



STUDENT AND FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024-2025



The mission of
The Sharon Academy is to
nurture **intelligent independent**
and **creative thinking** in a small school
community, awakening **students** to their immense
potential and the **difference** they can make in the world



Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Policy

The Sharon Academy does not discriminate on the basis of a student's, applicant's, employee's, former employee's or their family member's actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, ethnic origin, creed, religion, gender, gender identity, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, age, military/uniformed service or veteran's status, disability, genetic information (including family medical history), crime victims or other legally protected classification in the provision and administration of its activities, services, educational programs and policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school-administered programs, and access provided to the public, in accordance with and to the limits of applicable requirements of state and federal laws.

TSA complies with the American 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. TSA provides special education to eligible students in accordance with the School's special education approval from the State of Vermont in all Special Education categories, state and federal legal requirements, the School's policies and in coordination with the student's school district.

Questions, concerns, or complaints about the implementation of this Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Policy with respect to disability or a request for accommodations related to a disability by an applicant, student, or parent/guardian should be addressed to Mary Newman, Head of School, TSA.

Adopted December 5, 2016

Added crime victims 8/21/2018

Added Additional IRS Requirements re: protected categories 11/4/2020



A Note from the Head of School



Thank you for taking the time to read The Sharon Academy Handbook. Good educational practices and outcomes are not accidental; they are the direct result of the active engagement of community members, parents, students, faculty and staff.

This handbook contains important information and resources about The Sharon Academy (TSA).

While reading this handbook, please note several of the basic assumptions that TSA feels are essential ingredients to a successful education:

Young adults need:

- to be articulate in communicating their knowledge both verbally and in writing;
- to know how to work constructively in groups;
- to be able to advocate for themselves and effectively utilize members of the community in support of their learning, both social and emotional, and
- to embrace the notion that hard work plays an essential role in all aspects of their growth
- to learn to take appropriate emotional and physical risks

Understanding, trust, and respect form the backbone of TSA's model; our school works diligently to develop those capacities within and between our students. These three ingredients are essential in an environment where human development is the highest objective.

Our ultimate goal may seem lofty but is nonetheless imperative. Now more than ever, it is essential for us to nurture a generation of learners who are confident of their own abilities, strong, effective communicators, and engaged team members who are committed to the betterment of humankind.

Please feel free to visit our website for more information. We enjoy welcoming current families and visitors to our two campuses.

Sincerely,

Mary Newman
Head of School



A Note from the Director of the Middle School



Whether you are in the process of considering The Sharon Academy middle school or have already joined our learning community, the intent of this handbook is to provide the information you will need to learn about our school and our community. The handbook focuses on the nuts and bolts of the school – expectations, definitions, processes, and procedures. Please see the Program of Studies for academic information.

The middle school strives to offer a rigorous and relevant academic curriculum, while also addressing the social, emotional, and developmental needs of young adolescents in a safe and nurturing environment. We work hard but do a lot of laughing in the process. If you would like to come see for yourself, parents and guardians are always welcome!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Andrew Lane'.

Andrew Lane
Director of the Middle School



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About The Sharon Academy

The Sharon Academy (TSA) is a state-approved independent day school located in rural Sharon, Vermont. With 160 (+/-) students, grades 7-12, TSA offers a lively and academically rigorous program whose mission is to "nurture intelligent, independent, and creative thinking in a small school community, awakening students to their immense potential and the difference they can make in the world."

The Sharon Academy is founded on the belief that all students have the potential to change their lives as well as their communities. Therefore, community is woven into all of our activities: academic, athletic, dramatic, and artistic. TSA students are independent, innovative, and engaged.

TSA offers a remarkably affordable independent school education. Because we are an approved independent school, any Vermont town that offers students school choice will cover our tuition. At TSA, 85% of our students are publicly funded.

The high school is located at 205 Academy Drive and enrolls approximately 125 students per year. The middle school is located on a separate campus about 1.5 miles from the high school at 79 VT RTE 132 and enrolls an average of 40 students per year. The small size of both schools supports the emphasis we place on high academic standards, differentiated instruction, and the social and emotional needs of young adolescents.



Accreditations and Memberships

Approved Independent School

The Sharon Academy is an Approved Independent School offering middle and high school education, grades 7 through 12. We are approved through the **State of Vermont** and the **New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)**.

For more information on **Vermont Approved Independent Schools**, visit the website:
www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/fullsection.cfm?Title=16&Chapter=003&Section=00166

For more information on the **NEASC accreditation process**, please visit: <http://cis.neasc.org>

Memberships

The Sharon Academy is a member of the following organizations:

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

<https://www.nais.org>

Association of Independent School sin New England (AISNE)

<https://aisne.org>

Vermont Independent Schools Association (VISA)

www.vtindependentschools.org.

New England Association for College Admission Counseling (NEACAC)

<http://www.neacac.org>

Vermont Principals' Association (VPA)

<https://www.vpaonline.org>

National Business Officers Association (NBOA)

<https://www.nboa.org/home>

League of Innovative Schools

<https://digitalpromise.org/initiative/league-of-innovative-schools>



Special Education

As of July 1, 2023, TSA is approved to receive students on any special education plan. For the 24-25 School year, please reach out to the Director of Academic Services, Martha Tucker.

Section 504 and Students with Disabilities

TSA also accommodates eligible students with disabilities in accordance with and to the limits of state and federal laws, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Please notify us at the time that you submit the enrollment form if your child is or has been on an IEP, a Section 504 Plan, or an Educational Support Plan so that we can coordinate the implementation of placement and program with TSA staff, you as parents, your student and/or the sending school district. These conversations regarding implementation of the program can take place both prior to enrollment and throughout the school year.

Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Students

TSA's mission is to support all enrolled students as they discover their immense potential and the difference they can make in the world. Supporting the unique needs of our individual students is important to us. TSA uses the Vermont Agency of Education's Continuing Best Practices for Schools Regarding Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students 2017 document to support decision making.

Please find the Agency of Education's [Continuing Best Practices for Schools Regarding Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students here.](#)



School Contact Information

Main Phone Number: (802) 763-2500 (ext 200)

High School Fax: (802) 763-2502

Middle School Phone Number: (802) 763-2500 (ext 300)

Middle School Fax: (802) 763-7315

General Email: tsa@sharonacademy.net

Website: www.sharonacademy.org

For a list of Administration, Faculty, Staff and their contact information please visit our website or follow this link: <http://sharonacademy.org/enrollment/faculty-and-staff/>

Students may use the school phone to call parents if necessary. Families can leave messages for their students at the front desk during the school day. Students will not have regular access to mobile devices

School Hours

Both the middle and high school buildings are open at 7:30 AM each morning and are open during the school year from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM unless otherwise stated.

Middle School

The Middle School begins at **8:15 AM and is dismissed at 3:15 PM**. On Wednesdays, school is dismissed at 1:00 PM except for 7 weeks during January and February when school is dismissed at 12:30 PM for an optional ski program. Middle School students who remain after school need to participate in the After School Program. We encourage a prompt pick up after school if possible.

High School

The High School begins at **9:00 AM and is dismissed at 3:15 PM**. On Wednesdays, school is dismissed at 1:00 PM except for 7 weeks during January and February when school is dismissed at 12:30 PM for an optional ski program. All students must be picked up by 5pm unless they are participating in an after-school activity with adult supervision. An adult will be present in the building from 3:15 until 5, but students waiting for buses or rides will not be directly supervised. The building will be locked promptly at 5pm.



Attendance

Early Dismissal

All High School and Middle School students must have permission to leave the school grounds once they have arrived. If a student needs to be dismissed early from school, please call, send a written note or email stating the time they should be dismissed. For middle school students, please contact Janice Stumpf the Office Manager (jstumpf@sharonacademy.net) At the high school, please call, write a note, or email the Dean of Students, Blake Fabrikant (bfabrikant@sharonacademy.net) and the Admin. Assistant, Jen Tewksbury, (jtewksbury@sharonacademy.net). Students arriving late or leaving campus during the day must sign in and out at the reception desk.

School Closing or Delay

If school is canceled or delayed due to the weather or any other emergency a “robo-call”, via Robo Call, will be issued to all families who have provided correct, current contact information. and place a note on the TSA homepage: www.sharonacademy.org. Closings are also announced on local radio stations and TV stations WCAX (channel 3) and WPTZ (channel 5). On occasions when power is out, we may not be able to leave a message on the school answering machine or place a note on the homepage.

Our primary concern when canceling school on snow days is the safety of our students and families. Because we have so many students driving themselves and other students to school, we err on the side of caution when calling snow days. In recognition of the fact that the weather in Vermont can be very localized, **we encourage you to use your own judgment.** Parents and guardians who feel that the roads are not safe and we have not called a snow day, should either call the high school (802-763-2500 Ext. 200) or email tsa@sharonacademy.net and let us know that your student will be late or absent that day.

TSA does not normally close early due to inclement weather. On the rare occasion that TSA does close early, TSA will use the Robo call system to notify parents and may oversee the creation of carpools to get students home safely.

If a family's contact information changes at any time during the year (moving, new job, new phone, etc.) it is essential that you update your information on Blackbaud. If you have not attended a training or are unfamiliar with Blackbaud, please contact the administrative assistant at either the middle or high school.

Student Absences

If your student is going to be absent from school, please call the school to report this (802-763-2500 Ext. 200 at the HS or 300 at the MS or tsa@sharonacademy.net) before 8:30 AM. If a student is absent and we haven't heard from the parent or guardian, someone from the school may call and/or email the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to double check that the student is safe.



For a planned absence, parents should send a signed note or email to the reception desk (tsa@sharonacademy.net) and CC the student's advisor at either the middle or high school in advance, indicating the reason and dates of the absence. Please encourage your students to make arrangements **before** their absence for completion of any work that may be missed. When students miss school, they must meet with teachers to arrange a reasonable schedule to complete missed schoolwork and homework. Please keep in mind that making alternate arrangements for absent students can represent significant effort for teachers. When possible, please schedule appointments for Wednesday afternoons to avoid missing classes.

Transportation

The majority of our families' form carpools with others in or near their town. If you need assistance connecting with a family near you, please ask our administrative assistants or your student's advisor.

Sharon students may ride the Sharon Elementary school buses to the middle school. This is a privilege, and students are expected to follow all TSA behavior guidelines when riding the buses. Be sure to check our calendar against the Sharon Elementary calendar. Sharon bus routes will not be extended to accommodate TSA students; they must use a stop on an existing route.

Families have access to bus transportation to TSA from the following towns: White River Junction, Chelsea, Tunbridge, Rochester, and Stockbridge. Bus routes can be found on the [Transportation](#) web page and on the [Blackbaud](#) Resource Board.

Students are responsible for getting on the bus when it arrives in the afternoon. If a student misses the bus, they are responsible for finding a ride home.

Food and Lunches

Free and Reduced Lunch: Lunches are available for free for all students whose families qualify for free or reduced lunch (FRL) according to income guidelines. All students sign up for lunch in the same way, regardless of whether they qualify - we work hard to guarantee confidentiality for recipients of FRL. Families who qualify for free/reduced lunch will not be billed when their student chooses to have lunch or snack. Families who do not qualify will be invoiced. For information and application forms please contact our business manager, Maria Duggan at mduggan@sharonacademy.net or (802) 763-2500 Ext. 234. [Fee Waiver Form 24-25](#)

Please send your student with a healthy snack for earlier in the day, even if they are planning on having a school lunch. Many students need to eat both a good-sized snack and lunch to make it through the day. Healthy food is essential to your student's ability to learn. We highly discourage snacking on sugary foods and candy, which can lead to an energy crash later in the day.



At the Middle School:

A refrigerator and several microwaves are available to students who bring snacks and lunches from home. For the 24/25 school year lunches are available for purchase. Families have the option of ordering hot/cold lunch meals that are delivered daily from the White River Valley Supervisory Union. Families will be charged \$5.50 for those meals and invoiced monthly. Students and families will receive an online sign-up sheet for lunches via email the week prior. Make your-own pb/sunbutter and jelly sandwiches, fruit and lunch snack are also available free. *Supplies are limited

Students have a chance to eat during a ten-minute morning snack break and a 45-minute lunch break. Students are expected to eat during these breaks, not during class time unless specifically given permission by a teacher.

At the High School:

A refrigerator is available for student use. For the 24/25 school year lunches are available for purchase. Families have the option of ordering hot/cold lunch meals that are delivered daily from the White River Valley Supervisory Union. Families will be charged \$5.50 for those meals and invoiced monthly. Students and families will receive an online sign-up sheet for lunches via email the week prior. Make your-own pb/sunbutter and jelly sandwiches, fruit and lunch snack are also available for free while supplies last.

School Communication

The school newsletter and general notices are emailed to families. Sign up for these emails to stay current with what is happening at TSA. The Newsletter includes upcoming events, appreciations, all-school news, middle school news, high school news, college and career updates, community service opportunities, sports, and community events.

Some families may have problems with the newsletter getting caught in their spam folder or in the "Social" tab of their Gmail. To remedy this, be sure to add the newsletter's email address, newsletter@sharonacademy.net, to your computer's address book or mark these messages as "not junk/spam".

These newsletters and notices are also archived on the website. Go to the Main Menu and click on Newsletter under News.

If you would like to contribute content to TSA's Newsletter, please contact the Social Media and Communications Coordinator, Bethany Meyer at bmeyer@sharonacademy.net.

The school website and Blackbaud are also important and timely resources.



Costs

Tuition

The Sharon Academy's tuition for the 2024-2025 school year is set at \$20,900.

If you live in a sending town, your town pays TSA's tuition. If you will be paying your tuition privately, you will receive a tuition invoice in the summer with information about payment schedules. Families residing in sending towns must fill out a Tuition Residency Form which can be obtained at the town clerks office.

Annual School Fee

Annual School Fee: TSA will charge an annual fee to cover most of the student activities, events, and incidentals incurred throughout the year. Examples of items that are supported by the yearly fee are: field trips, assignment notebooks, the high school prom, workbooks, graduation (including cap and gown), annual PSAT testing, yearbooks for every high school student, meals provided during the interim play, circus, interim t-shirts, and most elective class fees. The annual fee for all students (in either the middle or high school) for 2024-2025 is \$315. This fee is non-refundable.

If this fee represents a hardship for your family, please speak to Maria Duggan, our Business Manager, about a [fee waiver based on income](#).

Sports Participation Fees

For each team sport in which a student participates, there is a fee to help offset the costs incurred for each team. There are also separate fees associated with the Saskadena Six Ski and Snowboard Program, which change based on the fees the mountain charges, transportation costs, and the price of equipment rentals and lessons (for those students who rent/take lessons).

Fee Waivers

To apply for a fee waiver based on income or hardship please fill out a [Fee Waiver Form 24-25](#) and contact our business Manager, Maria Duggan, at mduggan@sharonacademy.net or (802) 763-2500 Ext. 234.

HealthHub

The Sharon Academy has a partnership with Health Hub. A practitioner from South Royalton Health Center will be at the MS and HS to see students and provide the following services if requested:

- Physical Exams/Sports Exams
- Immunizations
- Flu Shots
- Acute visits for sickness or injuries
- Prescriptions
- Minor Lab Procedures



- Identification of health risks and plans to reduce risks
- Monitoring of chronic conditions such as Asthma, Allergies, and Diabetes
- Referrals for specialty services, if required

HealthHub clinic visits will be billed directly to your existing health insurance.

Volunteering

Parent and guardian volunteers are essential to the success of The Sharon Academy. Volunteers strengthen and enrich TSA while saving thousands of dollars every year. In order to stay small, affordable, and accessible, TSA needs all families to participate in whatever ways they are able. On average, TSA parents and guardians cumulatively log over 4,000 hours in service to our school community each year! Volunteering is also a wonderful way to get to know other TSA parents and have fun! Please feel free to email any questions about volunteering at TSA to the Assistant Head of School at kfabrikant@sharonacademy.net.

Athletics

Sports at The Sharon Academy include soccer, basketball, baseball, cross-country, track, and Ultimate Frisbee at both the Middle School and High School. For more information, see the website or request to see the Athletic Policy through the Athletic Director, Grayson Levy at glevy@sharonacademy.net.

First Day Requirements

Students must have a current physical on file each year to participate.

Cancellations

It is TSA's policy that when school is canceled due to inclement weather, practices and games may still proceed if the weather permits. Coaches will notify players if scheduled activities are to be canceled.

Team Travel

Travel to games will be in private cars. Students may drive themselves and/or sibling(s) to away games only with express permission of the Head of School or the Athletic Director and only with the written permission of the student's parent(s) or guardians. Permission may also be granted if the away game is in the same direction as the student's home.

Non-binary/Genderfluid Athletes

The Sharon Academy supports students' participation on whichever gendered team best supports their personal growth as an athlete and human.

Drivers Needed



The success of the athletic program depends largely on help from volunteer parents. A big need for each of the teams is a parent to coordinate rides for games. Please discuss with your child's coach immediately if you are available to do the coordinating of rides.

TSA Athletic Booster Club Volunteers Needed

TSA's Athletic Booster Club will be asking for your participation in booster club volunteer events. At the start of the year, the Booster Club will need help making delicious pizzas in our wood-fired oven to serve at our home games. We are also looking for new members of the booster club. Please contact Grayson Levy, Athletic Director at glevy@sharonacademy.net if you are interested.



SCHOOL POLICIES

Behavior, Hazing, Harassment and Bullying, Drug and Alcohol, and Weapons policies are included in this handbook. TSA also has additional policies on a variety of topics. Copies of all policies are available for all students and parents in the office at the high school and are subject to change.

Behavior Policy

At The Sharon Academy, we require our students to show respect for self, others, and learning, to be responsible for their own behavior, and to follow all official school rules. Our behavior policy is reinforced in a positive manner as we work with students on making choices in alignment with their role as a student. Behavioral challenges are addressed with teachers, advisors, and/or members of the Student Support Team (SST). Students may request or be recommended /required to participate in the creation of a Behavioral plan outlined with specific goals, strategies, and consequences. Parents/guardians will be notified about significant or repeated behavioral challenges, and be part of the implementation of any behavioral plan.

If the behavior challenges continue after multiple consultations with parents, school staff, and the student themselves, the Head of School will confer with members of the Board of Trustees and the parents or guardians of the student. If the behaviors are then determined to be detrimental to the success of the student and/or other students at school, the student may be asked to leave TSA.

However, in cases of extreme antisocial behavior, including the use and/or distribution of substances, violent or threatening behavior, possession of weapons, harassment or hazing, the Head of School, after conferring with members of the Student Support Team and Board of Trustees and meeting with parents or guardians of the student involved, can suspend and/or expel students from TSA.

Adopted August 1996

Revised April 1997

Revised February 1999

Revised October 2001

Revised January 29, 2002

Revised August 2023



Hazing, Harassment, and Bullying Statement of Policy

The Sharon Academy (“TSA” 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 The Sharon Academy to prohibit the unlawful harassment of students based upon the student’s or their family member’s actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, creed, religion, sex, 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, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and/or other applicable federal or state civil rights laws.

It is also the policy of The Sharon Academy 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 Sharon Academy will address all complaints of harassment, hazing and bullying according to the procedures accompanying this policy, and will 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 punishment of a student for conduct which, although it does not rise to the level of harassment, bullying, or hazing as defined herein, otherwise violates the School’s Student Behavior Policy, Student Pact, or a student who otherwise engages in conduct that violates the School’s policies and/or standards.

24-25 Designated Employees to report to:

High School:

Blake Fabrikant, Dean of Students	802-763-2500
Jen Davila, School Counselor	802-763-2500
Kate Fabrikant, Assistant Head of School	802-763-2500

Middle School:

Blake Fabrikant, Dean of Students	802-763-2500
Andrew Lane, Director of Middle School	802-763-2531 Ext 301
Christa Wurm, School Counselor	802-763-2500

24-25 Investigation Team Members:

Blake Fabrikant, Dean of Students	802-763-2500
Andrew Lane, Director of Middle School	802-763-2531 Ext 301
Student Support Team Members	



Privacy Considerations

Under this policy, the privacy of the Complainant, the accused individual, and the witnesses shall be maintained consistent with The Sharon Academy'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 minor 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. The Sharon Academy 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 they are afraid of reprisals from the alleged wrongdoer, TSA will take steps to prevent retaliation and will take strong action if retaliation occurs. If the student continues to ask that their name not be revealed, TSA 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 and lawfully to the harassment/hazing/bullying while preventing harassment/hazing/bullying of other students. The Sharon Academy 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.

Disclosure of Discipline Imposed

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.

Notifications

All notifications made under this policy and the underlying procedures shall be subject to any applicable state and/or federal laws protecting the confidentiality of personally identifiable student information. A School Administrator may seek the consent of the parent/guardian of the accused student, or the accused eligible student (if 18 or older, the accused student has the ability to consent), in order to inform the Complainant of any disciplinary action taken in cases where the school determined that an act(s) of harassment, hazing or 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



Again, information obtained and documented by school administration regarding the school's response to notice of student conduct that may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying may warrant an educational record regarding the student or student(s) involved. Accordingly, such information usually will 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 The Student Support team 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 the School 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 Dean of Students and/or the Equity Coordinator(s) and Designated Employees by depositing the same in The Sharon Academy's central file for the investigation. That file will be maintained by the School 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 The Sharon Academy have been designated 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 the School's Non-discrimination policy and applicable non-discrimination laws:

24-25 Designated Employees to report to:

High School:

Blake Fabrikant, Dean of Students	802-763-2500
Jen Davila, School Counselor	802-763-2500
Kate Fabrikant, Assistant Head of School	802-763-2500

Middle School:

Blake Fabrikant, Dean of Students	802-763-2500
Andrew Lane, Director of Middle School	802-763-2531 Ext 301
Christa Wurm, School Counselor	802-763-2500

24-25 Investigation Team Members:

Blake Fabrikant, Dean of Students	802-763-2500
Andrew Lane, Director of Middle School	802-763-2531 Ext 301
Student Support Team Members	

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

“Equity Coordinator” is the designated team member on the investigation team responsible for implementation of the School's also responsible for overseeing implementation of the School's policies against harassment, hazing, and bullying of students. This role is assigned to the Dean of Students and the School Counselor for the High School and the Designated Employees for the Middle School.

“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, sex, 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 their 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 TSA;
- Has been accepted for admission at TSA; or
- Intends to attend TSA 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 which has been provided to a Designated Employee from another Employee, the student allegedly subjected to the 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 the Head of School or their designee, the Head of the Middle School and/or those administrators assigned to the role of the Team Equity Coordinator in each investigation.

“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 they have been harassed, hazed, or bullied under this policy, or who witnesses or has knowledge of conduct that they reasonably believe 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 they reasonably believe 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 they reasonably believe 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 name witnesses and present or suggest 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) 828-1625 (voice)
(877) 294-9200 (tty)
(802) 828-2481 (fax)
Email: human.rights@vermont.gov

Website: <http://hrc.vermont.gov>



Responding to Notice of Possible Policy Violation(s)

Upon Notice of information that 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 one of the Equity Coordinators of the information;
3. If in the judgment of the Equity Coordinator who is so notified, the information alleges conduct which may constitute harassment, hazing, or bullying, one of the investigation team members 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**, one of the Equity Coordinators shall:

Notify in writing both the Complainant and accused individual (or if either is a minor inform their respective parent or guardian) 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, one of the Equity Coordinators shall, no later than one school day after notice by a Designated Employee, initiate or cause to be initiated, an investigation of the allegations, which the Equity Coordinator reasonably believes may constitute harassment, hazing, or bullying.

Investigator Assignment. One of the Equity Coordinators shall assign a person to conduct the investigation; nothing herein shall be construed to preclude one of the Equity Coordinators from assigning him/herself or a Designated Employee as the investigator. 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 they has been sexually assaulted by another student, TSA 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, The Sharon Academy 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 imposition of suspension or expulsion of a student. The Sharon Academy will ensure that steps to protect standard due process rights in those situations involving potential major discipline do not restrict or unnecessarily delay the protections provided 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 a non-investigating Equity Coordinator.

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.

Review and Final Determination An Equity Coordinator who did not investigate the complaint 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 their 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 non-investigating Equity Coordinator’s determination, that Equity Coordinator 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 Equity Coordinator 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, their 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.

Notify the Accused Student – or, if a minor, their parent(s) or guardian – in writing of their 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 the School’s Student Behavior Policy, Student Pact or other School policies and/or standards, the Equity Coordinator shall report such conduct to the Dean of Students 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 TSA Student Behavior Policy, Student Pact and other School policies and/or standards may provide guidance, but the specific procedures set out here will be followed to the extent they are inconsistent with those rules. 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 they understand 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 The Sharon Academy will also make efforts to support victims' access to the School'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, TSA may deliver special training or other interventions for that class to repair the educational environment. If TSA offers the student the option of withdrawing from a class in which a hostile environment/bullying occurred, the School 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.

TSA 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 Equity Coordinator'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 School of the non-investigating Equity Coordinator'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 Equity Coordinator's determination, and the issuance of a final decision, shall, unless special circumstances are present and documented by The Sharon Academy, 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 non-investigating Equity Coordinator'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 Equity Coordinator'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) 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 the School. 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

Rights of Accused Students

Appeal. Any person determined to have engaged in an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying may appeal the non-investigating Equity Coordinator'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 Equity Coordinator. Appeals should be made to the Head of School within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the notice of the Equity Coordinator'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, The Sharon Academy 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. For those documents that cannot be provided due to privacy restrictions when the accused student/appellant seeks a review on the record before the Head of School, a school administrator 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 have provided 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 Living Independently (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

- Firsthand 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, The Sharon Academy 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 will be in age-appropriate language and include examples of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying. At a minimum, this notice is provided through the TSA Student Handbook which sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for the School.

Student Training: The Head of School or their designee shall use their 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 their designee will ensure that teachers and other staff receive training in preventing, recognizing and responding to harassment, hazing, and/or bullying.

**Legal References:**

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).

Approved by the TSA Board of Trustees May 2, 2016

Updated August 2021

Updated August 2023



Drug and Alcohol Policy

The Sharon Academy (TSA) recognizes that abuse of substance is a treatable health problem, which at times involves conditions and violations of law. Involvement with substance use can interfere with a student's academic, physical, emotional, and social development. Further, TSA recognizes that the school, as well as families and the community at large, have a responsibility to address this important matter.

The Sharon Academy acknowledges the following school roles. TSA will:

1. Educate students about substances;
2. Respond supportively to those whose use of substances interferes with school performance and the physical, emotional, and social health of the student;
3. Promote a climate in which students have comfortable access to help if they are in distress from their own or others' use of substances;
4. Help students recovering from dependency on substances;
5. Develop and implement guidelines and sanctions which:
 - a. Define violations and their consequences, both disciplinary and supportive;
 - b. Define immediate procedures for handling incidents;
 - c. Describe a support and referral system which includes response to self-referrals and suspected users, which are clear and articulated to staff, parents and students.
 - d. Education all personnel on school guidelines related to substances.
 - e. Ensure an evaluation of the above efforts twice a year.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Procedure

The Sharon Academy provides a safe environment for students to learn. We strive to develop an educational community that is dedicated to caring for students, guiding them to make responsible choices and helping them grow as individuals and members of their community. We base this policy on the belief that students can make healthy decisions that can positively impact themselves, their peers, their family and the community. Each individual in the community has a responsibility to themselves and to others to keep The Sharon Academy an environment free of substances. This procedure applies whenever school is in session, and when students are engaged in school-sanctioned activities on school property or on other sites. This will include transportation to and from school and travel to and from school-sanctioned events.

Violations

A student is considered in violation of the school's Drug and Alcohol policy if they are:

1. In possession of any of the following;
 - a. Any substance not prescribed to the individual
 - b. Any substance where misuse or misrepresentation of prescriptions is involved
 - c. Any substance whose use is illegal for people under 21 (nicotine/tobacco, cannabis, alcohol, etc.)
 - d. Any illegal substance



2. In possession of paraphernalia reasonably associated with illicit substance use;
3. Distributing or providing any of the above illicit substances;
4. Selling illicit substance;
5. Under the influence of illicit substances;
6. In the act of using illicit substance;
7. Intentionally in the presence of students in the act of possessing, distributing, selling, or using illicit substances, except when it is clear that the student's presence is for the purpose of intervening for safety reasons or against another's use of illicit substances.

Legal Action

Any violation of the Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Use Policy may be reported to local law enforcement officials for appropriate action.

Offenses and Consequences

The limits of the reach of this policy reinforce the roles of parents/guardians and other responsible adults for providing supervision for students at home and in the community.

- A. When a student uses or possesses alcohol or illegal drugs at school or while under school jurisdiction, the following shall result
 - a. Potential notification of police (as determined by the law First time offenders may be referred, when appropriate, to a Diversion program.
 - b. Notification of parent/guardian.
 - c. The student will meet with an investigation team which will include the Dean of Students (DOS) and/or the Director of the Middle School (DOMS).
 - d. The Student may be required to be involved with a counselor, in school or with an outside agency.
 - e. The student may be placed on probation. Probation would limit participation in school-sanctioned activities until they are actively engaged in the process with a drug and alcohol counselor. Restrictions may be placed on activities during unstructured school time – lunch, study halls, free time before a sports or drama practice.
- B. A student who commits a first offense will start with a warning. The warning system has three levels, with increasing consequence. The third consequence could result in expulsion from school or a leave of absence until successful completion of an inpatient treatment program.
- C. Student athletes will continue to practice with their team and will attend games but may be suspended from game play according to their level on the warning system. For an athlete at level one: four game suspension; level two: eight game suspension; level three: suspended from games until consequences finalized. Any team captain who is found with alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs will be stripped of captaincy for the remainder of the season.
- D.
 - E. A student will be suspended from extra-curricular activities according to their level on the warning system. For a student at level one: four event suspension; level two: eight event suspension; level three: suspended from extra-curricular activities until consequences finalized.
 - F. Selling (attempted or actual) or distributing, the following shall result:



- a. Notification of police.
- b. Notification of parents/guardians.
- c. Placed on social probation – warning level.
- d. Meeting with the Investigation Team and DOS/DOMSe – possible expulsion.

C. Tobacco

Use of any tobacco products are prohibited on school grounds or at school sponsored events. If students are in possession of, or using tobacco products, the following shall result:

1. Product will be confiscated.
2. Parents or guardians will be notified.
3. Be required to be involved with a drug and alcohol counselor, in school or with an outside agency, for a minimum of two sessions.

D. Items

Students in possession of tools or paraphernalia that can be reasonably associated with illegal drug use, but which show no evidence of drugs having been used:

- a. Item will be confiscated.
- b. Parents or guardians will be notified.

E. Intentionally in the Presence

A student or students intentionally in the presence of other drug users will:

- a. Be required to be involved with a drug and alcohol counselor, in school or with an outside agency, for a minimum of two sessions.

F. Self-referral

The Sharon Academy provides students with the opportunity to seek help with alcohol or drug related problems through a confidential self-referral program. No disciplinary sanctions will be imposed provided the following conditions are met:

- a. There is no immediate or apparent threat of harm to self or others.
- b. The student is self-referred if they are asking for help in advance of being caught.

G. Referral Process

Referrals for assistance may come from self, peers, parents, teachers and administrators. All referrals will be treated in confidence unless it is determined that the student has been harmed or is at risk of harm from self or others.

- a. Self – students may seek out help from any faculty member in confidence. A direct self-referral can be made to a member of the Student Support Team (SST) without the knowledge or permission of parents or administration. Students can also seek support outside of the school setting.
- b. Peers – Classmates can be important contributors to the safety of their peer group. Students are often the first to know about the risk behaviors of friends. By making a confidential referral to the SST, a peer can help to create a safe opportunity for their friend to engage in a conversation about choices without fear of consequences.



c. Parents – Parents may contact a School Administrator or the SST to ask questions in confidence about suspected substance related behaviors of students. Support services can be arranged during school or outside of school at no cost.

d. Teachers – Teachers may confidentially refer a student to the SST. When the safety and wellbeing of a student is in question, the SST will meet to develop a plan for appropriate action.

Elements of Protocol

Students, Staff, and Parents are expected to act as partners in the process of helping each student to grow into a healthy young adult in a safe and successful community of learners. Because substance abuse by any student can compromise the safety and success of the individual as well as the community, TSA requires students to act responsibly on behalf of the greater whole.

Educate – “Know It”

Provide the practical information necessary for each member of the school community to become more fully aware of the real world risks of substance abuse.

Discuss the details of the school substance abuse policy and the implied expectations for each person.

Explain the “do no harm” rationale behind the interventions outlined in the policy.

Identify – “Name It”

Recognize each incident as potentially harmful to students and the school community.

Share your concern in a supportive conversation with the student and encourage them to seek help.

Refer “Address It”

Make a referral to the SST to begin the helping process.

Help connect students in need with community resources that can help them.

Seek support to share the burden of knowing about the risky choices of others.

Assess – “Understand It”

Complete an initial screening followed by a complete professional evaluation if indicated.

Consider the potential impact on friends, family, and school community.

Assist – “Change It”

Develop a responsible course of action to assist the student in need. Build a manageable treatment plan that addresses behaviors at home, school, community, workplace, and sports/music/arts/drama.

Help the student to get connected with individual and group support outside of school.

Adopted: October 22, 2007

Amended: January 28, 200

Amended August, 2023



Weapons Policy

No person shall enter The Sharon Academy's grounds (including all parking and other adjacent areas and the school building themselves) while carrying any kind of weapon on their person or with their belongings or in their vehicle. Carrying weapons is antithetical to The Sharon Academy's mission of nurturance.

This includes a prohibition against weapons in vehicles on the TSA campus. Weapons include, but are not limited to, a firearm, knives (other than pocket penknives, tools like Leatherman, or common table cutlery), other dangerous or any other deadly weapons and other destructive devices.

The term "firearm" means: (a) any weapon that will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (b) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; or (c) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer. Destructive device means:

- Any explosive, explosive device, incendiary or poison gas; Bomb; Grenade;
- Rocket having a propellant charge of more than 4 oz.;
- Missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than ¼ oz.;
- Device similar to any of the devices described above;
- Any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described above and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled;
- Any weapon that will, or that may be readily converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and that has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter; and/or
- Any other weapon, device, instrument, material or substance, whether animate or inanimate, which in the manner it is used or is intended to be used, is known to be capable of producing death or serious bodily injury.

The term "weapon" does not include archery equipment used in TSA's archery classes or used specifically for practicing for or engaging in competitive interscholastic archery, as approved and supervised by the School. All such archery equipment must be stored in locked cabinets or the like when not in active use.

Exceptions

This policy does not apply to the following:

- law enforcement officials duly authorized to carry such weapons
- on-campus theatrical productions requiring props, provided these props are properly secured when not in use and are used under the guidance of a School faculty or staff member
- starter pistols at athletic events operated by authorized adults, and properly secured when not in use
- military drills, honor guards, and color guards utilizing facsimile weapons
- historical displays



- individuals licensed to possess, discharge, or display fireworks when providing these services for approved School events
- individuals licensed to possess, discharge, or use explosives when providing these services for approved School construction projects
- the separate storage of personal firearms and ammunition pursuant to the Firearms Storage Authorization
- normal kitchen utensils and cleaning supplies when appropriately used

Adopted June 25, 2016

Revised January 23, 2017

Search and Seizure By School Personnel

The purpose of this policy is to describe procedures related to search and seizure of students, their property, and/or The Sharon Academy (TSA) property that students are using.

TSA retains the right to examine its property at any time. Lockers, textbooks, computers, and other materials or supplies loaned by the school to students remain the property of the school, and may be opened and inspected by school employees at any time. Searches of students' persons, personal effects, and vehicles may be conducted when there are reasonable grounds for suspecting, at the time of initiating the search, that the search will reveal evidence of a violation of law or of school rules. The Dean of Students, or their designee, may consult with legal counsel and/or law enforcement officials when considering whether or how to conduct a search of a student's person, personal effects, or vehicle. The Dean of Students, or their designee, shall develop procedures to ensure that all searches and seizures of students and student property are conducted in a manner that complies with state and federal constitutional protections against unreasonable searches and seizures of students and student property in schools.

Adopted August 2023



General *Middle School* Expectations and Guidelines

The Sharon Academy endeavors to treat individuals of all socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, religious, cultural origins and sexual orientations with dignity, fairness, and respect. Our staff intentionally works to model and create a respectful environment free of harassment, prejudice, and discrimination in all aspects of school life. At TSA, we ask our students to show respect for themselves, others, and learning; to be responsible for their own behavior and to adhere to school expectations.

Behavior

The middle school informs students early in the school year of behavior expectations and includes them in creating social norms for the community. Guidelines for appropriate behavior are posted throughout the school building. The staff will take appropriate action when a student has difficulty following school expectations. For more information see the behavior policy which is included in this handbook.

The Director of the Middle School and the Head of School can suspend and/or expel students from school for antisocial behavior, including, but not limited to, the use of drugs and/or alcohol, violent or threatening behavior, hazing, harassment, bullying and possession of weapons.

Illegal Substances

Possession and use of alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, vaping devices, and illegal drugs are not allowed at any time. See the drug and alcohol policy included in this handbook.

Field Trips

Field trips are regarded as part of the school curriculum and are considered an important part of the learning experience. The same rules regarding behavior in school apply during field trips. We require a signed permission slip before a student can participate in a field trip.

School Property

Students are expected to respect and care for school property and the property of fellow students and staff. Textbooks must be covered. Please do not use sticky covers or tape. Damaged or lost school property will be replaced at the family's expense.

PDA (Public Display of Affection)

Students may not engage in inappropriate public displays of affection. The definition of "inappropriate" will be discussed with students in school.

Lockers

Each student is assigned a locker for storing backpacks and personal items. Students may appropriately decorate the interior of their lockers.



Supplies

Students should be equipped with the supplies from The Middle School Supply List, which is sent home each August and is available on our website.

Drinks

Students are encouraged to have a water bottle. Students can bring water to class; however, once class has started, students will not be allowed to leave the classroom to fill their bottle. Please do not send sugary or caffeinated drinks.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Conserve

The middle school tries to model practices to reduce the waste stream and conserve energy. We encourage students to use both sides of paper, bring lunches with minimum waste (reusable silverware and cups are provided at school), compost, recycle, and in general be aware of what is being tossed into the trash can. Please mark reusable food containers with your name. Unmarked containers that are left around the school are sent home with a volunteer who washes and distributes them for reuse. Containers are not returned to students once they have left the school.

Physical Activity

Almost every day your middle school student will be asked to participate in some sort of physical activity. If your student is to be released from moderately strenuous physical activity on a long-term basis, please arrange to meet with us for a short conference so we can fully understand and accommodate the student's needs. Students should have at least one pair of shoes that they can exercise in safely. If students wear dresses, suits and/or shoes with heels, they should bring alternative clothing.

Middle School Dress Code (see [school policy](#))

Assignment Notebook

Students will receive an assignment notebook from the school. Students are expected to bring this book to every class and clearly record all assignments. Training students to use this notebook is a priority of middle school. If students lose their notebook, they are asked to replace it immediately. Students should bring this to school every day (including days when students say they do not need it). Parents and Guardians: This is an excellent way to see what homework your student has on any given night. Please help us by asking your student on a regular basis if they are remembering their assignment notebook.

Feedback

Managing and guiding middle school is a constantly evolving process. Every year, the strengths, personalities, and challenges of our student body changes. Every year, we try out new ideas to better assist our students. Sometimes it becomes clear that rules must be fine-tuned. We are open to constructive feedback on how our "system" is working. We guide our students on how to provide feedback that is constructive, and we give them opportunities to voice their concerns and work with us to problem solve solutions. We encourage parents to also voice concerns and work with the middle school staff to improve our school.



Laptop Computers

Laptops are not a mandatory requirement of the TSA middle school and most students do not have their own laptops. However, during times when we are working in school on extended research and writing projects, we often request that students who own laptops bring them to school. Please note, before bringing a laptop to school for daily use, students must get permission. Guidelines for use must be agreed upon between the student and the staff. We want to make sure that the computer is contributing to our work rather than serving as a distraction.

MS Specific Technology Guidance and Rules (See School Tech Guidelines as well)

Chromebooks/computer options:

1. Use their own computer for school work
2. OR have a chromebook assigned to them for the year (no cost) *and sign a contract* and they are responsible for that device the remainder of the year. They are financially responsible for it. They are permitted to take it home with them.
3. OR They use a chromebook while at school, but are not permitted to take it home. They are not committed to a contract. They will need to realize that they may need to stay for HW club after school to do computer- based work.

Summary Rules for all Electronic Devices:

- From arrival - 3:15, school Chromebooks are **only** to be used for schoolwork
- From arrival - 3:15, personal computers are **only** to be used for schoolwork.
- From arrival - 3:15, cell phones/iPads are **only** to be used for schoolwork or communication with family only if absolutely necessary and with express permission from a staff member. The cell phone must then promptly be returned to the student's locker.
- Appropriate* recreational uses (web browsing, Youtube, personal email etc) of school Chromebooks and personal devices permitted only after school.
- No gaming or streaming content on any device at any time.
- Wireless headphones cannot be used during school hours (unless given explicit permission) and must be stored in lockers from arrival - 3:15.

Communicating with parents:

- Use the school phones to make necessary phone calls. If you need to text a parent/family member during school hours, please ask for permission from a faculty member.

Consequences for handheld devices:

- Until 8:15, a student will be reminded to store their device in their locker with no penalty.



- If a student is discovered with a cell phone or other handheld device between 8:15 and 3:15 or has to be reminded multiple times on any given day before school, their phone will go in the locked phone box for the rest of the day. The student can collect their phone at the end of the day. The teacher who takes away the phone will notify the director of the middle school who will work out next steps to help the student comply with the rules.
- The cell phone lock box is how we help students manage their device if they are struggling to manage it themselves.

Wearables:

If a student has a smartwatch or similar wearable technology and uses it in a way that violates our technology or phone use policy (including but not limited to: sending and receiving text messages, playing games, using social media) then the device is subject to the technology and phone policy outlined below and it may be confiscated during school hours.

Steps for managing inappropriate technology use:

These consequences are intended to help students learn how to manage their time and attention when using technology. Examples of inappropriate technology use include but are not limited to: gaming, extraneous web browsing, or using chat features during class time.

1. First violation: when using a laptop you must sit next to the teacher for one week for supervision and guidance.
2. Second violation: an email goes home about using technology inappropriately in class.
3. Third violation: a conference is scheduled with your parents to discuss technology use.



General High School Expectations and Guidelines

The following expectations can be summed up in one word: Respect. We ask our students and families to please help us maintain our greatest asset: a safe, thoughtful environment where all are accepted for their unique qualities and abilities.

1. Students are expected to treat themselves, other students, teachers, community members, learning, and school property with respect.
2. Students are expected to follow TSA's High School Universal Expectations (See Next Page)
3. Students may not engage in antisocial or threatening behavior or language: i.e., bullying, hazing, and/or harassing. (Policy follows)
4. Students may not bring weapons (knives or pocket knives longer than 3", guns, etc.) onto school property. (Policies follow.)
5. Possession and/or use of alcohol, tobacco and nicotine products, vaping materials, and other drugs are not allowed at any time.
6. Students are required to attend all school programming from 9:00 - 3:15.
7. Students should arrive on time to all classes with required supplies.
8. Students are expected to bring their own school supplies.
9. Students are expected to conserve school resources whenever possible.
10. Students may not leave the school grounds without express parental/guardian permission provided to the administrative assistant.
 - a. The grounds are defined as the building, athletic fields, and parking lot.
 - b. Students arriving late or leaving campus during the day are asked to sign in and out at the front desk.
11. Students (except siblings) may not ride in another student's car for school-related activities without written parental permission. Students (except seniors with privileges) may use cars only to travel to and from school.
12. Students are asked to dress in accordance with the Dress Code
13. Students will keep backpacks and personal items in their lockers or cubbies.
 - a. Athletic bags should be stored in the gym.
 - b. Students may appropriately decorate the interior of their lockers. No stickers or permanent outside decorations are allowed.
14. Telephones: Students may use the telephone at the front desk if necessary. Students with their own cell phones may use them before and after school or during lunchtime.
15. The Gym: Individuals cannot use the gym during class time or Phoenix Block without express permission. Students may use the gym before and after school, and during lunch.
 - a. Students may only eat on the bleachers in the gym, not on the gym floor, and must wear shoes that have not been worn outside.
16. The Head of School can suspend and/or expel students for anti-social behavior, including, but not limited to, the use of drugs and/or alcohol, violent or threatening behavior, hazing, harassment, bullying and possession of weapons. Expulsions as decided by the HOS are to be reviewed and approved by the Board President.



TSA High School Universal Expectations

Participates in Learning

This looks like:

- Showing up on time
- Attending the duration of class
- Working to keep an open mind
- Attending Phoenix Block
- Engaging in-class activities
- Taking responsibility for absences

Engages in healthy relationships

This looks like:

- Developing and maintaining productive relationships
- Applying appropriate boundaries
- Taking responsibility for our impact on others
- Using technology to enhance, not distract from relationships
- Accepting and responding to feedback constructively

Contributes to positive school culture

This looks like:

- Attending All School Programming (including but not limited to ASM, Turquoise Days, Advisory)
- Following School Policies
- Advocating for yourself and others through designated channels
- Using empathy and curiosity when solving problems
- Taking responsibility for maintaining clean physical space.



School Dress Code

Diversity of expression is a defining trait of our institution; we value it in all its forms including dress. At The Sharon Academy we trust our students and their families to make good choices. The primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and parents or guardians. The school is responsible for seeing that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student, and that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student. The Student Support Team may intervene with a student or communicate with a student's family if the student's manner of dress causes them to have significant concern for the student's wellbeing even if the attire is within the dress code outlined below.

People Must Wear:

- Shirt or Top
- Bottom: pants/sweatpants/shorts/skirt/dress/leggings
- Shoes; activity-specific exceptions are permitted (dance elective in gym)

People May Wear: (Unless the item violates a rule from the "people cannot wear" category)

- Hats
- Hair in any style
- Religious attire of any kind
- Clothing that expresses their self-identified gender
- Hoodie sweatshirts (overhead is allowed)
- Fitted pants, including leggings, yoga pants and "skinny jeans"
- Midriff baring shirts
- Pajamas
- Ripped jeans
- Tank tops, including spaghetti straps, halter tops, and "tube" (strapless) tops
- Athletic attire
- Clothing with commercial or athletic logos

People Cannot Wear:

- Violent language or images.
- Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity)
- Hate speech, profanity, pornography.
- Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment
- Helmets or headgear that obscures the face (except as a religious observance).
- [Review the full Dress Code and Enforcement Policy on the website](#) or on the [Blackbaud Resource Board](#).



School Honor Code

The Sharon Academy values academic integrity within the spirit of collaboration and pledges to nurture, recognize, and uphold it in the school community. Members of the Sharon Academy staff and student body will participate in a thoughtful discussion of the honor code at the beginning of each year. Teachers will review their individual expectations, specify authorized versus unauthorized aid, and define plagiarism further in the context of their individual classes. Violations of the Honor Code will result in education and/or disciplinary action.

To be signed by all students at the beginning of each year:

I will uphold academic integrity. I will do my own work honestly.

I understand that academic integrity includes:

- Honoring the intent of assignments
- Asking for teachers' help, support, and/or clarification of the intent of the assignment when I need it
- Completing all assignments to reflect my own independent and creative thinking (Examples of "assignments" include homework, class work, tests, essays, projects, and exhibitions)
- Not knowingly helping others to be dishonest

I understand that academic dishonesty includes:

- Plagiarism, that is, representing someone else's work and ideas as your own
- Using, giving, or soliciting unauthorized aid including on-line language translators and plagiarism software (AI "artificial intelligence" such as ChatGPT)
- Copying another student's work
- Knowingly helping others to be dishonest

Student Printed Name

_____ Student Signature

I understand and will uphold The Sharon Academy Academic Honor Code.

(For 24-25, this will be acknowledged digitally via google form by all students)

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Printed Name(s):



Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature(s):

School Technology Guidelines

Technology Requirements

TSA requires that every high school student have their own computer to use for schoolwork. High school students can "bring your own device" (BYOD) or use a Chromebook supplied by TSA, either purchased or borrowed. We encourage students to obtain their own device, either BYOD or by purchasing a TSA device.

To compare the options visit our website's [Technology](#) page under Family Resources.

To reserve a TSA Chromebook to buy or borrow for the 2023-2024 school year, or to ask questions about the program, contact:

Information Technology Director Carl Groppe at
carlgroppe@sharonacademy.net
802-763-2500 Ext. 206

TSA Information Technology Mission Statement

The use of Information Technology is an essential component of the educational process at The Sharon Academy.

As such, the school will maintain standards for, and instructions in, computer literacy; technologies to support classroom instruction; instruction in, and exploration of, electronic sources of reference and a culture which encourages students and teachers to share their knowledge of electronic information resources and technology in informal settings, the classroom, and in school-wide forums; the infrastructure to support appropriate access to the Internet for every student, teacher, and administrator; electronic storage of appropriate documents for every member of The Sharon Academy community; access to email for every member of the school community; the opportunity for students to participate in the design, maintenance, and administration of technology systems; a set of standards, developed by student, faculty, and administrative representatives, for the appropriate use of computer technology at The Sharon Academy; security adequate to protect The Sharon Academy computer network and file systems from intrusion, viruses, spyware, and other forms of abuse.

Computer Usage Guidelines

In order to maintain and sustain this resource, the school requires that every member of the community assume responsibility for its appropriate use. This use shall reflect the same standards of behavior as those in effect for personal behavior at Sharon Academy, including



the school's policies and expectations regarding academic honesty, harassment, bullying, respect for privacy and personal property.

It is expected that every member of the school community will have a school email account. Email is provided for the purpose of exchanging information consistent with the educational mission of Sharon Academy and facilitating communication between students, faculty, staff, and parents. Users must log in to The Sharon Academy network and email using their own user ID and password. **Seeking or gaining access to the accounts, email, and files of others is prohibited.** This rule protects the basic right of privacy of all users on the network. Taking advantage of someone who inadvertently leaves a computer without logging out is no different than entering an unlocked room and reading a personal letter or destroying personal property. Once accounts have been established, users must not share their network or email account passwords with anyone.

Non-academic use of school computers and other electronic devices is restricted. Playing games is completely prohibited during the school day. Use of social networking sites for non-academic purposes is prohibited between the hours of 8:15 am and 5 pm at the MS and 9:00 - 3:15 at the HS. Use of a computer for educational purposes including research and completion of classroom assignments always has priority over other internet uses.

Internet chat sites, blogs, gaming, and social media are examples of non-academic use of a school computer. It is not a good idea - and essentially unsafe - to publicize personal data, including an address or phone number, on the internet. It should also be noted that internet sites aimed at social networking (i.e.: Snapchat, Instagram, Tik Tok) are accessible to and referenced by future employers, college admissions offices, and the Vermont State Police.

The school's computers and network are the property of The Sharon Academy and are subject to access and inspection by network administrators. Computers may not be used at the school to attempt to view, display, print, store, or distribute material that is commonly offensive to others, including pornographic, obscene, racist, hateful, or violent material. The TSA Network alerts members of the Student Support Team (SST) when language involving bullying, self-harm, or other destructive behavior is detected. If a user genuinely needs to research one of the other topics they must obtain permission from the Head of School or Dean of Students.

Personal Computers

Non-academic uses such as gaming, social networking, and YouTube are prohibited on personal computers between 8:15 am and 3:15 pm. This preserves the internet for academic purposes. People using personal computers are responsible for updated virus protection on their machines. Users not abiding by these guidelines may be reprimanded regardless of the fact that the computer is not school property.

Transmission of any material, via email or over the internet, in violation of any United States or Vermont statute or regulation is strictly prohibited. This includes but is not limited to copyrighted or trade secret material, threatening or obscene material, and criminal activity.



The school will update virus protection software on school computers as updates become available. School machines are scanned weekly. Users are responsible for taking precautions to prevent viruses on their own equipment connected to the school network.

The Sharon Academy cannot be held responsible for any lost resources or damages incurred through the use of a Sharon Academy account. Users are responsible for making their own back-up copies of documents that are critical to them. Work should be saved on your home drive or USB flash drive, not on the hard drive of a TSA computer.

Printing should be limited to class work and be kept to a minimum. The school community is committed to reducing waste and recycling used paper. Users are encouraged to select blocks of text to print rather than complete documents, where possible.

Users must use personal headphones for any computer programs that generate sound.

A user downloading or streaming a large file or engaging in an activity that otherwise adversely affects network performance, may be asked to stop such activity and restart it during non-academic hours.

Users of the school network agree not to violate or attempt to violate network security or intentionally interfere with network performance. ***Attempts to subvert network security, to impair the functionality of the network, to bypass restrictions set by administrators, to capture passwords or network traffic data, and to download or to possess software that attempts to do these actions are serious offenses, which could lead to disciplinary action from the school.*** Assisting others in violating these rules is likewise punishable. Users may not use the school computers or network to hack into another computer system.

These guidelines apply to members of the school community using their own computers while on school property. Users who don't follow the guidelines in this document may be subjected to disciplinary action by the school.

The use of tablets as computers in the classroom as well as mobile devices will be used under the same parameters dictated in the above Computer Usage Guidelines.

See General Middle School Expectations for Middle School Specific Mobile Device Rules



High School Mobile Device Usage Guidelines

At TSA, we believe in the power of face-to-face interactions, deep engagement, and a focused learning environment. We've seen firsthand how limiting cell phone use during the school day can:

Strengthen our community: When students are less distracted by their phones, they are more likely to connect with their peers, build meaningful relationships, and fully participate in the vibrant life of our school.

Enhance learning: Research shows that cell phones can be a major distraction in the classroom, impacting focus and attention. By creating a phone-free zone during the school day, we're fostering an environment where students can truly thrive academically.

Support student well-being: Excessive cell phone use has been linked to mental health concerns and unhealthy behaviors. Our new policy aims to promote a healthier, more balanced school experience for all students.

What this means for students:

No cell phones during the school day: Students will not be able to access their phones from 9:00 am to 3:15 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm on Wednesdays.

Secure storage: Phones and smartwatches will be kept in locked cabinets in the lobby, organized by advisory. Students will retrieve their devices at the end of each school day.

These guidelines apply to all students on the TSA high school campus.

Approved by TSA Staff and Faculty 2013

Updated, September 2015

Amended, June 22, 2017

Updated August 26, 2019

Updated August, 2022

Updated August 2023

Update August 2024



High School Senior Privileges 2024-2025

At The Sharon Academy we offer 12th grade students in **good standing** (defined below) the privilege of leaving campus when they do not have scheduled classes, advisory or meetings. We believe this privilege is an important step in students demonstrating their increased responsibilities within the context of our established relationship of trust and respect. This privilege is not monitored daily, and works when all 12th grade students assume responsibility for the learning community as a whole. Students who leave campus are expected to be aware and respectful of driving safety and laws, time management, responsible for communication to any involved parties (teachers, advisors, other staff) and to own their mistakes if they arise. TSA is not responsible for students when they are off campus. This is a risk that TSA is willing to take to encourage the growth that takes place with additional social and logistical contexts.

- Seniors in **good standing** at The Sharon Academy may partake in senior privileges with a parent/guardian's signature on the TSA Senior Privileges form.
- Good Standing:
 - "Meeting" in previous module's classes
 - On track to graduate: 50 or less GRE Standards remaining
 - Meeting all behavioral expectations
- Senior privileges include:
 - Arriving late to school when the student *does not have* an AM Block class
 - Leaving school during a PM Block if the student *does not have* a class
 - Leaving school during lunch.
 - Leaving school during office hours.
- Seniors may ride in a car driven by other seniors **only with parental permission** on the Senior Privileges form.
- We encourage planning, communication and carpooling to reduce environmental impact.
- Parents/guardians are expected to be clear about these parameters/permissions and discuss them with their students.
- The Sharon Academy is not responsible for students who are off campus.
- Privileges can and will be suspended if they are abused, if rules are broken, or if the student is no longer in **good standing**.
 - It is considered an abuse of privileges if a student arrives late to class any time after exercising senior privileges.
 - It is considered an abuse of privileges if a student travels with or provides transportation to a student who does not have Senior Privileges.
 - It is considered an abuse of privileges if a student does not accurately and clearly sign in/out on the sign-out sheet in the lobby.



- It is considered an abuse of privileges if a student leaves campus without parental permission at an unapproved time not listed above during the school hours of 9:00am-3:15pm.

Students must work with the Dean of Students to create a plan for reinstatement of privileges.

To receive Senior Privileges at The Sharon Academy, students must be in good academic standing and have permission from their parents/guardians, even if they are 18. These privileges can and will be revoked if they are abused or if rules are broken. Whenever arriving late, or leaving early, (leaving and coming back from lunch, etc,) students **must clearly and accurately sign in and out** at Jen's desk. Whenever signing out, seniors **MUST** indicate on the sign out sheet where they are going. This is in case of emergencies. Seniors must leave a record of their cell phone numbers (if they have one) with Jen Tewksbury, Administrative Assistant.

My senior student _____ (name) has permission to:

(Indicate yes or no)

_____ Leave TSA during lunch.

_____ Leave TSA during office hours.

_____ Leave TSA during a PM Block if and only if they do not have a scheduled class at TSA

_____ May drive other seniors when leaving school grounds.

_____ May ride with another senior when leaving school grounds.

Please initial to indicate understanding of Good Standing:

_____ "Meeting" in previous module's classes

_____ On track to graduate: 50 or less GRE Standards remaining

_____ Meeting all behavioral expectations

Parents must be clear with students as to whether or not they are allowed to drive or to ride with other seniors. ***No 9th, 10th, or 11th grade students may leave the school grounds with seniors between 8:15 - 3:15.***

I understand that seniors who abuse these privileges by transporting an underclassman during the school day, are consistently late to class, or are not in good standing, may lose senior privileges at the discretion of The Dean of Students or a delegate.

I understand that The Sharon Academy is not responsible for students who leave campus during the school day.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____



Disclosures

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

(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 School a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official 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, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. 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 the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to privacy of personally identifiable information 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 School Board of Trustees; a person or company with whom the School has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another official in performing their tasks.

Under FERPA, Schools may disclose a student’s “directory information” which includes information generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The Sharon Academy has designated the following information as directory information: student’s name, town of residence, dates of attendance, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, diplomas and awards received, photographs or video of the student, and the most recent school attended. Parents or eligible students, who do not want their directory information released must notify the school in writing.



A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill their 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 or is already enrolled.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the 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 20202-5901](#)

Protection of Pupil Rights Act (PPRA)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) is a federal law that affords certain rights to parents of minor students with regard to surveys that ask questions of a personal nature. Briefly, the law requires that schools obtain written consent from parents before minor students are required to participate in any U.S. Department of Education funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning the following areas:

1. Political affiliations;
2. Mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student and their family;
3. Sex behavior and attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent*; or
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program.)

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 contains a major amendment to PPRA that gives parents more rights with regard to the surveying of minor students, the collection of information from students for marketing purposes, and certain non-emergency medical examinations. In addition, an eighth category of information (*) was added to the law.

Privacy/Opt Out:

Students and parents have rights, under state and federal laws, to control the release of student information. If you do not want information about your student(s) given to military and/or postsecondary recruiters, you must send a letter to TSA to tsa@sharonacademy.net requesting we not release information. Please state specifically to whom you do not want information released. Keep in mind that once students begin to send information to colleges and other organizations, their information may be given to other organizations.



Asbestos Management Plan

The Sharon Academy is required by law to develop and maintain an Asbestos Management Plan, and to make this plan available for review in the administrative office. A plan is available in the office at the high school. No asbestos was used in any part of the construction of The Sharon Academy high school buildings at 6704 VT Route 14. The middle school building at 79 VT Route 132 has been tested, and no asbestos was detected. Any questions may be directed to The Director of Facilities, Paul Hurwitz, phurwitz@sharonacademy.net.

Emergency Protocols

The Sharon Academy has adopted a robust Crisis Prevention and Response Plan in an effort to keep our students safe. This plan is posted in every room at both the middle and high schools and is shared with area law enforcement agencies. The Protocols and Plans outline what to do in case of an emergency. Drills are held regularly at both the middle school and high school to practice these procedures.



STUDENT SAFETY

A critical ingredient in the safe school recipe is the classroom response to an incident at school. Weather events, fire, accidents, intruders and other threats to student safety are scenarios that are planned and trained for by students, teachers, staff and administration.

SRP

Our school is expanding the safety program to include the Standard Response Protocol - Extended (SRPx). The SRPx is based on these five actions: Lockout, Lockdown, Evacuate, Shelter and Hold. In the event of an emergency, the action and appropriate direction will be called on the PA.

LOCKOUT - "Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors"

LOCKDOWN - "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight"

EVACUATE - "To the Announced Location"

SHELTER - "For a Hazard Using a Safety Strategy"

TRAINING

Please take a moment to review these actions. Students and staff will be trained and the school will drill these actions over the course of the school year.

More information can be found at <http://iloveugays.org>

LOCKOUT

GET INSIDE. LOCK OUTSIDE DOORS

Lockout is called when there is a threat or hazard outside of the school building.

STUDENTS:

- Return to inside of building
- Do business as usual

TEACHERS

- Recover students and staff from outside building
- Increased situational awareness
- Do business as usual
- Take roll, account for students



LOCKDOWN

LOCKS, LIGHTS, OUT OF SIGHT

Lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard inside the school building.

STUDENTS:

- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence

TEACHERS:

- Lock classroom door
- Lights out
- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence
- Wait for First Responders to open door
- Take roll, account for students



EVACUATE

TO A LOCATION

Evacuate is called to move students and staff from one location to another.

STUDENTS:

- Bring your phone
- Leave your stuff behind
- Form a single file line
- Show your hands
- Be prepared for alternatives during response.

TEACHERS:

- Grab roll sheet if possible
- Lead students to Evacuation Location
- Take roll, account for students



SHELTER

FOR A HAZARD USING SAFETY STRATEGY

Shelter is called when the need for personal protection is necessary.

SAMPLE HAZARDS:

- Tornado
- Hazmat

SAMPLE SAFETY STRATEGIES:

- Evacuate to shelter area
- Seal the room

STUDENTS:

- Appropriate hazards and safety strategies

TEACHERS:

- Appropriate hazards and safety strategies
- Take roll, account for students



HOLD

IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Hold is called when the hallways need to be kept clear, even during class changes.

STUDENTS:

- Remain in your classroom
- Do business as usual.

TEACHERS:

- Recover students and staff from hallways
- Close and lock classroom door
- Take roll, account for students





As part of our ongoing efforts to keep our learning community safe, this year The Sharon Academy has adopted a new protocol for responding to an active threat in our schools. At the recommendation of the Vermont School Safety Center, Vermont’s Agency of Education and Department of Public Safety and the U.S Department of Homeland Security, we have **transitioned to what is known as an “options based” response protocol** for addressing the unlikely event of an active threat in our schools. An options-based protocol empowers people to choose a response to an active threat situation based on the information they have in the moment, known as situational awareness. It teaches individuals to use the information at their disposal to do what they think is best to keep themselves and others safe.

The infographic is a vertical poster with a dark grey background at the top. It features three circular icons: a green circle with a white running figure, a blue circle with a white car under a table, and an orange circle with a white figure fighting another. Below these icons are three chevron-shaped boxes labeled 'RUN' (green), 'HIDE' (blue), and 'FIGHT' (orange). Underneath is a dark grey bar with the text 'BE PREPARED | ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE'. The main body of the infographic consists of three horizontal bands: a green band for 'RUN', a blue band for 'HIDE', and an orange band for 'FIGHT'. Each band contains a circular icon, the word 'RUN', 'HIDE', or 'FIGHT' in bold, and a list of instructions. The 'FIGHT' section includes a small white box with the text 'FIGHT ONLY AS A LAST RESORT'.

BE PREPARED | ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE

RUN

If a safe path is available, RUN

- Do not hesitate, get out
- Leave your belongings
- Do not attempt to move injured people

HIDE

If you cannot get out safely, HIDE

- Be quiet and silence your phone
- Block entrances and lock doors
- Stay out of the shooter's view

FIGHT

If your life is in danger, FIGHT

- Try to disable the shooter
- Use improvised weapons
- Fight like your life depends on it

FIGHT ONLY AS A LAST RESORT



TSA Employee Code of Ethical Conduct (CEC)

Policy for Employees and Volunteers in Relation to Students

This Code of Conduct is intended to provide guidance to all members of The Sharon Academy (TSA) community regarding appropriate interactions between adults and students. Although it is not intended to be an exhaustive list of expectations and prohibited behavior, it should serve as a reminder that the actions of faculty, staff, coaches, volunteers, and any adult that interacts with students, should at all times be above reproach, governed by common sense, and taken with the best interests of the students and the school in mind.

All faculty, staff, coaches, and known volunteers must attend the annual fall mandatory reporter training and complete the online Vermont State Department of Children and Families Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse/Neglect.

<http://dcf.vermont.gov/protection/reporting/mandated>. Once completed, the certificate of completion must be given to the Director of Human Resources.

General Principles

As employees, coaches, and volunteers of the TSA community, we recognize that we have special responsibilities and duties of care for our students. We understand and accept fully the trust placed in us by our students and their families. We recognize that learning occurs best in a school when trust and a sense of security are systemic within our community.

In situations that raise concerns about the wellbeing or safety of any member of our community, it is our responsibility to utilize the available resources of TSA to address the situation urgently. In light of the above:

- We promote a culture of dignity and respect within our community;
- We pledge to nurture the wellbeing and safety of our students at all times;
- We acknowledge that the inherent imbalance of power in our relationships with students requires us to maintain healthy boundaries in our interactions with them. In the behavioral domain, we prohibit all forms of sexual or romantic contact with students;
- In the verbal domain, we observe appropriate boundaries in spoken and written communication, including electronic communication and social networking platforms.

Standard of Behavior

Employees, coaches, and volunteers of TSA are required to at all times act in accordance with the General Principles stated above. It is not possible to create an exhaustive list of standards for behavior to cover every potential situation involving conduct with students.



The following are behavioral standards to help guide employees when engaging with students. When interacting with students, whether in person or otherwise, employees, coaches and volunteers must at all times:

- Be alert to the **imbalance of power** that exists in relationships between adults and students and never abuse it. This imbalance can continue after the student has graduated from The Sharon Academy.
- Establish and maintain healthy boundaries with students and **refrain from any conduct that places the interests of the adult** ahead of the student's interests.
- Conduct oneself as **role models** for students. Operate in a manner consistent with the mission of the school and which reflects well on the school.
- Set appropriate **limits** with students.
- Encourage student growth, learning and autonomy.
- **Refer students in need** of counseling, health services, or other professional attention to the appropriate resource.
- In regard to staff's social media presence, **attention should be paid to one's online privacy settings** in order to ensure that healthy and safe boundaries are maintained between staff and students. Content that puts these boundaries in jeopardy requires the strictest privacy settings.
- In addition to Mandatory Reporting responsibilities, staff/faculty, coaches, and volunteers must **report any concerns for student or school safety that they are alerted to**. Reports can be made to: Student Support Team, Head of School or Vermont State Police.
- **All meetings/activities involving minors should be held in settings that are observable and interruptible**. An "observable" location is a public place, a common area, or an open-doored room in which a passerby would have a clear view of the activity inside. "Interruptible" means that an observer must be able to spontaneously enter the meeting area. An exception to this would be an emergency situation.

The following conduct by volunteers, employees, coaches, and volunteers is prohibited:

- Any sexual, romantic, or dating relationship with students; any activity with students that could be considered sexual or romantic in nature; or any sexual, romantic or unduly familiar behavior or communications (including inappropriate personal stories and history) with students whether in person or indirectly through the use of email, telephone, social networking, or other media.
- Engaging in, participating in, or condoning in any way the use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs by students.



- Sharing or disclosing any information concerning a student, other than on a need-to-know basis, to any person not specifically authorized to receive such information. This includes, but is not limited to, information concerning educational assessments, test scores, grades, behavior, mental or physical health, and family background or finances. All Employees, volunteers and coaches will need to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement prior to beginning their work at TSA.

Updated August 2023