



THE POTOMAC SCHOOL

Handbook for Parents and Students

2023-24

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Introduction

This Handbook includes information and policies for The Potomac School and each of its four divisions. Information not included here – such as frequently called numbers, Parent Association activities, volunteer opportunities, and a variety of forms – can be found on CampusNET, the school’s password-protected intranet.

About This Handbook

This *Handbook for Parents and Students* (the “Handbook”) is intended as a general guide for families to the policies, procedures, and personnel at The Potomac School (“Potomac” or “the school”). Please take the time to read this Handbook carefully and review it with your children. It is important that families understand the school’s expectations and policies and know to whom they can direct their questions or concerns.

Please understand that this Handbook is intended only to highlight current policies, practices, and procedures. The policies and procedures set forth here are intended as general guidelines; specific situations may call for handling a matter in a manner different from that described in the Handbook, depending upon the particular facts and nature of the situation. It would be nearly impossible to review every element of every policy or every possible scenario and outcome; this Handbook serves as a series of policy summaries to help keep your family informed.

Circumstances may require that the policies, practices, and procedures described in the Handbook change. The Potomac School reserves the right to modify or change any or all such policies, practices, and procedures in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice. The school will make every attempt to give timely notice of substantive changes in policy.

Should events that are beyond the school's reasonable control and occur without its fault or negligence necessitate a closure, delay, or modification of its educational programs and activities, the family's obligations as outlined in this Handbook, as outlined in the Enrollment Contract, and/or as otherwise established by the school shall continue. The school shall not be liable for any failure, delay, or modification of its programs or activities. The school reserves the right to make modifications to the school year as necessary to account for time lost due to any closure or delay, including without limitation the following: extending the school year for a period of time, conducting classes via virtual learning, and/or scheduling weekend classes. Possible events that could necessitate closure, delay, or modification as described above include, but are not limited to, acts of nature, fire, pandemic, U.S. government restrictions, wars, and insurrections.

This Handbook supersedes all prior policies (whether written or oral, expressed or implied) that in any way contradict the policies included in it. However, this document is not intended to supersede any written agreement between an individual/family and the school or any applicable law; if you believe such a conflict or discrepancy exists, please contact the school’s CFO/COO. This Handbook is not intended to constitute a legal contract of any kind.

School (K-12) Information and Policies

Mission

At The Potomac School, we believe that intellectual development, love of learning, and strength of character are complementary and equally essential educational goals. With a firm commitment to our core values and a rigorous academic program, we prepare students to lead lives of purpose, achievement, and generosity of spirit.

Philosophy and Practice

We achieve The Potomac School's mission through our educational philosophy and practice. At Potomac we

- foster a diverse, inclusive learning community where all voices and viewpoints are valued
- provide a balanced educational experience that integrates academics, athletics, and the arts
- empower our students to become independent thinkers and learners by emphasizing the rewards of inquiry, initiative, and reflection
- emphasize appreciation for the natural world and each person's responsibility for environmental stewardship
- call upon all members of our community to act with compassion, civic conscience, and a commitment to serving others

Core Values

Since its founding, The Potomac School has steadfastly believed that developing a student's character is as important as educating for intellectual growth. Informed by values, students learn to use their intellect and skills productively and in service to others. The school has identified the following five core values as the ethical and moral guideposts that enable all of us in the Potomac community to develop good judgment and live principled lives:

- Courage
- Integrity
- Humility
- Perseverance
- Respect

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

"We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike" - Maya Angelou

E pluribus unum: Out of many, one - Great Seal of the United States

The Potomac School's mission is to prepare students for lives of purpose, achievement, and generosity of spirit. Our commitment to welcome, appreciate, and engage respectfully with people of all backgrounds and perspectives is essential to achieving this mission.

At Potomac, we are a connected and inclusive community. We learn from one another and firmly believe that our community is intellectually enriched and morally strengthened by the presence of many different voices and viewpoints.

As we accept, learn from, and celebrate differences at our school, we also work together to uphold the principles that form the foundation of the Potomac community – our core values, a commitment to mutual support, and a shared focus on the common good. We expect everyone at Potomac to demonstrate integrity and respect for all individuals and to act in the best interests of others and the community as a whole.

In harmony with these convictions, we are committed to the following:

- To be a school where each individual is respected and valued and demonstrates the same respect toward others
- To recruit and retain outstanding faculty, staff, and administrators from a variety of backgrounds
- To enroll talented students from a variety of backgrounds and to provide equity of opportunity, ensuring that all students can learn, grow, and thrive at Potomac
- To advance our individual growth by working to connect with and understand others, especially those whose backgrounds, voices, or viewpoints differ from our own
- To be courageous in the pursuit of justice in our community and in the world

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Potomac School administers its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid program, athletics program, and other school programs (including the hiring of faculty and staff) without discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender, age, nationality, sexual orientation, or any other category to the extent protected by applicable laws.

Tuition

For returning students, a completed enrollment contract and non-refundable re-enrollment deposit are due in February. For new students, the enrollment deposit and contract are due by the deadlines stated in the Letter of Acceptance.

The Potomac School offers several payment plans/options. Tuition is payable as follows:

- Option 1 – Full tuition is due on July 1.
- Option 2 – Tuition is payable in two installments: 65% of tuition and 100% of fees by July 1 and the remaining 35% of tuition by December 1.
- Option 3 – Ten-month payment plan (May–February) through FACTS

Since the school relies upon tuition income to deliver its programs, prompt payment is essential. A late fee of \$90 per month will be assessed on all overdue accounts. A \$45 returned check fee will be assessed for any returned check or e-check.

Consistent with standard practices and with the school's Enrollment Contract, Potomac requires that any delinquent portion of tuition must be paid in order for a student to attend classes or receive a re-enrollment contract for the following academic year.

As outlined in the Enrollment Contract, Potomac requires full-year tuition payment for all students, regardless of whether the student is withdrawn, dismissed, or otherwise ceases to attend for all or a portion of the school year. Tuition refund insurance and accident insurance plans, currently provided by A.W.G. Dewar, are available for purchase prior to August 1. The purchase of tuition refund insurance is mandatory for any family utilizing the ten-month payment plan through FACTS. Please contact the Finance Office at (703) 873-5550 with any tuition-related questions.

Transportation/Bus System

Because of The Potomac School's zoning agreements with Fairfax County and neighboring communities, there are limits to the traffic we can allow on campus. To comply with these limits, only the following are permitted to drive onto campus:

- Kindergarten parents, for morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. Siblings of kindergarten students are permitted to be driven with their sibling.
- Senior students may drive to school and park on campus. Seniors with siblings enrolled in the school are permitted to drive their siblings. Siblings in the Lower, Middle, and Intermediate Schools must be dropped off at the Lower School entrance no later than 8:05 am so that all students arrive to class on time.

Juniors may drive but must park at the Trinity United Methodist Church (1205 Dolley Madison Boulevard) and then take a shuttle to campus. The shuttle from Trinity United Methodist Church runs at 7:40 am and 8:00 am.

All other students who do not walk or bike to school are required to use Potomac's bus services. Except as outlined above, carpooling with a kindergarten parent or a senior student is not permitted. Compliance with the school's transportation policy is a condition of continued attendance.

Under special circumstances (e.g., family emergency), juniors may receive permission from their grade-level dean to park on campus. Juniors must ask the dean at least 24 hours in advance to receive this permission. Sophomores are not allowed to drive to school.

The Bus Square contiguous to the Arundel Library and the Intermediate School is reserved for school bus operations between 7:45 and 8:15 am; drop-off in this area is strictly prohibited to ensure the safety of our students.

Bus Services

Potomac offers two bus services: a fee-based service with stops throughout the Washington, DC, metropolitan area and a free shuttle service that picks up from designated locations close to campus. Parents can select either service or a combination of the two for their child(ren) to ride to and from school. For the fee-based service, discounts are available for families with multiple riders – 25% for the second child, 99% for the third or more children.

The school expends great effort to provide convenient bus service for all families. The provision of bus service is dependent upon the number of riders in a given area and the limitations of time and distance; the school cannot guarantee fee-based bus service to any specific locale. Bus capacity may be limited, with preference given to those students riding to and from school. Students may be required to walk short distances or be given a ride to some fee-based bus stops. In areas that are a significant distance from the school, where students are widely dispersed, and/or where locations are difficult to reach in a timely manner, service will be limited to designated central stop locations.

The school is not responsible for students before they enter or after they leave the bus, except when they are on school property.

Late Buses

Fee-based service and free shuttle service offer late buses for students involved in after-school activities. Students may sign up for late bus service as needed per sports/ETC/activities season, or if attending Extended Day. Late shuttle service is free. For those students not enrolled in regular fee-based service, a fee of \$450 per season will be charged for the late fee-based bus service. Any students not enrolled in either regular or late fee-based service may ride for a single-trip fee of \$12 per trip.

Storm Stop Schedule

Winter storms or other inclement weather may require Potomac to modify bus schedules due to impassable road conditions. During these events, the school's buses may operate on a storm stop schedule, where students will be picked up or dropped off at designated locations on main roads. Parents will be notified when the storm stop schedule is in effect. Stop locations are available under the Transportation tab on CampusNET.

Athletic Events

Information regarding transportation to and from athletic events for Intermediate and Upper School students can be found in the *Athletics Handbook* on CampusNET.

Absences and Transportation Changes

Student absences or requests for transportation changes should be reported through the SchoolPass app. Please use the app to

- report a student's absence. The app allows for the reporting of absence(s) for one day, multiple days, or periodic intervals;
- report a student's late drop off/late arrival to school;
- report a student's early departure, with or without a return to campus (i.e., for a medical appointment)
- make any changes to a student's transportation plan, i.e., move from regular dismissal to late fee-based/late shuttle, move to shuttle service to expedite getting to after-school activity.

Morning notifications should be made through SchoolPass by 7:00 am; any requests for afternoon transportation changes should be entered into SchoolPass before 12:30 pm. Adherence to these deadlines ensures that the bus drivers will have accurate rosters.

Once entered in SchoolPass, all of the above changes will result in an automatically generated email notification to you, your child's division administrative assistant, and the Transportation Office. The school can also communicate directly with parents within the SchoolPass app. Should you have questions about SchoolPass, please contact [Kelly Laraia](#) for assistance.

In the event the SchoolPass app is unavailable, absences can be reported by emailing the student's divisional administrative assistant with a cc: to transportation@potomacschool.org.

Behavior on Buses and at Bus Stops

The Potomac School has established rules to maintain order and ensure safety on our buses. All students riding the bus for any purpose must understand and comply with these rules. Before the start of school, parents should review these rules with their children:

- Each student is expected to show respect for the driver and courtesy to all passengers. All rules that otherwise govern student conduct and behavior are equally applicable while riding the bus.
- Students are required to comply with the bus driver's instructions or directives.
- Students should remain seated at all times.
- Students are not to put their hands or any other body parts, or any objects out the windows.
- Loud talking, shouting, and inappropriate language are not permitted.
- Roughhousing, throwing objects, or any behavior that could distract the driver or interfere with the comfort/safety of another passenger is prohibited.
- Students are expected to clean up after themselves.
- Food and drink (e.g., pre-packaged snacks) may be permitted on buses, subject to proper cleanup and student behavior. Abuse will result in suspension of this privilege.
- Students in grades 4 through 12 are permitted to use electronic devices on buses, such as computers, iPhones, or iPads, but earphones/buds are required for any audio. Use of such devices will be suspended if it creates a distraction or causes offense to the driver or other students.

The above rules pertain to all Potomac students on any bus for any reason (field trips, sports, etc.) Serious or continued misconduct may result in suspension from riding the bus or other disciplinary action; there will be no refund for service not provided during a period of suspension. Parents are financially liable for any student-caused damage to a bus.

Parents dropping their children off or picking them up at bus stops are asked to exercise caution and adhere to the following guidelines:

- Students should arrive at their designated stop at least five minutes before the published bus arrival time.
- If a student misses the morning bus at their stop, it is acceptable to take them to another designated stop on the same route, a stop on another fee-based route, or a shuttle stop to catch the bus. It is not safe or permissible to "chase down" a bus in an effort to have it make an unscheduled stop. The bus drivers will NOT stop in transit to pick up riders; students may only board a bus at a designated stop.
- Vehicle drivers should approach and leave bus stops slowly, obeying all traffic rules while watching for children and pedestrians.
- Prior to the start of school, please review with your student the universal bus safety guidelines found at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/school-bus-safety>.

Please remember that many of our stops are located on private property. The owners have shown kindness and generosity by making these locations available to the Potomac School community. We ask all members of our community to respect the owners and their property.

Additional Information

The Transportation section of CampusNET has additional information, including contact information, updates, general transportation information, and storm stop schedules/locations.

Driving and Parking

Evermay Driving Standards

Potomac School Road runs through the neighborhood of Evermay. Parking on Evermay streets by Potomac students, employees, families, or guests is strictly prohibited, per an agreement with Fairfax County. All Potomac community members must park on campus at all times. The road to the left of the school entrance is a private road for residents only; public or general use is prohibited.

Please respect our neighbors and

- strictly observe the 25 mph speed limit
- make a full stop at the Long Meadow Road stop signs
- make a full stop at the school exit before entering Potomac School Road
- be courteous and allow residents to enter Potomac School Road from driveways and side streets, particularly when school traffic is heavy
- remember that pedestrians always have the right-of-way
- never block an intersection and, while stopping for this purpose, allow several car lengths of open space ahead of you on the far side of the intersection to facilitate side-street traffic
- give your full attention to driving at all times (Fairfax County law, Code Section 82-4-24)
- do not read or send any email or text message while driving (Virginia State law, 46.2-1078.1)

Campus Driving Standards

The speed limit on campus is 15 mph. Please drive carefully, obey stop signs, and yield to pedestrians.

On campus, cars are not allowed to be parked along any roadways or in the East Building bus circle (in front of the Upper School), even if staying for only a few minutes. Please park in designated parking places only. Short-term parking is provided as marked; time limits are indicated, and repeated abuse may result in citations. Handicapped spaces are NOT to be used for drop-offs.

Potomac seniors who drive to school or juniors who drive to the Trinity United Methodist Church lot in order to take a shuttle to campus will be required to register their vehicles and acknowledge their understanding of Potomac's driving and parking policies by completing the Student Driver Registration and Pledge Form. Driving privileges will not be granted until a student's vehicle(s) is registered and the Registration and Pledge Form has been completed. Students who drive must display their parking permit and may only park in those areas specifically designated for their use. Please refer to the Student Driver Registration and Pledge Form for further details and expectations.

Students who drive recklessly or violate the standards of driving outlined above, whether on campus or in the surrounding neighborhood, will likely have their driving privileges suspended or revoked. The school also reserves the right to suspend a student for repeated or serious infractions.

Communication with Potomac Employees

Potomac students and employees should communicate with one another only through school-sponsored and approved modes of communication, such as their Potomac-issued email. Notwithstanding, in situations where the message is urgent or the parties are away from campus (i.e., at an away game, on a school trip), text messages may be utilized; group texts are encouraged whenever possible. As needed, individual check-ins between a student and teacher or other support staff members (counselor, college counselor, dean, learning specialist, etc.) may take place by phone.

Similarly, parents are asked to direct all their communications to an employee's Potomac-issued email in lieu of using personal email addresses and/or cell phones.

Emergency Communications

Announcements made through Potomac's mass notification system are audible in all interior and exterior spaces on campus. This system is the primary way students, faculty, and staff will receive information and instructions in an emergency.

Emergency information will be communicated to parents through our SendWordNow/OnSolve system, which sends simultaneous text, voicemail, and email messages. Information and updates will be posted on Potomac's website as appropriate.

In the event of a campus or regional emergency, parents are asked not to come to school to pick up their children until instructed to do so. The campus must be kept clear for emergency responders. Access to campus may be restricted until the emergency has passed.

The SendWordNow/OnSolve system is also used to notify Potomac families of weather-related closings, delays, and cancellations. In addition, this information will be posted on the school's website and, when appropriate, communicated via local media, including television channels 4, 5, 7, and 9 and WTOP radio.

Multiple Households and Custody Orders

The school does not seek to become involved in parental disputes. It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of any living, custody, or financial arrangements that may affect the student's enrollment or experience at school. Custody orders or settlement agreements must be provided to the CFO/COO. While the school endeavors to comply with court-ordered living, custody, and financial arrangements to minimize disruption to students' educational experiences, we cannot do so without clear communication.

Photography and Recordings

Throughout the year, photographs, videos, and voice recordings (collectively, the “Recordings”) are taken of students participating in various school activities. These Recordings are used in Potomac School print and online publications, in video productions, and occasionally in newspapers or magazines. They may also be used in educational materials, including recordings of classes for other students’ use. By virtue of their child(ren)’s enrollment at Potomac and by permitting their child(ren) to attend, parents consent to such Recordings and the school’s use of them. Parents also understand that Potomac reserves the right to grant the use of these materials to any third parties in connection with their work with the school. This authorization serves as authority to use such material during and after the student is enrolled at the school.

As stated in the Enrollment Contract, if parents wish to opt their child(ren) out of Recordings made in connection with Potomac activities, they must notify the director of communications, in writing, within 30 days of the date of contract execution.

Parents are asked **not** to post on the Internet (including but not limited to on social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc., or on any blogs) photos or videos of others’ children taken on campus or while otherwise participating in school-related activities (with the exception of participants in athletic events). Should parents post photos or videos of others’ children taken on campus or while otherwise participating in school-related activities, parents are expected to obtain permission from the parents of all other children captured in the photo or video before posting.

Use of School Name and Brand Marks

Use of The Potomac School’s name, seal, or other brand marks in connection with events and activities not officially sponsored by the school is prohibited. The school reserves the right to take necessary and appropriate action in response to any unauthorized use. Please direct any questions related to the use of the school’s name, seal, and/or brand marks to the director of communications at (703) 873-5539.

Use of School Directories and Other Information

The school’s directory, whether provided in print or online, and all other information about Potomac students and their families are confidential and may only be used by members of the Potomac community in relation to official school activities, events, and communications. Any unauthorized use of the directory or other personal information is strictly prohibited.

Parents are expected to ensure that the school is provided with up-to-date contact information. Parents may update their contact information directly through the Parent Portal on CampusNET.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Every technology resource at The Potomac School is made available to further the goals of academic excellence and student achievement. The use of technology tools and devices, including the Internet and network access through the school, is a privilege extended to members of our community – one that should be used with care and for the purpose of furthering academic pursuits. This policy applies equally to school-issued technology resources and students' own technology. It applies during and outside of school hours, both on- and off-campus, while using the school's network, attending school-sponsored activities, and during any periods of virtual learning.

Students should understand that the guidelines and expectations for in-person interactions and behavior are equally applicable to interactions and behavior while using computers and other electronic devices. Students should understand that they have no expectation of privacy in using computers and other electronic devices while using Potomac's network. The school may monitor the activity and contents (including email, documents, and other files) of computers and school-ed online accounts on campus and/or connected to its network to ensure student safety and compliance with the guidelines.

The school expects students to adhere to the following guidelines while using The Potomac School's system, devices, Internet resources, accounts, and applications:

- Use these resources in a safe, respectful, and responsible way for school and age-appropriate educational purposes only.
- Use appropriate language and etiquette in all communications.
- Obtain appropriate permission before signing up for accounts in applications and software.
- Keep passwords private and secure.
- Tell a teacher, administrator, or adult in charge if they see or otherwise observe content that makes them uncomfortable and/or is inappropriate.

As stated above, students are expected to use technology in a respectful way. The following actions represent disrespectful use of technology and are strictly prohibited:

- damaging or destroying a school-owned device
- not properly returning a school-owned device
- revealing personal passwords or using another person's password
- revealing personal information about oneself or another member of the Potomac community
- using technology in a manner that is inconsistent with any other Potomac expectations for student conduct
- using online communication to embarrass, bully, or intentionally bring emotional/social harm to any person
- impersonating another user

- altering any software settings on a school-owned device without permission
- installing or downloading software onto school computers from the internet, home, or by any other means without permission
- interfering with system security or gaining unauthorized access to the school's network or data
- altering electronic communications to hide the sender's identity or impersonate another person
- accessing inappropriate information on the internet, such as (but not restricted to) sites that bypass filtering, promote hate or violence, or contain explicit or obscene material
- using the school's network to engage in any illegal act or violate any local, state, or federal statute or law

All divisions require students and parents to sign a document signifying their agreement to abide by the provisions of this Technology Acceptable Use Policy. Any breach of the policies outlined here, or specific divisional policies, may result in losing access to school devices, email accounts, network logins, and online applications. Violations may also constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

Surveillance Cameras

The school utilizes camera and video surveillance in various public areas on campus and on school property (including on its buses) to provide for the safety, health, and welfare of Potomac students, faculty, staff, and visitors. While security cameras on campus record only video, security cameras on the buses record both audio and video. Parents understand that by virtue of using the school's bus service, audio and video of their students may be captured. While surveillance devices may be in continuous operation, they will not be monitored on a minute-by-minute basis. Only approved Potomac personnel may view video surveillance footage.

Searches of Student Property

The school may conduct a search of a student and/or a student's belongings on campus or at school-related activities if a violation of a school rule or policy is reasonably suspected. Items/areas that may be searched include cell phones, electronic devices, backpacks, student lockers, and vehicles. The school reserves the right to conduct such investigations without seeking prior permission from the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).

Student Health

Health Records and Information

Parents must provide Potomac information about their student's health. In part, this information is obtained to comply with applicable laws; it is also needed to keep the school well-informed of the health of all students. The school requires that proof of an annual physical examination by a licensed physician/nurse practitioner and proof of up-to-date immunizations for every student be kept on file.

All student medical information will be stored on Magnus Health, accessible to parents through the Parent Portal on CampusNET.

Confidential medical information about a student may be shared with school employees on a need-to-know basis. If an injury has occurred on school property or during a school-sponsored event, medical information may be provided to emergency medical personnel providing support, as well as the insurance company that receives a copy of the claim form.

Student Illness

Typically, two registered nurses are on duty during the academic day. If a child becomes ill at school, a nurse will call the parent(s)/guardian(s). Sick children should be picked up within 30 minutes of the nurse's phone call.

Parents or guardians should report any absence via SchoolPass by 7:00 am and may follow up with their division administrative assistant (Lower School: (703) 749-6335; Middle School: (703) 749-6383; Intermediate School: (703) 749-6390; Upper School: (703) 749-6304). Please state the reason for the child's absence. Students may not self-report absences.

In order to maintain a safe and healthy environment for students and staff, do not send students to school with any of the following: fever of 100.0 degree F or greater, vomiting, diarrhea, or profuse discolored discharge from nose or eyes.

If a student presents with a temperature or other symptoms of COVID-19 while on campus, the student will be isolated and may be rapid antigen tested for COVID-19. Students sent home for fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or who develop these symptoms at home must be symptom-free for a full 24 hours – without medication – before returning to school or as otherwise directed by the Health Services Office. Students placed on medications for contagious illnesses must be on the medication for a full 24 hours before returning to school or as otherwise directed by the Health Services Office. Parents must notify the school if their child contracts a contagious illness such as strep throat, chickenpox, COVID-19, or influenza.

If a student is ill or expresses health-related discomfort before leaving home, please do not send the student to school.

Medication

Medication to be administered during the school day must be brought to the school nurse for dispensing. Students may not carry medications during the school day except for respiratory inhalers. Students carrying respiratory inhalers must present the school with documentation from their provider indicating that their provider has prescribed an inhaler, that the student has received adequate information as to how and when to use it, and that the student is able to use it properly.

All medication to be administered by the nurse must come in an appropriate pharmacy container labeled with the student's name. The name of the medication must be clearly displayed, along with the correct and current dosage regimen. Any changes in the medication schedule will require a change in the

pharmacy container and a note to document the changes. The nurse will not accept a pharmacy container that has been altered in any way.

The administration of medication by the school nurse must be authorized by a physician's note. A physician's note is also required for any changes in the dosage specified. The nurse will not accept verbal changes. Physicians' authorizations may be scanned and submitted via Magnus Health.

If a student needs Tylenol, Advil, or other over-the-counter medication, the student may obtain it from the nurse. However, parental authorization to administer over-the-counter medications must be on file before it will be administered.

When returning to school after an illness or injury, a student may be temporarily excused from participation in physical education or recess if a note from the parent or doctor is given to the teacher and the divisional administrative assistant. If a child is excused from PE, they may not participate in recess.

Emergencies

The nurse will attempt to contact parents regarding serious illness or injury, but in circumstances that warrant immediate attention or when the school is unable to reach the parent(s)/guardian(s) or designated emergency contact, the nurse will determine appropriate management. In the event of a serious emergency, an ambulance will be called; the student may be taken to a hospital emergency room at the discretion of the EMS, and at least one parent will be notified immediately.

Parents are expected to keep all health information up-to-date in Magnus Health, including but not limited to allergies, current medications, medical conditions, and emergency contacts.

Communicable Diseases

It is the responsibility of every person in the school community (including parents, legal guardians, faculty, staff, and students) to report immediately to the school any health condition that may call for separation, isolation, or other special measures to protect the health of other persons. Communicable conditions, such as COVID-19, strep throat, influenza, chickenpox, impetigo, and pertussis, must be reported immediately to the school nurse.

Potomac may exclude any student from school who has a communicable illness or has been exposed to an infected person if the school determines that such exclusion is appropriate for the welfare of the student who is excluded from school and/or the welfare of other students or school employees. In reaching the decision to exclude a student from the school, Potomac may consult with appropriate medical professionals and/or the Virginia Department of Health.

When appropriate, the school will disseminate information to students and families regarding campus health and safety issues through regular internal communication channels. For example, the school may

provide families with information about the nature and spread of communicable illnesses, including symptoms and signs to watch for and required steps to be taken in the event of an epidemic or outbreak.

Routine Screenings

Lower School students receive annual hearing and vision screenings. Speech screenings are performed at the teacher's request, in consultation with the parents. Middle School students receive annual vision screenings. Periodic lice screenings are performed as a preventive measure for Lower and Middle School students.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

There are several Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) on campus for use in the event of a cardiac emergency. AEDs can be accessed at the following locations:

- Engelhard Performing Arts Center lobby
- Lower School, near the aquarium and doors to the Gum Tree field
- Middle School Square, near the Trading Post
- Upper School Tundra Building, first floor reception desk
- Chester Gym lobby, near the exit to the Turf Field
- Flag Circle Building, main level, near the stairs
- Spangler Center for Athletics and Community, Squash Level, near Court 1
- Spangler Center for Athletics and Community, Level 1, gymnasium (nearest tennis)
- Spangler Center for Athletics and Community, Level 2, outside Athletics Department suite

In addition, there are two portable units, which the athletic trainers bring to sporting events; an AED in the Guard House (available only when the Guard House is staffed); and an AED at the swimming pool (available only during summer camp).

Epinephrine (Epi-pens)

In an emergency, it is the school's policy to follow the State of Virginia's guidelines and provide stock auto-injectable epinephrine pens for the nurse or other authorized personnel to administer to a student believed to be having an anaphylactic reaction. Epi-pens will be available at the following locations on campus:

- Nurses Offices (near the MS Square and in the US near the Blackbox Theater)
- LS administrative assistant's office
- US Tundra Building, outside the library (at reception desk)
- Spangler Center for Athletics and Community, athletics training room

This policy is not intended to replace specific orders with parent-provided Epi-pens for particular students. These medications are kept in the Nurses Offices and are sent on field trips during the school day.

If an Epi-pen is administered, 911 will be called first, and then the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified.

Vaccinations

State policy requires all students enrolled in any Virginia school be vaccinated and present documented proof of the vaccination. Exemptions are given in two situations: 1) If the immunization conflicts with a student's religious beliefs, or 2) If the immunization would be detrimental to a student's health. In these situations, an affidavit of the religious or medical exemption with required documentation must be presented to the school. It is important to note that there is no "personal belief" exemption in Virginia as it exists in some states. The Potomac School strictly adheres to state policy. In the event of a regional outbreak of either measles or chickenpox, Potomac may require any students who are unvaccinated (with a documented exemption) to be kept at home until the risk of infection is past.

Students who do not provide proof of up-to-date immunizations may be barred from attending school and participating in any school-related activities. The school reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to require that students obtain additional vaccinations to attend in-person classes to protect the health and safety of the school community. Parents agree to comply with the school's policy regarding required immunizations and possible exemptions and to provide the school with required health records and documentation.

Flu Shots

All students are strongly encouraged to receive an annual flu shot (unless, for health reasons, the flu shot is contraindicated for that student).

COVID-19 Vaccination

The school requires all age-eligible students to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, subject to the exemptions discussed below. Students are considered fully vaccinated two weeks following the final dose of any series authorized for their age group. Parents must upload the student's vaccination card to Magnus Health. The school reserves the right to require students to receive a booster or additional dose when eligible and available.

Exemption from Vaccination

Consistent with its policies and applicable law, Potomac will accommodate students for the 2023-24 school year who:

(1) cannot safely receive the COVID-19 vaccine due to a medical condition and/or have been advised by their medical professional that they should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine; or

(2) have an existing religious exemption on file with the school that was applied to other childhood vaccines.

Parents seeking an exemption for their student should contact Health Services Manager Danielle Donaldson. Parents seeking a medical exemption must provide documentation signed by the student's medical provider.

Upon receipt of an application request, the school will engage in an interactive process to determine whether to grant exemption from this policy as an accommodation, including identifying alternative accommodations that would not pose an undue hardship on the school and would not pose a direct threat to the health and safety of the school's employees, students, and community.

Food Allergies

Potomac strives to protect the well-being of students with food allergies. Teachers, administrators, and school staff, including bus drivers and coaches, receive first aid training, which includes discussion of the symptoms of severe allergic reactions and the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector (Epi-pen). All students with known food allergies should have an Emergency Action Plan on file with their Epi-pen in the Health Services Office. Parents are asked to discuss their child's specific allergies with the school nurse and the classroom teacher or advisor.

Snacks and Class Celebrations

Although Potomac is not a nut-free school, we are mindful of allergen concerns. Snacks provided by the school in LS and MS are nut-free. In the other divisions, however, the snacks vary and may include allergens. (Snacks are available to IS and US students via vending machines, and the Panther Pirequiresshould teach their children to read ingredient labels carefully and avoid products with their allergens.

Birthday snacks and other special treats to be shared at school must be nut-free and include an ingredient list. This includes snacks made at home. *The provision of birthday snacks must be coordinated with the division, and only single-serve items (e.g., cupcakes) will be allowed.*

Lunch

The **hot lunch** served to LS, MS, IS, and US students through Meriwether Godsey (MG) is nut-free. Allergens present in the lunch program can be checked online via MyMenu, MG's menu, and nutrition portal, which can be accessed via CampusNET. MG labels for the following food allergens: egg, fish, gluten, milk, peanut, shellfish, soy, tree nuts, and wheat.

There are peanut-free tables for student use in each Potomac cafeteria. The Upper School cafeteria (where grades 7-12 dine) also offers gluten-free toasters and nut-free, sesame-free microwaves for

students with food allergies. Peanut butter is available to students in the US cafeteria at a separate counter space.

Field Trips and After-School Events

Students' Epi-pens will follow them on LS, MS, and IS field trips during the school day. US students are responsible for bringing their own Epi-pens on school outings.

Some school-sponsored activities and events occur after dismissal or when school is not in session. Availability of an LS, MS, or IS student's stored Epi-pen for these events will be coordinated by the school nurse and the teacher or advisor. Parents are asked to contact the school nurse with any questions or concerns.

Accommodations for Students

Potomac is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities are provided equal access to the school's programs and services in accordance with applicable law. For students who need additional support or curricular adjustments, the school may require appropriate professional documentation regarding the student's needs.

In all instances, the school will make reasonable accommodations to enable a student to participate in the program, where doing so does not pose an undue burden to the school or a threat to the safety of its students.

The Potomac School does not offer or recognize Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Potomac does offer Intervention Plans (IPs) in the lower divisions or Individual Academic Plans (IAPs) in the upper divisions, which are school-specific plans that list accommodations and areas of strength/need/teaching strategies for all students with a diagnosis. Accommodations that the school may provide in response to a documented need include

- extended time for in-class tests and exams
- preferential classroom seating
- use of laptops, adaptive technology, and software
- use of a calculator when appropriate
- an alternative testing location

While the school is able to provide certain accommodations, the decision whether to grant accommodations for PSAT, SAT, ACT, or AP exams lies solely with those administering organizations, not the school.

Even after supportive services and accommodations have been put in place, a student may still struggle to meet Potomac's academic and community requirements and expectations satisfactorily. In such instances, the school may notify the student's parents that the accommodations put in place may not suffice to ensure the student's success at the school. At that time, parents will be asked to engage in a dialogue to determine whether the school is able to provide any other accommodations that would help the student to meet its academic and community requirements or whether it is in the student's best interests to remain enrolled.

School Counselors

Potomac's counselors provide services to promote the healthy development of all students. They work with students to address social and emotional issues that impact the school experience and, when necessary, provide a bridge between outside mental health support and the school.

Counseling at school is intended to be short-term and specific. Students needing longer-term support or support related to non-school-related issues may be referred to private mental health providers.

Counselors work in collaboration with many members of the school community, including teachers, division heads, learning specialists, and nurses, and partner with families and outside mental health professionals to provide consistent service and support for students and to assess and address mental health needs that arise. The counselors' role varies by division and the developmental needs of students.

Counselors strive to honor privacy and confidentiality. As is developmentally appropriate for the student, certain information shared with the school counselor is confidential, and the student's privacy is guarded in accordance with law, ethics, and school rules. Families and students should be aware, however, that there are limits to what can be kept confidential:

- The counselor may share information when there is concern about possible harm to self or others or if someone is likely to harm or is harming another student.
- Counselors, like all school personnel, are obligated to report suspected abuse or neglect and will share information as required by law.
- The counselor may also share information when consulting with other school employees with the goal of supporting and advocating for students' emotional, physical, psychological, social, and academic needs.

Volunteering

Potomac is fortunate to have a large and dedicated corps of parent volunteers. Their help is vital, and we are deeply grateful for all they do. The Parent Association (PA) coordinates volunteer work on many community events; parents interested in volunteering at the school should contact the parent representative for their child's grade or the Advancement Office.

Because the safety and well-being of our students is Potomac's first priority, we conduct background checks on a limited number of parents who volunteer at the school. We do not take this step lightly; public and independent schools across the country use such checks effectively, and we believe they can play a small but important role in keeping our students safe.

Any volunteer who may work with students in one-on-one situations must undergo the same two background checks that we require of Potomac employees: 1) a check of FBI records using fingerprints, and 2) a check of local and state criminal records through IntelliCorp, an accredited and nationally recognized company used by many schools and businesses.

Most volunteers do not work in roles that require a background check. We will conduct background checks only for volunteers who have direct contact with students and may occasionally be alone with a student or work with limited supervision from a Potomac employee. Such volunteers include those who chaperone overnight outings, lead student clubs, or help coach a sports team. The background checks, which are free of charge, will be handled with the utmost concern for privacy and confidentiality. If asked by a division head or other administrator to be checked, the parent will be guided through the process by the school's Human Resources Office, which manages background checks for Potomac employees.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

1. I/we agree to treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, and consideration.
2. I/we agree to share with teachers and/or school administrators concerns that I/we may have related to student welfare and/or safety.
3. I/we agree to observe confidentiality in respect to sensitive and/or personal information gained through participation as a volunteer. All information held by Potomac should be handled with care.
4. I/we agree to comply with the mandatory reporting regulations of the Commonwealth of Virginia, which require that I/we report suspected child abuse and cooperate fully in any investigation.

Fundraising

The Advancement Office works with the head of school, the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and volunteers to support the school's annual operating needs and secure capital gifts to build Potomac's endowment and facilities. Any additional fundraising initiatives must be coordinated through the director of advancement and the division head.

Resolving Concerns

If parents have concerns about academic or classroom matters, they should contact the student's teacher or advisor. The classroom teacher or advisor should always be the first point of contact. If the issue is not resolved, parents should then contact the appropriate dean or division head. Once this step is taken, if there is still no resolution, parents may contact the assistant head of school for academics. If necessary, the assistant head will take the matter to the head of school, whose decision shall be final and binding.

For other school-related concerns, parents should begin the conversation with the appropriate dean or division head. If this step does not resolve the situation, parents may contact the associate head of school. If necessary, the associate head will take the matter to the head of school, whose decision shall be final and binding.

Division Information and Policies

Lower School

Attendance

School hours are 8:15 am to 3:15 pm. Carpool for kindergarteners and their siblings begins at 8:00 am and ends at 8:15 am. Our reading, writing, and math specialists provide intervention support from 8:00 am to 8:40 am to those students recommended to receive such support by our Lower School Support Team. Homeroom teachers provide students with "morning work" or choice times beginning at 8:00 am and hold a "morning meeting" shortly after the bell rings at 8:15 am. Children who arrive at school late miss this important classroom community-building part of the day. Lower School students will be dismissed at 3:10 pm to get to their buses before the older students.

Regular attendance is critical to your child's success. Parents are asked to ensure that appointments and family trips do not conflict with the school calendar. If this is unavoidable, the head of lower school and the classroom teacher must be notified in advance. Teachers will provide students with work and support upon their return during illness or family emergencies but are not required or expected to provide work for students absent from school for reasons other than illness or family emergency.

Reporting Absence or Late Arrival

Transportation changes affecting morning bus transportation (absence or late arrival) should be reported using the SchoolPass app by 7:00 am. If a student arrives late, the parent/guardian must sign them in at the LS office so we can make attendance modifications.

Early Departure

If a student must leave school early, the LS office must be notified in advance. When picking the student up, the parent/guardian must sign them out at the LS office. If the student returns during the school day, they will need to sign back in at the LS office.

Note that transportation changes (such as a student being picked up early to go to an appointment and thus not riding the bus home) must be reported using the SchoolPass app. Changes affecting morning bus transportation (absence, late arrival) should be reported by 7:00 am, while changes affecting afternoon transportation should be reported by 12:30 pm. Students who arrive late should sign in at the Lower School office before heading to their classrooms.

Reports

In February and June, teachers evaluate students' progress in written reports available to parents through the Parent Portal on CampusNET. These reports constitute an ongoing account of a student's development at Potomac, and a copy is placed in the student's permanent file. The reports reflect how fully a student is

realizing their potential. Reports are also intended to foster growth by helping students set goals, assume responsibility for learning, and solve problems in school life. Each student's academic achievement, effort, work habits, and social-emotional skills are reported through developmental checklists and narrative comments. Grade promotion and issuance of re-enrollment contracts will be subject to a review of the student's performance.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are an important component of students' academic and social success. They enhance communication regarding the evaluation process and are essential to developing ongoing growth and improvement plans. The Lower School offers fall and winter conferences in which parents and teachers thoroughly discuss a student's academic progress and social achievement. Parents should initiate additional discussion with a teacher by calling or emailing to schedule an appointment. Conferences may be conducted virtually or in person.

Class Placement

Class placement is a complex process involving many factors. At the close of every school year, regular and special subject teachers at each grade level confer with the head of lower school to organize classes for the following year. We carefully consider each child's placement. Parents are asked to refrain from submitting teacher requests to faculty, staff, or administrators; we cannot honor specific requests for placement, and all placement decisions are final.

Prior to Labor Day, students are notified of class placements through a letter from the teacher. Class lists are posted on CampusNET on the Saturday before Labor Day.

Homework

Lower School students experience a full academic day at school, so when homework is assigned, it is intended to be purposeful and developmentally appropriate, thus strengthening the school-home connection.

Nightly reading is introduced in kindergarten and first grade to help children practice literacy skills, foster reading habits, and build stamina. Students learn to assume responsibility for selecting "just right" books at the end of the day and returning them to school the next morning. Students are expected to read and talk about these books with a parent, practicing fluency and phrasing as they read. The selected books are intended to be easy so the child can read them independently. Parents are also encouraged to read **to** their children regularly, to reinforce literacy skills and nurture a love of reading. Written homework is not assigned in kindergarten and first grade.

In the second and third grades, students continue to read for a minimum of 20 minutes every evening as part of their homework. Students' reading becomes more self-directed as they develop and recognize their own reading identities. At times, teachers may also assign written homework to provide students with opportunities to apply and extend previously-taught concepts. Written homework should not take

more than 15 minutes for the child to complete. Please communicate with the classroom teacher if a child struggles to complete written homework within this time frame.

It is helpful for parents to assist their child in developing a consistent homework routine. Asking children to explain their thinking builds metacognition, which further enhances learning. Establishing a calm and supportive atmosphere and a comfortable space to work will contribute to a positive homework experience.

Bus Behavior

At the beginning of the school year, Lower School students, teachers, and the head of lower school meet as a community to discuss guidelines and expectations for safe and respectful behavior on our buses. We view the bus ride to and from school as part of the school day; thus, students are expected to conduct themselves responsibly and respectfully while traveling on the bus. For specific behavioral expectations, please see the “Behavior on Buses and at Bus Stops” section on page 8 of this Handbook.

In September, students will receive a copy of the Lower School Bus Charter. Each student will be expected to discuss the charter with a parent and return a signed copy to the school. All students will be held accountable for the behavioral expectations listed in this Handbook and the charter.

Standardized Testing

Standardized tests are used to measure both individual achievement and curriculum effectiveness. At Potomac, the Milestone Assessment of the Educational Records Bureau is administered to third grade students. This is our students’ first experience with standardized testing in a group, and it is one of *many* measures we use to monitor student progress. While the Milestone Assessment does not measure everything a child knows or is being taught, it does give parents and the school a glimpse into how a student is progressing compared to others in the national population of independent school students.

Outside Testing

At the recommendation of the Lower School Support Team (the head of lower school, the K-6 director of learning support, the classroom teacher, the counselor, reading specialists, and math coordinators), the school may advise parents to have their child engage in educational testing with a trained specialist, who will then make a confidential report for parents and relevant school personnel. Parents may be expected to pay a portion or all of the cost for such testing. The results of such testing may be used to assist the school in forming an accommodation plan consistent with the school’s policy on accommodations.

Parents are strongly urged to confer with the head of lower school about the school’s testing guidelines *prior* to undertaking any outside testing they plan to submit to the school. Reports from outside testing, whether done by individuals or agencies, must be shared in full with the school and must conform to the school’s established guidelines if recommendations are to be considered for inclusion in the student’s educational plan.

Tutoring

Teachers will provide support to students during the school day. At times, a student may need additional individualized support; in such cases, the school may suggest tutoring. Lower School teachers may only tutor Potomac School students (at a rate of \$90 per hour) if the Lower School Support Team determines that tutoring is necessary. Please contact the Lower School dean or the K-6 director of learning support with any questions about tutoring.

Physical Education

The physical education program in Lower School is focused on developing gross motor skills and coordination. We also consider enhanced self-esteem, the development of a cooperative spirit, and sportsmanship to be important goals. The objective of the program is to help each child achieve personal fitness and learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The program provides fun activities that enable all children to work toward their potential in a safe, supportive environment.

Cell Phones, Smartwatches, and Electronics

The Lower School understands the benefits of responsible use of technology and finds meaningful ways to incorporate it within our curricula. We also understand the importance of social-emotional skills and the social interactions needed to aid in developing these skills. To this end, smartwatches are not allowed, and cell phones are strongly discouraged. If a Lower School student has a cell phone, it must be turned off and kept in their backpack at all times, both in school and on the bus, except in an emergency.

School-provided iPads and laptops may be used during the school day for academic purposes, and all such technology use will be adult-supervised.

We encourage parents to help us enforce this no-school-use policy by refraining from calling or texting their children on their personal devices during the school day. This simple act will eliminate student worry about missing a call, text, or post. If a parent needs to contact their child, they should contact the Lower School administrative assistant, and we will make sure these messages are shared.

Lunch and Snacks

An optional hot lunch program is offered by semester or for the full year for Lower School students. Students also have the option to bring lunch from home each day. Student lunches should not contain anything that requires refrigeration or reheating. A beverage may be included (no soda, please), or the student may use their water bottle. Please do not send glass containers. Low-fat milk is provided for all students during lunch.

Please ensure that your child eats a good breakfast so that they will be alert and maintain concentration throughout the day. The school provides a small, individually wrapped morning snack; students may bring a snack from home if preferred.

Birthday Snacks

Birthdays are important occasions in the lives of Lower School children. On their special day, children are invited to bring a snack from home to share with their classmates. Birthday snacks and other special treats to be shared at school must be nut-free and include an ingredient list; this includes snacks made at home. Due to the large number of birthdays throughout the year, we are unable to invite parents to school to serve birthday snacks. We try to keep these celebrations low-key in order to protect learning time.

The provision of birthday snacks must be coordinated with the division, and single-serve items (e.g., cupcakes) are preferred.

Water Bottles

Because growing brains and bodies need hydration, we ask that every child bring a filled, reusable, labeled water bottle to school each day.

Assemblies

Assemblies are essential to the fabric of our Lower School culture. On many Fridays throughout the school year, we have Lower School Sharing Assemblies, where students, faculty, and parents gather as a community. The nature of our “sharing” varies from grade to grade but is usually tied to the curriculum. Sharing assemblies help students develop confidence and poise when presenting to others, reinforce the importance of being respectful audience members, and fosters a strong sense of community.

Parents are invited to attend certain assemblies via *Paw Prints* and communications from the classroom teacher. We will continue to provide a livestream option for family members who are unable to attend.

Premium seating for certain assemblies (dance assembly, grade-level plays, the Kindergarten Circus) tends to be in high demand. In the spirit of community, we ask that families refrain from holding seats for guests who will arrive later. Please consider arriving early to get your preferred seat.

We ask that parents and visitors refrain from using flash photography during assemblies and class plays.

We strongly discourage parents from pulling their children from class to attend assemblies of siblings in other divisions, as this disrupts instructional time.

Clothing and Dress Code

Lower School students do not wear uniforms. Our students are engaged in active learning, both indoors and outdoors. Students are expected to wear neat, comfortable, and appropriate clothing for their activity level.

Suggested attire includes

- shorts or slacks

- knit or woven shirts, with or without collars
- skirts, dresses, or jumpers
- closed-toed shoes or sneakers

The following items are not permitted:

- denim jeans or shorts
- shirts with inappropriate words or images
- shirts exposing the midriff
- halter tops
- sneakers with wheels
- heels
- flip flops
- dangly earrings

Each season, an extra set of clothing, including socks and underwear, should be sent to the classroom in a labeled Ziploc bag. During the winter months, our students do go outside, so children should be dressed appropriately for the cold. During snowy weather, students should bring snow pants and boots to school.

All clothing, outdoor apparel, water bottles, and personal items must be labeled with the student's first and last name.

Extracurricular Activities

There are many after-school activities at Potomac available for an additional fee, including ETC (Education That Continues) enrichment classes, private music lessons, and the Extended Day Program. For more information, please see CampusNET.

Outside Activities and Parties

The school day ends at 3:15 pm. All extracurricular activities must be scheduled after school hours. Early pick-ups to accommodate after-school sports or lessons are not permitted.

Many social activities involving Potomac students, such as birthday parties or other group events, are not school sponsored, yet the nature of these activities often extends to conversations during the school day. As part of our mission, Potomac seeks to foster a respectful and inclusive community of learners. With this in mind, we ask parents to consider the inclusiveness of birthday parties and other group social events or activities involving Potomac students. It is important that complete groups of students (for example, all girls in the class, all boys in the class, or the entire class) have the opportunity to participate so that no child is excluded. *Please ensure that party invitations and gift exchanges are handled outside of school.*

Gifts for Teachers and Students

Because exchanging gifts is a very personal matter, we ask that children not bring gifts to school, either for one another or for their teachers. It is Potomac's belief that the best expression of appreciation is something a child has created. Similarly, a personal note of thanks from a parent or child is always meaningful to our teachers.

Interactions with Others

Interactions with fellow students, teachers, and visitors should be marked by kindness, civility, and generosity of spirit. Aggressive physical behavior is considered serious misconduct and will lead to significant disciplinary action. Inappropriate touching, harassment, bullying, and the like are unacceptable, particularly based on gender; age; or racial, religious, or socioeconomic differences. This policy applies to student interactions at school and during school-sponsored activities.

If a student threatens another student or engages in aggressive physical behavior, they may be removed from classes, and parents will be called to take the student home. The head of lower school will determine when and under what conditions the student may return to school.

Middle School

Attendance

Regular attendance is critical to your child's success. School hours are 8:15 am to 3:15 pm. MS homeroom teachers generally hold a "morning meeting" at 8:15. Children who arrive at school late miss this important part of the day.

Parents are asked to ensure that appointments and family trips do not conflict with the school calendar. If an extended trip during the school year is unavoidable, the head of middle school and the classroom teacher must be notified in advance. Teachers will provide students with work and support upon their return during illness or family emergencies but are not required or expected to provide work for students absent from school for reasons other than illness or family emergency.

When injury and/or illness causes a student to miss an extended period of time or intermittent absences begin to amass over time, the Middle School leadership team will consult with the student's teachers and counselor and connect with the student's parents to discuss a plan for the student to complete their work and meet determined course requirements.

Recognizing that the particular circumstances of each situation may vary considerably: the Middle School has adopted the following guidelines for students who miss excessive amounts of class periods over the course of the year:

If a student misses more than 10% of any given school year (between twelve and fifteen days and/or classes), the Middle School dean and learning specialist will consult with the parent(s)/guardian(s), the student's teachers, and the counselor. Together, they will review the attendance policy and develop a plan for improved attendance for the remainder of the school year that will be shared with the student.

If a student misses more than 15% of their classes (between eighteen to thirty days), the head of middle school will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss options for the remainder of the school year. These options may include supplementing work after school or on weekends, moving the student to Pass/Fail (for second semester sixth graders), deferring some work to later in the school year or the summer, or not receiving credit for the course(s). Extensive absence may affect promotion to the next grade.

Early Departure

If a student needs to leave school early (for example, for a medical appointment), the MS office must be notified in advance. When picking the student up, the parent/guardian must sign them out at the MS office. If the student returns during the school day, they will need to sign back in at the office.

Note that transportation changes (such as a student being picked up early to go to an appointment and thus not riding the bus home) must be reported using the SchoolPass app. Changes affecting morning bus transportation (absence, late arrival) should be reported by 7:00 am, while changes affecting afternoon transportation should be reported by 12:30 pm. Students who arrive late should sign in at the Middle School office before heading to their classrooms.

Reports

Twice a year, in late January/early February and June, teachers evaluate students' progress in written reports, which are available to parents through the Parent Portal on CampusNET. These reports constitute an ongoing account of a student's development at Potomac, and a copy is placed in the student's permanent file. The evaluations reflect how fully the student is realizing their potential. They are also intended to foster growth by helping students set goals, assume responsibility for learning, and solve problems in school life.

The academic achievement, effort, work habits, and social-emotional skills of the student are reported through developmental checklists and narrative comments. Letter grades are introduced during the second half of the sixth grade year for core academic subjects. In addition, parents receive notes on student progress from the homeroom teacher and the special subject teachers during the fall parent-teacher conferences. Grade promotion and issuance of re-enrollment contracts will be subject to a review of the student's performance.

In addition to these formal semester reports, all middle school students receive a mid-semester interim report on their main areas of strength and growth, which is reviewed in the fall parent/teacher conference. In addition, sixth grade families receive an interim report in the spring for those classes that will give grades on the June progress report.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences continue the evaluation process and are essential to implementing suggestions for improvement. The Middle School has fall and winter conference days, during which the parents and homeroom teacher have the opportunity to thoroughly discuss a student's effort, achievement, and social skills. Sixth graders lead the winter conference with their parents. Parents may also initiate additional conferences; a parent should feel free to start a discussion whenever needed by emailing the teacher to schedule an appointment. Conferences may be conducted virtually or in person.

Class Placement

Class placement is a complex process involving many factors. At the close of every school year, homeroom and special subject teachers at each grade level confer with the head of middle school and academic dean to organize classes for the following year. We carefully consider the placement of each child. We cannot honor specific parent requests for placement, and all class placements are final.

Prior to Labor Day, students are notified of class placements through a letter from the homeroom teacher. Class lists are also posted on CampusNET on the Saturday before Labor Day.

Homework

Because the development of effective work habits is vital to educational success, Potomac urges parents to arrange a regular time and a quiet, comfortable place for homework to be completed without distractions or interruptions. Under normal circumstances, fourth grade homework consists of approximately 30 minutes of assigned work and 30 minutes of reading. Fifth grade homework consists of up to 45 to 60 minutes of assigned work and 30 minutes of reading. Sixth grade students spend 1.5 to 2 hours on homework, including 30 minutes of reading.

In all Middle School grades, every attempt is made to limit weekend homework, with the exception of independent reading. At times, however, students will need to complete long-term projects or assignments over a weekend – especially if they have not worked on them during the week. This is particularly true for sixth graders. Any concerns about homework should be discussed with the student’s teacher(s).

If parents would like to request homework for a child who is sick at home, they should call the Middle School office before 10:00 am. The homework will be available from the administrative assistant by 2:00 pm, or it can be sent home with a sibling or neighbor.

Bus Behavior

At the beginning of the school year, Middle School students, teachers, and the head of middle school will meet as a community to discuss guidelines and expectations for safe and respectful behavior on our buses. We view the bus ride to and from school, as well as on field trips, as part of the school day; thus, students are expected to conduct themselves responsibly and respectfully while traveling on the bus. For a list of specific behavioral expectations, please see the “Behavior on Buses and at Bus Stops” section on page 8 of this Handbook.

Standardized Testing

Standardized tests are used to measure both individual achievement and curriculum effectiveness. Testing can indicate strengths and weaknesses and approximate a student’s standing in the national population of independent school students. While these tests are useful guides for improving student achievement, the information they provide about students is limited.

The Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP) of the Educational Records Bureau is administered at school in February in grades 4 through 6. The results, which are mailed to parents shortly after completion of the test battery, become part of the student’s individual record. Other standardized tests may be employed as needed as diagnostic tools to measure individual students’ progress.

Outside Testing

At the recommendation of the faculty, counselor, head of middle school, K-6 director of learning support, and/or learning specialist, the school may advise parents to have their child engage in educational testing with a trained specialist, who will then make a confidential report for parents and relevant school personnel. Parents may be expected to pay a portion or all of the cost of such testing. The results may be used to assist Potomac in forming an accommodation plan consistent with the school's policy on accommodations.

Parents are strongly urged to confer with the head of middle school, academic dean, and/or K-6 director of learning support about the school's testing guidelines *prior* to undertaking any outside testing that they plan to submit to the school. Reports from outside testing, whether done by individuals or agencies, must be shared in full with the school and must conform to the school's established guidelines if they are to be considered for inclusion in the student's educational plan.

Tutoring

Teachers will provide support to students during the school day. At times, a student may need additional individualized support; in such cases, the school may suggest tutoring. Middle School teachers may only tutor Potomac students (at a rate of \$90 per hour) if the MS Support Team determines that tutoring is necessary and cannot tutor students whom they teach. Please contact the Middle School academic dean or the K-6 director of learning support with any questions about tutoring.

Physical Education

Through physical education, Middle School students learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle, as well as methods to achieve personal fitness. We also consider enhanced self-esteem, the development of a cooperative spirit, and sportsmanship to be important goals. A sports-specific curriculum enables each individual to develop their potential in a variety of skills. Teamwork is stressed, as well as individual excellence and effort.

Cell Phones, Smartwatches, and Electronics

We strongly discourage Middle School students from bringing cell phones and smartwatches to school. If a student does have a cell phone or smartwatch, it must be turned off and in their backpack at all times while in school, except in case of an emergency.

Students may use e-readers, such as iPads, for reading only and only with the permission of their teacher.

We encourage parents to help us enforce this no-school-use policy by not calling or texting their children on their personal devices during the school day. This simple act will eliminate their worry about missing a call, text, or post. If a parent needs to contact their child, they should contact the MS office, and we will make sure these messages are shared.

School-provided iPads and laptops may be used during the school day for academic purposes, and all such technology use will be adult-supervised.

Lunch and Snacks

Middle School students may sign up for the fee-based hot lunch program or bring their lunch from home. Lunches brought from home should not include glass containers or items requiring refrigeration or reheating. Low-fat milk and water are provided for all students. Students are not permitted to forego or trade lunch.

Please ensure that your child eats a good breakfast so that they will be alert and maintain concentration throughout the day. The school provides a small, individually wrapped, nut-free morning snack; students may bring a snack from home if preferred.

Birthday Snacks

On their birthdays, some children bring a snack from home to share with their classmates. Birthday snacks and other special treats to be shared at school must be nut-free and include an ingredient list; this includes snacks made at home. Due to the large number of birthdays throughout the year, we are unable to invite parents to school to serve birthday snacks. We try to keep these celebrations low-key in order to protect learning time.

The provision of birthday snacks must be coordinated with the teacher and/or division ahead of time, and single-serve items (e.g., cupcakes, donuts) are preferred.

Water Bottles

Because growing brains and bodies need hydration, we ask that every child bring a filled, reusable water bottle to school each day. The bottle must be labeled with the child's first and last name in order to be returned if misplaced.

Assemblies

There are two types of assemblies that typically take place during a given cycle. Some assemblies involve performance -- class plays, holiday celebrations, "sharing assemblies," and visiting guest performers. Parents are typically invited to attend these assemblies, which are also livestreamed. Teachers will let parents know when your child's class play is taking place; these assemblies typically take place on Fridays, with some exceptions. Other assemblies are used for smaller presentations, sharing, or times when the head of middle school connects with students or discusses an important issue. Parents generally do not attend these assemblies but will be invited if their children are presenting. These smaller gatherings will usually take place during the Clubs/Activities period held on Day 1 of the 6-day cycle.

Clothing and Uniforms

Middle School students wear uniforms for their regular school day – the full uniform on days when there is no scheduled physical education (PE) class and the PE uniform on days when physical education is scheduled. Parents are asked to purchase certain uniform items from Lands' End, our authorized uniform distributor, or through our used uniform store, the Panther Post, in order to ensure uniformity

of clothing. These items include the jumper and all components of the PE uniform. All other items may be purchased from regular retail stores.

When students enter Potomac, they are assigned to either the Red or Blue team, Potomac's traditional intramural teams. The divisional administrative assistant can provide your child's team assignment. Short- or long-sleeved t-shirts for these teams (used for PE classes and special events) must be ordered through Lands' End, along with the MS physical education uniform (the Panther Post also retains these items). Detailed uniform requirements can be found on the Middle School information page on CampusNET.

Gently used uniforms are offered for sale by the Panther Post, located in the Middle School Square. The Panther Post is operated by volunteers from the Parent Association.

Extracurricular Activities

There are numerous after-school activities available at Potomac for an additional fee, including ETC (Education That Continues) enrichment classes, private music lessons, and the Extended Day Program. Please see CampusNET for more information.

Outside Activities and Parties

The school day ends at 3:15 pm. All extracurricular activities must be scheduled after school hours. Early pick-ups to accommodate after-school sports or lessons are not permitted. Parents may request a change through SchoolPass and move their students to shuttle bus service to expedite getting to their after-school activity.

Many social activities involving Potomac students, such as birthday parties or other group events, are not school sponsored, yet the nature of these activities often extends to conversations during the school day. As part of our mission, Potomac seeks to foster a respectful and inclusive community of learners. With this in mind, we ask parents to consider carefully the inclusiveness of birthday parties and other group social events or activities involving Potomac students. It is important that complete groups of students (for example, all girls in the class, all boys in the class, or the entire class) have the opportunity to participate so that no child is excluded. *Please make sure that party invitations and gift exchanges are handled outside of school.*

Interactions with Others

Interactions with others, whether in person or online, should be marked by respect, empathy, and generosity of spirit. Instances of harassment, hazing, bullying, or the like, whether physical or verbal, are unacceptable.

The following offenses will constitute a major rules violation: 1) harassment based upon gender, sexual orientation, age, race, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, or other such identity-based harm; discriminatory or demeaning language in reference to anyone; racial, ethnic, and religious epithets and

other slurs associated with an individual's identity; 2) inappropriate sexual behavior, even if consensual, and sexual assault, harassment, or misconduct; 3) aggressive physical behavior, such as fighting, and potentially catastrophic behavior, such as bringing incendiary devices, weapons, or look-alikes to school.

Violation of any of these rules may result in the immediate removal of the student from classes. When a student is removed from classes, the parents will be called to take the student home. A decision about returning to school will be made by the Middle School head. Time missed during the removal from school will not count toward any subsequent days of suspension decided upon as part of the school's disciplinary response.

As a school community that prides itself on the quality of its personal relationships, Potomac has a zero-tolerance policy for violations of the aforementioned rules, meaning that there will be consequences for any violation. Probation, suspension, and expulsion are possible consequences, even for a first-time offense.

The school does not generally initiate disciplinary procedures for infractions of major rules that occur during out-of-school situations. However, the Intermediate School head, in consultation with other administrators, may deem it necessary to address some major rule infractions that occur outside of school should they be deemed to harm or threaten the safety of the Potomac community or negatively affect on-campus relationships.

Theft and Vandalism

Students must respect the property of community members and the school at all times. Instances of graffiti, vandalism or theft will result in significant disciplinary action.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is integral to Potomac's mission. The school expects students to provide honest and complete responses to questions and submit academic work that is solely the product of their own effort.

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to copying answers from a peer, inaccurately citing or crediting sources, sharing or receiving information about an assessment, using inappropriate resources, and seeking the assistance of a parent, tutor, peer, or AI on an assignment where the guideline prescribed by the teacher was to complete it solely on their own.

When instances of academic dishonesty are suspected, the teacher and/or middle school dean will engage in a conversation with the student. If the conversation affirms the concern regarding academic dishonesty, the student will meet with the head of middle school and complete a written reflection. In addition, parents will be contacted. The student will be responsible for re-doing the assignment for reduced credit. Any subsequent breach of academic integrity will result in significant disciplinary action.

Substance Use

Drug, alcohol, and tobacco education is part of Potomac's health curriculum. Parents are encouraged to learn about the signs and symptoms of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and educate their children about its dangers. The school's Counseling Office and administration have resources to help families.

Potomac students may not 1) use, possess, or distribute alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, inhalants, marijuana, tobacco products (which includes e-cigarettes or vaporizers), or any related paraphernalia; 2) use any prescription medication or over-the-counter medication in any manner or for any reason other than its intended purpose (including a student's use of prescription medications that were not prescribed for them); or 3) be under the influence of any of these products while on school grounds, at school-sponsored functions and events (including school competitions and field trips), or otherwise within the school's jurisdiction. This policy is a zero-tolerance policy, meaning that there will be consequences for any violation, including a first-time offense. The range of penalties includes probation, suspension, and expulsion. Any student who has previously been suspended for such an infraction will likely be recommended for expulsion.

The school will contact parents directly when it receives information regarding off-campus drinking or drug or tobacco use. If the school learns of a pattern of substance abuse, it will likely mandate outside drug and alcohol counseling as a requirement for the student's continued enrollment.

Gifts for Teachers and Students

Because exchanging gifts is a very personal matter, we ask that students not bring gifts to school, either for one another or for their teachers. It is Potomac's belief that the best expression of appreciation is something a child has created. A personal note of thanks from a parent or student is always meaningful to our teachers.

Intermediate School

Attendance

School hours are 8:15 am to 3:15 pm. Regular attendance is critical to your child's success. Parents are asked to ensure that appointments and family trips do not conflict with the school calendar. If an extended trip during the school year is unavoidable, the head of intermediate school, the advisor, and IS office need to be notified in advance.

Teachers will provide students with work and support upon their return during illness or family emergencies but are not required or expected to provide work for students absent from school for reasons other than illness or family emergency.

When injury and/or illness causes a student to miss an extended period of time or intermittent absences begin to amass over time, the Intermediate School learning specialist will consult with the student's advisor, teachers, and counselor and meet with the student's parents to discuss a plan for the student to complete their work and meet determined course requirements.

Recognizing that the particular circumstances of each situation may vary considerably, the Intermediate School has adopted the following guidelines for students who miss excessive amounts of class periods over the course of the year:

If a student misses more than 10% of any given class (approximately eight class periods), the Intermediate School academic dean and Intermediate School learning specialist will consult with the parent(s)/guardian(s), the student's advisor, teachers, & the Intermediate School counselor. Together, they will review the attendance policy and develop a plan for improved attendance for the remainder of the course that will be shared with the student.

If a student misses more than 15% of their classes (approximately 12 class periods), the Intermediate School head will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss options for the remainder of the course. These options may include moving the student to Pass/Fail, deferring some work to later in the year or the summer, or not receiving credit for the course. Extensive absence may affect promotion to the next grade.

Early Departure

If a student is planning to leave school early, a parent or guardian must notify the IS office. When leaving, the parent/guardian must sign the student out at the IS office. If the student returns during the school day, they will need to sign back in at the office.

Note that transportation changes (such as a student being picked up early to go to a medical appointment and thus not riding the bus home) must be reported using the SchoolPass app. Changes affecting

morning bus transportation (absence, late arrival) should be reported by 7:00 am, while changes affecting afternoon transportation should be reported by 12:30 pm.

Ridesharing and Taxi Services

For school-related events, Potomac will work to ensure that students are transported by Potomac School bus or another vetted transportation option. When there are no other viable options, a teacher may travel with a group of students via taxi or ridesharing service.

Most ridesharing services (Uber, Lyft, etc.) do not permit students under the age of 18 to travel without an adult. It is the responsibility of the family and student to comply with these stated policies of the ridesharing service. Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, use of ridesharing or taxi services by a student shall be at the family and student's own risk.

Anyone using a ridesharing service must meet the vehicle at the security gate; rideshare providers will not be permitted to drive up to specific buildings. In consideration of Potomac's traffic mitigation agreement with the Evermay community, any use of ridesharing or taxi services to travel to and from campus is strongly discouraged.

Reports

The Intermediate School instructional program is designed to meet the academic needs of all students while challenging them to achieve at a higher level each day. Student grades are a reflection of a student's progress and achievement in each course. Grades are issued regularly and are reported to parents through academic updates, progress reports, and report cards. Faculty use academic updates to inform parents about a positive academic outcome or a situation that needs attention.

Classroom teachers evaluate students' progress in written reports posted in the Parent Portal on CampusNET at the end of each semester. Parents also receive an interim checklist report in the fall. These reports constitute an ongoing account of a student's development at Potomac. The evaluations indicate how fully the student is realizing their potential. Evaluations are also intended to foster growth by helping students set goals, assume responsibility for learning, and solve problems in school life.

The reports from each subject teacher contain descriptions of the student's performance, attitude toward schoolwork, and achievement. A letter grade is given for each academic subject each semester; a separate grade is given in June as an evaluation of the whole year's work. Teachers also write academic updates as needed when they note a significant improvement or downturn in a student's work. Students are considered in satisfactory academic standing if their term grade in each course is in the "C" range or above. Grade promotion and issuance of reenrollment contracts will be subject to a review of academic performance.

Conferences

Parent-advisor conferences are an important component of the evaluation process. They help to contextualize the evaluation and are essential to implementing suggestions for improvement. A candid and constructive relationship between parents and the school is essential to student success and is a fundamental part of the Potomac ethos. Whether in the formal setting of a scheduled conference or in casual conversation, parents and teachers have many opportunities to connect and are encouraged to foster cooperative working relationships. Conferences may be conducted in person or virtually.

The Advisor System

The advisor-advisee system, which pairs students with faculty members, is an integral part of the Intermediate School. The advisor serves as the liaison between the school and the parents and takes a personal interest in the advisee and their academic, extracurricular, and social life at Potomac. It is hoped that the advisor-advisee relationship becomes a partnership of support, trust, and understanding.

Teachers periodically report to advisors about students' academic progress, and advisors maintain regular contact with students and their families.

Intermediate School Advisory Statement of Purpose

Potomac's Intermediate and Upper School advisory program plays an essential role in creating a community where every student feels affirmed, respected, and known.

The advisory program engages a network of caring adults and students who nurture productive, honest, and enduring relationships and build a culture of mutual support and cooperation within each advisory group. Through the themes of social and emotional wellness, relationships, cultural competence, digital citizenship, and learning habits, advisory reinforces the school's mission of fostering each student's intellectual growth, love of learning, and strength of character.

The advisor serves as the primary bridge between home and school. Students, parents, and advisors partner to build relationships based on communication, compassion, and trust, ultimately supporting each student's autonomy and well-being.

Homework

Because the development of effective work habits is vital to educational success, Potomac urges parents to arrange a regular time and a quiet, comfortable place for homework assignments to be completed without distractions or interruptions.

Intermediate School students will be assigned homework in preparation for class or for reinforcement of class learning; homework is usually assigned daily and posted on each teacher's Google Classroom page. Teachers are encouraged to give assignments that will take about 30 to 40 minutes per subject for the average seventh or eighth grader. Because of IS's block scheduling, students often have two nights to complete an assignment.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school if their child is spending considerably more or less time on homework than the above guidelines. Each child should have time after school for pleasure reading, creative endeavors, physical activity, and relaxation. Work habits and attitudes toward homework should be discussed at parent conferences. Homework is designed so that students learn concepts and skills, not simply perform tasks. Unless otherwise instructed, students are expected to complete their homework assignments independently. Sharing information or collaborating with others is acceptable only within guidelines prescribed by individual teachers.

Standardized Testing

Standardized tests are used to measure both individual achievement and curriculum effectiveness. Testing can indicate strengths and weaknesses and approximate a student's standing in the national population of independent school students. While these tests are useful guides for improving student achievement, the information they provide about students is limited.

The Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP) of the Educational Records Bureau is administered in the Intermediate School. Other standardized tests are employed as needed, and their results become part of the student's individual record. Test results are shared with the parents either during a conference or by mail.

Outside Testing

At the recommendation of the faculty, division head, counselor, grades 7-12 director of learning support, and/or learning specialist, the school may advise parents to have their child tested by a trained specialist, who will then make a confidential report for parents and relevant school personnel. The results of such testing may be used to assist the school in forming an accommodation plan consistent with the school's policy on accommodations. Parents may be expected to pay a portion or all of the cost of such testing.

Parents are strongly urged to confer with the head of intermediate school, grades 7-12 director of learning support, or learning specialist about the school's testing guidelines *prior* to undertaking any outside testing that they plan to submit to the school. Reports from outside testing, whether done by individuals or agencies, must be shared in full with Potomac and conform to the school's established guidelines if they are to be considered for inclusion in the student's educational plan.

Tutoring

Teachers will provide support to students during the school day. At times, a student may need additional individualized support; in such cases, the school may suggest tutoring. Intermediate School teachers may only tutor Potomac students (at a rate of \$90 per hour) if the IS Support Team determines that tutoring is necessary and cannot tutor students whom they teach. Please contact the IS learning specialist with any questions about tutoring.

Interactions with Others

Interactions with others, whether in person or online, should be marked by respect, empathy, and generosity of spirit. Instances of harassment, hazing, bullying, or the like, whether physical or verbal, are unacceptable.

The following offenses will constitute a major rules violation: 1) harassment based upon gender, sexual orientation, age, race, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, or other such identity-based harm; discriminatory or demeaning language in reference to anyone; racial, ethnic, and religious epithets and other slurs associated with an individual's identity; 2) inappropriate sexual behavior, even if consensual, and sexual assault, harassment, or misconduct; 3) aggressive physical behavior, such as fighting, and potentially catastrophic behavior, such as bringing incendiary devices, weapons, or look-alikes to school.

Violation of any of these rules may result in the immediate removal of the student from classes. When a student is removed from classes, the parents will be called to take the student home. A decision about returning to school will be made by the Intermediate School head. Time missed during the removal from school will not count toward any subsequent days of suspension decided upon as part of the school's disciplinary response.

As a school community that prides itself on the quality of its personal relationships, Potomac has a zero-tolerance policy for violations of the aforementioned rules, meaning that there will be consequences for any violation. Probation, suspension, and expulsion are possible consequences, even for a first-time offense.

The school does not generally initiate disciplinary procedures for infractions of major rules that occur during out-of-school situations. However, the Intermediate School head, in consultation with other administrators, may deem it necessary to address some major rule infractions that occur outside of school should they be deemed to harm or threaten the safety of the Potomac community or negatively affect on-campus relationships.

Theft and Vandalism

Students must respect the property of community members and the school at all times. Instances of graffiti, vandalism or theft will result in disciplinary action.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is integral to the mission of The Potomac School. The school expects students to provide honest and complete responses to questions and submit academic work that is completed with integrity.

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to copying answers from a peer, inaccurately citing or crediting sources, sharing or receiving information about an assessment, using inappropriate resources,

and seeking the unauthorized assistance of a parent, tutor, peer, or AI on an assignment where the guideline prescribed by the teacher was to complete it solely on their own.

When instances of academic dishonesty are suspected, the appropriate grade-level dean will engage in a conversation with the student. If the conversation affirms the concern regarding academic dishonesty, the student will meet with the division head and complete a written reflection. In addition, parents will be contacted. The student will be responsible for re-doing the assignment for reduced credit. Any subsequent breach of academic integrity will result in significant disciplinary action.

Substance Use

Drug, alcohol, and tobacco education is part of Potomac's health curriculum. Parents are encouraged to learn about the signs and symptoms of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and educate their children about its dangers. The school's Counseling Department and administration have resources to help families.

Potomac students may not 1) use, possess, or distribute alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, inhalants, marijuana, tobacco products (which includes e-cigarettes or vaporizers), or any related paraphernalia; 2) use any prescription medication or over-the-counter medication in any manner or for any reason other than its intended purpose (including a student's use of prescription medications that were not prescribed for them); or 3) be under the influence of any of these products while on school grounds, at school-sponsored functions and events (including school competitions and field trips), or otherwise within the school's jurisdiction. This policy is a zero-tolerance policy, meaning that there will be consequences for any violation, including a first-time offense. The range of penalties includes probation, suspension, and expulsion. Any student who has previously been suspended for such an infraction will likely be recommended for expulsion.

The school will contact parents directly when it receives information regarding off-campus drinking or drug or tobacco use. If the school learns of a pattern of substance abuse, it will likely mandate outside drug and alcohol counseling as a requirement for the student's continued enrollment.

Cell Phone, Smartwatches, and Electronics

IS students may bring a cell phone to school but may not use it after they arrive on campus in the morning. Their phones must be turned off and kept securely in their backpacks throughout the school day. There may be times when a student is permitted to use their cell phone during a class. In these instances, students may only use the phone for specific classroom tasks and return the cell phone to their backpack promptly at the end of the class. Other personal electronic devices, including smartwatches, are not permitted to be used during the school day.

After school, at the completion of classes and athletic commitments, students may have access to their phones. Students may not use their phones during ETC after school programming. Misuse of electronics will result in disciplinary action that may include detention or confiscation of the device.

Physical Education and Athletics

Because the athletics period occurs during school hours, it is considered fully part of Potomac's required program, and, as such, waivers are not granted for outside athletic endeavors, and IS class attendance policies apply. Skills and habits acquired in the classroom and on the playing field are practiced and enhanced in both arenas. We believe that hard work, personal achievement, sportsmanship, and cooperation are important to our students' development.

In the Intermediate School, students improve their fitness through physical exercise and begin to experience the benefits of competitive interscholastic athletics. The emphasis is on skill building, conditioning, teamwork, and sportsmanship. Students choose an activity for each season prior to the start of the school year. Potomac offers a wide range of interscholastic sports, as well as the option to participate in the musical during the winter season. Teams are formed according to ability and/or grade, and the number of squads depends on the available facilities. Every effort is made to provide each student the opportunity to participate on a team.

Time for athletics is incorporated into the school day. On game days, athletics will finish at the conclusion of the contest. Students will then attend a late study hall and go home on their late bus or a late shuttle.

Students are required to wear a specified practice uniform that can be purchased through the school's online store. Game uniforms, where appropriate, are distributed by the Athletics Department and must be returned at the conclusion of the season; if a student misplaces their uniform, they will be billed for the cost of the uniform. The head coach will determine and inform students of any other equipment needs. The *Athletics Handbook*, which outlines all aspects of the program, is available on CampusNET. Team coaches will provide additional seasonal information.

If a student is excused from school due to illness or a family emergency, the student will be excused from athletics or after-school activities that day, and they should inform their coach via email. Intermediate School students must arrive at school by 9:30 am in order to participate in after-school activities, including athletics, rehearsals, performances, and dances. If a student arrives at school after 9:30 am due to a situation such as a funeral, religious service, or family emergency, the Intermediate School head may grant approval for the student to participate in after-school activities. In such cases, the parent must contact the Intermediate School head and call the IS office no later than the evening before. Such requests should be rare; frequent requests, as well as requests to arrive late due to "sleeping in" will most likely be denied.

Athletics Information

The Athletics page of the school's website offers information regarding the daily athletics schedule. Any changes to the game schedule will be posted on the website as soon as the information is available.

Concussion Protocols

The Potomac School has adopted policies and procedures to ensure appropriate expectations, effective communication, and proper care for students who are suspected or confirmed to have suffered a concussion. These policies and procedures are articulated in the following documents:

[Concussion Management and Recovery Policies and Procedures](#)

[Concussion Management for Return-to-Learn Procedure \(Intermediate School\)](#)

[Concussion Management for Return-to-Play Procedure](#)

Assemblies

Assemblies are a time for sharing activities occurring in the classrooms. Parents are invited to attend certain assemblies via the school's e-newsletter, *Paw Prints*. Special assemblies are also noted in the school calendar. We ask that visitors and parents refrain from using flash photography during assemblies. Students may not attend assemblies of siblings in other divisions during the school day. Some assemblies will be livestreamed for family members who cannot attend in person.

Clothing and Uniforms

IS students are responsible for being dressed in the appropriate uniform each day. Clothing should be clean, neat, and well fitting. Parents are urged to label all clothing. There is both a letter and a spirit to the uniform requirements, and the School reserves the right to assign disciplinary consequences to students who fail to abide by both.

Most IS uniform items may be purchased from regular retail stores as long as the clothing meets the uniform guidelines; the only exception is the kilt, which must be purchased through Lands' End. Detailed uniform requirements can be found on the Intermediate School information page on CampusNET.

Gently used uniforms are offered for sale through the Panther Post. In addition to the Panther Post location in the Middle School Square, the Intermediate School has an annex location next to the IS robotics room. The Panther Post is operated by volunteers from the Parent Association. The required t-shirt and shorts for Intermediate School athletics can be purchased through the school's online store.

Athletic shoes should reflect what is recommended for a specific sport or activity; some sports may require cleats and/or running shoes.

Lunch and Snacks

All Intermediate School students participate in the hot lunch service in the Upper School dining hall unless documented allergies preclude them from doing so. Students are encouraged to bring a snack from home to eat during break time and after school. A small selection of food items is available for purchase through the IS vending machines.

Please ensure that your child eats a good breakfast so that they will be alert and maintain concentration throughout the day.

Extracurricular Activities

Potomac offers an array of after-school activities for an additional fee, including ETC (Education That Continues) enrichment classes, private music lessons, and the Extended Day Program. Please see CampusNET for more information.

Gifts for Teachers and Students

Because exchanging gifts is a very personal matter, we ask that students not bring gifts to school, either for one another or for their teachers. It is Potomac's belief that the best expression of appreciation is something a child has created. A personal note of thanks from a parent or student is always meaningful to our teachers.

Upper School

Attendance

School hours are 8:15 am to 3:15 pm; however, Upper School students will be dismissed at 3:10 to provide transition time before after-school activities and athletics. Regular attendance is critical for academic success. Parents are asked to ensure that appointments and family trips do not conflict with the school calendar. Teachers are not required to provide work for students who skip a class but are expected to work with students and their advisors to provide make-up work for all other absences.

If a student is planning to be absent for any non-school-related reason, including a college visit, the student must complete a [Planned Absence Form](#) at least two days in advance of the absence. Planned Absence Forms are available from the US administrative office, the grade-level dean, and the front desk in the Tundra Building Lobby. The form requires the signature of a parent or legal guardian. Students are also expected to be in attendance for all community days, including class trips and service learning programming. Absences on these days will count toward the student's attendance record.

Parents should report routine absences or late arrival by 7:00 am, using the SchoolPass app. Early departure should also be reported via SchoolPass, by 12:30 pm. The app will automatically forward the information to the divisional administrative assistant and the Transportation Office. Additionally, US students must sign in or out at the front desk in the Tundra Building Lobby when arriving late or departing early during the academic day.

In the case of extensive absences, the parents or guardians should be in contact with the grade-level dean to discuss the circumstances. Extensive absences will be noted in the student's academic record. For situations where injury, illness, and/or mental health issues result in a student missing an extended period of time, the Upper School has adopted the following guidelines, recognizing that the particular circumstances of each situation may vary considerably:

If a student misses more than five consecutive days or accumulates a number of absences that seriously compromises their academic progress, the student's grade-level dean will work with the advisor to develop a plan for the student to complete their work and will monitor the student's progress. The grade-level dean may contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss next steps.

If a student misses more than 15% of their classes (approximately nine classes in a semester course and 18 in a year-long course), the grade-level dean will consult with the parent(s)/guardian(s), the student's advisor, teachers, and the Upper School counselor. Together, they will review the attendance policy and develop a plan for improved attendance for the remainder of the course.

If a student misses more than 25% of their classes (approximately 15 classes in a semester course and 30 classes in a year-long course), the director of curriculum and academics will contact the

parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss options for the remainder of the course. These options may include moving the student to Pass/Fail, dropping the course, deferring some work and/or the final exam to later in the year or the summer, or not receiving credit for the course. Any decision that has an impact on the student's transcript or eligibility for promotion would require the approval of the head of Upper School.

Mental Health Day

Students have the option of requesting a mental health day to focus on their own mental well-being. While students can be absent from school without indicating their mental health as a reason, this program is designed to immediately connect the student with Potomac's counseling team, ensure the student's safety, and alleviate some of the pressures of a missed day of classes and co-curricular activities. The Upper School believes that mental health issues can disrupt the learning process, and mental health days can help to cultivate a more inclusive and supportive academic environment. To request a mental health day, students must follow [this link](#).

Course Load

Students are required to take no fewer than five courses per semester in English, mathematics, history and social sciences, science, and world languages unless they are specifically excused because of a medical and/or other waiver granted through the learning specialist and the director of curriculum and academics. Classes in the performing or visual arts must also be taken in accordance with departmental requirements for graduation. A student is limited to six courses in English, mathematics, history and social sciences, science, world languages, and some concentration program (GPAC, SERC, VPAC, EFEB) classes.

Independent Study

Independent studies are a privilege; they must be approved by the sponsoring teacher, the department chair, and the director of curriculum and academics. Students may petition for an independent study if they have a strong academic record and show a compelling interest in a topic beyond, or not covered by, the scope of the curriculum. To petition for an independent study, the student must meet with the director of curriculum and academics and write a proposal that includes a statement of interest, list of topics to be covered, manner in which academic mastery will be assessed/measured, and materials to be used. The independent study must be approved by the end of the preceding academic year.

Dropping and Adding Courses

Students may add a class through the tenth day of classes; they are responsible for making up any missed work from those initial classes. Students may drop a class through the sixth week of a course without the course appearing on their record. If a student withdraws after the end of the sixth week, the designation "W" and the date of withdrawal will appear on their transcript. With parental permission, Potomac will provide any relevant explanation (e.g., medical) as the student applies to college.

Changing Course Level – Grading Implications

Over the course of a year, for a variety of reasons, a few students change classes. When students move to a different section of the same class (e.g., from one section of Spanish 2 to another section of Spanish 2), all grades earned in the first section carry over to the second. Sometimes, however, the class change presents a different standard of rigor or scope of difficulty (e.g., moving from a section of Honors Algebra 2 to a section of Extended Algebra 2). In these instances, the Upper School follows the protocol below to balance the student's grade:

- a) None of the student's assessments will carry over into the new class if the change occurs by Friday, October 20. All reported grades will be based on the work and the assessments performed in the new class.
- b) If the change occurs after Friday, October 20, all grades earned in the first class will carry to the second and be averaged with any grades earned in the new class, proportional to the time spent in the class. For a semester course, that semester grade will be the final grade. For yearlong courses, the first semester will be worth one-third of the final grade, and the second semester will be worth two-thirds of the final grade.

AP Examinations

Students enrolled in an Advanced-level course that has a corresponding Advanced Placement exam through the College Board may take the corresponding AP exam at The Potomac School in May. Any Potomac student can sign up to take an AP exam at the school. To do so, the student should contact the AP testing coordinator in the College Counseling Office by November to allow time for test registration. Students who are seriously ill or who miss the exam due to some unforeseen circumstance may ask the AP coordinator and the director of curriculum and academics to order a make-up exam.

Academic Transcripts

Transcripts are available for students who have completed at least one semester in the Upper School. Students, parents of current students, and alumni of the Upper School may request a transcript at any time. Potomac retains the right to withhold transcripts in the event that any installment of tuition or fees is past due.

The transcript includes the student's legal name, home address, birth date, and gender, as well as the final grade in each completed course, credit earned, and the course designation Enriched (Enr), Honors (Hon), or Advanced (Adv) if appropriate. Grade point average (GPA), class rank, and standardized test scores are not reported on the transcript.

Transcripts can be requested by completing a form in the College Counseling Office or by contacting the registrar. A transcript can be produced on paper or electronically as a PDF. Most transcripts, particularly

those in support of students' college applications, are submitted by the registrar electronically, directly to the institution or agency requiring the transcript.

Graduation

In order to graduate, students must fulfill the minimum requirements and complete their senior year at Potomac or in a Potomac-approved program. Seniors must complete a senior project approved and monitored by the Senior Project Faculty Committee. Students who have completed the minimum graduation requirements and want to "graduate" early may earn a certificate of attendance but cannot receive a full diploma confirming them as graduates of the school.

Reports

At regular intervals during the year, classroom teachers evaluate students' progress in written reports posted on the Parent Portal of CampusNET. These reports constitute an ongoing account of a student's development at Potomac. The evaluations indicate how fully the student is realizing their potential. Reports are also intended to foster growth by helping students set goals, assume responsibility for learning, and solve problems in school life.

In the Upper School, a student's progress is formally reported four times per year – at the midpoint and the end of each semester. Interim reports will include a grade and narrative comment; end-of-semester reports will include a comment only in cases where the student's progress has changed markedly since the previous interim report or in cases where the student has experienced significant difficulties in that semester.

When appropriate for students experiencing difficulties, a more frequent reporting schedule may be established.

Promotion Standard

Grade promotion and issuance of reenrollment contracts will be subject to a review of academic performance. The academic standard for promotion to the next grade level in the Upper School requires that a student not fail English nor receive more than one grade below "C-" in a year-long course. The final decision surrounding questions of promotion rests with the head of upper school in consultation with the head of school.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are an important component of student evaluation. They help to contextualize the evaluation process and are essential to implementing suggestions for improvement.

The Upper School schedules both day and evening conferences in the fall. Upper School advisors also contact parents in the fall to discuss the coming year and to begin (or continue) their relationship with advisee families. Additional conferences can be suggested by students, parents, advisors, classroom teachers, and/or administrators. Furthermore, there is an opportunity in the winter for the student,

parents, and advisor to meet for a conference designed to enhance the advisor-advisee-parent relationship and to discuss the full scope of the student's experience at Potomac.

A candid and constructive relationship between parents and the school is essential to every child's success and is a fundamental part of the Potomac ethos. Whether in the formal setting of a scheduled conference or in casual conversation, parents and teachers have many opportunities to connect and are encouraged to foster cooperative working partnerships. Conferences may be conducted in person or virtually.

The Advisor System

The advisor-advisee system, which pairs students with faculty members, is an integral part of the Upper School. The advisor serves as the liaison between the school and the parents and acts as the student's advocate by taking a personal interest in the advisee's academic, extracurricular, and social life at Potomac. In the Upper School, advisors also assist with course selection. It is the advisors' goal to develop partnerships of support, trust, and understanding with their advisees and their advisees' families.

The school takes great care in pairing students with their advisors and encourages students to remain with their originally assigned advisor whenever possible. Should a student feel that they would be better served with a different advisor, they may work with their grade dean and the director of student life to pursue changing their group for the following school year, a process detailed for and available to students each spring.

Upper School Advisory Statement of Purpose

Potomac's Intermediate and Upper School advisory program plays an essential role in creating a community where every student feels affirmed, respected, and known.

Our advisory program engages a network of caring adults and students who nurture productive, honest, and enduring relationships and build a culture of mutual support and cooperation within each advisory group. Through the themes of Wellness, Relationships, Digital Citizenship, and Academic Habits, advisory reinforces the school's mission of fostering each student's intellectual growth, love of learning, and strength of character.

The advisor serves as the primary bridge between home and school. Students, parents, and advisors partner to build relationships based on communication, compassion, and trust, ultimately supporting each student's autonomy and well-being.

Homework

Because the development of effective work habits is vital to educational success, Potomac urges parents to arrange a regular time and a quiet, comfortable place for assignments to be completed without distractions or interruptions.

Upper School students will be asked to continue their learning beyond class meetings by completing homework or asynchronous work designed to review concepts recently taught or to prepare for new material. Keeping in mind that each Upper School class meets every other academic day, ninth graders can expect approximately 45 minutes of homework in preparation for each class meeting, while tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders can expect approximately 60 minutes of homework in preparation for each class meeting. (Students should expect work in Advanced classes to sometimes exceed this amount of time.)

Some students choose to complete all homework for a given class the day before it's due, thus only focusing on two or three subjects most nights, while other students may prefer to do a smaller amount of work in each subject each night. Advisors, teachers, grade deans, and the Learning Resource Center are all available to support students as they determine which approach is optimal for them.

It is not unusual for students to take a few weeks to become accustomed to a homework routine. Early in the year, some students may over-invest in their studies, while others underestimate the effort needed. It is always important to focus on the fact that homework is designed to help students learn the material, not simply perform a task. Unless otherwise instructed, students are expected to complete their homework assignments independently. Students must do their own work; the school insists that parents and tutors, in their willingness to assist students, not do the student's assignments. Sharing information or collaborating with others is acceptable only within guidelines prescribed by individual teachers. Under no circumstances can a parent, tutor, or any other individual or AI source assist a student on an assessed assignment completed away from school unless previously discussed with the teacher. This includes but is not limited to, consulting on the assignment, adding comments within the assignment, or changing any language in the assignment. Failure to acknowledge assistance from other sources constitutes plagiarism and carries serious disciplinary consequences for students.

While homework assignments are posted on Google Classroom, Upper School students who are sick or absent from class are encouraged to contact a classmate for notes, assignment details, and any other relevant context.

Teachers are asked to be sensitive to homework or assessments the day following a religious holiday. Students who observe those holidays should identify themselves to their teachers, and their teachers will seek to reasonably accommodate them.

Late Work

Each academic department has its own policies regarding submitting late work. These policies may differ slightly. Teachers will cover all policies regarding grades and the submission of work in course syllabi or other materials. Generally speaking, in order to receive an extension, the student must request additional time in writing, with the teacher, advisor, and grade dean copied, at least 24 hours before the assignment is due.

Students must complete all major assignments in a course to earn credit. Tests, quizzes, essays, labs, projects, and formal presentations may be considered major assignments; a major assignment typically takes more than one night of homework or one class period to prepare for or complete. A student's grade for a course with outstanding major assignments will remain "incomplete" until one week after the last day of classes for that semester. (For seniors in the second semester, that date is one week after the last day they are in class before going on senior projects.) All department policies regarding penalties for late work will apply, with accrued penalties reaching a maximum of 60 percent off the grade for work that is handed in after the end of a semester. If the one-week grace period expires and the student does not complete the outstanding assignments, the "incomplete" in the course will convert to a failing grade, and the student will not earn credit for the course. For minor assignments such as homework, problem sets, paragraphs, and similar work that typically takes one night of homework time, the same policies for work not completed will apply, except that students will receive a zero for that assignment rather than an "F" for the course.

Study Halls

The registrar will schedule a study hall for each freshman and sophomore. During these periods, the student is to remain in the study hall room, working quietly, individually, and independently.

For juniors and seniors experiencing academic difficulties, the advisor, in consultation with the student's teachers and the grade-level dean, may assign a study hall to replace the student's free period(s).

Conference Block

Built into the academic schedule is a daily conference block running from 2:40-3:10 pm. Students are encouraged to use this time to meet with teachers, collaborate on group assignments, or get a jump on homework. While seniors without an afternoon co-curricular activity are allowed to depart after their final academic commitment, students in grades 9-11 are required to remain in the Upper School spaces until 3:10 pm.

Outside Testing

At the recommendation of the faculty, division head, counselor, grades 7-12 director of learning support, and/or learning specialist, the school may advise parents to have their child tested by a trained specialist, who will then make a confidential report for parents and relevant school personnel. The results of such testing may be used to assist the school in forming an accommodation plan consistent with the school's policy on accommodations. Parents may be asked to pay a portion or all of the cost of this testing.

Parents are strongly urged to confer with the counselor or grades 7-12 director of learning support about the school's testing guidelines *prior* to undertaking any outside testing that they plan to submit to the school. Reports from outside testing, whether done by individuals or agencies, must conform to Potomac's established guidelines if they are to be submitted for action.

College Counseling

The College Counseling Office provides individualized guidance to students and families throughout the college process and guides all aspects of a healthy college search and application experience. The school seeks to guide students toward developing and articulating goals for their college experience.

Student Standards of Conduct and Behavioral Expectations

The discipline system of the Upper School is rooted in the belief that students have an opportunity to develop and mature intellectually, morally, and ethically when clear expectations are set, and individuals are responsible for their *words and behavior*. Appropriate action and discipline in response to misconduct can provide an opportunity for students to grow and learn, as well as address unacceptable behavior. This policy applies to student interactions at school and during school-sponsored activities.

Minor Rule Infractions

Smaller conduct infractions may include eating or drinking in any area of the campus where this is not permitted, leaving trash behind when departing a campus space, violating rules regarding where to park on campus, using inappropriate language, arriving late to class, dressing out of code, using a cell phone or technology when not authorized, or the like.

More significant conduct infractions may include disrespectful interactions with any member of the Potomac community; disregard for school facilities; reckless driving on or near campus; failure to attend class or assembly; unauthorized parking on campus, at the Trinity Church shuttle stop, or in the Evermay neighborhood; or the like.

Any faculty member may address a student about a conduct infraction. Faculty members will then write a conduct infraction notification, which both creates a record of the infraction and notifies the student, the student's advisor, and the appropriate grade-level dean.

Grade-level deans may call a meeting with a student after a more significant conduct infraction or a series of smaller infractions. This meeting will serve as a check-in and a chance to discuss an appropriate resolution to the situation. All resolutions will be shared with the parent(s)/guardian(s) by the grade dean.

If a student fails to meet the terms of the resolution or continues to incur conduct infractions, there will be a follow-up meeting with the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s), the grade-level dean, the advisor, and the director of student life. Any further consequences and/or resolution plans will be managed at the discretion of the grade dean, director of student life, and/or head of Upper School.

Resolutions remain a part of the student's internal file at school and will not be shared with colleges, other high schools, or programs to which the student may be applying. Conduct records and resolutions will be included in any review of student standing.

Standards of Conduct/Major Rule Infractions

The Upper School [Standards of Conduct](#) regarding major rules are reviewed by students and signed by each student and a parent/guardian at the beginning of the school year. The Standards of Conduct are included below.

Interactions with Others

Interactions with others, whether in person or online, should be marked by respect, empathy, and generosity of spirit. Instances of harassment, hazing, bullying, or the like, whether physical or verbal, are unacceptable.

The following offenses will constitute a major rules violation: 1) harassment based upon gender, sexual orientation, age, race, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, or other such identity-based harm; discriminatory or demeaning language in reference to anyone; racial, ethnic, and religious epithets and other slurs associated with an individual's identity; 2) inappropriate sexual behavior, even if consensual, and sexual assault, harassment, or misconduct; 3) aggressive physical behavior, such as fighting, and potentially catastrophic behavior, such as bringing incendiary devices, weapons, or look-alikes to school. The violation of any of these rules may result in the immediate removal of the student from classes. When a student is removed from classes, the parents will be called to take the student home. A decision about returning to school will be made by the Upper School head. Time missed during the removal from school will not count toward any subsequent days of suspension decided upon as part of the school's disciplinary response.

As a school community that prides itself on the quality of its personal relationships, Potomac has a zero-tolerance policy for violations of the aforementioned rules, meaning that the school will take action for any violation. Probation, suspension, and expulsion are possible consequences, even for a first-time offense.

Substance Use

Drug, alcohol, and tobacco education is part of Potomac's health curriculum. Parents are encouraged to learn about the signs and symptoms of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and educate their children about its dangers. The school's Counseling Office and administration have resources to help families.

Potomac students may not 1) use, possess, or distribute alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, inhalants, marijuana, tobacco products (which includes e-cigarettes or vaporizers), or any related paraphernalia; 2) use any prescription medication or over-the-counter medication in any manner or for any reason other than its intended purpose (including a student's use of prescription medications that were not prescribed for them); or 3) be under the influence of any of these products while on school grounds, at school-sponsored functions and events (including school competitions and field trips), or otherwise within the school's jurisdiction. This policy is a zero-tolerance policy, meaning that there will be consequences for any violation, including a first-time offense. The range of penalties includes probation,

suspension, and expulsion. Any student who has previously been suspended for such an infraction will likely be recommended for expulsion.

The school will contact parents directly when it receives information regarding off-campus drinking or drug or tobacco use. If the school learns of a pattern of substance abuse, it will likely mandate outside drug and alcohol counseling as a requirement for the student's continued enrollment.

Theft and Vandalism

Students must respect the property of community members and the school at all times. Instances of theft, graffiti, or vandalism will result in significant disciplinary action.

Appropriate Use of Technology

Student use of personal devices at school, use of school-owned devices, and use of the school's network will be governed by Potomac's Acceptable Use Policy (see page 13 of this Handbook). The school's devices are provided to meet the needs of the educational program. Devices and networks are not to be used in ways that might negatively affect the work, privacy, or access of other users. Individuals who tamper with devices or the network or who violate the policies of the school with regard to inappropriate content will have their access privileges revoked. Violations may also constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

Adherence to Attendance Policies

Leaving campus during the school day without permission of a parent and/or without signing out is a serious offense that will result in significant disciplinary action.

The following disciplinary consequences exist and may be applied at the discretion of the grade dean, the director of student life, and/or the Upper School head. This list is not exhaustive, and the school reserves the right to take disciplinary action it deems appropriate.

- a warning
- a call home
- a meeting with parent(s) and advisor
- loss of free time
- loss of the privilege of participating in community events or holding community positions
- loss of parking/driving privileges
- *Probation*: Probation may include a combination of the consequences listed herein and/or specific resolution plans and/or specific resolution plans for a duration as determined by the grade dean, the director of student life, and/or the head of Upper School. If further infractions occur during the probation period, students will be subject to elevated consequences, including suspension or expulsion.

- *Suspension*: Suspension is a mandated, temporary separation from the school community. Suspended students may not attend classes or any other school programming. Suspended students are expected to complete homework assignments and submit major assignments on their regular due date. Upon return, students must work with their teachers to take in-class assessments they have missed.
- *Expulsion*: Expulsion is a permanent separation from the school community. Students who have been expelled are not permitted on campus unless written permission is granted in advance by the director of student life and/or head of Upper School.

Conduct that involves an infraction of a major school rule (other than breaches of integrity, as discussed in the Honor Council section below) will be reported to the director of student life. Working with the grade-level dean and other appropriate Upper School administrators, the director of student life will examine the situation, meet with the student, and make a recommendation for consequences to the Upper School head. The disciplinary response for conduct that involves harassment, discrimination, or any other instances of prejudicial behavior relating to an individual's identity may include a restorative justice component.

The school does not generally initiate disciplinary procedures for infractions of major rules that occur during out-of-school situations. However, the Upper School head, in consultation with other administrators, may deem it necessary to address and apply disciplinary consequences for some major rule infractions that occur outside of school, should they be deemed to harm or threaten the safety of the Potomac community or negatively affect on-campus relationships.

The school respects the privacy of its students and their families and, as a matter of practice, keeps confidential the details of student misconduct and the school's response to it. However, there are times when the community's need to know and the school's need to establish clearly its expectations for students and families outweigh its desire to protect individual students' privacy. In such cases, the head of school will determine how much information about a disciplinary matter and the school's response to it will be shared with the broader community.

Honor Council

The Upper School Honor Pledge

I believe in the power of my intellect and the value of my hard work. I recognize that demonstrating integrity in all my interactions with the school community is more important than any outcome. I acknowledge the efforts of my teachers and classmates, and understand that my actions can have positive and negative impacts. Therefore, I pledge to engage honestly with my work, not giving or receiving inappropriate assistance, and I pledge to maintain my integrity with respect to others.

Integrity is a Potomac School core value and critical to all aspects of campus life: academic work, relationships, and our culture of honor and respect. In all their endeavors, students are expected to represent themselves truthfully, answer questions honestly, and complete academic assignments and assessments with integrity. Conduct that may involve a breach of honor will be reported to the director of student life and/or the faculty chair of the Honor Council, who will discuss the situation directly with the student(s) and teacher(s) or other community members involved. These discussions may involve the faculty and student chairs of the Honor Council.

If the situation warrants an Honor Council meeting, the council will convene to process the case. The Potomac Honor Council is composed of three faculty members and eight peer-elected students. A minimum of two faculty Honor Council members and four student Honor Council members must be present at a meeting. Before holding a meeting, the director of student life or the faculty chair of the Honor Council will call the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and notify the advisor and grade-level dean, as appropriate. These communications should occur at least 24 hours before the meeting. The student will select a faculty member, typically the advisor, to attend the meeting. To support the student, this faculty member may offer counsel prior to the meeting. The advisor/teacher attends the Honor Council meeting but does not play a role during the Honor Council's conversations with the student.

During deliberations, the Honor Council will consider the following:

- school rules, expectations for student conduct, and the severity of the infraction
- the student's honesty and sincerity during initial conversations and the Honor Council meeting
- previous infractions involving integrity
- the grade level of the student

If a breach of integrity has occurred, the Honor Council may recommend to the head of upper school consequences and restorative actions that range from a warning to probation, suspension, or expulsion. Any confirmed incident of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade penalty on the assignment or assessment, ranging from a 50% for general cases to a 0% for significant or repeated breaches of integrity.

Confidentiality will be prioritized in every phase of processing an Honor Council case, from the initial report to the final outcome. Faculty and student members of the Honor Council are directed not to discuss any aspect of the case with other members of the Potomac community.

Appeals

Students who face a disciplinary response following an appearance before the Honor Council have an opportunity to appeal the decision *only* when new information, not originally known or presented, becomes available and is brought forward within 60 days of the original ruling. If the director of student life and head of upper school determine that relevant new information has come forward, they will refer the case to the associate head of school or the assistant head of

school for academics for an official appeal.

Student ID Cards

Upper School students receive ID cards to access exterior doors across campus. These cards can also be used to swipe in for morning attendance and at the printer/copier machines located throughout the Upper School. ID cards will be distributed at the beginning of the school year and must be returned to the US administrative team at the end of the school year. Students are responsible for bringing their card to school each day and reporting any loss or damage to the card in a timely manner. Should the school need to replace an ID card for a student (for a reason other than a card defect), a \$10 charge will be applied to the student's account to cover the cost of the replacement card.

Cars and Driving on Campus

Only seniors who are licensed drivers and have registered their cars with the school may drive to and park on campus. Juniors who are licensed drivers and have registered their cars with the school may park at the Trinity United Methodist Church on Route 123 and then take the shuttle to campus. Under very limited circumstances (such as a family emergency), juniors may receive special permission from US administration to park on campus; this permission must be requested at least 24 hours in advance. Sophomores are not allowed to drive to school.

All juniors and seniors who are licensed drivers must register all vehicles that they may drive to school or the Trinity lot. To register a car, students and parents must complete the Student Driver Registration and Pledge form and return it to the Upper School administrative assistant. The student will then be issued a parking permit, which must be displayed in the front window of any vehicle driven to campus or the Trinity lot. Seniors park in the senior lot next to the Upper School faculty lot. Students may not move their cars during the school day. In all cases, students are expected to observe posted driving and parking regulations and to drive with care. Students who do not follow driving guidelines will likely have their driving privileges suspended or revoked.

Ridesharing and Taxi Services

For school-related events, Potomac will work to ensure that students are transported by Potomac School bus or another vetted transportation option. When there are no other viable options, a teacher may travel with a group of students via taxi or ridesharing service.

Most ridesharing services (Uber, Lyft, etc.) do not permit students under the age of 18 to travel without an adult. It is the responsibility of the family and student to comply with these stated policies of the ridesharing service. Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, use of ridesharing or taxi services by a student shall be at the family and student's own risk.

Anyone using a ridesharing service must meet the vehicle at the security gate; rideshare providers will not be permitted to drive up to specific buildings. In consideration of Potomac's traffic mitigation agreement

with the Evermay community, any use of ridesharing or taxi services to travel to and from campus is strongly discouraged.

Cell Phones, Smartwatches, and Electronics

While US students may bring cell phones, earbuds, smartwatches, and other personal electronic devices to campus, these devices can challenge our commitment to engaging as a community while we're together each day. To that end, to strike a balance between community and personal autonomy, US students must adhere to the following expectations during the school day:

- Cell phones are not allowed to be used during academic periods and study halls without explicit permission from the teacher. When students enter the classroom, they should silence their phones and put their phones away unless the device is to be used for class activities as instructed by the teacher.
- Cell phones are not allowed to be used in advisory spaces without explicit permission from the advisor. Students should expect a rhythm in advisory where phones are used for certain activities—checking email, reviewing homework assignments, etc.—and then put away.
- Earbuds are not allowed to be used in classroom or advisory spaces, even if they are hidden.
- Cell phones and earbuds are not allowed to be used during assemblies, grade meetings, or any other school gatherings.
- Students may use their phones, earbuds, and other electronic devices before class and during free periods, passing time, lunch, and conference periods. However, students are encouraged to take advantage of their time together by socializing without the use of personal electronic devices.

Students in violation of these expectations may have their phone or other device confiscated and left with their grade dean for the remainder of the day. Regular infractions will lead to a call home or a set plan to leave devices with the grade dean for the entirety of the school day.

Dances

Upper School student organizations sometimes sponsor chaperoned student dances during the school year. The dances typically run from 8:00 to 11:00 pm and are for Potomac School students; each student may bring one guest with the submission of a Dance Guest Permission Form, which can be found on CampusNET. At no point during dances may students leave and then reenter.

Safety on Campus

Although we have an open campus and give relative freedom to Upper School students, it is the school's expectation that they will always be in sight of the Upper School buildings (Upper School,

Tundra, Chester, and East buildings, as well as the Engelhard Performing Arts Center). Students may visit the campus nature trails only when supervised by an adult. Students who leave the Upper School buildings to visit other parts of the campus must sign out when leaving and sign in upon returning.

Upper School Athletics

Potomac's Upper School athletics program is co-curricular; it complements our academic curriculum, and participation in athletics or an approved equivalent is a graduation requirement. Skills and habits acquired in the classroom and on the playing field are practiced and enhanced in both arenas. We believe that hard work, personal achievement, sportsmanship, and cooperation are important to our students' development.

The Upper School program offers students a variety of interscholastic sports opportunities. The program promotes physical, emotional, and social development through regular exercise, practice, and competition. By encouraging students to commit to a group or team, the athletics program also helps them develop discipline, cooperation, and leadership skills.

Interscholastic teams are formed according to ability, and most of the school's sports include varsity and junior varsity squads. Varsity teams strive to compete at the highest levels while emphasizing sportsmanship and teamwork. At the junior varsity level, while success in competition is encouraged, skill building and participation are the primary goals.

The Upper School's after-school athletics/activity requirement is defined as follows:

Students are encouraged to participate in each of the three athletics/activity seasons annually. At least eight seasons of activity are required over the course of an Upper School career, with four being physical activities. Students in grades nine through twelve must earn two credits each school year, with one of these being from a physical activity. In some cases (as outlined on the athletics sign-up forms), students may apply for a waiver or an independent study. Students exploring waivers or independent study should contact the Athletics Department directly.

There are associated extra expenses in most athletics programs for personal equipment, athletic gear, and/or team travel not covered by the Athletics Department or through tuition.

A handbook that outlines all aspects of the athletics program is available on CampusNET.

Athletics and Co-Curricular After-School Activities and Attendance

All students on all teams must attend all practices and games. We do, however, appreciate that students may have to miss a practice due to unexpected circumstances. An absence will be excused if the student or parent notifies the coach in advance; the absence will not be excused if notification is made after the practice. Each coach will clearly outline the team absence policy to the group.

If a student is excused from school due to illness or a family emergency, the student will be excused from athletics or after-school activities that day. Upper School students must arrive at school by 9:30 am in order

to participate in after-school activities, including athletics, rehearsals, performances, and dances. If a student arrives at school after 9:30 am due to a situation such as a college visit, a funeral, a religious service, or a family emergency, the grade-level dean or upper school director of student life may grant approval for the student to participate in after-school activities. To make such arrangements, the parent must contact the grade dean or upper school director of student life no later than the evening before. Such requests should be rare; frequent requests, as well as requests to arrive late to allow for “sleeping in,” will most likely be denied.

Athletics Information

The Athletics page of the school’s website offers information regarding the daily athletics schedule. Any changes to the game schedule will be posted on the website as soon as the information is available.

Concussion Protocols

The Potomac School has adopted policies and procedures to ensure appropriate expectations, effective communication, and proper care for students who are suspected or confirmed to have suffered a concussion. These policies and procedures are articulated in the following documents:

[Concussion Management and Recovery Policies and Procedures](#)

[Concussion Management for Return-to-Learn Procedure \(Upper School\)](#)

[Concussion Management for Return-to-Play Procedure](#)

Lunch and Snacks

All Upper School students participate in the hot lunch service in the Upper School dining hall. Though snacks are available for purchase, a good breakfast is essential so that students will be alert and can maintain concentration throughout the day. Snacks are available for purchase during the day via vending machines and after school on most days at the Panther Pit. It is expected that all students will make every effort to respect the privilege of eating in common spaces, such as the Quad and Crossroads, and be responsible stewards of the campus, recycling, and composting whenever possible.

Students are not permitted to use the Chester Gym, Turf field, or Spangler Center during the community lunch block.

Assemblies

Student assemblies incorporate a variety of activities, including student and faculty presentations or performances, talks by speakers from inside and outside Potomac, academic programming, and class meetings. Assemblies represent important learning opportunities and are community events. Attendance at assembly is required of all US students and faculty.

Please note that assembly dress is required at several school-wide assemblies, including Opening Assembly, Thanksgiving Assembly, Winter Lights, May Day, and Closing Assembly. Other events

requiring assembly dress may come up over the course of the year. Assembly dress is defined in the “Dress Code” section below.

When parents are invited to special assemblies, we will note the event on the school calendar and website and in *Paw Prints*. Some events may be livestreamed for those who cannot attend in person.

Dress Code

The Upper School dress code is one of the many elements that define our collective experience. The way we dress is a key way we express who we are and what we care about. To that end, our Upper School Dress Code is a reflection of our commitment to the School’s mission: when we are thoughtful about how we present ourselves, we demonstrate the seriousness of our purpose. It is the Upper School’s expectation that every family, and every student, will take all appropriate measures to respect and follow not only the letter but also the spirit of our dress code. If an item of clothing is in question, the student should consult the appropriate dean before wearing it to school. If a faculty member or an administrator feels that clothing is against the spirit of the dress code, they may mandate that the student not wear that article of clothing again. Students out of dress code may be subject to disciplinary action and/or be sent home. In some instances, when a student is out of the dress code, parents will be called to bring appropriate clothing.

General Guidelines

- All clothing must be neat, clean, and in good repair.
- Clothing may not have writing or pictures on it that are counter to our community’s values; examples include but are not limited to references to drugs, alcohol, and violence.
- Hats and hoods may not be worn in buildings.
- Attire must completely cover the midriff and all undergarments. Shirts and dresses must appropriately cover the chest, back, and sides.

Specific Guidelines

- Collared shirts, blouses, and other dressy tops meet our guidelines.
- Sweaters and Potomac School sweatshirts may be worn over tops permitted by the Dress Code.
- Shorts and skirts must meet the general guidelines, be dress or khaki-style, and reach to mid-thigh; shorts may be worn all year.
- No blue jeans, sweatpants, or athletic-style shorts may be worn.

Requirements for Assembly Dress

There will be certain days when Upper School students are asked to be in “assembly dress.” These are for events when we gather together as a full K-12 community or events where we are inviting distinguished guests to our campus. Assembly Dress includes the following:

- Jacket; collared shirt and tie; Dress Code-appropriate pants (no shorts)
- Dress or skirt/slacks with an appropriately formal top that meets Dress Code guidelines
- No flip flops, sneakers, or work boots

Failure to meet the dress code will result in a loss of privileges. Repeated infractions may ultimately lead to a suspension.