

THOSE WHO ENJOY THE HIGHEST

HUMILITY, GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP, AND GOOD CHARACTER

LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT MUST ASSUME THE GREATEST

**Guide to
Philosophy
And
Community
Values**



**Burke
Mountain
Academy**

RESPONSIBILITIES TO EXHIBIT

Introduction

The philosophy and community values presented in this booklet have provided a strong foundation for Burke Mountain Academy since its earliest years. These values have been supported by generations of students and staff, providing both with the strongest possible opportunities to work and grow together.

New teachers, students, and families join the BMA community each year - bringing with them fresh ideas and unique challenges. The school is a constantly changing enterprise. But to be successful, year after year, it must have a solid foundation of values, a moral and philosophical compass.

The principles outlined on the following pages are Burke Mountain Academy's compass. All members of the BMA community - students, staff, parents and trustees - are expected to support and promote the values outlined in this guide.

Burke Mountain Academy HONOR CODE

Burke Mountain Academy has a special system of trust, values and goals. I understand that we all live together, and I will respect and be courteous to other members of the BMA community including staff and other students. Even though there are few specific rules, I understand that I am trusted to act in the best interest of the BMA community.

I support the standards of the Burke Mountain Academy community as set forth by the Head of School and as stated in the Guide to Philosophy and Community Values, and the Student Handbook. I pledge my commitment to live by these standards both on the school campus and wherever I am identified as a BMA student/ athlete.

I understand that my personal support of these standards is important to the strength, openness, and trust of the entire BMA community. I acknowledge that any failure to sustain these standards shall be just cause for my dismissal from the school.

My signature, dated below, promises my commitment to these standards now and in the future, and attests to my support of them in the past.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

TRUST/THE HONOR CODE

BMA shall sustain its traditional Honor Code which applies to all facets of school life - community, academic, and athletic. This code shall serve as the foundation on which an environment of trust and cooperation is built between all members of the BMA community. The most fundamental responsibility of a BMA student is to support and nurture the Honor Code.

FREEDOM/RESPONSIBILITY

Under the Honor Code, BMA students and staff are given unusual freedoms. In all cases these freedoms entail equal responsibilities.

STUDENT/STAFF ROLES

The BMA community does not accept student/teacher roles that lead to “we/ they” thinking, and to games that involve students exploring the limits of what they can “get away with” while staff try to catch or deter them. BMA is founded on the assumption that the staff’s primary role is to work for and collaborate with the students. Students and staff must feel they are on the same team and working toward shared goals. It is the responsibility of all students and staff to create an environment where the staff are free to teach and coach, the students are free to work and learn, and neither waste their time on discipline and rule enforcement. Each individual’s goals ought to provide them the motivation to remain absolutely committed to achieving their best, with no room for distractions.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Burke Mountain Academy’s academic program is college-preparatory in nature, but our objectives encompass a large vision and a broader horizon, stretching beyond the traditional classroom and into one’s fuller, later life. All members of the community strive to instill and support the confidence to take intellectual risks, to value hard work, and to be driven to pursue individual intellectual growth. Since its founding, BMA has always provided in-depth narrative evaluations in lieu of grades to mark the completion of courses in our curriculum. Indeed, we believe that the primary motivation for academic work must come from within our students. Working toward some arbitrary measure of performance can undermine a central community value of BMA: learning for learning’s sake. To support this ideal, we value the growth and refinement of certain core academic values that we believe support our educational process. These traits consist of commitment to fostering a community of learners, personal responsibility for learning, self-awareness, individual drive and self-direction, and intellectual curiosity.

NON-GRADING

American society uses grades in countless ways to predict the future success of learners. BMA believes one cannot use today’s test results to predict the success or failure of an adult ten or more years in the future. We are reminded often of these truths as we witness the achievements of our alumni. BMA’s mission is to help every student grow a little every day, and to believe that continuing growth is always possible.

NO LEADERS/ALL LEADERS

There are no designated leaders at BMA – no class officers, no student council, no dorm proctors, no team captains, etc. At BMA, each person bears his or her own personal responsibility for finding a way to engage in and support the community. We ask each student to look for ways to engage in personal acts of leadership. In essence, this is risk-taking behavior because it requires each of us to identify a specific need, and respond to that perceived need. Every student has an equal responsibility to strengthen all aspects of the school community. All students are encouraged to assume leadership roles from their first day at the school.

NO PEER GROUPS

BMA discourages the development of exclusive peer groups. For example, there are no senior privileges, junior proms, different rules or standards for the best athletes. The school includes all age groups in all areas of school life. This helps younger students to mature, and older students to learn responsible nurturing, as exists between siblings in families. There is no place at BMA for “peer group myopia” - seeing the world with only the limited perspective of others the same age. In families and communities, people work together in supporting and caring ways across three or more generations, forming productive bonds among all groups, and being sensitive to the needs of each generation. BMA expects its students to form friendships in all classes, with adult faculty, with small children, and with others in the larger Burke community, from ski area employees to school parents and local merchants.

There is no hierarchy at BMA based on age, class, athletic or academic ability or socioeconomic status. Older, better ski racers do have more opportunities for travel and time away from school than do younger students. However, the distinction between “opportunities” and “privileges” must be well defined in the BMA community. The former exists. The latter do not.

BMA has a long tradition of its students being especially comfortable with adults. This is seen in the easy ways that students meet and talk with adult visitors to the school. We encourage and expect our students to be ambassadors for the school wherever they do, and with people of all ages.

HEROES

BMA does not believe in making “heroes” of its best athletes, best students, or best citizens, however these “bests” may be defined. Indeed, those who enjoy the highest levels of achievement must assume the greatest responsibilities to exhibit humility, good sportsmanship and strong character.

REWARDS AND PRIZES

BMA does not give awards or prizes to selected students. No awards are given at graduation or other ceremonies for academic, athletic, or personal achievement, other than fun, intra-school prizes for periodic games and contests. BMA values equally the effort and growth of each student.

PATIENCE

The BMA community is committed to a philosophy of patience in helping young people grow. Human development (academic, athletic, personal) is a cyclic process. Burke respects that every individual matures physically and cognitively at a vastly different pace. The school believes that if students adhere to the Burke philosophy and goals, their personal objectives will be realized.

BMA is not patient with laziness. Burke staff and students have clear responsibilities. Hard work is expected in all areas of school life. Integrity and support of the Honor Code is demanded every day.

HAZING

The BMA community does not tolerate hazing. The school does not accept that hazing is a “right of passage” for young people. It is always wrong for one student to build his or her ego by putting down another. The goal for every person in the BMA community is to help others grow in as many ways as possible. Hazing is destructive behavior for individuals and for communities, and is unacceptable in any form. No one has the right to make any member of this community unhappy or uncomfortable.

WORK

BMA especially values and respects work. We expect hard work in training, hard work in academics, and hard work in the community. For members of the BMA community, the growth of self-respect and confidence is best engendered through the achievements that result from commitment and hard work.

MUTUAL RESPECT

The high levels of trust and cooperation that exist between students and staff at BMA are built on mutual respect. Young people, when granted genuine respect by adults, respond by acting with greater maturity and responsibility. The atmosphere of trust, respect and cooperation that results greatly strengthens the BMA community.

CO-ED HOUSING AND TRAINING

BMA has always provided co-ed housing for its students. We believe this promotes closer friendships and understanding between students. The goal is to promote positive nurturing relationships and mutual respect between students similar to those of brothers and sisters.

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

BMA respects that the expression of affection for other people is a normal and healthy part of human social maturation. BMA's stated policy is abstinence.

CAMPUS CLEANLINESS

Students and staff are responsible for the upkeep and cleanliness of the school. Daily clean-up and organization of all spaces allows for a smoothly functioning community. Moreover, it simultaneously fosters our sense of respect for the shared spaces in which we live, enhances appreciation for the community and teaches humility. BMA does not support having others clean our mess.

RESPECT FOR COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL PROPERTY

BMA prides itself on being a community based on trust. It is expected that a community member will seek and get permission before taking or using another's personal property regardless of perceived value. Upholding the Honor Code requires a greater responsibility to do what is right.

LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

BMA's commitment to strong relationships between staff and students means that a walk, a hike, a talk, or a meal shared are as significant as any lecture or lesson in the classroom, and are as often led by student initiative as teacher direction. These less formal opportunities for student-teacher exchanges are a trademark of the BMA educational experience, offering both students and teachers valuable time for intellectual reflection, consideration and exploration.

Historical Perspective

“In all sports, the most successful junior development programs excel at teaching a lot more than athletic skills. Kids, coaches and parents work together to teach character and values. They talk about trust, teamwork, responsibility and kindness. Over time, they learn how to build cultures and value systems that breed success not only in their athletic pursuits, but throughout their lives. When the kids have significant roles in designing and building their programs, they work much harder to continually strengthen them.

I am a strong believer that every student in a school (or athlete in a sports program) must have significant “ownership” in creating and sustaining the values that define their programs. This goal cannot be reached by having a few students on a committee that meets occasionally with a group of parents or staff who “run the program.”

From the first day of its founding, Burke Mountain Academy has had a mantra that applies equally to all students, staff and parents: “Every day, everywhere you go, and with every person you meet – earn respect for yourself, your family, and your school.”

This simple mantra requires every student, coach, and parent to accept responsibility for the success of their program. Most important, it grants all the kids unusual freedom and opportunities to be important builders of their programs. This is an environment in which kids thrive.”

- Warren Witherell, Founder, Burke Mountain Academy

BURKE MOUNTAIN ACADEMY

Community ♦ Academics ♦ Athletics

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