

PINE
MEADOW
ACADEMY

2025-2026
Student & Family
Handbook

Pine Meadow Academy is a public high school that integrates academic and applied learning in a small school setting. The school is based on a central theme: learning through authentic work and interests. Students who want to learn in a hands-on, experience-based setting will want to consider attending Pine Meadow Academy. We offer an opportunity for students to explore the potential of their personal interests and skills in a diverse, dynamic learning environment.



Play, Passion, and Purpose

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“Experience is the best teacher”

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Dear PMA Students & Families,

Welcome to Pine Meadow Academy, where your education is as unique as you are. We’re excited to have you join our learning community—one that values individuality, creativity, and the power of choice in shaping your high school experience.

At PMA, we believe that education should fit the student, not the other way around. That’s why we offer an alternative approach grounded in personalized learning, flexible pathways, and strong student-teacher relationships. Whether you’re here to catch up, move ahead, explore new interests, or simply find a learning environment that better suits you, you’re in the right place.

Our mission is to help you discover your strengths, set meaningful goals, and build the confidence and skills to succeed—both in school and in life. We encourage you to take ownership of your journey, ask questions, seek support when you need it, and take pride in your progress.

This handbook is here to help guide you through your time with us. Inside, you’ll find important information about our school’s expectations, resources, policies, and the many opportunities available to you. This handbook is NOT all-inclusive but rather represents a framework of information upon which we will build through experience and personal communication. At all times, we welcome your input as to how we can improve communication between family and school, as this communication is key to helping our students experience success in school and life. Please take the time to read it carefully, and don’t hesitate to reach out to your advisor, teachers, or staff if you have any questions.

We’re glad you’re here. Let’s make this a great year—together.

Sincerely,

Rachel March

Coordinator of Pupil Services
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Preface

The material covered within this student handbook is intended to communicate Pine Meadow Academy's philosophy, academic programming, classroom management and restorative practices, and a general overview of student expectations. This document is not intended to diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation, or negotiated agreement. **Material contained herein may therefore be superseded by such Board of Education policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement** (please see the District Handbook for specific policies). Any information contained in this handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice.

Welcome

Congratulations on becoming a part of one of the most exciting learning opportunities available to students. We are excited to have you as a part of Pine Meadow Academy and are looking forward to observing the development of your full potential. Your success at Pine Meadow Academy will be in direct proportion to your effort, application, and participation. Pine Meadow Academy was designed to meet the needs of students, both for the present and for the future. We are an ever-changing school working in an ever-changing society. The intention of Pine Meadow Academy is to give students a strong performance-based education closely related to real-life experiences.

Our Beliefs and Responsibilities

We believe that a child's interests and passions are the key to their high school education and life-long learning, and that learning best takes place when each student is an active participant in their education. Our focus is not only on knowledge acquisition but is also on knowledge utilization. We strive to develop life-long learners with the ability to apply academic, practical, and creative knowledge to real-life experiences and challenges; therefore, we believe that school-based learning is most effective when blended with outside experiences that broaden and deepen students' learning and interests.

A Philosophy of Personalization, Far-reaching Visions, and a Unique Design

Pine Meadow Academy is defined by its commitment to educate "One Student at a Time". Our school is built around the recognition that each student has unique interests, needs, and abilities that the educational program must take into account. We believe that the key to academic achievement lies in fostering students' individual interests and encouraging their active participation in the learning process. Students become passionate about their learning because they are learning what they are passionate about. Pine Meadow Academy focuses on authentic learning to develop students' abilities to apply academic knowledge and skills to real-life experiences and challenges. We believe students become productive citizens when they are

challenged and mentored in leadership, problem-solving, and thinking skills while engaged in worthwhile tasks that are personally meaningful and have significance outside of school.

- Students and their parent(s) work with an advisor to identify the student's interest and develop a learning plan as an extension of the student's interests.
- Learning is centered on real work, in context, that has significance outside of school. Advisors connect students to their interests and the world of work.
- Students have meaningful daily communications with advisors, and peers.
- Students are respected for their individuality and diversity. The students and staff support and learn from one another.
- Students receive extensive adult mentoring and advising.
- Students see a connection between the behavior and attitudes they are being asked to demonstrate at school and in the community/workplace. The teaching of productive character traits and basic life skills is evident and consistent with real-world expectations and standards.
- Students have opportunities to work cooperatively with others and to be a productive and contributing member of a team.
- Students complete meaningful projects and solve challenging problems in the classroom and in an internship setting by learning and applying academic skills and knowledge.
- Students are aware of what they are expected to learn, know what they have learned, and can identify what they still need to learn.
- Students formally provide exhibitions of their work to advisors, parents, local college instructors, community mentors, and other students. They are evaluated on their work as a reflection of both school and community standards.
- Students are aware of their individual interests and talents and pursue internship opportunities to work on relevant projects that interest them.

In order to translate these beliefs into practice, Pine Meadow Academy has made fundamental changes in the relationships between and among staff, students, parents, community organizations/businesses, the curriculum, and organizational structure. The culture, climate, and practices of the school reflect the individualized nature of the instructional program. Advisors advocate and mentor each student so that the students are engaged in their own learning. Community members work with individual students as mentors, teaching the skills and attitudes required to complete real work in a business/community setting. Pine Meadow Academy creates a structure, instructional methods, and a learning environment that supports students to become self-motivated, competent, life-long learners.

Essential Elements Of Pine Meadow Academy

- One student at a time approach
- Curriculum & projects are aligned to the Common Core / cross-curricular standards
- Interest-based internships and exhibitions (Freshman / Sophomore – Focused on Soft-Skills and Junior / Senior focused on interests and future aspirations)
- Trade School / College Prep
- Preparing students for success in life
- All students are career ready

Pick Me Up (PMU) / Kick Me Out (KMO) is a welcome to the school day, a chance for the entire school community to assemble and share, get ideas, learn new things together, try new activities. In short, PMU/KMOs set the tone for the school day. PMU/KMOs occur every Monday and Friday for approximately 30 minutes. The philosophy of the PMU/KMO is to expose students to a variety of careers, talents, ideas, and educational opportunities.

Advisory is the place where relationships between students and advisors are developed and manifested. During advisory, students are grouped with an advisor (10:1 max). Advisories should be as diverse as possible. As a cohort, the students are guided through their four-year high school experience by the one advisor who knows them best. In advisory, students work with their cohort on meaningful projects, discussions, activities, and team building.

Teachers at Pine Meadow Academy are called advisors, and each advisor is responsible for the educational experience of their advisees. Advisors manage each student's personal schedule and educational plan, and act as direct links to family and internship mentors. Advisors get to know the whole student, not just their ability in one subject area. Advisors teach formal classes, and are integrally involved in each student's learning process. Advisors conduct advisory meetings, work individually with each student, and sometimes teach workshops to students interested in a particular topic. Advisors are responsible for teaching students how to learn, gather and filter the information they need from among human, print, and web-based sources. They set up and oversee student internships, facilitate Learning Plan meetings, collaboratively design individual and group projects, and provide guidance through student exhibitions. Advisors document student progress within the Learning Goals through narrative assessments. All advisors are Connecticut certified teachers.

Parent/Family Engagement

Families are a vital part of the school community and are encouraged to become actively involved. The family is the student's primary teacher and is considered a partner in educating one student at a time. At least one parent or guardian must be part of each student's Learning Plan Team, which meets four times a year. For students whose parents aren't able to be part of the Learning Plan Team, then a designated adult may attend.

Independent Work Time (IWT) is a time when students work at their own pace to complete various tasks related to skill-building, interest exploration, the LTI experience, and advisory. This time period is monitored and facilitated by advisors who ensure that students are making

steady progress. During Independent Work Time advisors are available for 1:1 assistance for students who need further guidance or support.

Learning Through Internships (L.T.I.) are the foundation of the personalized learning students engage in. These internships are where meaningful relationships are built with responsible adults through mentorship. LTIs allow students to personalize their education, and provide a practical avenue to gain the problem-solving skills, organization, and knowledge that will help them succeed in college and in the real world.

Rigorous and Relevant work is crafted through projects which help the student academically and the site professionally.

Pine Meadow Academy students will work towards earning the opportunity to spend one or two days a week out at an internship site within the greater Windsor Locks community. Students are given real-world experience at internships that are based on their passions or interests. By Learning Through Internship (LTI), the student will learn math, science, reading, writing and many more skills that he or she cannot learn in a classroom. Students are partnered with a mentor, who becomes a part of each student's learning team. While engaged in internships, students experience the rigors and routines of that specific profession. The internship culminates with a student-selected, interest-based project that is in service to the mentor or hosting organization. Additionally, the L.T.I. Coordinator, Pine Meadow Academy Advisors, and travel to internship sites to meet with mentors and help facilitate student learning. They also have common planning time, prep time, and meet with students 1-1, both in school and at internship sites. This structure is the same across all grade levels at Pine Meadow Academy, with variations of rigor.

Authentic Assessment

Students document every aspect of their research and projects in *portfolios*, which are later refined during senior year and presented with their applications to colleges. Instead of multiple-choice tests and exams, each student defends their work in hour-long *exhibitions* at the end of each quarter. A student's advisor, parent(s), mentor, and peers comprise the exhibition panel and offer feedback and recommendations for the following quarter. Rather than a report card filled with number or letter grades, a student receives quarterly multi-page *narratives* from the advisor. These are driven by the students' learning *plans* and connect with goals outlined from previous meetings. The narrative describes the student's academic and personal growth in detail, based on the goals outlined in the learning plan, the portfolio work, and the exhibition.

Advisory

Daily, students meet with their advisor and advisory groups to build relationships, compile artifacts for student-led conferences, and engage in activities that align with the five advisory purposes:

FOSTER STUDENT VOICE AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS:

- Each student and advisor will reflect on their leadership role within advisory, school, and community and understand how having an empowered voice impacts success in and out of school.
- Each student will use their voice, at least once per semester, to lead aspects of advisory and whole school community events, community circle, experiential learning, etc.
- Advisors will show significant progress toward developing learning partnerships with students and periodically select a focal student to maximize growth and student voice efficacy.
- Advisors are able to support students to develop norms that are revised as needed to foster equitable student voice.
- Students and advisors will honor their community norms.
- School leadership prioritizes adequate structures to support advisor collaboration to successfully facilitate personalized leadership opportunities for students.

PROVIDE STRUCTURE FOR A COMMUNITY OF PLAY AND FUN:

- Each student can reflect on how and why play and fun builds community.
- Each student can demonstrate growth in non-cognitive skills needed to function inside and outside of the classroom setting.
- Observations from walk-throughs consistently report high levels of student engagement and continued levels of growth for each advisor.
- Advisors identify problems of practice to address and receive feedback from peers.
- Advisors will develop and maintain appropriate conditions, structures, and tools for students to play and have fun.
- Each advisory plays and has fun in a supportive, inclusive community.

STRENGTHEN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS:

- Each student demonstrates the ability to leverage personal relationships in order to meet individual goals.
- Students and advisors will develop restorative practices and use them appropriately and as needed.
- Students and advisors celebrate milestones.
- Advisors will develop strong, responsive, and supportive circles as a normed and consistent behavior.
- All advisors recognize, facilitate, and leverage relationships for their advisees with other adults in the building and student reflections indicate a sense of belonging and support.
- Each student's family will have at least one member who feels heard by the advisor.
- Students and advisors will practice non-cognitive skills to create a supportive community for both staff and students.

EXPAND UNDERSTANDING OF IDENTITY:

- Each student can reflect on how and why their identity evolves over time.
- Each student demonstrates an understanding of how identity is informed by the intersectionality of social constructs such as gender, race, age, culture, values, bias, etc.
- Students and advisors feel safe in sharing their characteristics of their identities.
- Students and advisors honor the differences of the individuals in our communities (both in school and out of school).
- Students and advisors consistently demonstrate a commitment to the equity vision and an understanding it is everyone's responsibility to address discrimination, bias, and racism.
- Each advisory has an individual identity representative of its members.

NAVIGATE POST HIGH SCHOOL OPTIONS:

- Students will articulate and reflect on decisions made about a post high school plan which includes individualized goals, plans, and interests.
- Students and advisors have college going mindsets and reflect on non-cognitive skills which consider students' outside of school interests, responsibilities, assets, and future goals.
- Advisors have deep knowledge of each advisee's individual interests, goals, identities, and personal life experiences.
- Advisors are able to access resources to support students in student-identified post high school interests and goals, and are building knowledge of requirements, timelines, and admission processes.
- Each advisory sets quarterly collective goals related to post high school interests and learning.
- Students are aware of and support each others' personal goals and experiences via celebrations, updates, and advisory routines.

Big Picture Learning

Pine Meadow Academy is not alone in our visions and beliefs. Fortunately, we are part of a larger network that shares our values and principles for educating students. Being a part of the Big Picture Learning network allows us to connect with other students and educators from around the country to share resources and ideas. This, in turn, promotes collaboration and increases rigor on the part of the students' projects. It also allows the students to feel connected to a larger movement and develop meaningful relationships with students around the country.

Big Picture Learning's mission is to lead vital changes in education, both in the United States and internationally, by generating and sustaining innovative, personalized schools that work in tandem with the real world of the greater community. We believe that in order to sustain successful schools where authentic and relevant learning takes place, we must continually craft techniques and test learning tools to make our schools better and more rigorous. Lastly, we believe that in order to create and influence the schools of the future, we must use the lessons learned through our practice and research to give us added leverage to impact changes in public policy.

The Big Picture Learning design is a dynamic approach to learning, doing, and thinking that has been changing the lives of students, educators, and entire communities since 1995. All of the components of the design are based on three foundational principles: first, that learning must be based on the interests and goals of each student; second, that a student's curriculum must be relevant to people and places that exist in the real world; and finally, that a student's abilities must be authentically measured by the quality of their work.

10 Distinguishers of the BPL Personalized Learning Method

Big Picture Learning schools exist throughout the country and the world. They are in rural environments and urban environments. They serve both large and small populations of students. Some Big Picture schools exist in gleaming new buildings, while some can be found in retrofitted structures which haven't been in use for some time. In short, Big Picture schools (like the students they serve) often look dramatically different than one another. Each is its own unique environment where students can flourish as individuals within a community of learners. However, there are many elements within our learning design that are uncommon and distinct, which pull our network together and distinguish them from most other schools.

One Student At A Time - The entire learning experience is personalized to each student's interests, talents, and needs. Personalization expands beyond mere academic work and involves looking at each student holistically.

Advisory Structure - Advisory is the core organizational and relational structure of a Big Picture Learning school, its heart and soul, often described as a "second family" by students. Students stay with an advisor and a group of fellow classmates for four years, building close personal relationships that last a lifetime.

Learning Through Interests And Internships (LTIs) - Real-world learning is best accomplished in the real world. Big Picture students intern--often twice a week for an entire school day--with experts in their field of interest, completing authentic projects and gaining experience and exposure to how their interests intersect with the real world.

Internships/Real-World Learning – At Pine Meadow Academy, learning is centered around real work, in context, with significance outside of school. Adult mentors connect students to their interest and world of work.

Parent And Family Engagement - Parents are welcome and valued members of the school community and play a proactive role in their children’s learning, collaborating in the planning and assessment of student work. They use their assets to support the work of the school, and often play an integral role in building relationships with potential LTI mentors.

Family Engagement, One Family at a Time – At Pine Meadow Academy, families are directly involved in making curriculum and assessment decisions in addition to contributing to the school every day. Student Learning Plans are identified and reviewed.

Education is Everyone’s Business – The school breaks down barriers between the school and community, serving the community while giving the whole community responsibility for education.

School Culture - In Big Picture schools, there is palpable trust, respect, and equality between and among students and adults. Students take leadership roles in the school, and teamwork defines the adult culture. Student voice is valued in the school decision-making process, and visitors are struck by the ease with which students interact with adults.

Building a Community, One Student at a Time – At Pine Meadow Academy, the school’s culture is founded on respect for individuality and diversity. Students and staff support as they learn from one another.

Authentic Assessment - Students are assessed not by tests, but by public displays of learning that track growth and progress in the student’s area of interest. Assessment criteria are individualized to the student and the real world standards of a project. Students present multiple exhibitions each year and discuss their learning growth with staff, parents, peers, and mentors. At Pine Meadow Academy, student assessment is customized, while holding each student to high standards. They demonstrate their work in a real-world context. Students are prepared to become proficient or advanced on the CT State Standards and pass the Standardized State Test.

School Organization - Schools are organized around a culture of collaboration and communication. They are not bound by the structures of buildings, schedules, bells, or calendars. There is an interdependence between school and community.

Culture for Change – Pine Meadow Academy’s philosophy remains flexible, embracing change and responding to the needs of our students and the community.

Small Schools – At Pine Meadow Academy, “One Student at a Time” is not just a catchphrase. Rather than expecting all students to pursue the same body of knowledge at the same time and rate, PMA students have personalized curricula that are indeed designed one student at a time. Each PMA student has an individual learning plan that meets their optimal path to learning, making it impossible for students to slip through the cracks. PMA students can develop academically and personally in an environment where they are well known by both peers and faculty, and this deep level of personal interaction is made possible through advisories and personal learning plans. PMA parents are involved in the development of their child’s learning plan quarterly and the assessment of the work outlined through the quarterly public exhibitions.

Leadership - Leadership is shared and spread between a strong, visionary principal; a dedicated, responsible team of advisors and other staff; and students. The community functions as a democracy. A pervasive sense of shared ownership drives a positive culture dedicated to ongoing improvement.

Post-secondary Planning - Students develop plans that contribute to their future success--be it through college, trades, schools, travel, the military, or the workforce.

Professional Development - Regular advisor PD is conducted at each school by principals, other school staff, and BPL staff and coaches. A Big Picture School is a community of lifelong learners who embrace continuous improvement.

Assessment

At Pine Meadow Academy, we firmly believe that each student should be viewed and assessed as individuals. To that aim, we utilize a wide variety of assessments to evaluate students’ progress. Those assessments include:

Exhibitions: Quarterly presentations that enable students to share their learning with the school community and their families.

How are the Learning Goals Addressed through the Work?

- What authentic work is planned?
- What will be the products?
- How will the work be academically rigorous?
- What adults and resources will be available to help guide the student?
- When and how will the student proceed with the work?
- When and how will the advisor check in with the advisor?
- How will the work be assessed at the student’s exhibition?

Family Involvement / Communication

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communications and interactions. Parents/guardians are urged to encourage their children to put

a high priority on education and to make the most of their educational opportunities available. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the District's academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in campus parent organizations, attendance at board of education meetings, and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged. There are many opportunities for you to get involved at Pine Meadow Academy – please see our events calendar on the school web site at www.wlps.org/PMA

Counseling Services

Social services and counseling are available by professionally qualified members of the school staff. The responsibilities of the social worker and school psychologist include helping the student function more successfully within the school environment. The district's comprehensive mental health program strives to assist students in acquiring critical skills in the academic, career, and personal/social aspects of development. School counseling staff will use a variety of methods to assist students in overcoming barriers to learning, to make strong connections with the educational opportunities in the school and to ensure that every child learns in a safe, healthy and supportive setting.

Counseling provides an opportunity to talk with someone about things that are important to students. These opportunities to talk may be personal, social, educational or vocational. Counseling staff will listen and be open and honest with students. Counseling staff will also work with students and families for problem-solving, and may connect students and families with outside services and support. Counseling staff, with appropriate permission, will collaborate with families and outside providers, to ensure a continuity of services.

Counseling services may be provided in individual, small group, or large group settings, depending on student need.

All students participate in the Non-Cognitive Competencies class, taught by the School Social Worker, focusing on non-academic skills for success. Topics include positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, skills for navigating systems and understanding and addressing problems with equity, setting and reaching long-term goals, identifying a strong support network, leadership skills, and exploring areas of interest.

Students and families may contact either the School Social Worker or the School Psychologist to request support.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued to students 4 times a year, and will be mailed or emailed based on parent preference. Written reports of student grades and absences will be issued to parents at the end of each nine-week grading period. Grades are always accessible via PowerSchool. Parents are encouraged to schedule a conference with the teacher if they deem it necessary.

The teacher of the course determines grades given to students, and the determination of the student's grade by the teacher, in the absence of clerical or mechanical mistakes, will be considered final and will be changed only (1) by the teacher, with the consent of the principal after a re-evaluation of the student's work or (2) by an appeal made to the school principal and then to the superintendent or designee

Participation in Graduation Ceremony

Graduation Requirements

All Windsor Locks HS Graduates must earn a minimum of 25 credits by meeting the credit distribution requirements below as well as meeting the district's Community Service requirements of a minimum of 20 hours.

Humanities Credits (9):

English	4
Social Studies (Includes Civics & US History)	3
Fine Arts	1
Additional Elective in Humanities	1

STEM Credits (9):

Mathematics (recommended Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry/Intro to Prob & Stats)	3
Science (including Integrated Science & Biology)	3
CTE Electives	1
Additional Elective in STEM	2

Other (7):

World Language	1
Physical Education (two-semester credits)	1
Health (two-semester credits)	1
Completion of Mastery-Based Diploma Assessment (Vision of a Graduate)	1
Additional Electives	3

Total Credits Required for Graduation	25 credits
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Community Service	20 hours
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Students who transfer from another school or state will have their transcript from their sending school reviewed by their school counselor and/or administration to make sure they are assigned courses which must be successfully completed prior to graduation. Transfer students will be required to do a prorated amount of community service.

Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) may be exempt from specific graduation requirements if that is deemed appropriate by the Planning and Placement Team (PPT).

Completion of coursework at an accredited institution **may be granted credit** toward meeting graduation requirements by a committee of high school administration and faculty, but only if it is evaluated prior to the student’s enrollment (refer to WLBOE Policy 6001 for guidelines).

Any student that does not accumulate the required credits by the end of the school year will not be promoted to the next class, as indicated by the chart below:

- Credits needed to become a sophomore: 6
- Credits needed to become a junior: 12
- Credits needed to become a senior: 18
- Credits needed to graduate: 25

Eligibility Requirements for Participation in Extracurriculars

(WLPS BOE Policy #6145.1) Extracurricular Activities – Eligibility to Participate in Extracurricular activities is an integral part of school life; however, care must be taken so that these activities do not take precedence in importance over the subject matter areas. Extracurricular activities must remain in the position of supplementing the actual courses of study.

Eligibility for Participation

A student may participate in or attend a school function (e.g., dances, athletic events, and performances) that occurs on a school day only if the student attends school on the day of the function. Students may make an application of appeal to the principal for exceptions in extraordinary circumstances. Students may only submit applications of appeal twice during their high school career. Beginning with students in the Class of 2020, students at the high school shall be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities or interscholastic sports only if they meet the following criteria:

All courses used in the calculation of honor roll will be used to determine this eligibility requirement. If a student is unable to meet any of the Windsor Locks High School academic eligibility requirements due to extraordinary circumstances, the student may request an exemption by making an appeal to the high school’s Academic Review Board according to the guidelines noted in the chart above. The Review Board shall consist of an administrator, the student’s school counselor, and a teacher who is not one of the student’s current instructors; for appeals to participate in athletics, the Athletic Director will be included provided that the Athletic Director is not the coach of the sport being appealed.

	Fall Eligibility* (August-September)	Winter Eligibility* (November-December)	Spring Eligibility* (March-April)
Course Load	All students must be enrolled in at least four (4) units of work or the equivalent, at the time of participation.		
Academic	Students must have earned a minimum of five Carnegie Units from the prior academic school year.	Students must have a minimum of five 2.4 (C's) or better, at the conclusion of the marking period preceding the start of the activity.	Students must have a minimum of five 2.6 (C+'s) or better, two weeks preceding the start of the activity.
Habits of Scholarship (HOS)	Students must have earned the designation of a "Student in Good Standing" or better at the conclusion of the marking period preceding the activity.	Students must have earned the designation of a "Student in Good Standing" or better at the conclusion of the marking period preceding the activity.	Students must have earned the designation of a "Student in Good Standing" or better at the conclusion of the marking period preceding the activity.
Appeal Information	Students may appeal to participate if there are extenuating circumstances affecting their academic performance and/or HOS.	Students may appeal to participate if there are extenuating circumstances affecting their academic performance and/or HOS.	Students may appeal to participate if there are extenuating circumstances affecting their academic performance and/or HOS.
Students may only request two (2) appeals during their high school career.			
* Any high school student who would like to participate in interscholastic sports must also meet the formal eligibility requirements established by the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC). These requirements will be included in the Student/Parent Handbook.			

If a student is unable to meet any of the Pine Meadow Academy academic eligibility requirements due to extraordinary circumstances, the student may request an exemption by making an appeal to the Coordinator of Pupil Services according to the guidelines noted in the chart above. The Review Board shall consist of an administrator, the student's school counselor, and a teacher who is not one of the student's current instructors.

Attendance

Connecticut state law (CT Sec. 10-184) requires parents to have their children, ages five through eighteen inclusive, attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. Parents or persons having control of a child five years of age have the option of not sending the child to school until ages six or seven. Mandatory attendance terminates upon graduation or withdrawal with written parent/guardian consent at age seventeen. In order to emphasize the vital importance of regular school attendance, students and families must take all reasonable efforts to avoid excessive absenteeism as the value of classroom discussions and hands-on activities cannot be replicated.

ATTENDANCE

For state reporting purposes, a student is considered to be “in attendance” if present at their assigned school or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip) for at least half of the regular school day. A student who is serving out of school suspension or expulsion is always considered absent. A student not meeting the “in attendance” definition shall be considered absent. Students not considered present for a full school day cannot attend any after-school events or activities. Attendance is taken for each class period.

Definitions(related to chronic absenteeism)

Chronically absent child:

An enrolled student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during the school year.

Absence:

An excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education or an in-school suspension that is greater than or equal to half of a school day.

District chronic absenteeism rate:

The total number of chronically absent children in the previous school year divided by the total number of children under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education for such a school year. In addition, the calculation of chronic absenteeism rates shall exclude absence resulting from a student taking a mental health day pursuant to P.A. 21-46.

School chronic absenteeism rate:

The total number of chronically absent children for a school in the previous school year divided by the total number of children enrolled in such school for such school year.

Excused absence:

A student's absence from school shall be considered “excused” if written documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within ten(10) school days of the student’s return to school and meets the following criteria:

- A. For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered "excused" when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation to school officials.
- B. Absence resulting from a student enrolled in grades K-12, taking two mental health days during the school year. Such absence is to permit the student to attend to their emotional and psychological well-being in lieu of attending school. A student cannot take these mental health days during consecutive school days.
- C. For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absence from school are considered excused for the following reasons:
 - Student illness (must be verified by a licensed Medical Professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of the absence);
 - Students observance of a religious holiday;
 - Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;
 - Mandated Court appearances (documentation required);
 - The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a District other than the one the student attends(no parental documentation required);
 - Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and to be in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.

Unexcused absence:

A student's absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless:

- The absence meets the definition of an excused absence and meets the documentation requirement; or
- The absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence which is the result of school or District disciplinary action and is excluded from these State Board of Education approved definitions

When the school in which a student is enrolled receives no notification from a parent or other person having control of the child is aware of the child's absence, a reasonable effort shall be made by school personnel or volunteers under the direction of school personnel to notify by telephone and/or email such parent or other person having control of the child.

Responsibility for completing missed classwork lies with the student, not the teacher.

Dress Code

Pine Meadow Academy expects that all students will dress in a way that is appropriate for the school day or for any school-sponsored event. Student dress choices should respect the District's intent to sustain a community that is inclusive of a diverse range of identities. The primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). The school district is responsible for seeing that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student, that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student, and that dress code enforcement does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, or

body type/size. Any restrictions to the way a student dresses must be necessary to support the overall educational goals of the school and must be explained within this dress code.

1. Basic Principle: Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times.

- Clothes must be worn in a way such that private body parts are covered with opaque fabric. All items listed in the “must wear” and “may wear” categories below must meet this basic principle.

2. Students Must Wear:

- A Shirt (with fabric in the front, back, and on the sides under the arms ie - no midriffs), AND
- Pants/jeans or the equivalent (for example, a skirt, sweatpants, leggings, a dress or shorts), and shoes.
- *Courses that include attire as part of the curriculum (for example, professionalism, public speaking, and job readiness) may include assignment-specific dress, but should not focus on covering bodies in a particular way or promoting culturally-specific attire. Activity-specific shoes requirements are permitted (for example, athletic shoes for PE).

3. Students May Wear:

- Hats facing straight forward or straight backward.
- Religious headwear
- Hoodie sweatshirts
- Fitted pants
- Pajamas
- Tank tops and shirts that cover undergarments (as long as this is done in a way that does not violate Section 1 above).
- Athletic attire

4. Students Cannot Wear:

- Violent language or images.
- Images or language depicting/suggesting drugs, alcohol, vaping, or paraphernalia (or any illegal item or activity).
- Hate speech, profanity, pornography.
- Images or language that create a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or consistently marginalized groups.
- Any clothing that reveals visible undergarments
- Footwear that marks/damages floors or is a safety hazard.
- Swimsuits (except as required in class or athletic practice).
- Accessories that could be considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon.
- Any item that obscures the face (except as a religious observance or as personal protective equipment (PPE)).

5. Dress Code Enforcement:

- Students will only be removed from spaces, hallways, or classrooms as a result of a dress code violation as outlined in Sections 1 and 4 above and taken to the Coordinator’s Office to address the violation and support. Students in violation of Section 1 and/or 4 will be provided two (2) options to be dressed more to code during the school day:
 - Students will be asked to put on their own alternative clothing, if already available at school, to be dressed more to code for the remainder of the day.
 - If necessary, students’ parents may be called during the school day to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear for the remainder of the day.
- No student should be affected by dress code enforcement because of racial identity, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural or religious identity, household income, body size/type, or body maturity.
- These dress code guidelines shall apply to regular school days and summer school days, as well as any school-related events and activities, such as graduation ceremonies, dances, and prom. Student athletic apparel will be defined by safety and competitive performance standards.
- Students who feel they have been subject to discriminatory enforcement of the dress code should contact the Coordinator for Alternative Services.

Challenging Behavior ([BOE Policy 5131.911](#))

Windsor Locks School Climate Policy

All schools must support and promote teaching and learning environments where all students thrive academically and socially, have a strong and meaningful voice, and are prepared for lifelong success.

Implementation of the following set of guiding principles and systemic strategies will promote a positive school climate, which is essential to achieving these goals.

This policy sets forth the framework for an effective and informed school climate improvement process, which includes a continuous cycle of (i) planning and preparation, (ii) evaluation, (iii) action planning, and (iv) implementation, and serves to actualize the Connecticut School Climate Standards, as detailed herein.

The Board recognizes that improving school climate is contextual. Each school needs to consider its history, strengths, needs, and goals. Furthermore, this policy will support and promote the development of restorative action plans that will create and sustain safe and equitable learning environments.

The Windsor Locks District Board of Education adopts this policy.

Definitions

1. "School climate" means the quality and character of the school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community, and which is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and that reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures within the school community.

2. "Positive Sustained School Climate" is the foundation for learning and positive youth development and includes:
 - a. Norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, culturally, racially, intellectually, and physically safe.
 - b. People who treat one another with dignity and are engaged, respected and solve problems restoratively.
 - c. school community that works collaboratively together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision.
 - d. Adults who model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and
 - e. school community that contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.
3. "Social and emotional learning" means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.
4. "Emotional intelligence" means the ability to (A) perceive, recognize, and understand emotions in oneself or others, (B) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem solving and interpersonal communication, (C) understand and identify emotions, and (D) manage emotions in oneself and others.
5. "Bullying" means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.
6. "School environment" means a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, including at a school bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, and may include other activities, functions or programs that occur outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program if bullying at or during such other activities, functions or programs negatively impacts the school environment.
7. "Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any other electronic communication.
8. "Teen dating violence" means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.
9. "Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.
10. "Electronic communication" means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.
11. "School climate improvement plan" means a building-specific plan developed by the school climate committee, in collaboration with the school climate specialist, using school climate survey data and any other relevant information, through a process that engages all members of the school community and involves such members in a series of overlapping systemic improvements, school-wide instructional practices and relational practices that prevent, identify and respond to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to alleged bullying and harassment in the school environment.
12. "Restorative practices" means evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (B) holding

- each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and (C) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.
13. "School climate survey" means a research-based, validated and developmentally appropriate survey administered to students, school employees and families of students, in the predominant languages of the members of the school community, that measures and identifies school climate needs and tracks progress through a school climate improvement plan.
 14. "Connecticut school climate policy" means the school climate policy developed, updated and approved by an association in the state that represents boards of education and adopted by the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, established pursuant to section 10-222q of the general statutes, as amended by this act, that provides a framework for an effective and democratically informed school climate improvement process that serves to implement Connecticut school climate standards, and includes a continuous cycle of (A) planning and preparation, (B) evaluation, (C) action planning, and (D) implementation.
 15. "School employee" means (A) a teacher, substitute teacher, administrator, school superintendent, school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, school nurse, physician, paraeducator or coach employed by a local or regional board of education, or (B) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public school, pursuant to a contract with a local or regional board of education.
 16. "School community" means any individuals, groups, businesses, public institutions and nonprofit organizations that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school system and the community in which it is located, including, but not limited to, students and their families, members of the local or regional board of education, volunteers at a school and school employees.
 17. "Challenging behavior" means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.
 18. "Evidence Based Practices" in education refers to instructional and school-wide improvement practices that systematic empirical research has provided evidence of statistically significant effectiveness.
 19. "Effective School Climate Improvement" is a restorative process that engages all stakeholders in the following six essential practices:
 - A. Promoting decision-making that is collaborative and actively involves all stakeholders (e.g., school personnel, students, families, community members) with varied and meaningful roles and perspectives where all voices are heard;
 - B. Utilizing psychometrically sound quantitative (e.g., school climate survey, discipline data) and qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups) data to drive action planning, preventive and intervention practices and implementation strategies that continuously improve all dimensions of school climate, including regularly collecting data to evaluate progress and inform the improvement process;
 - C. Tailoring improvement goals to the unique needs of the students, educators, and broader school community. These goals shall be integrated into overall school improvement efforts thereby leveraging school strengths to address evidence-based areas of need, while sustaining the improvement process over time;
 - D. Fostering adult learning in teams and/or professional learning communities to build capacity building among school personnel and develop common staff skills to educate the whole child;
 - E. Basing curriculum, instruction, student supports, and interventions on scientific research and grounding in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychological theories of youth development. Interventions include strength-based programs and practices that together represent a comprehensive continuum of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments as well as address individual student barriers to learning and adult barriers to teaching; and

- F. Strengthening policies and procedures related to:
 - a. climate and restorative informed teaching and learning environments;
 - b. infrastructure to facilitate data collection, analysis, and effective planning;
 - c. implementation of school climate improvement plans with the goal of becoming restorative;
 - d. evaluation of the school climate improvement process; and
 - e. sustainability of school climate and restorative improvement efforts.
- G. Fostering adult learning in teams and/or professional learning communities to build capacity.

Board policy and regulation (Plan) #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.

Student Fees

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided to students at no charge. However, students are expected to provide their own basic supplies, including but not limited to pencils, pens, erasers, notebooks, and paper. In addition, students may be required to pay other fees or deposits, including the following:

Class Dues (\$100 total): Required for participation in various class-sponsored events and activities; may also cover class-related expenses such as graduation ceremonies and senior events. Students who do not pay their Class Dues will not be eligible to walk at graduation ceremonies. Students that transfer into WLHS will only be required to pay the dues for the year they transferred in and all subsequent years. Students that transfer in during their Senior Year will only be required to pay the cost of their Cap & Gown.

1:1 Laptop Insurance (\$20/yr): Families are offered 1:1 Laptop Insurance covering up to two instances of accidental damage per school calendar year. Covered incidents include: Accidental damage and unavoidable theft (a police report must be submitted within three school days of the theft). After two claims in a school year, families are responsible for any additional repair costs. The cost of repair to uninsured families can be found below:

- Replacement LCD Screen Laptop - \$130
- Replacement LCD Screen Chromebook - \$60
- Power Supply Laptop - \$30
- Power Supply Chromebook - \$25
- Keyboard/Trackpad Replacement Laptop and Chromebook - \$45
- Top Cover Laptop and Chromebook - \$20
- Bottom Laptop and Chromebook - \$20
- Touch Pad Replacement Laptop - \$20
- Touch Pad Replacement Chromebook - \$20
- Hinge Replacement Laptop and Chromebook - \$10
- Carrying Case Laptop and Chromebook - \$25
- **Unrepairable Device Laptop** - \$455 for replacement
- **Unrepairable Device Chromebook** - \$222 for replacement

**Replacement of device costs are subject to change based on current model/inventory.*

Materials for Class Projects: Students may need to pay for project materials that they choose to keep upon completion.

Personal Physical Education & Athletic Equipment: Includes specialized uniforms, shoes, or gear required for physical education classes and sports teams.

Fees for Damaged or Lost Materials: Students will be responsible for payment of lost or damaged textbooks, workbooks, library books, desks, tables, and other school-owned equipment.

Voluntary Purchases: Optional items such as school pictures, yearbooks, class rings, etc...

Insurance & Rental Fees for School-Owned Instruments: Covers the rental, maintenance, and insurance for band and orchestra instruments.

Parking Fees & Student Identification Cards: Required for students who park on school property or need a replacement ID card.

Membership Dues for Clubs: Fees for joining voluntary student clubs, honor societies, and other extracurricular groups.

Admission Fees for Extracurricular Activities: Includes costs for attending or participating in school-sponsored events such as dances, sports games, and field trips beyond the basic curriculum.

Field Trip Costs: Students may be responsible for fees associated with educational trips that are considered supplementary to the school's curriculum.

Students will not be denied an opportunity to participate in any class or school sponsored activity because of inability to pay for materials, fees, transportation costs, admission prices, or any other related expenses. Any student or parent/guardian who needs financial assistance for school activities should contact a building administrator or guidance counselor to request confidential help.

Electronic Devices And Games

See BOE Policy 5131.81 Tablets, Laptops, Cell-Phones

During the school day students will be allowed to use personal electronic devices only during passing time and at lunch. Pine Meadow Academy does not assume any responsibility for broken or lost electronic devices during the school day. Students who bring and use their personal electronic devices to school are solely responsible for securing their items. Teachers may allow students to utilize their cell phones to enhance instructional practices, check in with parents, and utilize various apps as an accommodation during independent work time.

Facetime, video recording, or social media live streaming is prohibited at all times. Students may be asked to turn their cell phone to the Coordinator of Alternative Services or their Advisor if violated.

Electronic Information Sources

The Windsor Locks School District considers unethical and unacceptable behavior just cause for revoking networking privileges and/or initiating legal action. Engaging in such activities, including but not limited to those examples listed below, will be considered grounds for revocation of privileges and/or legal action.

Any activity in which an individual:

- Uses the network for illegal, fraudulent, or obscene purposes, or in support of such activities. Illegal activities are defined as violations of local, state and/or federal laws. Fraudulent use is defined as those activities characterized by, involving, or proceeding from deceit, trickery, breach of confidence, perpetrated for profit or to gain some unfair or dishonest advantage or gains. Obscene activities are defined as violations of generally accepted social standards for use of a publicly-owned and operated communication vehicle;
- Uses the network for any illegal activity including violation of copyrights or other contracts violating such matters as institutional or third party copyright, license agreements and other contracts;
- Intentionally disrupts network traffic or crashes the network and connected systems;
- Degrades or disrupts equipment or system performance;
- Steals data, equipment, or intellectual property;
- Gains unauthorized access to others' files or vandalizes the data of another user;
- Gains or seeks to gain unauthorized access to resources or entities;
- Forges electronic mail messages or uses an account owned by another user;
- Wastefully uses resources, such as time or materials;
- Invades the privacy of individuals;
- Posts anonymous messages;
- Saves any information to the public hard drives (unless instructed to do so by the teacher or media specialist);
- Possesses any data, which might be considered a violation of these rules in any form.