



# Community High School of Arts & Academics

## Student and Family Handbook

2025-2026 Academic Year

**Community High School of Arts & Academics**

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[www.communityhigh.net](http://www.communityhigh.net)

# Introduction

This is a general handbook designed for parents, students, faculty, and board members of Community High School of Arts and Academics. Its purposes are various; we intend to offer it as a quick and easy guide to the theoretical underpinnings of CHS as well as to provide the answers to many practical considerations of daily life at the school.

## Who We Are

Community High School of Arts and Academics (CHS) is a small, secular, independent high school located in the Roanoke Valley in Southwest Virginia, with a commitment to small, seminar-based classes and to providing excellent scholars and artists as faculty. We are fully accredited by the Virginia Association of Independent Schools (VAIS).

## School Administration

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Head of School

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Assistant Administrator

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Email addresses for faculty and employees of Community High can be found in the Faculty Biographies section of this Handbook.

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# Community High School Overview

## Statement of Mission and Philosophy

**Community High School** is a small, secular, independent, college preparatory high school grounded in the liberal arts, founded with a commitment to seminar-based classes, and located in Roanoke's city center.

**Our Mission** is to develop creative and independent problem solvers with diverse backgrounds and abilities who are scientifically and culturally literate, globally conscious, locally engaged citizens.

**Our Pedagogy** is founded upon academic inquiry, which emphasizes how knowledge is learned. Our students' endeavors reflect the nature of intellectual and creative work in each respective field of study. Our students are assessed comprehensively and narratively in regard to their personal growth.

**We Value** trust, humor, empathy, curiosity, respect for the free exchange of ideas, and the acceptance of failure as an inevitable and essential part of real learning.

**We Approach** the Arts as an essential form of intellectual inquiry and as a foundation of academic, emotional, and social development, regardless of a student's eventual academic field of study or career goals.

**We Partner** with area colleges, universities, cultural and civic organizations, and provide cultural programming for the community at large.

**Our Students** are respected as scholars, citizens and individuals, encouraged in their curiosity, active in their own education, and responsible for their own achievement, as defined by their particular passions, goals, and circumstances.

**Our Community** of students, faculty, families, and board share our essential commitments to compassion, citizenship, scholarship, and the intentional nurturing of place.

## History and Facilities

Community High School was founded in 2002 by a group of parents, most prominently college professors from Hollins, Washington & Lee, and Virginia Tech, looking for a more innovative and responsive high school environment for their own children, a school that would more thoroughly prepare them for a complete liberal arts education and fulfilling adulthood. Many of those involved had long associations with Community School, which has provided a child-center alternative at the elementary level since 1971, and for middle school students since the late 1980s and with whom we maintain close ties, though we have always had our own governance and financial structure.

In its first year, CHS had only a dozen students and two full-time faculty. We were originally conceived as a museum school, and located downtown specifically so that our coursework could be augmented by the facilities and by the faculty of area museums and cultural institutions. We were housed in a portion of the Jefferson Center and offered classes in buildings around downtown. As national and local funding structures for not-for-profit organizations began to change, many of the institutions with which we had originally partnered began to shrink and transform; at the same time, our own student body, and faculty, began to grow. We, therefore, had to relocate, and for several years, we were housed in a former bank near the offices of the Roanoke Times. Our lease was generous, but our facilities were frustrating; our theater productions took place at the Dumas Center, and our laboratory classes in the Higher Education Center.

Beginning in 2011, Community High moved to a beautiful and permanent home in a restored historic warehouse in downtown Roanoke. Our building, located at 302 Campbell Avenue, has allowed us to consolidate and grow in classroom facilities deliberately and specifically designed to meet our own

pedagogical needs. It boasts original wide plank flooring, exposed brick walls, and heart pine timbers, along with a flexible 150-seat theater, band rehearsal facilities, a public art gallery, painting and film-editing studios, and fully equipped science laboratories. Our location allows our students direct access to downtown, including regional institutions like Center in the Square and the Taubman Museum of Art. Our facilities have allowed us to partner with outside cultural organizations including Off the Rails Theatre, No Shame Theatre, and Music after Midnight, and to bring in outside cultural organizations, including Joe Richman of *Radio Diaries*, playwright Mike Wiley, the American Shakespeare Center, Roanoke's Art by Night, and local readings.

## Admission

Not every student who applies to Community High School is accepted. Indeed, in recent years broad interest and limited space have required the school to become quite selective. Our acceptance policy is not based solely on quantitative measures of merit or talent but on the creation of a community of learners of diverse backgrounds, abilities, and interests. We seek students whose enrollment will benefit the community and whom the school can serve in a way that other institutions cannot.

## School Governance

As is standard in private educational institutions, the Board of Trustees is the governing body of Community High School. It is responsible for the financial well-being of the school, for setting policy, and for hiring the Directors of the school in accordance with the Bylaws of Community High School. CHS is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. The Directors serve at the pleasure of the Board and are evaluated annually by the Chair. It is the board members' duty to support and stand behind their chosen Directors. The Directors in turn are charged with the task of hiring faculty and staff in accordance with the mission, policies, and financial guidelines set forth by The Board of Trustees. It is the Directors' job to manage, support, encourage, help, and discipline their faculty and staff.

Parents are considered active stakeholders in the school. Should they have concerns regarding their children's education, they should not hesitate to speak either to the appropriate teacher or to either of the Directors. This handbook contains contact information for faculty and staff, and it can also be found on the Community High School website. Should the issue involve policy or governance, the concern should be brought to an appropriate member of the Board. Their email addresses are available by calling the school.

## The Current Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees meets four times each school year. The meetings are open to the CHS Community at large. However, non-members may only address the board if they have made a previous request to the Chair to be placed on the agenda. Contact the Board by emailing John McBroom, Board Chair, at [boardchair@communityhigh.net](mailto:boardchair@communityhigh.net).

### The Executive Committee

John McBroom - Chair of the Board  
Linda Thornton - Treasurer  
Kenneth Sosnowski - Secretary  
Cassie Hunt - Member-at-Large  
Josh Chapman - Academic Director  
Meg Giuliano Snow - Administrative Director

### At-Large Members

Leanne Cline - Faculty Representative  
Katrina Hill - Community School Director  
Remington Beard (CHS '08)  
Bonnie Bowers  
Katie Brown  
Peter Coogan  
John Eure  
Rachael McBroom (CHS '07)  
Pamela Winchell  
Jonathan Pait  
Jonathan Richardson  
Dan Summerlin

## Faculty Biographies

### Administration

**Josh Chapman:** Academic Director (jchapman@communityhigh.net)

Josh Chapman has been with Community High School since its inception. He attended Yale University, where he earned his B.A. in Anthropology in 1996; he also holds graduate degrees in Social Science and Creative Writing, both from Hollins University. Josh oversees faculty, curriculum, and the college admissions process, and teaches courses across the Humanities. Josh also has occasionally taught graduate courses in Literature and Film at Hollins University and has served as Curator for Community Engagement at the Taubman Museum. His fiction has appeared in a number of magazines in the United States and Canada and has been anthologized in *New Stories from the South*.

**Erin Coogan:** Registrar (ecoogan@communityhigh.net)

Erin graduated from Community High School in 2009 and earned a B.A. in History from Goucher College in 2013. In the years since, in addition to working with children from pre-K to grade 12, Erin served as the coordinator for the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation. In 2016, she became registrar at Community High School, where her duties include record maintenance, scheduling, and communicating with colleges and universities.

**Kasper Diller:** Counselor (kdiller@communityhigh.net)

Kasper Diller is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin, holding a Bachelor of Arts in Government and History and the University of Southern California's Master of Education in School Counseling Program, which has a significant emphasis on diversity and equity in education. Kasper has had an interest in education and politics since they were in high school and is passionate about helping students thrive on their individual paths. They have worked as a substitute teacher, a tutor, a peer mentor, an outdoor educator, and a horseback riding instructor in addition to their experience as a K-12 school counselor. When not at work, Kasper spends their time reading, writing, riding their horse, and fawning over said horse, as well as their cats and turtle.

**Meg Giuliano Snow:** Administrative Director and Admissions (msnow@communityhigh.net)

Meg Snow is responsible for the administration of staff, finances, and the physical plant at Community High School, and she also teaches environmental science and oversees the admissions process. Meg graduated from Williams College in 2005 with a B.A. in Biology and holds a master's degree in environmental management from Duke University. Previously, Meg has taught at environmental education nonprofits in New England and worked as an energy efficiency and sustainability consultant with the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy in Washington, D.C. Outside of the classroom, she enjoys playing and singing music, spending time outdoors, and growing and cooking delicious food.

**Linda Thornton:** Director Emerita

Linda Thornton is a founding member and the first director of Community High School. She graduated from Hollins in 1972 with a B.A. in English and then attended Brown University, graduating with an MAT in 1973. When she returned to Roanoke she began working at Community School under her earlier mentor from St. Catherine's School, Susanna Turner. For the next twenty-five years, she worked with and educated her children at Community School serving at various times as teacher, administrator, Director and Chairwoman. Having helped the school create its Middle School Program, it fell naturally to her when parents and community members insisted on the creation of a philosophically similar high school. After nine years as Director, she now chairs the Board of Trustees of Community High School. When not on the CHS campus, she is actively involved in her family farm, and is Chief Financial Officer of H.L. Lawson & Son Inc. She has served on various community boards including the Taubman Museum and The Historical Society of Southwestern Virginia.

### Full-Time and Adjunct Faculty

**Becca Allred:** Science and Math (ballred@communityhigh.net)

Becca Allred graduated from Community High School in 2006. She earned a B.S. in Chemistry from the College of William and Mary in 2010 where she competed at the varsity level in Track and Field. Becca continued teaching, tutoring, and researching by studying physical chemistry at Yale University, graduating with a master's degree in 2012. The following years took her to San Antonio before leading her back home to Botetourt, where she lives inside the trail circuit formed by Virginia's Triple Crown and enjoys taking in the quiet trails by hiking on weekdays rather than weekends.

**Leanne Cline:** Spanish (leanne@communityhigh.net)

Leanne Cline started her teaching adventures after graduating from James Madison University with degrees in Spanish and English. She went on to get her master's degree in Spanish Language and Cultures from La Universidad de Salamanca in Spain. Over the years, she has taught Spanish Acquisition, Spanish Language Arts, English Language Arts, and English Acquisition in a multitude of settings, from middle school to college. After 20 years in the teaching field, Leanne's passion is providing opportunities for people to open their cultural perspectives and appreciate the world in which we live. Having lived and studied in Spain, Argentina, and Ecuador, she brings a unique perspective to her classes, one of cultural awareness and linguistic diversity. Leanne enjoys storytelling, travel, bicycles, great food, being creative, and doodling. Most doodles include some magical van/home conversion. When not teaching Spanish, Leanne is adventuring with her kids and dog or dreaming up the next adventure.

**Brian Counihan:** Arts and Humanities (brian@communityhigh.net)

Brian Counihan is a founding faculty member of Community High, where he teaches courses in the humanities, art history, curatorial studies, and studio art. Brian grew up in the Republic of Ireland and received a degree in painting and printmaking from Crawford School of Art, in Cork City. He also has a B.A. in Art History *summa cum laude* from Northwestern University and was awarded *The Elizabeth Dipple Award* for his M.A.L.S. thesis that explored the work of James Joyce and contemporary culture. Prior to joining Community High School, Brian taught studio art at Randolph Macon Women's College and Lynchburg College. Additionally, Brian is very involved in the regional art community, having served on the Art Museum of Western Virginia/Taubman Museum's education committee for six years and served as the Taubman Museum's Curator for Community Engagement. He is the co-director of Liminal Station, an alternative artspace in downtown Roanoke, and an active member of a variety of cultural organizations in the region.

**Seph Custer:** Arts (seph@communityhigh.net)

Seph Custer has been performing live music for 20 years! In that time, he's played with bands in the styles of rock, bluegrass, funk, punk, R&B, traditional blues, hip-hop, and everything in between. Seph has released 2 solo albums and is working on his third. He has also produced or played multiple instruments on many other's albums. Since beginning teaching music at age 15, Seph has expanded his offerings to include electric and acoustic guitar, electric bass and upright bass, violin and fiddle, banjo, mandolin, ukulele, slide guitar, piano, and virtually almost every contemporary stringed instrument. Seph also serves as the coordinator of the Appalachian Ensemble at Hollins University, in addition to teaching guitar, banjo, on that campus. He has also been offering private lessons at Fret Mill in Downtown Roanoke since 2016.

**Les Epstein:** Arts and Humanities (les@communityhigh.net)

Les Epstein teaches courses in Theatre and the Humanities. He received undergraduate degrees in Theater Performance and English from Otterbein College, an MA in English from Miami (Ohio) University and continued with studies in Literature at New York University and in Theatre Education at The Ohio State University. He completed his teacher training at Mary Baldwin College. Les spent 20 years in theater and opera management, including ten seasons as education director and production coordinator for Opera Columbus (Ohio) and seven as the executive director for the Children's Theatre of Winston-Salem (N.C.). He is also a seasoned stage director, librettist, and playwright, and in those capacities has worked for companies across the United States.

**Jonathan Falls:** Humanities and Administration (jfalls@communityhigh.net)

Jonathan Falls joined Community High School in 2023 as an Instructor of Humanities and Associate Administrator. In addition to his teaching, he assists with admissions, community outreach, and school events. Jonathan attended Virginia Tech, where he graduated *summa cum laude* with B.A.s in International Relations and German. His intellectual interests include 19th- and 20th-century German philosophy and literature and contemporary political theory. He has spent three summers working at the Virginia Governor's World Language Academies, and has traveled extensively in Germany and Austria. Outside of the classroom, Jonathan plays trumpet and flügelhorn in the Roanoke-based band Cinémathèque. He also enjoys hiking, biking, and paddle boarding in the mountains of Southwest Virginia.

**Warren C. Fry:** Arts and Humanities (warren@communityhigh.net)

Warren C. Fry moved to Roanoke in 2010 after working with Community High School faculty and area cultural workers during the 2009 and 2010 Marginal Arts Festivals. He is a graduate of the Columbus

College of Art and Design and earned an M.F.A. in Event and Performance from Rutgers University in 2007. Prior to joining Community High, Warren taught art history at Bergen Community College and William Fleming High School. His creative practice encompasses writing, performance, game design, and comedy. He participates in a number of experimental, creative networks.

**Jessica Joy:** Math (jess@communityhigh.net)

Jess Joy received a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from The University of Southern California and a Master's Degree in Education with a focus on secondary mathematics from The University of California Los Angeles. She taught in The Los Angeles Unified School District before moving to Roanoke and finding Community High School. She now teaches math at Community High School and brings an interest in project based learning and exploring social, political, and economic issues through mathematics.

**Tiffany Lee:** Latin and Physical Education (tlee@communityhigh.net)

Tiffany received her BA in Classical Languages from the University of Missouri and her MA in Classics from the University of Kansas. She also holds a J.D. from Washington and Lee University School of Law. Tiffany has taught all ages from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through graduate school in a variety of fields. In addition to teaching Latin at CHS, Tiffany teaches middle school Latin at Community School and healthcare law, disability law, and bioethics at WLU Law. In her spare time, Tiffany likes to garden, spend time with her pets (dogs, cats, chickens, and horses), and play the harp and drums.

**Olchar E. Lindsann:** Arts and Humanities (olchar@communityhigh.net)

Olchar E. Lindsann teaches Humanities and Creative Writing courses, oversees the Writing Lab, and oversees the Library. He took his B.F.A. in Visual Art from Columbus College of Art and Design, and his MA in Performance Writing at Dartington College of the Arts, an experimental, multidisciplinary programme in the UK where he concentrated on critical theory, and experimental performance, arts organizing, and literary history. He has published many books of experimental poetry, fiction, literary and social theory, and the history of intellectual subcultures, and has lectured and performed extensively in the United States and England. He administers a small press specializing in avant-garde writing, theory, and translation, and has organized and co-organized numerous cultural events and symposia, including many years on the steering committee of the Roanoke Marginal Arts Festival.

**Martha O'Brien:** Mathematics (mobrien@communityhigh.net)

Martha earned her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from the University of North Florida. She went on to teach in middle and high mathematics in Orlando, Jacksonville, and Denver Public Schools. Her focus has been working with Gifted and neurodiverse students and creating a classroom environment that fosters challenge seeking and creative thinking. Martha is passionate about working with students outside of the context of the classroom through clubs, leadership, and travel opportunities, as well as creating a fun and inclusive school culture for every student.

**Jen Sosnowski:** Science (jen@communityhigh.net)

Jen Sosnowski received Bachelor's degrees in both Biology and Music from Salem College, and teaches courses in Science at Community High. She graduated from the University of Virginia with a Master's in Biology and attended Virginia Tech for her education coursework, which leaves her feeling rather conflicted during football season. Jen's background in Molecular Biology research and interest in interdisciplinary curriculum design gives her a wide range of experiences to draw upon when creating her classes.

## **Faculty Expectations Regarding Professional Decorum**

Teachers are mentors and role models. Students tend to form close bonds with CHS teachers and count on them to be responsible and participating members of the CHS community and of the world. The school is modeled on respect and trust. Therefore, it is incumbent on our faculty and staff to embrace and uphold those standards of honesty, integrity, tolerance, and open-mindedness, which are fundamental to the mission of the school and to the wellbeing of our community. As a community, we strive to be intentional, sensitive, respectful, courteous, and attentive to the needs of others. Individual differences deserve respect and no form of harassment will be tolerated. Teachers and administrators must be ever cognizant of their relationships with colleagues and with students so that no private boundaries are breached and power relationships are sensitively recognized. Any misconduct will be handled by the Directors on an individual basis. The Directors will be held accountable by the Board of Trustees with due respect and sensitivity for everyone involved.

## **The Role of Parents**

At CHS, we work hard to develop independence and responsibility in our students. We expect them to keep track of their assignments and manage their own work schedules. Faculty and staff will initiate contact if we have concerns about a student's health or safety, but unlike at some schools, we do not reach out to parents with the results of individual assignments. We believe it's important that students learn to negotiate relationships with faculty and school prior to attending college, not once they get there.

Because of this philosophy and because of the rigor of the work, students at CHS may occasionally encounter setbacks they might not meet elsewhere. This can be difficult for students and parents who are used to straight "A's"; but we strongly believe that unflagging success is not a good teacher, and that failure often can be.

As just mentioned, the workload can occasionally be daunting at CHS. Expectations for writing and reading, especially at the upperclassman level, are much higher than at many of our peer institutions. This allows students to learn how to plan and prioritize; those who take these challenges seriously routinely report being far better prepared than their peers for college work.

Independent schools have the fortune and obligation to teach differently, and to teach different material as well. At CHS, courses are designed by faculty. Faculty members also choose the texts. Sometimes those texts, even the canonical ones, contain difficult material that students may be encountering for the first time. We believe that school should be an appropriate and nurturing place to grapple with such content.

Classroom discussion is an essential part of our pedagogical model. Consistent attendance is therefore required. Parents are strongly encouraged to assist us in emphasizing timeliness. Please see the *Attendance Policy* section.

Families are responsible for daily transportation to and from CHS; this includes classes off campus at area colleges.

Normally, students in good standing may leave campus to eat downtown at lunchtime, though many students prefer to bring their lunches from home. Parents are expected to provide meals and/or lunch money. Students share access to a microwave and a refrigerator.

Although CHS provides a great deal of the material required for education, including most of the books used, families are occasionally asked to purchase books and supplies. This helps us to keep instruction costs down, and tuition accessible. If this is unduly burdensome, please inform the teacher in question in a timely fashion. Otherwise, students are expected to come to school with appropriate notebooks, paper and writing materials. Personal computers are useful—teachers require that papers be typed and printed—but not required, as a computer lab is provided for student use.

As noted earlier, the CHS school day runs from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm each day. Activities and arts classes, which might be considered extracurricular elsewhere, are curricular here, and have the same expectations and weight as others.

Parents are encouraged to bring concerns directly to relevant faculty, all of whom should easily be reached by email. Occasionally, a parent may feel it necessary to communicate directly with administration instead. As with faculty, email is the preferred and most efficient mode of communication.

Although formal conferences are consistently scheduled only at semester's end, parents or faculty may request conferences at other times during the year. Conferences can be requested by emailing the Registrar.

## **Family Participation Campaign**

Unfortunately, the cost of a student's education in a private school is rarely covered by tuition. At CHS, current tuition covers less than a third of the cost of each child's education. Happily, the school is fortunate to have loyal and very generous donors who guarantee its financial stability. Those donors make it possible for the school to be effectively needs-blind and thereby award financial assistance as needed to ensure a diverse and well-balanced student population.

Nevertheless, CHS needs parents' financial help and personal commitment. Therefore, the board created the Family Participation Campaign. Each fall, every family is encouraged to give a gift to this campaign. It is important to note that this campaign is focused on participation, and does not include monetary goals. Instead, families are asked to give financially as they are able. This may mean that some families choose to give their time or talents to the school as an in-kind gift rather than giving money. All families receive a letter regarding the Family Participation Campaign, which may be followed up by a personal call. Traditionally, CHS has enjoyed high levels of participation in this campaign, and the goal is to get as close to 100% participation as possible. Donations can be made on the CHS website, at [www.communityhigh.net](http://www.communityhigh.net), or by check (made out to Community High School).

### **Tuition, Fees, and Financial Aid**

Tuition at Community High School is \$6,500 annually, with generous need-based financial aid available. Current tuition amounts to less than a third of the cost of educating each student, demonstrating our commitment to providing an affordable private education. Over half of our current students receive some form of financial aid, and CHS encourages all families who may need assistance to apply. We offer several forms of aid, including the following: free tuition, for families who make less than \$60,000 annually on their latest tax return; financial aid, for other families needing assistance; and a reduced tuition rate (\$3,250 annually) for children of all full-time educators, pre-K through college level. All families must sign a financial contract indicating their choice of a payment plan or need for financial aid. The Administrative Director will provide a letter outlining the financial aid award for the upcoming year in the spring of the prior school year for any students receiving aid. Families will receive an invoice in advance of each payment due, and are required to pay all tuition amounts according to the tuition contract. Community High School will occasionally charge fees for certain types of programming, such as YMCA fees for PE, and will notify parents of all fees appropriately on their invoices.

# Annual Disclosures

## Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management

The Behavioral Threat Assessment Management Team is responsible for monitoring and addressing threats to the school, the faculty, and the students, both internally and externally. This includes threats of violence, self-harm and suicide, hostile language, dangerous situations, and any other related concerns. Threat assessment and management teams are effective, proactive, and protective measures that are designed to prevent - not predict - potential acts of targeted violence. Community High School follows the VCPE recommendations for this process.

Reports of potential threats can be made anonymously [here](#), by email [tat@communityhigh.net](mailto:tat@communityhigh.net), or in person to one of our four Behavioral Threat Assessment Team members listed below:

### Community High School's Behavioral Threat Assessment Team consists of the following:

Meg Snow, Administrative Director  
Erin Coogan, Registrar  
Kasper Diller, Counselor  
Les Epstein, Faculty

## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Because CHS is a private school that does not accept federal funding, we are exempt from the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). However, we choose to follow FERPA guidelines as best practices for protecting our students' privacy and records. Questions about FERPA or requests for records should always be directed to the Registrar.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records and applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights are also given to the student when they reach the age of 18 or attend a school beyond the high school level. These students are known as "eligible students."

"Education records" are defined as records that are directly related to a student and are maintained by the school or party acting on behalf of the school. These records include but are not limited to: grades, transcripts, evaluations, class lists, student course schedules, health records (at the K-12 level), student financial information (at the postsecondary level), directory information, and student discipline files.

FERPA outlines who may have access to education records without parental permission. These are "school officials," including teachers, who are decided upon by the school and are determined to have a legitimate educational interest in the student's education records. At CHS, this designation covers our administrative staff, advisors, college counselors, and all current full-time and part-time faculty.

### Parent Rights Under FERPA

1. Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of the records unless, for reasons such as distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records.
2. Parents have the right to request that a school correct records, which they believe are inaccurate or misleading. All requests for record corrections must be made to the Registrar in writing.
3. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties under the following conditions (34 CFR 99:31).
  - a. School officials with legitimate educational interest

- b. Other schools to which a student is transferring
  - c. Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
  - d. Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
  - e. Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
  - f. Accrediting organizations
  - g. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
  - h. Authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law
4. Schools may disclose, without consent, “directory information” such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors, and awards, and dates of school attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them.
5. Schools must notify parents annually about their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA handbook or student handbook, or newspaper/newsletter article) is left to the discretion of each school. This entry serves as our annual notification of FERPA rights.

If a parent believes that the school has violated FERPA by improperly disclosing personally identifiable information from their child’s education records, the parent may complete a FERPA complaint form that should include the following specific information: the date of the alleged improper disclosure occurred or the date the parent learned of the disclosure; the name of the school official who made the disclosure, if that is known; the third party to whom the education records were disclosed; and the specific nature of the information disclosed.

## **Mandated Reporting**

Faculty and staff are considered mandated reporters under the Department of Social Services regulations. This means that any allegations or evidence of abuse will be immediately reported to Child Protective Services. Drug use and paraphernalia on school property must also be reported. For more info, see <https://www.dss.virginia.gov/abuse/mr.cgi>.

## **Non-Discrimination Statement**

Community High School seeks to create and maintain an environment that is safe and welcoming to all of its students, faculty, and community members. We, therefore, prohibit discrimination against and harassment of any community member because of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law.

## **Publicity/Photo Permission**

Consent on the publicity release form allows CHS to use pictures taken by the school that include the student in our social media posts (X, Facebook, Instagram), on our website, in newsletters, and in marketing materials. We do not identify students by name in conjunction with their picture, except in special cases (i.e. congratulations or recognition of accomplishments). Minors will be listed only by their first name and last initial unless permission is otherwise given by a parent.

# Academics

## Curriculum

Community High was founded by university faculty trained in the liberal arts tradition; our curriculum reflects those origins and the mission they forged. At CHS, we hire teachers whom we presume to be wise, humble, and curious, and trust them to develop and pilot their courses as professors in liberal arts colleges do. And just as most liberal arts colleges allow students to exceed minimal requirements in areas where they have special interest or talent, so do we strive to allow students to take more classes than would be typical in math, science, art, language, or the humanities.

We offer our students a college-preparatory **Humanities** curriculum in a format different from that of other schools in our region. Our courses are generally offered by semester and conducted in small, multi-age seminars. The dominant model is that of college. Instead of English 9, 10, 11, and 12, for example, this year a student may take a class on Colonial America, the Spanish-Speaking Caribbean, Japanese Religions, and so on. We require all students to fulfill a U.S. History requirement by taking three courses that focus on Early America (USH-A), the Civil War Era (USH-B), and the 20th Century to the present (USH-C). All our Humanities classes contain both literary and social science content so that students are required to approach an individual course's content focus from a variety of curricular perspectives. Critical and creative writing, independent research, seminar discussion, and close reading are all emphasized.

Students select courses investigating the literature, art, political, and social history of several cultural regions (among them, specifically, the United States, Latin America, the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa, Arabia, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Eastern Asia, Southern Asia) and eras (which divide by region). No class could reasonably contain all modes of inquiry—archaeology is more applicable in some courses, political science in others, for example—but over the course of their time at the school, students will be exposed to the research methodologies of a wide variety of social sciences. Similarly, students will be exposed to a wide variety of literary forms, not presented abstractly, but in their appropriate historical, formal, and cultural contexts, aspects of literature too often neglected in English classes.

Classes are small, capped at 16 and rarely exceeding 10 students; the lion's share of teachers' work is therefore concentrated in editing, coaching, and continuing scholarship.

Though content performance varies in Humanities classes, evaluation of performance and academic growth is typically clustered around progress in consistent areas. These include *academic writing, problem-solving and critical thought, test performance (including, but not limited to, memorization, extemporaneous argument, and deductive reasoning), independent research, participation and seminar discussion, formal presentation, and academic reading*. Faculty discuss expectations in each of these areas with students and among themselves with the goal of graduating students who are prepared to excel in college-level scholarship and assessment.

Our **Math** courses are yearlong and more closely align with those offered in peer institutions. We no longer offer AP courses at CHS, as we value our faculty's ability to develop responsive and independent curricula, though students in Calculus I and Calculus II may still take the corresponding AP exams for college credit through us. We also offer Statistics as an advanced course, with the recognition that for many professions and fields of study, grounding in statistical analysis is more valuable than Calculus. For students who take longer to master mathematical concepts, or whose pre-high school preparation prevented them from progressing to either Statistics or Calculus by the time of graduation, we provide necessary interim courses, such as Personal Finance. Occasionally, as appropriate, we also have offered terminal courses in practical applied mathematics in personal finance and related fields.

In addition, unlike many of our peer institutions, we offer Geometry as a beginning math course, enabling students who did not take Algebra I in middle school to take the algebra sequence (i.e. Algebra I and Algebra II) uninterrupted. Teaching Geometry as a foundation course also enables faculty to instill the importance of logic, deduction, and critical thinking early within our mathematics courses. Furthermore, when necessary, we offer Algebra II as a two-year course, entitled Algebra IIA and

Algebra IIB. Students can take these classes under faculty guidance and approval, whenever it is determined to be at the student's benefit to allow for more time on the foundational skills that the Algebra II curriculum provides.

The modes of assessment in mathematics center around testing, as one might expect, but our small class sizes allow teachers to observe students engaging in mathematical work every day. Class participation is therefore not merely a measure of quiet, respectful citizenship, but of creative quantitative analysis. Our primary goal is not the mastery of process, but the nurturing of independent abstract reasoning.

Our **Science** curriculum contains relatively conventional high school survey courses in Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Science, and Biology. Such courses are often multi-age, though Chemistry and Physics have a minimal math requirement, and can be taken in any sequence. All of our teachers have experience teaching on other campuses, including colleges, and public and independent schools, and design their classes to meet or exceed normal college preparatory expectations in content knowledge. We do, however, in consonance with our mission, take special care to focus not only on knowledge mastery but also on how science works, on how knowledge is learned. We require that all students pursue two of their three Science Courses with an additional Lab class and credit, so that they may actively engage in experimentation throughout their time at CHS. Assessment of students is therefore based on thorough and engaged participation in the laboratory process, as well as in testing, academic writing, research, and formal presentation.

In addition to the courses described above, we are also able to offer special topic classes on subjects as diverse as Paleoanthropology and Astrobiology. Such courses are offered in three or four-year rotation, and allow students to explore subjects they wouldn't otherwise be exposed to until college or university.

At Community High, courses in the **Arts** are considered "core" classes and are required and weighted in the same way as those in languages, humanities, math, and sciences. Evaluation is based not on "talent," a slippery concept in any case, but on progress in creative thinking, in risk-taking, in sustained work ethic, in the full execution of ideas, in discipline and precision in that execution, in collaboration and openness to critique, and in the acquisition of skills relevant to the course.

At CHS, we currently teach two **languages** other than English -- Latin and Spanish. In past years, we have also offered French and German; multiple language offerings are dependent year-to-year on student interest. With the exception of Latin, all courses are taught with a greater emphasis on oral and aural fluency than is sometimes typical of high school language instruction. This is the benefit of exceptionally small enrollment since classes in this division typically range from four to eight. Students are expected to attain vocabulary and grammar skills with the goal of entering college language instruction at a high enough level that fluency at college graduation in an additional language is possible regardless of a student's major. Students who wish to pursue additional languages, from Korean to Norwegian, are allowed to do so through individual instruction, online instruction, or college enrollment (see *Off-Campus Classes* for instructions and requirements).

**Physical Education** exposes students to a variety of fitness programs and sports, with a goal of creating lifelong fitness. We have partnered with Roanoke's nearby YMCA so students may augment outdoor sports activities—soccer, hiking, etc.—with programs of personal fitness, yoga, and gym literacy. Students who already participate in travel sports or ballet as part of their busy schedules have typically been exempted, though some continue to participate.

Each year, qualified students supplement CHS classes with **college courses** at Hollins University, Roanoke College, and Virginia Western Community College. This option is limited to upperclassmen who have exceeded expectations earlier in their high school careers and have been at CHS at least one full semester. Courses can be taken for college credit or high school credit. See *Off-Campus Classes* for more information about the cost and processes.

Students with specialized or esoteric interests are also encouraged to pursue internship opportunities at some of the many downtown institutions, ranging from the library's Virginia Room archive of historic documents to the Roanoke Children's Theatre. Such Internships may be pursued for credit, and are evaluated by a sponsoring faculty member to whom the student reports and documents their work. Students who wish to do an internship must meet with the faculty representative in charge of internships to start the process (see *Internships*).

## Full Course Load

All freshmen, sophomores, and juniors are expected to take a full course load each semester. Seniors who have completed their graduation requirements may take a less-than-full course load, but should be aware that it may negatively impact their college prospects.

Students who do stop taking a subject after completing the graduation requirement are expected to fill that time in their schedule with something else.

### Regular Full Course Load

1. Two Humanities per semester
2. Foreign Language
3. Mathematics
4. Science (lab or non-lab)
5. Fine Arts or PE

## Internships

A student wishing to pursue an academic-credit-bearing internship must be in good standing with the school and at least a sophomore or older. Students must have a faculty sponsor and fully complete and document each aspect of the program to receive Credit. Students should see the faculty representative in charge of internships for detailed requirements and deadlines regarding internship credits.

## Mature Content in Classes

At Community High School, we believe that the best way to handle the difficulties of the adult world is to approach them together in a frank, open, and nurturing classroom environment. Some classes will therefore necessarily expose students to mature content - content that may be avoided at other high schools. We expect students to handle disagreements about the meanings of such content that arise from personal opinion, life experience, faith, and family culture with an appropriate degree of respect and empathy.

## Off-Campus Classes

### College/University Classes

Community High School is willing to offer individual enrollment for upperclassmen of appropriate academic ability and maturity - and in good academic standing in all classes - at a number of area colleges and universities. All courses must be approved by the Registrar and the Academic Director prior to enrollment. CHS is not responsible for the cost of books, materials, parking, or travel to and from off-campus classes. The tuition costs are broken down below.

**Hollins University and Roanoke College** -- CHS will pay 50% of the tuition for one class per semester. Families will be billed by CHS for the other 50%.

**Virginia Western Community College** -- CHS will pay the full tuition cost of one class per semester. For classes taken at other Virginia community colleges, CHS will pay up to the cost of one VWCC class per semester, and families are responsible for the remaining balance.

### Physical Education

Students may complete their required Physical Education credits off campus provided their activity meets the following criteria:

1. Minimum of 40 hours spent in practice, rehearsal, class, competition, or performance
2. The above was completed under the supervision of a professional instructor or coach who is not related to the student and will sign a verification.

Additionally, students who take dance and cannot shift their dance schedule to accommodate Arts classes at CHS will be allowed to use dance for Arts credit provided it also meets the above criteria for physical education credits. Dance cannot be used for Arts and PE credit in the same semester.

### **Virtual Virginia Classes**

CHS does not accept high school credits taken during the academic year through other high school programs, including Virtual Virginia, except when it is a class that CHS is unable to offer the student or the student would not graduate on time without it. CHS will not pay for high school credits taken outside of CHS unless we are unable to offer the class while the student is enrolled or we bear responsibility for the student not being able to graduate on time.

### **Summer Programs, Classes, and Credits**

Community High School encourages students to pursue summer opportunities available to them, including but not limited to classes, programs, study abroad, work, and travel. To that end, we accept summer credits earned through accredited secondary institutions and programs, under the following circumstances:

1. To accelerate the student's path in that discipline
2. To receive remedial credit for a failed course
3. To accelerate the student's graduation date
4. To combat learning-loss or strengthen needed development skills
5. To pursue a class or program not offered by CHS

Students who wish to receive credit for a summer class that will be offered at CHS within the same calendar year must have additional permission from the Academic Director. Any transcripts or letters of recommendation needed for admission to a summer program, class, etc. should be requested by email as soon as possible and include any deadlines. The student is responsible for providing the Registrar with a copy of their transcript or other necessary documentation to receive credit.

### **Assessment**

Community High does not use a grading scale, either numeric or letter-based, to evaluate our students. All classes are offered Credit/No Credit. More significantly, each student's acquired knowledge and skills are described *narratively* and in detail for each class, each semester. Taken together, these narrative evaluations provide students with clear goals for improvement over time, and college admissions offices the opportunity to understand the student more deeply and less subjectively.

In knowledge acquired and skills displayed, there are broad and stable standards for earning credit, roughly equivalent to a 70 or better in a 100-point graded system. Narratively, however, students are evaluated on an individual basis, according to their own objectives and strengths, and are not compared to one another for evaluation purposes. For these reasons, Community High School does not internally rank students, by GPA or other means.

### **Credit**

Community High School is an ungraded educational environment where students optimally view one another as collaborators rather than competitors. Detailed narrative evaluations are preceded with an evaluation of either "Credit" or "No Credit," based on criteria explained at the semester's start in the course's syllabus.

### **Audit**

Occasionally, students are allowed to Audit a class instead of taking it for credit. A student who audits a class does so for the purpose of self-enrichment and academic exploration. Students auditing a course must get the Course Audit Contract signed by the add/drop deadline. The contract lays out the following policy stipulations:

1. Students auditing a course are not required to take examinations or complete any out-of-classroom work, with the exception of work that is required for discussion participation. Any other coursework the auditor does should be agreed upon in writing with the instructor.
2. Since attendance and participation are the main components of auditing, students who miss more than 17% of class hours in a semester will be automatically dropped from their audit.
3. The auditor will not receive credit for the course, but will receive an evaluation marked AUDIT.

- Audit forms must be completed and turned in to the Registrar by the Add/Drop deadline. No audits will be granted after the deadline without approval from the Academic Director.

### **No Credit**

No Credit is given to students who have not completed the required work for the class, or have not adequately mastered the material, and/or have been absent for too many classroom hours for the given class (see thresholds below). If the class is part of a sequential series, students who receive No Credit may be required to repeat the class. Starting with Fall 2023, No Credits will now appear on final transcripts.

**Missed between 17-20% of classroom hours:** No Credit may be granted solely for attendance reasons at the discretion of the teacher.

**Missed over 20% of classroom hours:** No Credit is automatic for the semester; this decision may be appealed to the Academic Director in writing.

### **Incomplete**

An incomplete may be given for a class where a student has outstanding work. Incompletes are at the sole discretion of the teacher. To receive an incomplete, the student must have a written agreement with the teacher regarding what work must be turned in and the date it is due. If work is not completed by the deadline, the incomplete will become a No Credit.

## **Graduation Requirements & Diplomas**

The vast majority of CHS students receive the Standard Diploma, which was originally designed to meet the requirements of the Virginia State Advanced Studies Diploma. Beginning in 2025-2026, CHS has increased its graduation requirements to more closely align with changes to the Virginia State Advanced Studies Diploma. Current sophomores, juniors, and seniors will still continue under the old standard diploma, which meets the Virginia State Standard Diploma, with the option of meeting the increased requirements. The new diploma will go into effect with current freshmen (Class of 2029).

Students under the old Standard Diploma who wish to graduate with the increased requirements will need to work out a plan to do so with their advisor and have it signed off in writing by a parent/guardian, the Academic Director, and the Registrar. If they complete the increased requirements, it will be noted on their transcript.

For students who are unable to meet the standard diploma requirements due to a learning disability, medical condition, or upperclassmen transfer to CHS we offer additional options such as a Modified Diploma or Transfer Diploma. All incoming freshmen and sophomores are automatically assigned the Standard Diploma, and any changes must be approved in writing by the student, a parent/guardian, the advisor, the Registrar, and the Academic Director.

## Current Diploma for Seniors, Juniors, & Sophomores

Subject	Required Credits for Standard Diploma	Recommended Credits for College-Bound Students
Math*	6	8
Foreign Language	6 in 1 lang. or 8 in 2 lang.	8
Fine Arts	6	8
Humanities*	14	16
Science	8 (6 lab)	10
Elective	4	4
Physical Education	2	2
Total	46	56

\* **Algebra II Requirement** -- Within their minimum 6 math credits, all students must have either:  
 Completed Algebra II or  
 Completed both Algebra IIA and Algebra IIB

\* **US History Requirement** -- Within their minimum 14 Humanities credits, students must have either:  
 1 credit each of a class labeled USHA, USHB, and USHC (3 credits total)  
 2 credits of US or American History (transfers only)

### Modified Diploma

Students who are unable to complete all but one of the credit requirements for the standard diploma and have made an honest effort to meet the remaining requirement, as determined by the Academic Director, may be eligible for a Modified Diploma.

## New Standard Diploma

Subject	Required Credits for Standard Diploma
Math	8 (including Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or Algebra IIA & Algebra IIB)
Foreign Language	6 or 8 (3 levels in 1 lang. or 2 levels in 2 lang.)
Fine Arts	8
Humanities*	16 (including USH-A, USH-B, and USH-C)
Science	10 (6 lab)
Physical Education	2 (including 1 semester of Sex Ed/Health)
Freshman Seminar	2
Total	52

**\* US History Requirement** -- Within their minimum 16 Humanities credits, students must have either:  
1 credit each of a class labeled USH-A, USH-B, and USH-C (3 credits total)  
2 credits of US or American History (transfers only)

### Credits from Middle School

Beginning with the Class of 2029, CHS will no longer count high school credit earned in middle school towards graduation requirements. These credits will still be used to determine class placement.

### Transfer Diploma

Students who transfer into CHS as a junior or senior are eligible to receive a transfer diploma, which states that they made an honest effort towards completing our graduation requirements but were unable to because of the grade level at which they transferred in. All transfer diploma students are required to meet all the minimum requirements of the Virginia State Standard Diploma.

### Modified Diploma

The modified diploma is for students who, because of a diagnosed learning disability or health condition, cannot complete one of the requirements for the standard diploma. They must have shown honest effort towards the requirement, as determined by the Academic Director.

## **Advising**

Each student at CHS is assigned to a faculty advisor upon enrolling at CHS and will have the same advisor for their entire time as an underclassmen. In January of their junior year, students will begin the transition to their senior advisor. For that semester, the student will have both advisors -- the junior advisor will be the main advisor and handle the conference, while the senior advisor will focus on college counseling.

The role of an academic advisor is not necessarily to mentor the student, but to help them navigate CHS and stay on track towards graduation. Specific academic concerns are expected to be handled by individual classroom teachers and any disciplinary issues involving the student will be addressed by the Head of School.

End of semester conferences and new student conferences will be conducted by advisors. Advisors will meet with their advisees periodically throughout the year, both individually and as an advisee group. Additional meetings may happen when the student or family requests it or when multiple faculty have expressed academic concerns.

## **Conferences**

Students will have a conference with their advisor and at least one parent or guardian at the end of every semester. Conferences are important opportunities to teach self-evaluation, so students are encouraged to be active in discussion. At semester conferences, evaluations from the student's instructors are given to families. New students, seniors, and students who are not performing well may have more than two conferences per year. The conference is an opportunity for all parties to touch base and feel comfortable about the path of learning we are providing to the student and the work that the student is giving to us. It is an excellent venue for asking questions. There are no classes scheduled on conference days. Parents, students, or faculty may request an additional conference outside of our regularly scheduled semester ones at any time.

## **Academic Support**

A student is placed on Academic Support when they have not received Credit in two or more classes in a single semester, and/or if faculty members have determined that a continuing issue has affected the student's performance in two or more classes. The probationary period includes the following semester. Faculty will set clear goals for improvement at end-of-semester conferences prior to the onset of the probationary period. These goals will include receiving credit in all classes, as well as individualized goals to assist toward that end, and will be listed on a contract that acknowledges the terms of Academic Support. The student, his or her parent/guardian(s), and the student's academic advisor will sign the contract within the first two weeks of the semester. The goal of Academic Support is not to punish the student, but to assist them in improving their performance.

Students on Academic Support will meet every 2-3 weeks with the school counselor to assess progress on said goals. Communication between the counselor and parents or guardians should occur at least once within the semester in addition to the end-of-semester conferences. The student's participation in extracurricular activities and his or her use of free time within the school day may be restricted as appropriate.

## **Standardized Testing**

Community High School is philosophically opposed to any monolithic measure of learning and is especially opposed to overreliance on expensive and reductive modes of inappropriately quantitative analysis. We do not use standardized tests for evaluation of either student or faculty achievement. Having said that, we do occasionally use them as tools for internal guidance. With the exception of seniors, we administer the PSAT to all underclassmen every year in October. Students are, of course, encouraged to learn how such tests work and to do their best on any ACTs, SATs, and APs they take.

## **Disciplinary Policies**

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

“Artificial Intelligence” is a large and unclear term without set boundaries. As a technological category, it is also evolving rapidly. As a result, schools have been slow to respond with clear policies, and necessarily will have to revisit what policies they do set reactively and regularly in the coming years.

We at CHS are opposed unequivocally to cheating and plagiarism. It is unethical to present others’ work as your own. Since large language models like ChatGPT essentially run by devouring and synthesizing the words of others, it is difficult to imagine their ethical use in an academic context. Beware their use in research as well; AI has no means to distinguish between true facts and nonsense. For these reasons, students are asked to turn in written work as a shared Google document with the teacher as editor.

For clarity’s sake, written work for any course may NOT use such tools, unless a teacher has expressly required it. Other digital aids to actual thinking such as calculators or digital language translators may be used with and only with a teacher’s express permission. Violation of these rules will be treated as a form of plagiarism.

These rules extend to faculty. It is neither permissible nor moral for educators to use large language models in the composition of communication with parents, letters of recommendation and other official external communication, accreditation documentation, tests or evaluations. Employees are also prohibited from inputting or posting into AI any identifiable information deemed personal and/or confidential to the School, its employees, students, families, or the School community.

Again, technology changes and society changes apace. A review of others’ policies regarding large language model technology reveals a startling lack of agreement about what is ethical or appropriate. Nonetheless, we at CHS hold that writing is a form of critical thinking, and handing that duty over to a robot is not only abstractly dystopian, but actively at odds with the fundamental goals of a liberal arts education.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism robs others of their intellectual property, and deprives the plagiarist of the opportunity to learn; it is therefore not acceptable and will result in punishment ranging from a requirement to redo an assignment up to expulsion, depending on the judgment of the classroom teacher and Head of School. Plagiarism includes, minimally: the unacknowledged copying of another’s work in tests or problem sets; the uncited and unacknowledged appropriation of others’ research; the uncited and unacknowledged appropriation of others’ prose, music or visual images; and the unacknowledged use of artificial intelligence devices or tools, including but not limited to calculators, translation programs, or AI writing or image generators.

# College Counseling

## College Counseling

At Community High, we work with each student and family to ensure that the college chosen is appropriate and suited to a student's individual talents and goals, as well as to the family's financial reality. In doing so, we take our ethical obligations seriously, discussing the application process at length with students but allowing the work and writing, in conception and execution, to be their own. Toward that end, we leave campus for two days each fall for a seniors' retreat, a time when we examine the admissions process in-depth and provide a quiet and dedicated time and space to craft admissions essays. Throughout the year, we host admissions counselors from a variety of institutions, and we often and consistently visit various institutions of higher learning when on field trips. We encourage our students to broaden their searches to include institutions across the country but maintain an awareness of each family's individual financial and cultural background. Below is a list showing the range of colleges that have accepted our students in the past four years, with current enrollments in bold.

Belmont University  
Beloit College  
Bennington College  
Berea College  
Boston University  
Bryn Mawr College  
**Champlain College**  
**Christopher Newport Un.**  
Clark University  
College of the Atlantic  
**College of William & Mary**  
**College of Wooster**  
**Davidson College**  
Drew University  
Earlham College  
**Elon University**  
Emory & Henry College  
**George Mason University**  
George Washington Un.  
Goucher College  
Hawai'i Pacific University

**Hendrix College**  
Hofstra University  
**Hollins University**  
Ithaca College  
**James Madison University**  
Longwood University  
Marymount Manhattan  
Marymount University  
Occidental College  
Oglethorpe University  
Ohio University  
**Old Dominion University**  
Parsons School of Design  
Radford University  
**Randolph College**  
Randolph-Macon College  
Reed College  
**Roanoke College**  
Salem College  
Sav. College of Art & Design  
Skidmore College

St. John's College  
**St. Olaf College**  
Susquehanna University  
**Syracuse University**  
UNC Asheville  
**Université de Lyon**  
University of Cincinnati  
University of Kentucky  
**Un. of Mary Washington**  
University of Pittsburgh  
**University of Richmond**  
University of Tennessee  
**University of Virginia**  
University of Wyoming  
Ursinus College  
**VCU**  
**VCU School of the Arts**  
**Virginia Military Institute**  
**Virginia Tech**  
**Virginia Western**  
Warren Wilson College

## Letters of Recommendation

Students requesting Letters of Recommendation from faculty for college admissions, scholarships, programs, or transfer purposes should respect the schedules of the faculty and staff when making such requests and give ample time for them to be written. All requests for Letters of Recommendation must be made in writing, including the deadline, and students are required to provide any necessary forms.

## Transcripts

Transcripts for college admission should be ordered through the online service Parchment. Transcripts or record requests for any other purpose must complete a record request form from CHS or the receiving body and submit it to the Registrar. Please allow up to a week for transcripts/records to be compiled and sent.

# The School Day

## The School Day

Doors to the school will be open from **8:15am** to **5:30pm** unless otherwise stated. We cannot be responsible for students before or after these times unless previous arrangements have been made between parent or guardian and appropriate faculty or staff. The class day is from **9:00am** to **5:00pm**, Monday through Friday. Unless otherwise negotiated with the administration, students are required to be at school, including for school-related events, from 9:00am until at least the start of arts block (3:00pm MWF, 2:40pm Tu/Th) or until their arts block class has been dismissed, on all regular school days. Students taking college courses are excused from campus while traveling to and from. Seniors may be granted additional off-campus privileges at the discretion of the Administrative Director (see *Senior Privileges*).

## Arrival, Dismissal, and Leaving School During the Day

Upon arrival at CHS each morning, students are required to sign in with their time of arrival using the sign-in sheet located on the counter by the front door. At the end of the day, students must sign out with their time of departure. Students may leave school at the start of arts block (3:00 pm MWF, 2:40 pm T/Th) or at the conclusion of their arts block class. Students may NOT sign another student in or out. Students who leave CHS at any time and for any reason during the school day are required to sign out (and back in if appropriate) in the log. Students should indicate where they will be going and what time they are leaving in the spaces provided. Failure to properly sign in or out five or more times will result in the suspension of off-campus/lunch privileges for a period of time to be decided by the Administrative Director.

Non-seniors may occasionally, with permission from an authorized administrator, go downtown within the designated boundaries for coffee, etc. during a free period and not at lunch. Such trips may not exceed one a day at the maximum.

Seniors in good academic standing may be awarded additional off-campus privileges, referred to as "senior privileges" (see *Senior Privileges*). All other students must get permission from an administrator to leave school at any time other than lunch (see *Lunch*) or end-of-the-day dismissal. If an instructor is taking a class out of the school building, special permission is not required, but students are still required to sign out and back in using the log book.

## Senior Privileges

Seniors in good academic standing may be awarded additional off-campus privileges, referred to as "senior privileges." Seniors must have the permission form signed by a parent/guardian for this special status. The Administrative Director will give the form to seniors at the start of the school year. Students with senior privileges are required to be on campus for all classes, labs, meetings, and announcements, but other times are left to the student's discretion. Senior privileges will be revoked if the student does not remain in good standing in all classes or misses any scheduled classes, labs, meetings, or announcements. Students with senior privileges are not allowed to drive non-seniors off campus during the school day unless they have explicit permission to do so.

## Attendance Policy

Students are allowed a maximum of fifteen (15) absences and/or tardies per school year. CHS will contact the parents/guardians in writing after ten absences or tardies. After fifteen (15) absences or tardies, both excused and unexcused, we will require a written plan in conjunction with parents, the student, their advisor, and a school administrator to improve the student's attendance for the remainder of the year. This plan may include consequences such as, but not limited to, the removal of the student from activities and clubs or the suspension of their downtown or senior privileges until attendance improves. Failure to comply with an agreed attendance plan may result in their suspension, repeating a grade, medical withdrawal, or removal from school.

A parent/guardian is the only one able to give permission for absences. This can come by phone (540-345-1688), or by signed note or email ([ecoogan@communityhigh.net](mailto:ecoogan@communityhigh.net)) to the Registrar. If we have not heard from a parent/guardian of an absent student by 9:15am, we will initiate contact to check on the status of the student.

**Excused Absence** -- acceptable reasons for absence include illness, mandated quarantine, death in the family, court appearance, and medical appointments. CHS must be notified, including any notes or other backing documentation, before an absence can be counted as excused. Travel may also be acceptable; however, such absences should be planned well in advance, with attention paid to the number of days a student has missed otherwise. In the case of such travel, please contact the school and the students should inform their teachers at the first opportunity to minimize the impact of missing instructional time.

**Unexcused Absence** -- absences are marked unexcused when they do not fall into one of the above reasons or the school is not informed of the absence by a parent/guardian. Consecutive unexcused absences may result in the student being reported as truant.

Additionally, a student may be removed from any individual class or given No Credit in that class at the sole discretion of the teacher once they have missed more than 17% of class hours in a single semester. Students who miss over 20% of class hours in a single semester are automatically given No Credit; this decision may be appealed to the Academic Director in writing.

## Downtown Boundaries

Students leaving campus on foot during lunch or (with permission) at other times of day must stay within the following boundaries unless special permission to be somewhere else has been granted:

1. Students may only access downtown Roanoke by walking under the overpass near the Taubman. They may NOT cross the intersection of Williamson and Campbell Ave.
2. Students may not walk down Campbell Ave. in an easterly direction (away from downtown).
3. Students are allowed to be in the central commercial district of downtown Roanoke, from CHS to the Roanoke Public Library (Main Library) on Jefferson, and as far west as the Kirk YMCA<sup>1</sup>.

New students will be taken on a tour of downtown Roanoke so that they can learn the boundaries during Orientation. These boundaries do not apply to seniors who have been granted senior privileges.

## Downtown Safety

All students should have a cell phone with them when they go downtown or be in a group with someone who has a cell phone. It is also best practice for students to go downtown in groups rather than alone. New students must go downtown with at least one other student for the duration of their first semester.

### What to do if you feel unsafe downtown:

1. Go into the nearest business and find an adult
2. Call the school (540-345-1688) and a teacher will come get you
3. If it is an emergency, call 911

### Downtown meeting point

If there is an incident that prevents you from getting back to campus -- inclement weather, train breakdown or accident, school lockdown, etc. -- go to the top floor of the Market Building and call the school (540-345-1688) to be picked up.

### After-Hours (Afternoon Clubs)

After 5pm, any issues downtown should be reported immediately to the faculty member supervising the student's afternoon club or activity. That faculty member will then report to the Administrative Director. If it is an emergency, call 911.

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<sup>1</sup> Student use of the YMCA during school hours requires parent approval and this privilege may be revoked by CHS at any time if it affects the student's ability to attend class on time.

## **Inclement Weather**

Because Community High School does not have a bus service, we are sometimes open when other schools are closed due to inclement weather. We understand, however, that our students come from various locations, and that driving may be hazardous for some students, but not all. For this reason, if at any time a student or parent does not feel that driving is safe, the student should not come to school. Please call and let us know.

In the event that school is closed, families will be notified via the methods below:

1. The CHS voicemail at 7 a.m. on the morning of the event; (540) 345-1688
2. The Community High School website, [www.communityhigh.net](http://www.communityhigh.net)
3. Mass email from the school
4. WSLN –TV NBC (Channel 10) and WDBJ – TV CBS (Channel 7)
5. Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/CommunityHighSchoolRoanoke>)
6. Twitter (<https://twitter.com/CommunityHS>)
7. Mass text message (to join the text messaging service, provided through [www.remind.com](http://www.remind.com), by texting @bdc88g to the number 81010 from your cell phone)

## **Visitors**

CHS frequently hosts visitors on campus for a number of reasons, including but not limited to the following: classroom guest speakers, parents, Lycée Day presenters, alumni, student teachers from local colleges/universities, volunteers, college representatives, student guests, members of local organizations, and admissions visitors. Faculty members who are hosting guests should make sure that visitors sign in and out in the binder in the Student Lounge. Guests should not be left alone with students, as they have not gone through required background check procedures; a faculty host should always be present. If students wish to bring a guest for a short visit to campus, they should notify the Directors in advance (at least two weeks) to ask permission. If a student's guest will be visiting classes, the student also needs to obtain permission from all classroom teachers before bringing their guest. Any campus visitor who is unaccompanied by their parents/guardians under the age of 18 must turn in an Emergency Treatment Form signed by their parents/guardians to the Directors before they can visit.

# Illness, Medical, and Disabilities

## Illness Policy

If a student becomes ill while at school, faculty and staff will contact a parent or guardian to pick them up. If CHS is unable to reach a parent or guardian, the emergency contacts provided on the student's Illness and Emergency Care form will then be called.

In normal times, Community High School uses the following guidelines when determining if a student is too ill to remain or attend school. If a parent has questions about a specific illness, absence, or protocol, those questions should be directed to the Registrar.

1. Students must be fever-free (<100.4F), no vomiting and/or diarrhea within the past 24 hours, unassisted by medication, in order to return to school.
2. When a student is placed on an antibiotic for a contagious illness, they must be on the medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
3. Upon return to school, students who were absent with a respiratory virus (Covid, Flu, RSV, etc.) should mask indoors for 5 full days.

Parents and guardians agree to contact CHS immediately if any student or member of their immediate household have been exposed to a reportable communicable disease. We will, of course, respect all parties' privacy in compliance with federal law.

For students who drive themselves, bike, walk, or take the bus, an administrator will contact a parent or guardian to confirm that the student can transport themselves home sick.

## Face Masks

CHS is mask-optional. While we are mask-optional, surgical or cloth masks are allowed. We encourage all students to talk to their families and make the decision they feel is best for them. Some may choose to keep wearing their masks because of circumstances or preferences and we ask that all community members be respectful and supportive of others' choices regarding masking.

## Immunization Policy

No student shall be enrolled in Community High School without documentation of the required immunizations or a qualified exemption. Certain prescribed immunizations are required for a child to enroll or attend school in the State of Virginia, as set by the Virginia Department of Health. Parents and/or guardians are responsible for providing documentation that required immunizations are up-to-date or completed, or that the proper exemption has been obtained. Immunization records sent by a student's previous school are acceptable but may require updating if they are dated prior to 7th grade. Parents of homeschooled students must provide a record from the student's doctor, medical practice, pharmacy, or health department.

## Required Immunizations

See the [Virginia Department of Health School Requirements](#) for the up-to-date list of required immunizations and boosters ([VA Code § 32.1-46](#)).

## Covid-19 and Flu Vaccination

CHS strongly encourages -- but does not require -- all students to get yearly flu and covid vaccinations. For more information on covid, flu, and other viruses please see the Virginia Department of Health page on [Respiratory Diseases in Virginia](#).

## Conditional Enrollment

Students without complete immunizations can be enrolled conditionally for 90 days with a written plan for the completion of the required immunizations. To be eligible for conditional enrollment, the student must already have at least one dose of each immunization needed. Failure to comply with the

written plan will result in the student being excluded from school until the requirements are met; if the student passes the 15-day absence limit while excluded, they will be removed from school.

### **Exemptions**

Students may be exempt from immunization requirements if they present one of the following:

1. **Medical Exemption** -- a physician or health department submitted certification, including a specific reason, that one or more of the required immunizations is detrimental to the health of the student.
2. **Religious Exemption** -- a parent must submit the notarized Virginia Certificate of Religious Exemption.
3. **Foster care or homeless students** -- can be enrolled absent of immunization records provided that a parent or current guardian provides a written statement attesting to the best of their knowledge: the student's age, good health, and that they are free from communicable or contagious diseases.
4. **Demonstrated immunity** -- students who have demonstrated antibodies in sufficient quantities through serological testing can be exempt from immunizations for mumps, measles, rubella, or varicella.

In the event of a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak or potential outbreak, as identified by the Virginia State Health Commissioner, students exempted from Virginia State immunization requirements will not be allowed on campus until the outbreak has ended or the student receives the required immunizations and has been cleared by a medical professional to return ([VA Code § 32.1-47](#)).

### **Medical Withdrawal**

A medical withdrawal is an official status granted to a student in cases where the student is unable to do the necessary schoolwork and/or has too many absences due to illness in a given semester. Such a withdrawal will be made in coordination with the parent or guardian, the Administrative Director, and the Academic Director and in consultation with an appropriate attending physician.

### **Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications**

While on campus, emergency medications such as Epi-Pens and inhalers may be carried by students. All emergency medications carried by a student must be listed on their Illness and Emergency Care form. Other prescribed medications that need to be taken during the school day must be presented to one of our trained staff to be administered appropriately. The medication must be in the original packaging, including the written dosage instructions. Parents must also fill out a medication form.

Parents and guardians can provide authorization on the Illness and Emergency Care form for faculty and staff to administer the following over-the-counter medications to students: Benadryl, Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, antacid tablets, Pepto-Bismol, and throat/cough drops.

### **Services for Students with Disabilities**

CHS believes that, with proper support, most students who are committed to their education and are willing to collaborate with teachers and staff can have a positive educational experience at Community High School. We therefore have some members of the student body with diagnosed learning differences whom we feel will benefit from our small classes and seminar-based approach. This policy is intended to clarify what the School expects from students and what students can expect from CHS.

When a student with learning differences documented in an existing 504 plan or IEP is admitted to the school, the parents and student will meet with the School Counselor to discuss ways in which the accommodations suggested by said plan are to be implemented in alignment with CHS' specific pedagogy and culture. Those accommodations will then be outlined in a 504 plan which will be added to the student's file and communicated to the faculty who teach or advise the student. The faculty will then be expected to carry those accommodations out and to document their implementation in a monthly log maintained by the School Counselor. Faculty who need assistance implementing specific

strategies should consult with the School Counselor and/or Academic Director. It is not appropriate for teachers to share details about accommodations in evaluations or letters of recommendation. Parents are required to provide CHS with all documentation of learning differences, and keep CHS informed of changes in circumstances, including medications, that may affect their child's ability to learn.

Should a student be admitted to CHS with a formal diagnosis but no plan, the student and parents will meet with the school counselor to formulate a 504 plan.

Should a student present evidence of previously undiagnosed learning differences in the classroom, teachers are encouraged to share that evidence with the School Counselor. Should the evidence prove sufficient, the School Counselor or designee will bring the suspected learning difference to the attention of the student and their guardians. All CHS students are eligible for free evaluation by Roanoke City Schools personnel upon recommendation from school officials. Alternatively, a family may choose to seek out independent evaluation at their expense.

All students at CHS are expected to fulfill their academic requirements. Therefore, if necessary, students may be required, at their parents' expense, to receive outside support in order to succeed in our academic program. CHS is not an appropriate environment for students that present ongoing behavior problems.

# Student Conduct

## Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management

The Behavioral Threat Assessment Management Team is responsible for monitoring and addressing threats to the school, the faculty, and the students, both internally and externally. This includes threats of violence, self-harm and suicide, hostile language, dangerous situations, and any other related concerns. Threat assessment and management teams are effective proactive and protective measures that are designed to prevent - not predict - potential acts of targeted violence. Community High School follows the VCPE recommendations for this process.

Reports of potential threats can be made anonymously [here](#), by email [tat@communityhigh.net](mailto:tat@communityhigh.net), or in person to one of our four Behavioral Threat Assessment Team members listed below:

### Community High School's Behavioral Threat Assessment Team consists of the following:

Meg Snow, Administrative Director  
Erin Coogan, Registrar  
Kasper Diller, Counselor  
Les Epstein, Faculty

## Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping, and Electronic Cigarettes

Students at Community High School are expected to comply with the law, to respect their own health, and to behave in ways that reflect positively on the greater community. Students who violate these expectations with regards to the consumption of illegal or restricted substances will face strong consequences, which may include expulsion from the school. The possession or use of marijuana or tobacco products or the use of vape products or electronic cigarettes is forbidden to students on our campus or elsewhere during the school day. This rule pertains even if a student has a medical prescription for marijuana.

## Honor/Student Conduct System

Community High School is a unique learning environment. Our philosophy is based upon trust of one another. For this reason, students are asked to sign a contract at the beginning of school promising to be trustworthy. Students who break school rules, participate in illegal activities, or prove to be untrustworthy in any fashion will be counseled by the Academic Director and/or the Administrative Directory. The disciplinary actions available are as follows:

- 1) Restriction of Privileges—For minor infractions, students may be required to give up privileges for a prescribed period. Seniors may be restricted to campus, and underclassmen are disallowed leaving during lunch periods, for example.
- 2) Community Service—For moderate offenses that harmed the community at large, but which do not merit actual expulsion, students may be asked to engage in community service actions as appropriate.
- 3) Suspension—While we very rarely employ this option, as preventing students from coming to school is often more harmful to their ultimate success in the community, occasionally an offense merits temporary removal from campus and peer group.
- 4) When a student's actions directly affect the well being of another member of the community, they may be asked to formally apologize with consideration and in writing. Additionally, they may be asked to undertake a restorative act appropriate to the circumstances.
- 5) Misbehavior often stems from a lack of empathy or of self-awareness; students are therefore sometimes asked to research and reflect in writing on the nature of their offense, their motives in undertaking it, and the consequences for the community at large.
- 6) Grounds for Expulsion—Students who repeatedly violate the same rules or principles despite previous counseling and punishment will be asked to leave the school. This is also done when a

student commits a particularly egregious offense that causes significant harm to him or herself, to peers, or to the community.

## **Profanity**

Different teachers may tolerate different levels of crude language in the classroom; all members of the community, however, are expected at all times to avoid words that stigmatize or hurt others because of gender, orientation, ethnicity, faith, race, or other aspect of cultural or biological identity. See the section on *Social Conflict*.

## **Sexual Expression, Conduct, and Misconduct**

Affection and touch are healthy in appropriate contexts, but overt expressions of sexual affection are distracting and can be detrimental to the school's learning environment. Sexual Misconduct may range from aggressively crude to unwelcome physical advances to demeaning sexual language to sexual assault. Our full policy regarding sexual misconduct can be found in [Appendix A](#).

## **Social Conflict**

Physical violence is not tolerated at Community High School. When other forms of social conflict occur, it is the community's expectation that they are handled through peaceful discussion, and, if necessary, mediation. Bullying or intimidation, harassment, malicious gossip, rumor-mongering, etc. are forms of violence and harm the victim, the community, and the perpetrator in turn. We expect all members of the community to treat one another with kindness, when possible, and respect at all times.

The same rules above apply in disputes over political differences or approaches to advocacy. Schools should be places where ideas rooted in conventional discourse can be freely exchanged. This does not mean that a proposal of genocide is acceptable, but it does mean that a variety of intellectual approaches to the world should be tolerated and heard. Bullying is not advocacy. Ad hominem attacks and social disparagement are not acceptable.

## **Speech**

Community High strives to be a place that encourages the free exchange of ideas. Having said that, all members of the community are expected at all times to avoid words meant to bully, threaten, degrade or stigmatize others because of gender, orientation, ethnicity, faith, race, or other aspect of cultural or biological identity. Even when not intended harmfully, such speech is generally harmful to the community at large and not conducive to trust or learning, and it will potentially carry consequences ranging from mediation to expulsion. Any of the acts listed above should be reported to school administration as soon as possible.

## **Theft**

Respect for the physical property of others is an important part of a shared and trusting community. Stealing from any member of the community, or from the school itself, can therefore not be tolerated and will lead to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

## **Weapons**

All weapons, including but not limited to firearms, knives, body armor, brass knuckles, and pepper spray are both restricted by law and prohibited on campus. Possession of them will be handled with severe consequences, up to and including expulsion.

# Student Life

## Bathrooms

CHS has two gendered multi-user restrooms on the main hall, as well as four single-user gender neutral restrooms, two in the gym and two in the upstairs space. Bathrooms are not to be used as a social space and having more than one person in a single-user bathroom or in a single stall is a disciplinary offense. Any maintenance issues or policy violations with the bathrooms should be reported to an administrator immediately.

## Bicycles

Students are encouraged to use alternative modes of transportation to get to and from school, including bicycles. Students riding their bikes to school should bring a sturdy lock to discourage theft and lock their bicycles on the rack outside of CHS during the day. Bicycles may not be brought inside the building. Students should plan to comply with all relevant laws and school rules and ride their bicycles in a safe manner, and should wear a helmet when riding. Students may not ride their bikes during free periods or lunch unless they have specific written permission from their parent or guardian and approval from the Administrative Director.

## Clubs

Clubs at Community High School have traditionally been student initiated and organized. Students who are interested in starting a club should first bring a proposal to the faculty, as well as find a faculty member who will act as a sponsor for their club. One student usually acts as the liaison between the club sponsor and the members of the club. Clubs are formed through sign up sheets or word of mouth and typically meet once a week. Proposals should include the purpose of the club, when and how often the club will meet, and any equipment or cost associated with running the club. If the time for the club to meet is after school hours, the faculty sponsor must be willing to supervise students in the building, as well as maintain a sign in sheet for said club.

## Commencement, Graduation, and Peer Laudations

Each school year at CHS concludes with a ceremony to celebrate graduation. Unlike other schools, students are not chosen to address their class based on rank. Rather, each graduate is presented and discussed in a tradition we call *Peer Laudations* that began with our first commencement. Non-seniors are a key part of this ceremony and should attend and participate as appropriate.

## Counseling Program

Community High School is dedicated to the success of its students and employs a full-time school counselor to that end. Students are able to access short-term individual and group counseling, academic and career support, and crisis intervention, as well as a network of community resources to address needs beyond the scope of the school and the counselor. Additionally, the counselor provides supplemental academic programs, facilitating the Academic Support Program and instructing our Skills Seminar class. We operate under a standard school policy of informed consent, meaning that information shared with the counselor by students is strictly confidential, except in the instance of potential harm to self or others or when express permission to share with specific individuals is given by the student.

## Dress Code

Generally, most students' dress is accepted as a creative part of our students' personalities. However, if dress is sufficiently offensive or revealing to bother other students, faculty or staff, students may be asked by staff or students to change clothing. Occasionally, CHS hosts outside guests. When this occurs, students will be notified to be particularly careful in their dress. We are not in the business of policing fashion; however, we do ask students to use good judgment in what they wear. Even while video conferencing.

## Driving

Students in any year who have their drivers' licenses are allowed to drive themselves to school. See the Parking section for more information. Non-seniors who have their licenses are NOT allowed to drive off campus during the day, including during lunch, unless they have explicit permission from a CHS administrator and their parents/guardians to drive to a college class, a medical appointment, or a volunteer/internship opportunity. Students must not drive other students unless the appropriate permission forms have been signed by a parent/guardian.

## Field Trips

In addition to smaller day trips aligned with particular classes or activities, CHS occasionally provides longer trips. Any such trips may require that students be in good academic and attendance standing.

We hope to offer all students the opportunity to visit college campuses. Through these trips, we seek to expose our students to various college campuses and options, allowing them to see first-hand what the next step in their education could look like. These trips also build community amongst groups of students with diverse interests and show them places and experiences that provide a variety of unique learning experiences.

In addition to college visits, CHS also regularly offers a recreational trip for graduating seniors, and occasional overnight activity-based, class-specific or cross-curricular trips. Whenever possible, the school will cover all costs for travel and activities, as well as some meals. Specific information on any field trips will be provided to parents/guardians prior to the trip, along with a trip permission form that must be signed in order for students to participate. Our current policy regarding overnight room assignments is as follows:

1. Teachers may room with one another if they are comfortable doing so, but they will not room with students.
2. In order to maximize the comfort and safety of all members of the community, CHS requires that the same rules restricting physical or sexual affection on campus also apply on trips. Faculty will reiterate this and other conduct expectations on each trip.
3. No students currently involved in a romantic or physical relationship shall room together, no matter gender identity or sexual preference.
4. Students will be provided single rooms if requested to the extent possible.
5. Faculty leading each field trip will, with the assistance and approval of administration, be responsible for determining rooming assignments; if they so decide, faculty may speak with individual students beforehand to determine their comfort level with any such assignment. Such assignments will be based on students' gender identities as expressed in official school records. For our policy on changing name or gender identity on school records, please see the section on *Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students*.
6. Parental permission forms will be required for all trips; these will include roommate assignments.

## Gym

CHS has a small gym on campus that is available for student use during school hours. To use the gym, students must first be trained by a faculty member and have a liability waiver, signed by a parent or guardian, on file. Students who wish to use the weights must have another person present the entire time. Violation of these rules can result in the suspension of the student's gym privileges.

## International Travel

CHS occasionally provides opportunities for students to travel internationally. Requirements (grade level, language competency, etc., as applicable) for participation will be specified for each trip. Financial aid is available, so qualified students may attend regardless of family finances. In order to attend an international trip, the student must be in good academic standing leading up to the trip, and must not have had any significant behavioral issues during the academic year in which the trip occurs. Full policies and behavioral expectations will be provided for each trip opportunity. Students are expected to follow all CHS rules about expectations and behaviors on all school trips. In the event a student has to be sent home from a trip because of a policy violation, the family will be liable for any incurred expenses. In some years, CHS will also host students from other countries. Both host students/families and students who do not host are expected to be welcoming to all of our guests, and to behave in a manner befitting a CHS student in all interactions with visiting students and faculty.

## Library

Each bookcase is designated with a letter A—J; signage gives the letter and the sections contained in each. The bookshelves to your left as you enter (A and B) contain check-out forms and materials for initiating inter-library loans. They also include special sections for current classes, with the books from all sections most likely to be helpful to you for papers and assignments. You should use these books on-campus and photocopy what you need so that they remain available to fellow students.

Because it is a small library, we do not use the Dewey Decimal system; books are organized according to how you are most likely to use them for your classes. There are sections for each academic and artistic discipline you will work with at CHS. Some sections are organized by author, some by title, and the history books by chronology. Some books (mainly Drama, Foreign Language and many Math and Science books) are kept in the corresponding classrooms, but the catalog will tell you where you can find them.

To find a book: There is a full library catalog on Shelf A, and each bookcase is provided with its own catalog; you will also be emailed a pdf version of the library at the beginning of the year, which you can search using the 'find option'. If you know what book you're looking for, search the online catalog. This will give you the section it is in, and the order of the books within that section. The heading for each bookcase indicates which level of the shelf each section is on and how it's ordered. If you're not sure exactly what you're looking for, first look at the section for your class near the entrance. If you don't find what you need there or you're not looking for class-related material, you can browse the appropriate shelf.

To check out & return a book: There is a clipboard with a check-out sheet on Shelf A. Simply write your name, the title and author of the book you're checking out. There is no due date, but if another student needs to use the book you'll be asked to share. To return a book, simply place it on the top of Shelf A, and the librarian will process it and return it to the shelves. If you use a book at school but don't check it out, put it in with the returns; *do not* place it back where you got it. Not only does this ensure that all books are re-shelved correctly, it also lets us keep track of what books are most helpful to our students and build a more useful library.

If you don't find what you need: We'll do what we can to help you get a book once you know you want it. If the source is over 100 years old, you might find a free online version at [archive.org](http://archive.org), [gutenberg.org](http://gutenberg.org), or [books.google.com](http://books.google.com). If not, use keywords to find potential sources online via [openlibrary.org](http://openlibrary.org) and [worldcat.org](http://worldcat.org).

Ground Rules: The library is also the computer lab and study area, which necessitates a few ground rules. NO FOOD and NO OPEN DRINKS are allowed in the library, to protect computers and books from preventable accidents.

The library is the school's area for quiet study. School computers should be used only for school-related work; they should not be used for gaming or social networking. Conversation should be limited to tutoring and school-related questions.

## **Lockers**

CHS provides a locker for every student, either in the Student Lounge or the back hallway. Students claim their locker for the year during Orientation and should write their name on the blackboard sticker on the locker door. Students can choose to secure their locker with a lock provided by the school – combinations should not be changed without notifying an administrator of the new lock combination. The CHS administration retains the right, at any time, to access a student's locker either with the lock combination or by removing the lock entirely. Students should not share the combination to their locker with other students, or ever access or take items from another student's locker without permission. Violation of this is a disciplinary offense.

## **Lunch**

Lunch is from **12:10 pm** to **1:00 pm** each day. Normally, students may go downtown for lunch (see Downtown Boundaries) after signing out (see Arrival, Dismissal, and Leaving School During the Day). When doing so, students should note the time of their departure and anticipated location on the sign-out sheet. Students should be back from lunch before 1:00 pm and are responsible for making it to their next class in a timely manner.

## **Network of Complementary Schools**

CHS is a member of the Network of Complementary Schools, a group of private and public schools across the United States that facilitates short, one-way domestic exchanges at member institutions. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors in good standing are eligible to apply for an exchange. CHS families may be asked to host students from other schools. Host families are expected to curate a welcoming and engaging experience for the exchange student, and all adult members of the household are subject to a background check. Please contact the CHS Network Advisor for detailed information about the application, hosting, and financial responsibilities and assistance.

## **Parking**

The Big Lick Junction parking lot spaces are reserved for faculty and visitors, with the exception of space 302. If students wish to drive their own vehicle to school, they may park in the pay lot across the street, and are responsible for parking costs. All driving students should give vehicle information (Make, Model, License Plate Number) to the Administrative Director for school records. If a student parks in a free public two-hour parking spot, they may not leave a class in progress to move their car, even if a parking ticket is possible.

## **Personal Effects**

Students are provided with individual cabinets at school in which to stow their possessions. These cabinets do not lock and may be checked by staff when necessary. Other students, however, must respect the privacy of these cabinets and keep out of those not assigned to them. Food or other vermin-attracting perishables should not be stored overnight at school. Students must clean out their cabinets at the end of every semester.

## **Refrigerator and Microwave**

Students are responsible for supplying their own cups, flatware, etc., and for cleaning and maintaining the shared kitchen facilities, including the CHS-provided student refrigerator and microwave. Anything put in the student fridge should have a name and date on it. Anything left there at the end of the week will be thrown away.

## **Service and Cultural Outreach at Community High**

Community High School strives to create meaningful exchanges with regional partners that champion diversity, inclusion, and civic agency. Through outreach programming, volunteer opportunities, curricular choice, professional development, recruitment initiatives, arts programming, and community service, we hope to provide the context and tools for CHS students and staff to work for the changes they want to see. Community High School believes that community service begins at home. Students are expected to help keep our building clean, and then expand this commitment of pride in place to

the local community. When participating in school-wide community service days, students are tasked with reading academic articles that apply directly to the work they will be doing.

To this end, CHS continually seeks to develop meaningful partnerships with a variety of regional organizations. Since 2013, these efforts have resulted in opportunities for students to serve with groups including the Rescue Mission of Roanoke, Feeding America, Roanoke Transit Assistance, Goodwill, the Christian Soldiers Food Bank, the Salvation Army, and Habitat for Humanity. Students have been encouraged to participate in partnerships with organizations promoting diversity such as the Harrison Museum of African-American Culture, Points of Diversity, the Roanoke LGBTQ History Project, the Henry Street Festival, and the Roanoke LGBTQ Zine. Student groups work as mentors with diverse and underserved communities for TAP's Super Hero Kids and Head Start programs, Maker Mart, Mental Health of America, REACH (SE Roanoke), and Roanoke Refugee Partnership. Periodic guest speakers and panels have discussed issues such as voter suppression, racial parity, gentrification, and LGBTQ+ rights with the entire student body. Students have undertaken urban gardening projects and clean-up of the neglected historic African-American cemetery in Gainsboro, and supplement their academic work on issues of inequality in programs such as Model UN, in addition to many service projects taken upon themselves beyond those listed which are specifically facilitated by CHS.

These initiatives are regularly undertaken over and above the central place held by concerns of social justice and diverse narratives in Community High School's educational philosophy, which strives to make them an inseparable aspect of all intellectual activity. While most evident in the Humanities offerings in which discourses and histories of minorities and oppressed groups are regularly incorporated from their conception, this ethical underpinning resonates as strongly throughout the whole curriculum, including classes whose content may make it less apparent.

## **Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students**

### **Names and Pronouns**

Students have the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that correspond to the student's gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required for a student to be addressed by their preferred name or pronoun. The intentional or persistent refusal to respect a student's gender identity (for example, intentionally referring to a student by a name or pronoun that does not correspond to the student's gender identity) is a violation of this policy.

When contacting the parent/guardian of a transgender or gender nonconforming student, school personnel should use the student's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student's gender assigned at birth unless the student, parent, or guardian has specified otherwise (see Official Records below).

### **Restrooms & Changing Rooms**

Students shall have access to the restroom that corresponds to the gender identity they have consistently asserted at school. Any student who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, will be provided with access to a single-stall restroom, but no student shall be required to use such a restroom.

### **Official Records**

Community High School is required to maintain an educational record for all current and former students that includes the student's legal name and legal gender. However, CHS is not required to use a student's legal name or gender on most school records. The entirety of a student's record can only be changed pursuant to a court order.<sup>2</sup>

For name or gender changes without a court order, the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) allows CHS to use a student's preferred name or gender on their CHS-generated records going forward once the Registrar receives a signed form from the parents of the student or the student themselves if they have reached "eligible student" status. CHS will not amend past records to reflect this change unless the records are being updated for another reason.

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<sup>2</sup> If the student chooses to change the entirety of their records with a court order, they are responsible for providing CHS with any updated medical records and any records from previous schools. The student is also responsible for changing the name associated with their CollegeBoard account and any colleges with which they have taken dual enrollment classes.

In situations where school staff are required to use a transgender student's legal name or gender, they shall adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such information. The student's legal name must always be used on:

- diplomas or certificates of completion
- heading on official transcripts
- financial aid documentation
- standardized testing
- medical records
- student ID cards

Receipt of the form to amend a student's name automatically restricts the release of the student's legal name with their Directory Information. CHS may still release Directory Information for the student without consent that does not violate the right to privacy of their gender status such as birth date, address, enrollment status, etc. Gender is not designated as Directory Information and cannot be released.

# Technology

## Calculators

All students in Algebra II, Precalculus, Statistics, Physics, Calculus I, or Calculus II are required to have their own TI-84 or above graphing calculator. Students should make sure their name is on their calculator. There are a limited number of calculators available for no-cost loan from CHS. Students should let their math teacher know if they need a loaner. Preference will be given to students in classes that require graphing calculators.

## Cell Phone Policy

Students are not allowed to have and/or use their personal cell phones inside the school building between the time of their arrival and the beginning of arts block. Cell phone use during class is prohibited, unless its use is explicitly outlined in the student's approved 504 plan. Students are still expected to take their cell phones with them when they leave campus for lunch, etc. (cell phones remain an integral part of our downtown safety procedures). Cell phones must be left in lockers – silenced or off – during the school day. Students who wish to do so may now secure their lockers with a lock provided by the school.

Possession or use of a cell phone during the above hours without administrative permission will result in confiscation of the device and loss of downtown privileges for the day. Parents will be notified by email anytime a cell phone is confiscated. Repeated violations of this policy will result in continued suspension of downtown privileges and other potential disciplinary consequences.

Parents who need to contact their student during the day should call the school at (540) 345-1688.

## Internet Usage

Internet usage at Community High School is an honor-based system. Students are on their honor to respect and abide by these guidelines. The following rules apply to all devices used on campus, whether they belong to the school or to individuals. Consequences for breaking these rules may include, but are not limited to, banning the student's devices from our internet or confiscating devices.

1. Students using public computers for purposes not directly related to class can be asked to turn them over by students who need them for academic reasons.
2. The settings on any school technology should not be altered.
3. Programs should not be downloaded to public computers without faculty permission.
4. Students should never download copyrighted material (songs, movies, television shows, video games, etc.) they have not paid for. Illegally downloading copyrighted material is punishable by law and any copyright infringement notice we receive is taken seriously. Students found to have illegally downloaded content or used Peer-to-Peer (P2P) software on the school internet will have their access revoked indefinitely.
5. Recreational activity -- including the use of social media, playing appropriate games, listening to music, watching videos, etc. -- is normally permissible on personal computers outside of class, so long as a student is in good academic standing and not bothering other members of the community.
6. Research does not always have to directly apply to school. Just as we encourage students to follow their own passions in the library, we encourage them to read, watch films, find music, etc. on the internet. That said, we expect students to show good judgment regarding content.
7. Pornography, violence, or hate speech is not welcome on this campus. We understand that all of these categories evade precise definition; if a student wants clarity regarding a specific site,

they should consult faculty. Should a student encounter inappropriate material on the internet inadvertently, they should alert faculty. Should a student have concerns about another community member's internet behavior at school, we encourage them to contact an administrator.

8. Digital identity and possessions are as real as their tangible counterparts and must be respected as such.

## **Online Conduct**

Regardless of whether they are on campus or not, students are expected to conduct themselves with the same respect for others as they would if they were in person at school. Posting online is not merely a form of conversation; as it is to some degree public and permanent, it is more akin to publication, and the consequences of malicious speech therefore extend to the community at large. Specifically, students should not make threats, bully or degrade online. Doxing, the intentional public release of private information such as cell phone numbers, email or physical addresses, is forbidden. Such actions may have legal consequences, and will carry consequences on our campus up to and including expulsion.

## **Personal Computers**

Students are allowed and encouraged to bring their own laptop or tablet to school when needed. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of their personal items and CHS is not responsible for damages or lost items. Students who cannot or do not want to bring their personal technology can use any of our iPads, Chromebooks, and desktop computers during the school day. See the *School Technology* section for more information on what we have available and how to use it.

## **School Technology & Rentals**

CHS has plenty of technology available for students to use, both during the school day and as a long-term rental. If you have any questions about this, please email the Registrar.

### **iPads & Chromebooks**

There are iPads with external keyboards and Chromebooks located in the Registrar's office for students to use during the day. They must be signed out at each use. Any students who need to take one home for extended use may do so with permission from the Registrar and an agreement signed by both the student and a parent. Students who use an iPad continually or regularly can request a school Apple ID from the Registrar.

### **Desktop Computers**

There are 6 Windows desktop computers in the library that are available for student use when there is no class in the library. Students can sign into the computers with their CHS email and password. Each classroom also has a desktop computer that students can use during class for presentations, etc.

### **Printers**

The two copiers (student lounge and back hallway) are available for student use for black & white copies and scanning. Instructions for setting up your laptop for wireless printing are posted in the library. The desktop computers in the library are also available to use for printing when they are not being used for a class.

## Appendix A: Sexual Misconduct Policy

### I. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to students and all faculty, staff, and non-employee volunteers (hereinafter referred to as employees) of Community High School of Arts and Academics (CHS). The institution does not tolerate any form of sexual misconduct, harassment, sexual violence, or retaliation for reporting such conduct.

1. This policy prohibits sexual misconduct involving students and/or school employees.
2. This policy protects all students and employees, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
3. This policy will consider the effects of other sexual misconduct, such as misconduct that occurs off-site or online, when assessing whether a student or employee has been subjected to a hostile environment.
4. For the purpose of this policy, sexual misconduct involving a student or employee that happens within the boundaries of downtown Roanoke laid out in the Student and Family Handbook and during the school day will be determined to have happened on the CHS "campus."

### II. Types of Sexual Misconduct Covered Under Policy

This policy defines sexual misconduct as including but not limited to:

1. Sexual harassment
2. Sexual assault or sexual violence
3. Dating, intimate partner, or domestic violence
4. Sexual exploitation and human trafficking
5. Hostile environment caused by sexual misconduct
6. Child sexual abuse
7. Quid Pro Quo harassment
8. Stalking
9. Retaliation
10. Intimidation
11. Complicity in the commission of a violation of this policy

#### A. Consent

This policy covers any type of sexual activity where all parties involved do not or cannot consent. CHS has chosen to use the following definitions for consent:

1. A voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity
2. A voluntary agreement to another's proposition
3. To voluntarily agree to an act or proposal of another

CHS will consider the age of the student, the legal age of consent, the nature of the conduct involved, and other relevant factors in determining whether a student had the capacity to consent to the sexual conduct. CHS will also consider whether the student has the ability to consent due to other factors such as intellectual or other disability, or incapacitation from the use of drugs and alcohol.

CHS also acknowledges that:

1. Someone who is incapacitated cannot consent
2. Past consent does not imply future consent
3. Silence or an absence of resistance does not imply consent
4. Consent to engage in sexual activity with one person does not imply consent to engage in sexual activity with another
5. Consent can be withdrawn at any time
6. Consent that is coerced, forced, or given under duress/threat is invalid

### III. Prohibition of Retaliation

This policy prohibits any retaliation against those who file a complaint, including third parties or those who participate in the investigatory and/or disciplinary process. CHS will take strong, responsive action if retaliation occurs. The process for reporting retaliation is the same as for reporting the initial misconduct.

#### **IV. Training**

All employees of CHS will receive annual sexual misconduct and mandatory reporter training at the start of each academic year, as well as be required to review the written policy annually. All students will view online consent training materials during Orientation at the start of the academic year. Students will receive additional consent, healthy relationship, and sexual misconduct training during the sexual education portion of the required Physical Education class.

Additional training for students and/or employees may be scheduled throughout the academic year by the Head of School or the Administrative Director if the need arises.

#### **V. Reporting**

Violations of this policy can be reported to any employee of CHS. The employee is then responsible for promptly bringing that report to the Head of School and Administrative Director for investigation.

1. It is the responsibility of the employee receiving the initial report to disclose their mandatory reporter status before any information is revealed.
2. If the misconduct happened at school or a school-sponsored activity or event, or with the use of CHS-owned technology or network, then CHS is responsible for investigating the misconduct and taking action to remedy the situation.
3. If the misconduct did not happen at school or a school-sponsored activity or event, then CHS might not have the authority to investigate and resolve the complaint; however, CHS will still provide support to the complainant and work to connect them with community-based resources or law enforcement.
4. If the misconduct involves the Head of School or Administrative Director, the report should be taken directly to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

#### **VI. Investigation**

Upon receipt of a complaint alleging sexual misconduct, the employee shall immediately report it to the Head of School or the Administrative Director. They will then undertake or authorize an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by other school personnel or a third party designated by the Board of Trustees.

1. If one of the directors is involved in the complaint or must recuse themselves from the investigation, the Chair of the Board of Trustees will conduct the investigation or authorize the other Director to complete the investigation on their behalf.

Once the complaint has been made, the Head of School or the Administrative Director will acknowledge receipt by giving written notice to both the person alleging sexual misconduct and the person accused of sexual misconduct. They will also inform them if it has been determined that interim measures should be taken pending the outcome of the investigation. Such interim measures may include, but are not limited to:

1. Separating the alleged victim and perpetrator
2. In cases involving potential criminal conduct, determining whether law enforcement should be notified

The investigation shall be completed as soon as practical, no later than fourteen (14) school days after the receipt of the initial report. If the Head of School or the Administrative Director determines that more than fourteen (14) school days will be required to investigate the complaint, the complainant and the accused shall be notified of the reason for the extended investigation and of the day by which the investigation will be concluded.

If the alleged sexual misconduct may also constitute child abuse, it will be reported by the Head of School to the Department of Social Services, in accordance with the Code of Virginia (§ 63.2-1509).

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the alleged perpetrator, and any others who may have knowledge of the alleged sexual misconduct or the circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation will consider witnesses and evidence from both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator. The investigation may also consist of the inspection of any other documents or information deemed relevant by the investigators. CHS shall take the necessary steps to protect the complainant and others pending the completion of the investigation.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation, the investigators will also consider, at a minimum:

1. The surrounding circumstances
2. The nature of the behavior
3. Incidents of past or continuing patterns of behavior
4. The relationship between the parties
5. How often the conduct occurred
6. The identity of the alleged perpetrator in relation to the alleged victim, i.e. whether the alleged perpetrator was in a position of power over the alleged victim
7. The location of the alleged sexual misconduct
8. The ages of the parties
9. The context in which the alleged incident occurred

Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a case-by-case determination based on all the facts and circumstances after a complete and thorough investigation.

Depending on the circumstances involved, disciplinary action may include disciplinary action as set forth in the Student Contract including suspension or expulsion from school; disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment; ban from school property, communication systems, and school-sponsored activities; referral for criminal prosecution; and other actions deemed appropriate to address the specific circumstances.

## **VII. Reporting Outcomes**

The Head of School or the Administrative Director shall complete a written report of the investigation. If the complaint involves the Head of School or the Administrative Director, the report shall be completed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees or their designee. The report shall include a determination of whether the allegations are substantiated, whether this policy was violated, and recommendations for corrective action, if any. This decision must be provided in writing to both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.

## **VIII. Disclosure of Information**

Once a report has been made, the student/parents or employee will be informed by the Head of School or the Administrative Director what information will be kept confidential and what information may be disclosed, to whom it will be disclosed, and why as well as the implications of state and local mandatory reporting laws on the school's ability to maintain a student's or employee's confidentiality.

With regards to FERPA, any investigations or consequences administered to students will remain confidential, with the exception of the notification of students who were the direct victim of misconduct by another CHS student.

## **IX. Employees**

1. With respect to sexual activity between an employee and a student of legal age, CHS will not tolerate a sexual relationship or any breach of this policy between an employee and student. Such action on the part of the employee is grounds for immediate termination.
2. All employees shall cooperate with any investigation of alleged sexual misconduct.
3. Employees who allow sexual misconduct to continue or fail to take appropriate corrective action shall be considered a party to the act of behavior, even though they may not behave in such a manner. Such employees shall be subject to corrective action. Depending on the circumstances, such corrective action measures may include termination.
4. Under the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations, employees are protected from sexual harassment defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
  - a. Submission to sexual conduct is an explicitly stated or an implied term or condition of an individual's employment
  - b. Submission to or rejection of sexual conduct by an individual is the basis for any employment decision affecting that individual
  - c. Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an

individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

**X. Sources and Compliance of Policy**

This policy complies with the following:

1. Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1971 (Title IX)
2. Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title IV)
3. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)
4. Child Abuse and Treatment Act (CAPTA)
5. Virginia Department of Social Services Policy JHG Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting
6. Code of Virginia