" means individually identifiable information including a student's or parent's name, address, telephone number, or social security number.

"Instructional material" means instructional content that is provided to a student, regardless of format. It does not include tests or academic assessments.

"Parent" means a natural or adoptive parent, a legal guardian or other person standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the welfare of a child).

Student Rights

The rights provided to parents under the Pupil Rights Amendment and this policy transfer to the student when the student turns 18 years old, or is an emancipated minor under applicable Vermont law.

Policy

- 1) No student shall be required, without prior written parental consent, to take part in a

survey, analysis, or evaluation funded by the U.S. Department of Education that reveals information concerning:

- (a) political affiliations or beliefs of a student or a student's parents
 - (b) mental or psychological problems of a student or student's family;
 - (c) sex behavior or attitudes;
 - (d) illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
 - (e) critical appraisals of other individuals with whom student respondents have close family relationships;
 - (f) legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians or members of the clergy;
 - (g) income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program for receiving financial assistance under such program; or
 - (h) religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parents.
- 2) Parents shall have the right to inspect any survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to a student. Requests for inspection shall be in writing, and shall be made in sufficient time to allow a response at least two weeks in advance of any survey to be given.
 - 3) Parents shall be notified at least annually, at the beginning of the school year or when enrolling students for the first time in the School, of this policy. The notification shall explain that parents/guardians or students 18 years of age or older, have the right to "opt out" of the following activities:
 - (a) the collection, disclosure and use of personal information gathered from students for the purpose of marketing or selling that information. This does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational services for, or to students.
 - (b) the administration of any survey not funded in whole or part by the U.S. Department of Education that includes the eight subject areas listed in paragraph 1 above; or the administration of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school not necessary to protect the immediate health or safety of a student or other students and not otherwise permitted or required by state law.
 - 4) In addition parents shall be notified, through U.S. Mail, email or other direct means, at least annually at the start of each school year of the specific or approximate dates of any activities described in sub-paragraphs A-C of paragraph 3 above, and shall be provided an opportunity to opt out of participation in those activities.
 - 5) Parents shall have the right to inspect, upon request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.
 - 6) The Head of School or his or her designee shall develop administrative procedures as required to ensure implementation of this policy.

**F-19 LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY STUDENTS
Policy**

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall to ensure that students whose primary or dominant language is not English, and who therefore have limited-English proficiency (LEP), have equitable access to school programs as required by law for independent schools.

Implementation

The Head of School or his or her designee shall be responsible for developing and implementing procedures to comply with federal and state laws which define standards for serving LEP students in independent schools.

G. INSTRUCTION

G-1 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT & COORDINATION

Policy

The curriculum of The Mountain School at Winhall is meant to meet the unique needs of the Mountain School community. The curriculum will be aligned in both scope and sequence to the various academic levels and abilities of MSW's students.

The Head of School shall be responsible for the development, coordination, and evaluation of the curriculum. The Head shall ensure that the curriculum is consistent with MSW's mission as approved by the Board of Trustees.

G-2 FIELD TRIPS

Policy

The Board of Trustees, administrators, and faculty all endorse the use of field trips as extensions of classroom experiences.

Implementation

No student will be allowed to participate in field trips unless the student's parents/guardian has executed the MSW annual field trip permission form, completed any additional paperwork, and paid any applicable fees.

G-3 STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Policy

The Mountain School at Winhall believes that giving students access to computers and the Internet provides positive educational experiences and motivates each student to become a lifelong learner, attain academic and personal potential, and enter the workforce with the necessary skills. It is the policy of the Mountain School at Winhall to use electronic resources to support and enrich the curriculum, taking into account the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities, and developmental levels of the students. However, the school also recognizes that with student access to computers comes the possibility that an industrious user may

discover controversial or inappropriate information or material. The Board believes that the benefits to students from access to electronic information and the opportunities it provides for expanded collaboration far exceed the potential risks and disadvantages, but it also recognizes the importance of minimizing the risks. MSW staff shall provide instruction about acceptable use of electronic resources, teach students about privacy rights, intellectual property, copyright infringement, plagiarism, and school policies which place restrictions on the materials accessed or shared on the school's electronic equipment. The school shall take reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of students when they access Internet resource materials by utilizing strategies that may include Internet filtering, network monitoring software, education portals, and age- appropriate staff supervision.

Access to electronic resources shall be available to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Violation of this policy and accompanying procedures may result in school disciplinary action or referral to local, state, or federal law enforcement officials. Students shall be held accountable for any misuse or damage of the school's electronic equipment or resources.

General Information

The school may provide technical methods or systems to regulate students' Internet access, but those methods may not guarantee compliance with the school's acceptable use policy. Even with the use of Internet filters, network firewalls, education portals, and direct staff supervision, school staff cannot guarantee that students will not gain access to inappropriate electronic materials. Consequently, staff shall collaborate with parents and guardians of minors to articulate and disseminate the standards that children shall follow when using electronic resources.

Student Expectations

The Board expects that all students shall learn to use electronic resources in an acceptable manner and to use them in appropriate ways to enhance their learning. School electronic resources shall not be used for commercial or entertainment purposes, as a public access service, or a public forum.

Students may access the school's electronic resources for limited personal use outside the general instructional day if advance permission is granted and the use:

- imposes no tangible cost to the school;
- does not unduly burden the school's electronic resources;
- occurs during non-instructional time and does not impede other student or staff access for educational purposes.

Students are expected to follow the rules of personal conduct outlined in the Family Handbook, as well as abide by state and federal laws using the school's electronic resources.

Communication over the school network shall not be considered private. The Head of School or his or her designee shall periodically review and inspect electronic files and email messages. The School reserves the right to access stored records, and in cases where there is reasonable suspicion of wrong-doing or misuse of the system, may forward records to the Head of School for possible distribution to the appropriate legal authorities.

All students *and parents* shall sign and follow the rules outlined in the Use of Computers and Internet Rules and Agreement Form before receiving access to school's electronic resources.

Disclaimer of Liability

School staff shall provide basic instruction to students on appropriate use of electronic resources and the Internet, but shall not be liable for students' unacceptable use or violations of copyright restrictions or other laws, user mistakes or negligence, and costs incurred by users. The school shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy, age appropriateness, or usability of any information found on the Internet.

The school makes no guarantee that the functions or the services provided by or through the school system will be error-free or without defect. The school shall not be responsible for any damage experienced, including, but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. The school shall not be held responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through or stored on the system, or for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the system.

Due Process

The school shall cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation relating to illegal activities conducted through the school's electronic system.

Disciplinary actions shall be appropriate to meet specific concerns related to any policy or procedures violation and will focus on helping students learn how to use the electronic network in a responsible manner.

Administrative Responsibilities

The Board authorizes the Head of School to prepare appropriate procedures for implementing this policy, and for reviewing and evaluating its effect on instruction and student achievement. The Head of School shall also be responsible for ensuring that the "Rules and Agreement" for governing the use of computers and the internet by students are signed by both the student and custodial parent/guardian, returned to the school and filed prior to granting the student access to the school's electronic resources.

G-4 GRADE ADVANCEMENT: RETENTION, PROMOTION & ACCELERATION OF STUDENTS Policy

A goal of The Mountain School at Winhall is for each student to progress in his or her educational program by reaching a standard of achievement necessary to progress from grade to grade. This policy applies to grade acceleration, retention, and promotion in grades K through

8.

Definitions

- 1) **Acceleration** is the advancement of a student by more than one grade beyond the current grade level.
- 2) **Promotion** is the single grade step most students take from year to year.
- 3) **Retention** allows a student to repeat all or part of a grade in order to more fully prepare for the work of the next grade.

Promotion, retention, and acceleration decisions will be based on the extent to which a student is meeting the standards established by the school, as well as other relevant factors, including social, emotional, physical and mental growth, past academic performance, behavior, motivation, and attendance. For students on IEPs or Section 504 plans, such decisions are made in collaboration with the student's IEP team.

Implementation

The Head of School will develop rules to implement this policy that will specify a process for determining the promotion, retention, or acceleration of individual students.

G-5 SPECIAL EDUCATION

Policy

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall to meet the needs of students with disabilities as the school is capable of doing. All Special Education/504 students must be approved for placement at The Mountain School at Winhall by the Sending Supervisory Union (the Local Education Agency, or LEA) and MSW. The LEA, as required, and MSW will meet the needs of students as defined in federal and state laws and regulations and provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to these students in the least restrictive environment that will allow all students to benefit educationally. The LEA is ultimately responsible for the evaluation, identification, and education of special education and 504 students, as well as the creation and implementation of all IEPs and 504 plans as per the agreement between the LEA and MSW.

The Mountain School at Winhall provides a continuum of special education and 504 services. In addition to specialized instruction we provide case management such as Meetings, Evaluations, IEPs/504 Accommodations Plans and State Forms, as well as case management of students referred for initial Special Education Evaluations, and the transitioning of our eighth grade students to high school.

504 Services and Special Education are provided through direct instruction, one to one support, classroom accommodations and consultation with the classroom teachers and related services providers.

Related Services are provided by the Local Education Agency (LEA). Students have those services provided within their day here at The Mountain School. For example, Physical Therapy is built

right into a student's weekly schedule.

The 504 Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator for student related matters shall be Special Education Director and Teacher, Allison Pittman. She can be reached at (802) 297-2662 or apittman@themountainschool.org. The 504 Coordinator for all employees, parents/guardians, volunteers, or members of the public shall be the Head of School, Margaret Schlachter, who can be reached at (802) 297-2662 or mschlachter@themountainschool.org

H. SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

H-1 MOUNTAIN SCHOOL AT WINHALL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS

An effective community relations program is a necessary component of a school's organization and operation. Therefore, the Board will provide the means necessary for its organization, maintenance, and operation. In accordance with this, The Mountain School at Winhall's community relations program should:

- Encourage an understanding of the objectives, accomplishments, and needs of the school;
- Be a planned, systematic, two-way process between the school and the school community;
- Use a variety of media, including meetings, letters, publications, and personal contact;
- Provide the channels necessary for resolving grievances and eliminating misunderstandings;
- Inform concerned persons as to their rights, privileges, and responsibilities.

The Head of School shall assist the Board in developing and implementing an effective community relations program.

H-2 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The academic and social success of students is largely determined by a positive, supportive relationship among staff, administration, parents, and community members. The school believes it is important that parents are involved in their child's education at home, in school, and within the larger community. The Head of School shall develop and implement programs, to the extent possible, based upon written procedures to accomplish the following:

1. Parents should be informed about significant changes in their children's educational programs, instructional methods, or objectives.
2. Parents should be provided with information and opportunities intended to improve their abilities to work with their children at home and in school, and to build partnerships between homes and schools.
3. Professional and paraprofessional staff members, administrators, Board members and school-community partners should be provided with training opportunities intended to improve their abilities to build more effective relationships with parents.

4. Parents should be provided with opportunities to become informed about program design, operation and evaluation, and to communicate with educators on these subjects.
5. Parents should be invited periodically to attend program meetings, discuss concerns with educators, participate in program evaluation and improvement efforts, and give recommendations to school staff, administration, and Board members.
6. In addition to parental involvement in meeting the educational needs of our students, parents are expected to participate in all aspects of school activities as described in our handbook.

H-3 COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

It is the policy of The Mountain School at Winhall to cooperate with the community in the scheduling of approved events.

Section 10: Forms

Please visit our website for all student forms or see the office for a hard copy.

www.themountainschool.org