

Letter from the Executive Director

On behalf of everyone that lives and works at the Maine School of Science and Mathematics, we are excited to have you part of the Penguin Family! MSSM is an intentional learning community providing a top-notch academic program in a vibrant and supportive residential community. I'm confident that you'll find your time at MSSM rewarding and life changing.

If you are new to MSSM, I'm sure that you will find many things unique to this special place. Dig in, ask questions, and find ways to engage in the community and you will quickly find how valued you are as a member of the MSSM community. If you are returning, you are familiar with our community and I encourage you to welcome your new schoolmates as you were welcomed in your first year.

This handbook outlines many of the rules and expectations of being a member of our School community. It may seem like an overwhelming amount of detail and information, but as you spend time experiencing all that is MSSM you will find that the expectations and rules contained in these pages are based in our commitment to creating a supportive community and a challenging academic program. Everything outlined in this Community Handbook is a natural extension of the way we explore and live together in our intentional learning community.

Our goal through this handbook is to establish a shared set of expectations that sets each and every student up for success. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to a campus adult. Your advisor is a great starting place, and you should feel comfortable coming to any member of the administration. We want to hear from you and we want to clarify any questions you may have - when we share an understanding of our expectations for living in community the possibilities are endless!

Welcome home and I look forward to a great year!

Mission Statement and Philosophy

Mission Statement

The Maine School of Science and Mathematics offers promising and engaged students relevant STEM-based learning experiences where curiosity meets challenge.

Strategic Vision - MSSM 2030

- *Stem Academic Excellence:* Building on its rich academic history, MSSM will develop a comprehensive and globally mindful STEM curriculum for the 21st century in Maine that cultivates students into adept problem solvers.
- *Intentional Learning Community:* MSSM will promote an atmosphere of inquiry and engagement through thoughtful and comprehensive programming that makes full use of the educational potential of our residential campus.
- *Access and Enrollment:* MSSM will implement a creative and comprehensive effort to attain optimal enrollment and facilitate student success in both its 9-12 STEM high school and its STEM summer programs.
- *Leadership Excellence:* MSSM will foster a leadership culture that facilitates generative, forward-looking conversation and empowers the leaders necessary at all levels for MSSM to remain at the forefront of STEM education in the State of Maine and beyond.
- *Financial Stability:* MSSM will exhibit a culture of financial excellence by increasing revenues through multiple avenues and enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of operations in order to ensure the viability of its long-term mission.

Philosophy

The administration, faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM) are committed to providing academic excellence to enhance previous student knowledge, as well as to prepare students for future studies. The opportunity to attend MSSM is a privilege, and each student can make the most of this experience by being dedicated to the academic and residential programs. Graduates of MSSM have experienced a well-defined curriculum based upon standards fostering both academic discipline and honesty, as well as the durable skills necessary to thrive in professional life such as self-advocacy, resilience, leadership, problem-solving, and effective communication.

All students live in residence to fully participate in this scholastic program of excellence with students who share similar interests. The nurturing of this educational community - the integration of the academic and residential components - is crucial to success at MSSM. Students are responsible for taking advantage of the academic and extra-curricular pursuits available at MSSM and for supporting community members in both their academic and personal development.

History of MSSM

Following the closure of the Loring Air Force Base in Limestone, Maine, the Defense Reauthorization Bill awarded \$1 million to the creation of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics. The funding was used to convert the former Limestone Elementary School into a dorm for 150 Maine students. MSSM opened in the fall of 1995, sharing its facilities with the Limestone Community School.

We are a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) magnet residential high school for scholars in grades 9-12 who enjoy stretching their brains in new and challenging directions. Our students hail from across the state of Maine and around the world. They come for inquiry, camaraderie, and a unique high school experience. Here students, staff, and faculty engage in energetic intellectual sparring served up with encouragement and support.

Renowned for its quirky culture and advanced course offerings, MSSM remains the only magnet school currently operating in the state of Maine. In 2019, MSSM was ranked the #2 public high school by *US News and World Report* and continues to rank regionally and nationally by Niche.com. MSSM is ranked as the #1 Best Public High School in the state of Maine and the #5 Best Public High School Teachers in America by Niche.com.

Communication

MSSM recognizes the importance of timely and transparent communication. To facilitate this, we publish information through the following means:

- Penguin Weekly
- Announcements at dorm meetings, wing meetings, and advisory lunch
- Emails
- MSSM Website
- MSSM Facebook Page
- MSSM Calendars
- Traditional Bulletin Boards

Any creation, or use of a publication, website, or social media account using the name, Maine School of Science Mathematics, its abbreviation (MSSM), or its logos must be approved by the Executive Director/designee.

We strive to be readily available to answer questions and receive feedback from each member of our community. If there is a problem, concern, or conflict, all are encouraged to start communicating as close to the source as possible. Those immediately involved are in the best position to act quickly and effectively. Only when those attempts have been exhaustively pursued are individuals encouraged to broaden the scope of involvement. Parents/legal guardians are urged to help their children become skilled and confident self-advocates by encouraging them to voice any questions or concerns to the appropriate staff member. We recognize that face-to-face communication is ideal, but when it is not possible, phone and email can be effective alternatives.

Academics

The academic staff consists of Full- and Part-time Faculty, the Student Academic Support Coordinator, and the Registrar. Division Leaders for STEM (Mathematics, Science, Computer Science, and Engineering) and Humanities (English, Social Sciences, World Languages, and Fine Arts) oversee the faculty. While focused on student life, residential instructors are also engaged in the administration of our academic program.

Academic Integrity

At MSSM, students and staff take great pride in academic honesty and a supportive academic environment. All are expected to maintain habits of rigorous debate, healthy inquiry, and the vigorous pursuit of truth. Academic dishonesty, in any of its forms, disrupts the learning process and tarnishes the integrity of our community. As a result, MSSM will treat instances of academic dishonesty very seriously.

If an instructor grants permission, students may collaborate in completing assignments and homework. Any unauthorized collaboration, copying, using of notes on exams/major assessments, storing of non-permitted information on calculators or on computers, or any other unacceptable activity that gives a student or a group of students advantages over others is cheating and will not be tolerated.

MSSM staff regularly discuss the ever-evolving impact of AI technologies on education, and are working on guidelines to encourage responsible use (and discourage irresponsible use) of AI by both students and staff.

While the assimilation of ideas from many sources is basic to academic research and intellectual development, students must always reference the use of any non-original materials. Failure to do so is plagiarism, and this dishonesty impairs an instructor's ability to accurately evaluate a student's performance. Plagiarism is using someone else's ideas, wording, or data without proper or complete acknowledgment. Credit must be given for ideas and information that belongs to someone else, whether it is quoted, summarized, or paraphrased. Faculty members may require that notes, drafts, and a list of sources be submitted along with the finished project. Failure to provide evidence of the work process may constitute an admission of plagiarism.

If students have questions regarding the use of materials or the appropriateness of their use, they should consult the appropriate faculty member. The following list provides an overview of some situations that are considered inappropriate use of materials:

- The verbatim reproduction or rephrasing of the content of any source that is not original as if it were one's own;
- Use of AI (ChatGPT, or similar technologies) at any point in the process of creating work that will be turned in for a grade, unless explicitly approved by the instructor;
- The use of any thought, research, organization of material, presentation, or phrasing of another person as if it were one's own — i.e., using a source without proper credit;
- The use of another person's laboratory data or conclusions without documenting that use;
- Falsifying data or research;

- Accessing and using online answer keys to complete assignments;
- Any collaboration on assignments which are intended to be completed independently;
- Copying the work or answers of others on assignments or tests;
- Allowing others to copy one's work or answers on assignments or tests;
- Sharing test questions or answers with another student; and
- Multiple submissions of one's own work from another school or another class are not permissible, unless the work is the product of an interdisciplinary assignment with permission from both instructors — (For example: a student cannot take a paper that he/she did in English and submit it for a History class).

Investigations of academic dishonesty will begin with the class instructor. The advisor, Division Leader, and parent/guardian will be informed if there is reason to believe a student has violated the academic honesty policy. The student's advisor will assist the student in navigating the process involved in investigating situations of academic dishonesty. If a student is found to have committed academic dishonesty (after an investigation by the Division Leader, advisor, and course instructor), that information (and appropriate penalty) will be reported to the parent/guardian, Director of Residential Life, and Executive Director, and will be recorded in the student information system. Typically, the penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty will be based on language in the instructor's syllabus. A second infraction will be treated as a school violation and forwarded to MSSM's Disciplinary Committee, while a third infraction will likely result in dismissal from MSSM. Disciplinary actions may be reported to colleges.

Student Educational Records

MSSM is in compliance with all State and Federal rules and regulations regarding student information, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Two of MSSM's policies that parents/legal guardians and students should be familiar with are **Student Educational Records (Policy Code JRA)** and **Notification of Rights Under FERPA (Policy Code JRA-E)**. They can be found on the MSSM website under the Board of Trustees [Policies and Bylaws](#) section of the webpage.

Academic Expectations

All students should dedicate themselves to fulfilling the potential which MSSM recognized through their initial acceptances as students. Students, regardless of ability or grades, are expected to adhere to the philosophy of MSSM, which requires a total effort toward maximizing learning and a commitment to academic integrity. A high level of effort and exemplary attitude toward the learning process generally equates to success at MSSM. Students who are not able to meet the School's expectations may be encouraged to withdraw or may be dismissed from MSSM.

Graduation Requirements

Students receive an MSSM diploma by successfully completing MSSM's graduation requirements. Students earn one-half credit for each one-semester course in which they earn a passing grade for the semester. Students earn a ½ credit for each one-semester course in which they earn a passing grade, while students earn 1 credit for each year-long course in which they earn a passing grade for the year. Students who do not pass a year-long course for the year will not receive any credit and must repeat the entire course. No partial credit shall be awarded for any course.

In order to receive an MSSM diploma, students must have successfully completed the following credits (1 credit equals one year) and have met all of the (additional enrollment) requirements outlined below. High School classes

taken prior to enrollment at MSSM can be transferred in (see 'transfer credits' under 'Course of Study' below) to meet some of these requirements. Once enrolled, graduation requirements can only be met by classes offered at MSSM.

Credits

- 4 Mathematics (with a minimum of Calculus)
- 4 lab-based Sciences (including one credit each of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics)
- 4 English (including 1 credit of MSSM Composition and Research (at any level))
- 1 US History
- 1 Social Science elective(s)
- 2 World Language (the same language)
- 1 Fine Arts
- ½ Junior Seminar
- ½ Senior Seminar
- ½ First Year Seminar

Note: Seniors who have completed either AP Calculus BC **OR** both AP Calculus AB and AP Statistics may petition to be exempted from the annual

mathematics requirement. The goal of any exemption is to create an opportunity for further academic exploration by the student. For more information, students are advised to speak with the STEM Division Leader, their advisor, and math teacher.

Additional Enrollment Requirements

Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 4 MSSM core classes each semester which must include mathematics, laboratory science, and English. At MSSM, other core classes include any social science, computer science, and/or world language classes, as well as electives in math, science, and English. Certain fine arts courses that are cross-referenced with other departments may be considered core courses.

Students must successfully complete J-Term each year at MSSM.

As part of their Residential Life curriculum, students will be engaged in health and wellness activities (including physical education) throughout the year. They will also be assigned to a *community care* activity such as dorm cleaning, assisting faculty, tutoring, etc.

Freshmen and first-year sophomores are limited to 4 core courses during their first semester at MSSM, while first-year juniors and seniors are limited to 5.

Course of Study

Placement

Placement of first-year students will be determined by students' transcripts, past work, Admissions tests in math and English, and MSSM placement exam results. Subsequent placements for math, science, English, and world languages will be determined by each content area based on performance while at MSSM.

Transfer credits

The maximum number of high school mathematics, science, and English classes a student may transfer to MSSM depends upon entry grade to MSSM.

- Freshmen - None
- Sophomore - 1 math, 1 science, 1 English
- Junior - 2 math, 2 science, 2 English
- Senior - 3 math, 3 science, 3 English

These, plus credits of world language, social science, and fine arts, will transfer to MSSM provided the student earned a C- or better, or demonstrated proficiency (by a proficiency-based report card) in the courses.

MSSM does not grant credit for courses taken at another high school while a student is enrolled at MSSM.

After entering MSSM, transferred credits are limited to pre-approved courses taken at a college or university. These credits cannot replace an MSSM graduation requirement or substitute for courses that are arranged in an MSSM-specific sequence (such as taking a summer class to then skip to a higher level class), unless taken to replace a failed MSSM course.

The Division Leaders must grant students prior approval for potentially transferred courses. Students will only receive credit for courses in which a grade of C- or better is earned. This applies to a course taken at the student's initiative and/or to a course being repeated as required by the School when a student fails to earn a C- or better in a course. Transferred courses will be documented as such in the student's Transcript Analysis Form, maintained by the Registrar.

Course Requests

Course requests start with the academic advisor. Students will meet with their advisors to review their placement recommendations and transcript analysis forms. Transcript analysis forms help the Registrar and student advisors track classes taken/required for graduation. After discussion, students and advisors will complete a course request form. Students are required to take classes at their placement level.

Any student requesting more than 5 core classes or 2 AP classes requires an [approved overload permission form](#). These forms are provided by the academic advisor and completed in conjunction with the student, the student's advisor, relevant teachers, and the student's parents/legal guardians. Overload approvals are done by the Division Leaders. In order to enroll in a course that requires a prerequisite, students must earn at least a grade of C- in the prerequisite, or receive department permission. Advisors will send copies of course requests to students and families.

Add/Drop

The procedure for adding/dropping a class begins with the academic advisor. After a conversation with the advisor, the student confirms the request via email to the advisor and parents/legal guardians. The advisor then confirms with the instructor(s) and submits the request to the Registrar using the Add/Drop Google Form. The deadlines and guidelines for adding and/or dropping courses are as follows:

- Deadline to add: seventh class day of a semester
- Deadline to drop without a grade: twenty-fourth day of a semester
- After the twenty-fourth class day of a semester, withdrawal from courses will be shown on students' transcripts with the indicator of W for withdrawal plus an indication of the letter grade on the date the student withdraws
- Unless there are significant extenuating circumstances, students can not withdraw from a class with fewer than 5 weeks remaining in the semester.
- Faculty-initiated add/drop may occur after the sixth week of a semester with the approval of the respective Division Leader in consultation with the advisor and appropriate faculty members

Independent Studies

Independent studies are designed to provide additional challenges for students with exceptional interest in a given topic not available to them in MSSM's regular course offerings. Independent study classes are reserved for students with a proven record of academic excellence, including the demonstrated ability to work independently. Students must make arrangements to meet with the appropriate instructors to develop independent study proposals.

The completed proposal should be submitted to the Division Leaders as part of course registration for the following semester ([link to proposal form](#)). The Division Leaders will meet to consider approval of the independent study class. The following information should be considered when submitting a proposal for independent study:

- An independent study class may not be used as credit for a specific core class (ie "chemistry") required for graduation;
- In general, students will be allowed to participate in only one independent study class per semester;
- An independent study class may not serve as an option for acquiring credit lost through a failed course except under extenuating circumstances;
- Depending on the nature of the independent study, the class may or may not count towards a student's academic load;
- The product of the independent study (paper, artwork, etc.) will be presented to the MSSM Community at the end of the semester;
- Students are not eligible for independent study classes during their first year at MSSM, and are generally restricted to juniors and seniors;
- Students have until the end of the semester to complete the independent study class. If not completed by that time, a grade of F will be recorded.

Academic Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes and school-wide events in a punctual and attentive manner. Both excused and unexcused absences are tracked each semester and addressed as they accumulate. While the School's response is based mainly on unexcused absences accumulated each semester, consecutive semesters with significant accumulated excused and unexcused absences signals deeper issues and the Division Leaders and/or Director of Residential Life may take necessary action. Students missing more than 10% (defined by the Maine Department of Education as "chronically absent") of the days for a given class may risk not earning credit for the class.

Unless otherwise specified in the course syllabus, assignments due on the day of a planned excused absence must be submitted to course instructor(s) electronically or given to the on-duty residential life instructor who will place them in the appropriate instructor mailbox in the main office for any planned absence. In cases of unplanned but excused absences, the advisor and Health Services Team will develop and communicate an expectation for work completion with the student. It is the student's responsibility to obtain class notes and assignments from missed classes, whether excused or unexcused.

Make-up Work Due to Absences

A student whose absence from class has been excused will be permitted to make up all work and assessments missed during the absence. Students who receive an unexcused absence from a class, however, will not be able to make up their class work.

On the first day the student returns to class from an excused absence, he/she must make arrangements with the instructor(s) to complete outstanding work. The time period is generally one day for each day absent depending on the length of the illness.

If an excused absence is pre-arranged (competitions, etc.), all work due on the day(s) of absence is due in advance of the absence, unless otherwise agreed upon by the teacher. If an absence is due to illness, any work due that day must still be turned in on time.

Excessive Absences

There is a direct correlation between class attendance and a strong comprehension of class materials. For this reason, the school monitors attendance and reserves the right to address attendance with students and limit excused absences if attendance becomes an issue and if student academic performance is an issue. Excessive absence may impact academic credits earned and may also lead to the determination that MSSM is not an appropriate academic setting for the student.

Tardy

Students who are reported as being late for class three (3) times will receive an unexcused absence.

Long-Term Absences (3 or more school days away from campus)

Students may be extended a temporary leave of absence from school for a variety of reasons, mainly related to physical and/or mental health issues or disciplinary actions. Absences due to family trips, college visits, or other non-essential departures from campus may be treated as unexcused absences, in which case instructors are under no obligation to allow for make-up work. Determination of whether this type of absence is treated as excused or unexcused will be done on a case-by-case basis. Students who qualify for long-term absence support begin the process of requesting leave by meeting with their advisors. Approval requires the completion of a [Request for Leave of Absence Form](#) where students document work that will be missed, propose a plan for completion, and review this plan with instructors. Final approval will be determined by the Executive Director in consultation with the Leadership Team. We encourage open communication with families when these occasions arise. By working together, we will determine the nature and duration of leave. The length of time away from classes has varying degrees of impact on students' academic situations. Knowing this, teachers take steps to be as supportive as possible.

In the case of a long-term leave of absence, the School may be able to offer some asynchronous remote work to allow some progress in the student's learning. This is entirely at the instructor's discretion, and no guarantees of remote opportunities should be assumed. Some types of activities (science labs, for example) may not lend themselves to an on-line format. Instructors may also not be willing to provide remote on-line exams, quizzes, or other types of assessments. If possible, discussions regarding remote learning need to occur prior to the student leaving campus.

Following are typical forms of leaves of absence:

- **Medical Leave of Absence:** The school medical staff, Director of Residential Life, or student's parents/legal guardians and/or primary care physician at home may request a medical leave. Medical leaves are decided on an individual basis and are typically not granted for more than two weeks. Once a medical leave has been granted, the student's medical team and academic team will work together to determine a course of action. Should the team decide the student needs to return home, the team will determine the conditions, if any, of return.
- **Personal Leave of Absence:** In unusual circumstances, a personal leave of absence may be granted at the request of the family or required by the school. The decision to allow or require a personal leave is made by the Director of Residential Life with input from faculty, RI's, medical staff, and administrative staff as needed.

- **Absence Due to Suspension:** Students suspended from school are allowed to complete daily assignments missed, provided pre-arrangements are made between the students and their teachers. If a major project or paper is due during the time of suspension, students must turn the paper in on time in order to get credit (this can be by email, fax, etc). If the work is turned in late, regular rules for lateness will apply. Without exception, if a test has been scheduled before the start of the suspension, then the student should return from the suspension with an arranged time to take the test. Tests announced during the suspension must be rescheduled with the teacher immediately upon returning to school with the assistance of the advisor, if necessary.

Assessment

Grading

The following table defines MSSM's grading system. Numerical averages are first rounded to the nearest whole number.

- A+(97-100)
- A(93-96)
- A-(90-92)
- B+(87-89)
- B(83-86)
- B-(80-82)
- C+(77-79)
- C(73-76)
- C-(70-72)
 - F(Below 70)
 - I(Incomplete*)
 - W/Grade (Withdrawal**)

***Incomplete** (An Incomplete is issued when a student is unable to complete sufficient assignments for a faculty member to accurately assess the student's knowledge and skills. Incompletes are only issued in the case of illness or other extenuating circumstances.)

- If a student receives an Incomplete for a course, a [plan](#) must be developed by the instructor, advisor, and student that sets out a timeline for finishing the class. This timeline should then be shared with the appropriate Division Leader and the Registrar.

****Withdrawal** from a course. If a withdrawal is after the first six weeks of the semester, the W will be accompanied by the grade at the time of withdrawal (e.g. W/B).

MSSM Effort Grade Rubric

The effort grade is an internal tool to help assess whether students are meeting MSSM's academic expectations. MSSM's effort grade will be issued on progress reports, academic updates, and end of semester grade reports for all classes. Following is the grading rubric for effort grades:

Effort Grade Standard

3 - Student models an exemplary work ethic that includes punctuality, few or no unexcused class absences, excellent and timely preparation of all homework and other assignments, a noteworthy level of class participation, and an exemplary attitude toward learning, as evidenced by a desire to go beyond the minimum requirements of the class. The student models a willingness to implement teacher recommendations for improvement.

2 - Student models an acceptable work ethic that includes punctuality, few or no unexcused class absences, consistent and timely preparation of homework and other assignments, an acceptable level of class participation, and a positive attitude toward learning, as evidenced by a willingness to try to meet all of the course expectations. The student models a willingness to implement teacher recommendations for improvement.

1 - Student fails to model an acceptable work ethic on a regular basis. Behaviors that would indicate this include some combination of the following - frequent tardiness, several unexcused absences, consistently poor homework preparation (including a failure to turn in a number of assignments), poor or ineffective class participation due to lack of preparation or an unwillingness to contribute to the class, failure to show a willingness to implement teacher recommendations for improvement, and/or a negative attitude toward learning (as evidenced by some or all of the aforementioned behaviors).

Academic Reports

Grades are posted three times each semester. The first is known as the "Progress Report", the second as "Academic Update", and the third as "Semester Grade". In addition, a "Final Grade" is posted at the end of the year for year-long courses. Final grades may be different from the semester grades depending on how the final grade is determined, as explained in the course syllabus. All grade communications are released as "Report Cards" found in our student information system.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are submitted by faculty once per semester (after approximately 5 weeks, as indicated by the school calendar) and are released on the student information system to students, parents/legal guardians, academic advisors, and administrators. The progress reports include a narrative of academic strengths and weaknesses, effort, and letter grades. The official transcript, which contains semester letter grades for semester courses and year-end letter grades for year-long courses does not include effort grades.

Academic Updates

Academic updates are released on the student information system once per semester (roughly 5 weeks following the progress reports). Every student will receive a letter and an effort grade. Narratives on academic strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement will be written for students who had a C or lower on their progress reports or who have slipped to a C or lower since the progress reports.

Academic Alerts and Kudos

Academic Alerts may be written any time a faculty member observes that a student misses assignments, appears sleepy in class, scores poorly on a test, has a below passing average, or is otherwise not meeting MSSM academic

expectations. The alerts will be used to denote the areas of concern as well as to make recommendations for improvement.

Academic Kudos may be sent to reflect outstanding work done by students.

Copies of these communications are forwarded to students, student files, parents/legal guardians, students' advisors, residential staff, administration, and all other people for whom it may be important to inform of students' academic performance.

Semester and Final Grades

Report cards denote the end-of-term grades earned by students. Fall report cards are released on the student information system by December 31. J-term/spring report cards are released on the student information system by June 15. Exemplary students will receive one of two letters of commendation from the Executive Director. The Renaissance Scholar letter is for students who have a B (not B-) or higher in all of their classes. The Polymath Scholar is for students who have all A's in their classes.

Academic Status

Academic Probation

Students will be placed on Academic Probation at the end of a semester if they receive a grade of F in any course. Students who end semesters with multiple C-'s may also be placed on Academic Probation.

All students placed on Academic Probation must meet with their academic teams to review their progress and to develop an academic plan. Students, in conjunction with their academic teams, will outline appropriate actions to help them reach their potential. Scheduled time with students' instructors, time in the Learning Commons, structured study, or a recommendation to return to students' sending schools are all possible results of these reviews. Parents/legal guardians are invited to attend in person or via phone conferencing. Notes from the meeting will be forwarded to the student, parents/legal guardians, and other members of the academic team. Approximately every four weeks, probationary students' progress will be evaluated by their advisors, Division Leaders, and Student Support Staff. Modifications to the plans may be made after these evaluations.

Continuing Enrollment

MSSM recognizes that the school's learning environment is not appropriate for all students. Many factors are involved in the success or lack of success of a student, including, but not limited to: inherent ability, work ethic, level of commitment, effort, family support, willingness to seek and accept help, and prior opportunities. MSSM assumes the right and responsibility to evaluate student performance to determine whether continued enrollment at MSSM is in the best interest of a student. Students may forfeit the privilege to continue attending the school at any time their performance or conduct falls short of school standards or academic expectations. Please see the Residential Life section of the handbook for expectations of residential conduct for continued enrollment.

Academic Dismissal

The status of students placed on Academic Probation is reviewed at the end of the probationary semester. Students' potential for graduation from MSSM will be of major consideration during this review. Other factors, such as attendance and overall performance in areas unrelated to the failed course(s), may also be considered.

Students may be required to leave MSSM if they:

- Earn two or more F's at the end of the semester.
- Previously spent at least one semester on academic probation and is facing another semester of probation.

Students and parents/legal guardians will be notified in writing by the Registrar of an Academic Dismissal. MSSM will make such notification within seven (7) business days following the deadline for the receipt of semester grades.

Appeals Process

If a student is dismissed, the School reserves the right to immediately enroll a waitlisted student in the place of the dismissed student. In these circumstances, the dismissed student will be removed from all internal lists, e.g., class registration requests, room assignments, etc. Appeals shall be made in writing to MSSM's Executive Director. The written request must be received within seven (7) business days of written notification of dismissal to students by MSSM. The Executive Director will review the written appeal, the student record, and any other information deemed appropriate. Students and parents/legal guardians will be notified of the Executive Director's decision within seven (7) business days of receiving the appeal. The Executive Director's decision is final. If the appeal is granted and there is no space available, the student will be given priority on the current enrollment waitlist.

Student Support and Resources

Academic Supports

MSSM strives to provide students with the support they need to develop and implement life-long skills required for the challenges at MSSM and beyond. MSSM is committed to student success and provides numerous academic supports available to all students.

Student Services

MSSM provides special services for qualified students through 504 Plans and Individualized Educational Plans (IEP's). Students who feel they might benefit from these services are encouraged to meet with their advisor. All plans are reviewed and MSSM proposed accommodations based on the plan - but please note that MSSM in itself is a special accommodation provided by the state and that accommodations do not remove the special requirements and expectations of being a student at MSSM.

First Year Seminar

All first-year students are enrolled in First Year Seminar during the fall semester. The goal of this course is to ensure students have the academic and residential skills needed to be successful at MSSM.

Faculty Office Hours

Each full-time faculty provides a minimum of three scheduled office hours per week, and often more by appointment. Students do not need an appointment to drop in and ask questions or do work in the classroom during office hours. All MSSM students are encouraged to take advantage of faculty office hours.

Advisory Program

Each student is assigned to an Advisory Group led by a member of the staff. MSSM students stay with this group and Advisor during their time at MSSM, developing close relationships with all members. The Advisor plays an important role in a student's experience, helping them navigate not only their classes and coursework but also the interpersonal ups and downs that come with being a member of a residential boarding community. Advisors assist

students with class selection, serve as a student's primary academic point person, act as an advocate for the student, a liaison for parents/guardians and the school, and can initiate academic supports for struggling students.

Advisory Lunch takes place every Tuesday during the lunch block. During this required time, students sit with their Advisory Groups and check in on each other. School wide announcements are made by the Advisory Coordinator and other members of the community, birthdays are celebrated, and special contests may even take place. At the end of the lunch period, Advisory Groups return to their advisor's classroom for an additional sit-down period to go over upcoming academic events, check in with each other, and play some trivia!

The Advisory Program is a holistic way for faculty to keep an eye on all of our wonderful students while also serving as a means to foster an even deeper sense of community. Outside of academics, Advisors are there to help students feel welcomed by organizing regular outings and other events with the Advisory Groups. Each Group also has opportunities to gain Advisory Points by participating in regular games and activities, and simply by being a positive member of the community. By emphasizing academic success coupled with socio-emotional support, MSSM's Advisory Program adds a robust extra layer of care to each student's experience!

Counseling and Wellness

Counseling

Counseling at MSSM is dedicated to providing social, emotional, and intellectual support for all MSSM students. The School has a full time social worker who plays an important role in supporting students as they adjust to life on a residential campus with a stimulating academic program. The School also has a full time academic support coordinator available to meet with students to provide academic and social-emotional support. Counselors are available to help students process the rigors and stressors of academics, living away from home, and develop skills and strategies to help with anxiety, stress, and other social/emotional concerns. For those students that need regular therapeutic support, MSSM's social worker can work with the student and family to refer and coordinate care from a therapist.

Wellness Programming

MSSM is committed to student wellness and offers personnel and activities to support students in this area. The School has a full-time nurse available during the day to meet with students and employees to develop plans for students. The Residential Life staff works with student groups to offer a wide range of activities designed to promote and facilitate student wellness and physical activity.

Learning Commons

MSSM's Learning Commons (LC) is located in the Donald V. Atwater Resource Center Library and provides a quiet and constructive space to work on assignments, study, and work in small groups. There, MSSM's Academic Support Coordinator is available for a wide variety of general assistance, such as locating appropriate resources, developing schedules, and bolstering time management skills.

In the Learning Commons, students have access to study rooms. The on-duty staff can provide study groups access to these rooms. When not using breakout rooms, some study groups choose to meet in the MSSM Computer Lab (also above the Learning Commons), which is a great space for larger group work.

The Learning Commons is open to all students during study hours and throughout most weekdays. The schedule is posted outside of the Library.

Tutoring Program

As an institution dedicated to academic excellence, MSSM takes great pride in its tutoring program and considers it an outstanding leadership opportunity. Each weeknight (Sunday-Thursday) during the Penguin Study period, student tutors are available in the Learning Commons and in the Dorm's lower lounge to provide academic support to students in most subjects offered at MSSM.

The tutors are all experienced MSSM students who have successfully navigated the academic rigors of at least one year at the school, and have shown themselves to be skilled in offering constructive support. Students may serve as tutors for multiple years and may do so as their work assignment or as a volunteer. After providing feedback and help as appropriate, they document their assistance in a shared document, giving the faculty and staff access to the amount and type of help that individual students receive outside of class.

Penguin Study Time

Penguin Study is a dedicated ninety minute evening time block, from 6:30pm to 8:00pm, providing all students an opportunity to focus on their academics and help them achieve success at MSSM. Penguin Study is scheduled five days each week, Sunday to Thursday. During this time all students need to either be in their rooms (with doors open), in academic spaces in the Dorm's lower lounge, or in a structured study overseen by a faculty member in the Learning Commons. All first year students are required to spend the first semester in structured study. Students who have been identified as needing extra academic supports (C+ or below for second semester first-years, or C or below for non-first-years, at one of the grade reporting periods, or request of advisor and/or parent) will be required to do their Penguin Study in the LC. Students assigned to the LC will remain there until the next grade report comes out. Those with evening classes and/or athletic event commitments are excused from the portion of Penguin Study they may miss.

Note: It is not intended that established study hours are the only times students should study. To be successful, students need to set aside additional study time each day. Some students may be required to participate in additional structured time in the Learning Commons with the Student Support Staff during the day.

Academic Team Meetings

Students who are failing a core course, or who have more than one C in core classes on their Progress Reports or Academic Updates, will have a Team Meeting with their advisor(s), the appropriate staff, and the parents/legal guardians to discuss the academic struggles that the student is encountering at MSSM. Any of these individuals may request team meetings or other additional supports at any time. The Academic Team meetings are organized and facilitated by MSSM's Student Support Coordinator. At this meeting, an academic plan is developed and put into place. Additional team meetings will follow if necessary. Some of the supports in this plan could be, but are not limited to, the following:

- Mandatory office hours
- Penguin Study in the Learning Commons
- Tutoring sessions with student tutors during study hours

Because we believe the best interest of the student may vary on a case-by-case basis, we do consider many variables when determining when to add or remove academic supports. Some of these variables these variable may include:

- Year in School
- Year at MSSM
- Recent Academic Performance
- Past Academic Performance
- Course Load

- Extracurricular Commitments
- Personal Circumstances

College Counseling

The College Counseling Office prepares students for college by assisting them in finding their most appropriate college matches. This is accomplished through a combination of personal meetings, individualized exploration and planning, and intensive seminar courses that begin in the spring of the junior year. College planning, standardized testing, and college financial aid information are all organized through the College Counseling Office.

Junior and Senior Seminar

Seminars begin in the spring of the student's junior year. In Junior Seminar, the students learn about some of the resources available to them when researching colleges, and they begin investigating how to complete some of the more difficult portions of the college application. A major focus is placed on writing attractive and insightful admissions essays and completing the Common Application, which is accepted by almost 900 colleges and universities across the nation. During the fall of their senior year, all students enroll in Senior Seminar. In this course, students concentrate on perfecting their college applications for submission.

Transcripts

Transcripts are requested and submitted through MSSM's Naviance Family Connection website. Transcript Request Forms are available in the College Counseling Office. Upon written request from students or their parents/legal guardians, the Registrar sends official transcripts to scholarship programs and other agencies or institutions. Personal copies of transcripts are not considered official. No official transcripts are furnished to students or alumni/alumnae who have outstanding financial obligations to MSSM.

Standardized Testing

Colleges and universities utilize standardized tests as one part of the application process, as well as for scholarship competition and placement. The SAT is used by colleges to help them compare students from different educational systems. MSSM is a testing site for PSAT, SAT, and AP exams.

Fees for national testing programs vary and are assessed by the individual agencies. Students are responsible for registering for these exams via the College Board. Parents/legal guardians are required to pay the fees for SAT I, and AP tests. A limited number of fee waivers are available from the College Counseling Office. No student should let finances keep him/her/them from testing. The College Counselor should be advised of any financial hardships or special situations.

Please remember that some testing opportunities take place when MSSM is not in session. If students choose to test when MSSM is not in session, they should select the site closest to their homes.

PSAT

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is co-sponsored by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). The PSAT/NMSQT measures the critical reading, math problem-solving, and writing skills that students have developed throughout their lives. MSSM requires and pays for all juniors to participate in the PSAT testing program. Freshmen and sophomores may also opt to take the PSAT, but are required to pay for the exam at the current College Board rate.

SAT

The SAT is a globally recognized college admissions test that enables students to demonstrate their reading, writing, and mathematics skills to colleges. Most students take the test more than once during their junior or senior year.

AP

The Advanced Placement (AP) Program is a cooperative endeavor between high schools, colleges, and universities. It allows high school students to demonstrate their mastery of college-level material through AP exams. Colleges and universities may, at their sole discretion, then grant credit, advanced placement, or both to students who have performed well. AP exams occur in May. Registration is done in the first week of AP class, through the student College Board account. Students who enroll in AP courses are expected to take the AP exam for those courses. Parents/legal guardians will be invoiced by the business office for the cost of these exams. Invoicing will occur in April. Though there are no fee waivers for AP exams, students who qualify for free/reduced lunch pay a discounted price. If a student decides not to take the AP exam, the AP designation will be removed from their course transcript. The College Board applies fees for late registration and unused exams.

<https://www.apreviewbook.com/ap-exam-fees/>

Maine State Assessments

Like students in other Maine public schools, MSSM students are required to take several State Assessment tests. In the fall and spring, students in grade 10 participate in Mathematics and English/Language Arts testing. In the spring, students in grade 11 participate in a Science assessment.

Testing Codes

In order to register to take the SAT tests at the Maine School of Science and Mathematics, students will need the following codes: **MSSM School Code:** 200574 for SAT, **MSSM Test Center Code** for the SAT Test: 20-217

Concurrent College Enrollment

University of Maine at Presque Isle Credit

Under a Partnership Agreement (MOU) with the [University of Maine at Presque Isle \(UMPI\)](#), MSSM students may receive college credit for some of their MSSM classes. Students are able to earn 18 free credits during their time in High School (grades 9-12). The cost (set by the University of Maine System) for any additional credit hours earned is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. If approved by MSSM, students may be able to pursue an Associate's Degree from the University of Maine at Presque Isle at a reduced per-credit cost. MSSM's focus is on delivering a rich STEM-based student learning experience designed to challenge our high school students and the faculty make all curricular decisions regarding classes offered and student placements based on that focus.

[MSSM Dual Enrollment Program](#)

Non-MOU College Classes taken during the academic year while at MSSM

Students desiring to be concurrently enrolled in other college classes while at MSSM must obtain permission and signatures of their academic advisor and appropriate Division Leader. These additional college classes are not considered part of a student's normal MSSM course load, so students still need to be enrolled in a minimum of 4 core MSSM classes. These courses do, however, count towards a student's core class total, which means approval of an overload may be required. It is highly unlikely that students will be approved to take more than one non-MOU class per semester. Students and their families shall pay all fees for courses not offered by MSSM once the 18 free credits limit has been reached.

Information Technology

Use Agreement (ITUA)

Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM) prioritizes supporting its community in achieving its educational goals. This commitment extends to its IT Department, which ensures reliable technology access through responsible use of equipment and the network. MSSM's computer and network policies are in place to promote efficient operation for everyone.

To access the MSSM network, internet, Google Workspace applications, and use MSSM hardware and software, all students and their parents/legal guardians must agree to the Information Technology Use Agreement (ITUA) by signing the ITUA code within the Community Handbook on Magnus.

Violating the ITUA will result in immediate network access suspension. In severe cases, computer searches for unauthorized programs may occur. Disciplinary action, law enforcement referral, or legal action may also be taken. The Executive Director (or designee) will make the final decision on network access limitations (restriction, suspension, or revocation) considering the violation's severity, prior disciplinary record, and other relevant factors. Students, parents, and advisors will be notified after the decision. Violations carry over year-to-year until graduation.

MSSM Computer Lab Guidelines

The IT Department supports MSSM's educational mission by providing a computer lab for student and staff use. To ensure a productive environment for everyone, please follow these guidelines when using MSSM Lab Computers:

- **Keep food and drinks away from workstations:** Spills can damage equipment, and crumbs can attract pests.
- **Be mindful of noise:** Use headphones to listen to music or videos, and keep conversations at a reasonable volume.
- **Software installation requires IT approval:** This helps maintain system integrity and security.
- **Report technical problems promptly:** The sooner IT is aware of an issue, the sooner they can resolve it.
- **Leave hardware maintenance to the professionals:** Tampering with equipment can cause damage and disrupt lab operations.

Staying Safe on the MSSM Network

MSSM's network is monitored to ensure a safe and secure learning environment for everyone. This includes monitoring traffic for inappropriate activity. While encrypted websites and passwords are protected, students should exercise caution when sharing personal information on the network.

Important Reminders

- Students are responsible for their online activity on MSSM's network.
- MSSM administrators may need to conduct computer searches to maintain network security. Cooperation is expected.
- In rare cases, network access may be temporarily suspended for investigation. Parents/guardians and students will be notified within 48 hours.

To ensure a safe and secure learning environment, MSSM requires a strong network security posture. Any action that jeopardizes the network's stability, integrity, or privacy, or that grants access to inappropriate hardware or materials, constitutes a violation of the ITUA. Examples of such violations include, but are not limited to:

- Probing the network to gain access to unauthorized network areas
- Sharing account credentials
- Lack of or outdated virus protection
- Operating systems that are no longer supported by the manufacturer
- Accessing a network other than MSSM's
- Accessing age-restricted websites

Report any security breaches, network issues, or attempts to bypass security or access controls to the Director of Technology.

MSSM IT assigns IP addresses to each student for up to three devices. Static IPs are not allowed; devices must use DHCP. Changing device MAC addresses, hostnames, or spoofing them is prohibited.

Bypassing school network security with tools like VPNs or accessing proxy sites is a violation. These tools are used to access websites that are normally blocked for your protection.

To create a safe and secure environment for everyone at MSSM, the network must be free from illegal activity. This includes any activity that violates local, state, or federal laws, or could lead to legal trouble for MSSM, its students, staff, or faculty.

Downloading, uploading, or possessing unauthorized digital data violates copyright law and is considered theft. This can have serious consequences for both you and MSSM, including the loss of internet access and potential legal penalties.

Protect yourself and MSSM

- Obtain all software and digital media (music, games, and movies) from authorized sources.
- Ensure all software is properly licensed.
- Only use files and programs that comply with U.S. copyright law.

MSSM fully cooperates with lawful investigations and may provide log information for any account suspected of copyright infringement.

If you violate the IT Usage Agreement (ITUA), you'll be responsible for any costs MSSM incurs, including investigation expenses.

Students facing network access suspension due to disciplinary action can still access computers in designated MSSM labs. However, using other student's personal computer is strictly prohibited.

Internet

MSSM offers internet access through Wi-Fi and Ethernet. You can connect during network hours: Sundays-Thursdays (6 AM - 11 PM) and Fridays-Saturdays (6 AM - Midnight). To ensure a safe online environment, MSSM follows the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and enforces its IT Use Agreement (ITUA).

While MSSM uses content filters and firewalls to block inappropriate content, the vastness of the internet means some may slip through. Our IT department can manually block these sites. Intentionally accessing such material violates the ITUA. Here are some examples of ITUA violations:

- **Inappropriate Materials:** This includes accessing, sharing, or displaying content that is defamatory, pornographic, abusive, obscene, or discriminatory. It also covers gambling and commercial activities for personal gain.
- **Copyright Infringement:** Copying, downloading, uploading, or sharing copyrighted material (games, music, videos, etc.) is prohibited. This includes using torrenting software.
- **Plagiarism:** Claiming someone else's work as your own, regardless of the source (online or otherwise). When using internet sources, proper citation is required.
- **Unauthorized Access:** Sharing passwords, using another user's credentials, or accessing accounts that don't belong to you. This also includes attempts to gain unauthorized access to systems or resources.
- **Malicious Activity:** Disrupting or harming MSSM's technology infrastructure, including spreading viruses, worms, or engaging in hacking activities. Defaming or harassing MSSM, its employees, or affiliates through technology also violates the ITUA (and may fall under MSSM's Harassment Policy).

In the absence of board policy regarding a necessary course of action within the school system, the authority to act resides with the Executive Director. (Policy-NEPN/NSBA Code: CHD)

Network Connection

MSSM provides Wi-Fi network access throughout residential and academic buildings for registered devices. While Wi-Fi offers convenient mobility for your devices, some areas in the dorm will require a wired Ethernet connection for network access or for activities requiring consistent bandwidth, such as video conferencing (e.g., Google Meet, Zoom). Each dorm room includes an Ethernet jack, and we recommend having an available, minimum 6-foot, cable to connect your computer.

Stay Connected with MSSM Google Workspace

MSSM utilizes Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals®, offering a suite of communication and collaboration tools to all students and staff. Your MSSM-assigned Google Workspace account is your primary channel for official communication. Proper use is expected, and misuse may lead to account suspension.

Benefits for Graduates:

To provide alumni with a lifelong connection to MSSM while adhering to Google's licensing structures, we transition all graduate accounts to a **Gmail Only User** license one month after graduation. While you will permanently retain your MSSM email address, you will lose access to the wider Google Workspace suite (such as Google Drive), so please ensure you migrate any personal files before this transition.

Connecting to the MSSM Network

- **Supported Devices:** MSSM's network is compatible with a wide range of devices, including desktops, laptops, smartphones, tablets, and gaming consoles, as long as they run manufacturer-supported operating systems.
- **Device Registration:** To ensure network security and access to campus resources, all devices must be registered with the IT department, regardless of operating system. You can find the Device Registration Form on the MSSM website (mssm.org/students/device-registration).
- **Personal Data Plans and Wi-Fi Hotspots:** Using personal data plans or creating Wi-Fi hotspots on your device is prohibited on campus. This helps maintain a stable and secure network connection for everyone. Violations may result in disciplinary action.

Keeping Your Device Secure

- **Security:** For added protection, we recommend using an antivirus program and keeping your device up-to-date with the latest security patches. These measures help fight off malware and keep your device secure.

Need to Print?

There are computers with printers (print stations) available in the Learning Center (LC) of the academic building and the dorm lower lounge for your printing needs. If these locations are closed, you can also use your own printer. However, please keep in mind that MSSM does not provide ink, toner, or paper for personal printers.

Accountability

Students are responsible for their own personal property, including electronics, while at MSSM during the school year. The school will not be held liable for lost or damaged items.

Unauthorized Network Devices:

- **Unauthorized network transmitters:** Unauthorized network devices are not allowed because they cause interference and disrupt the network for everyone.
- **Wired or wireless routers:** School and dorm networks are already set up and configured, bringing in your own router will cause interference and disrupt the connection for everyone.
- **Wireless access points:** Similar to routers, wireless access points will create conflicting signals and cause connectivity issues.
- **Wi-Fi extenders:** While these can be tempting to boost the signal in your dorm room, they also contribute to network congestion.
- **VPN software:** Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) are used to encrypt your internet traffic, which bypasses MSSM's security, therefore is restricted on our network.
- **Switches:** Switches are not allowed because they introduce complexities and interfere with the school's network configuration.
- **Servers:** Personal servers are not allowed because they introduce conflicts with the existing network configuration and resource allocation, causing slowdowns or outages for everyone.
- **Mobile hotspots:** Mobile hotspots are discouraged because they create signal interference, impacting performance for everyone.
- **Devices not supported by the manufacturer (EOL/unsupported devices):** Devices that haven't been tested, approved, or no longer supported by the manufacturer causes compatibility issues, security issues and disrupts the network's performance. For this reason, their use is not supported by MSSM IT department, nor permitted on campus.

If you're unsure about something, it's always best to consult the Director of Technology.

2026-2027 Student Life

Overview

Student Life Vision

Student Life at MSSM extends learning far beyond the classroom. Through intentionality within residential life, athletics, clubs, leadership opportunities, traditions, wellness initiatives and community events, students develop meaningful relationships, independence, resilience and a strong sense of belonging.

It is a place where the dorm becomes home, classmates become family and every day offers opportunities for students to quench their unwavering sense of curiosity. Living and learning together creates a uniquely supportive environment where students are encouraged to explore their interests, take on leadership roles, compete, collaborate and grow as individuals.

Every aspect of Student Life is designed to help students grow and develop independent living skills, durable skills and interpersonal skills. The overarching theme is making healthy choices, developing healthy habits and living a healthy lifestyle. The end result is a community that promotes and supports building character, fostering connections and preparing for success in college, careers and life. ***Learning Lives Here!***

Vigilante Penguin Student Life Curriculum

The Vigilante Penguin curriculum is a five-pillar wellbeing framework built around one idea: health is not the goal, but rather the vehicle you use to live the life you want. Instead of teaching students what to avoid, it asks them what they are building toward and promotes ownership by giving them the tools to develop the habits that make that possible long-term.

The five pillars are Movement, Nourishment, Purpose, Rest and Connection. Each represents a domain of health that research consistently links to longer, healthier lives. Together, the pillars form a complete system where each pillar reinforces the others.

Intentionally-designed, the curriculum is infused into student life daily and all throughout the days via RA activities and interactions, advisory meetings, athletics, intramural and club sports, as well as weekend activities; all the while checking off the State of Maine's required Health standards.

Residential Life Vision

Residential Life at MSSM is where the curriculum of life is taught. More than a place to live, the dorm serves as an intentional living-learning community where every day experiences become opportunities to develop the habits, character and knowledge that prepare students for life beyond graduation.

Through the thoughtfully designed Vigilante Penguin curriculum, students build independent living skills, durable skills and interpersonal skills while learning to navigate the responsibilities of young adulthood. Daily experiences such as caring for personal and shared spaces to time-management, resolving conflict, practicing wellness and contributing to the community all become meaningful opportunities for growth.

Grounded in a culture of care, accountability and belonging, Residential Life encourages students to make healthy choices, develop healthy habits and build healthy relationships. Supported by dedicated Residential Instructors and student Residential Assistants, every resident is challenged to grow in confidence, resilience, leadership and service while discovering the value of living in a close-knit community.

By intentionally connecting everyday experiences with lifelong learning, MSSM prepares students to thrive in college and throughout their careers, relationships and communities. ***Learning Lives Here. Living Teaches Here!***

Residential Instructors

Residential Instructors (RIs) are the consistent adult presence at the heart of the residential experience. Living and working alongside students, RIs create a supportive environment where students are known, cared for, challenged and encouraged as they navigate life away from home.

RIs serve as mentors, educators, community builders and trusted adults. Through daily interactions, they help students develop independence, make healthy choices, navigate challenges, build positive relationships and take responsibility for themselves and their community. They provide both support and accountability while helping ensure that residential expectations are rooted in learning, growth and care.

More than supervising the dorm, RIs intentionally teach the skills that students need beyond the classroom. They model communication, responsibility, problem-solving and healthy living while creating opportunities for students to practice durable and independent living skills in real-life situations. Through meaningful relationships and maintaining a safe, structured and welcoming environment, Residential Instructors help make the dorm a home and residential life an essential part of the MSSM educational experience.

Residential Assistants

Residential Assistants (RAs) are student leaders who help transform the dorm from a place students live into a community they belong to. Through intentional peer leadership, RAs serve as role models, mentors, community builders and a connection between students and Residential Life staff.

RAs are utilized throughout the residential experience to welcome, connect, support and mentor new students, facilitate activities and traditions, promote healthy habits, reinforce community expectations and help create a culture of respect, trust, responsibility and belonging. Their daily presence provides students with an approachable peer who can listen, encourage, guide and recognize when additional support may be needed.

Just as importantly, the RA program provides students with an opportunity to develop their own leadership skills through service to others. RAs practice communication, problem-solving, initiative, accountability and relationship-building while taking meaningful ownership of their community. RAs help shape the culture by strengthening connections and making MSSM feel like home for everyone. ***Student Life sets the vision. Residential Life creates the environment. RAs and RIs help bring that environment to life everyday.***

New Student Support

Transitioning into a residential school community is an exciting experience that also comes with new routines, relationships, responsibilities and expectations. At MSSM, new students are supported from the moment they arrive, with Residential Assistants (RAs) playing an important role in helping them navigate that transition and find their place within the community.

RAs serve as an immediate peer connection for new students. They are present to answer questions, introduce them to others, explain traditions and expectations, encourage involvement and help make the unfamiliar feel familiar. Through intentional check-ins, activities, shared experiences and everyday interactions, RAs help new students build relationships, develop confidence and become comfortable navigating residential life.

The goal is greater than helping students adjust; it is helping them belong. By providing every new student with approachable peer leadership and a connection to the larger residential support system, RAs help ensure that no

student has to figure out life at MSSM alone. Over time, students move from being welcomed into the community to becoming active contributors, and eventually helping welcome those who come after them.

Gender Identity and Belonging

Belonging is about the full affirmation of all individuals in the MSSM community. If a student comes out to an adult in the community as transgender, gender nonconforming, gender expansive, agender, or another identity that has not been affirmed by the school and school records will be shared with our Licensed Social Worker, Title IX Coordinator and Director of Student Life in order to help with any transition needed.

Advisory

The Vigilante Penguin Curriculum provides another intentional layer of student support and development by bringing the principles of healthy living, community responsibility and personal growth into the advisory experience. Delivered through regular advisory meetings, the curriculum creates a consistent space for students to connect with a trusted adult and a small group of peers while exploring the skills and habits that contribute to success at MSSM and beyond.

Through conversations, activities and reflection, advisory groups explore topics connected to healthy choices, relationships, communication, decision-making, independence, resilience, responsibility and community citizenship. Advisors help students connect these concepts to their everyday experiences, providing another trusted adult who can recognize growth, identify challenges and offer guidance.

By weaving the Vigilante Penguin Curriculum through advisory, student development becomes a shared responsibility across campus rather than something that happens only within the dorm. Students receive consistent messages and multiple layers of support from their RAs, Residential Instructors, advisors and peers, together creating a community where learning, growth and belonging happen everywhere.

Community Portfolio Report Cards

Community Portfolios serve as each student's "life report card," documenting abilities and growth in the skills that matter most for success in college, careers and community. Aligned with the Vigilante Penguin curriculum, Community Portfolios are a comprehensive record of each student's progress in life skills outside the classroom including citizenship, residential responsibility, community engagement, academic living, expectations, wellness and personal growth, all of which help students thrive in a shared community.

Community portfolios are updated and emailed to parents, students and advisors prior to each break so that parents can review with their children during breaks.

Minor/Major Discipline System

The Minor and Major Discipline System provides a clear, consistent and educational approach to accountability within the residential community. Rather than viewing discipline simply as a consequence for breaking rules, the system helps students understand how their choices impact themselves, others and the community while providing opportunities to reflect, repair and grow.

Minor concerns address everyday expectations and lower-level behaviors through timely intervention, conversation, reflection and appropriate restorative action. RAs can help reinforce expectations, redirect behaviors and model positive decision-making, while Residential Instructors provide guidance, documentation and follow-through. When behaviors become repeated, more significant or impact the safety and well-being of the community, they may progress to the Major Discipline process and receive a higher level of adult intervention and accountability.

The goal is growth. Through clear expectations, progressive accountability and opportunities to learn from mistakes, students develop responsibility, self-awareness, decision-making skills and an understanding of what it means to live successfully within a community.

Citizenship Committee

The Citizenship Committee gives a thoughtful and restorative approach to addressing significant or repeated concerns within the community. When a student's choices rise beyond the Minor Discipline process, the committee creates an opportunity to examine not only what happened, but how those choices impacted the student, others and the greater MSSM community.

The process centers on accountability, reflection and restoration. Students are encouraged to take ownership of their decisions, consider different perspectives and identify meaningful steps toward repairing trust and moving forward successfully. When appropriate, consequences are paired with opportunities for learning, growth and positive re-engagement with the community.

Ultimately, the Citizenship Committee reinforces that being part of MSSM comes with both privileges and responsibilities. Its purpose is not simply to respond to mistakes, but to help students learn from them, restore relationships and become stronger, more responsible members of the community.

Catch-Up Saturday and Sunday

Catch-Up Weekends provide students with dedicated time to reset, take responsibility and begin the new week in a stronger position. Rather than allowing unfinished responsibilities to accumulate, these structured opportunities provide students with the time, support and accountability needed to get back on track.

Catch-Up Saturdays focus on academics, providing dedicated time for students who have missing assignments, incomplete work or other academic responsibilities that need attention. The goal is to remove distractions, provide structure and help students develop stronger habits around organization, time management and follow-through.

Catch-Up Sundays focus on residential and community responsibilities. Students with outstanding disciplinary consequences, restorative actions, community responsibilities or unresolved minor concerns use this time to complete those obligations, reflect when appropriate and restore good standing within the community.

Together, Catch-Up Saturdays and Sundays reinforce a simple philosophy that falling behind does not mean staying behind. Students are given clear opportunities to take ownership, fulfill their responsibilities, reset and move forward academically, personally and as members of the MSSM community.

Residential Information

The Dorm

MSSM's dormitory provides students with a residential environment designed to promote long-lasting habits for study, sleep, and socializing. The cornerstone of life in the dorms is the acceptance of personal responsibility for living and studying and respect for others. It is important to list the most important dormitory rules here:

- Students may never be on a wing in which they do not live on unless invited in and hosted by a member of that wing and only during the approved visitation times.
- No one is permitted to change rooms without the express permission of the Director of Student Life. Generally, such requests are not considered until after Parent Teacher Conferences, and even then only after a number of intermediate measures are exhausted.
- Rooms are inspected at the beginning as well as the end of the year. Any room damage must be paid for by the occupant(s). Also, any expense for general damage to the dorm is divided among the occupants unless the person who is responsible for the damage is identified.
- Students are required to keep their rooms neat and clean at all times. Once a week there will be a room inspection by the Director of Student Life and maintenance. Students are expected to have their trash taken out and the room tidied.
- Sleepovers are permitted on Friday nights only.
- Valuables can be kept locked in dorm rooms or in the dorm's RI Office.
- All passports and passport cards should be turned in at check in and will be locked up in the dorm's RI Office.
- Skis, snowboards, and bicycles may not be kept in the dormitory rooms or hallways. Storage for recreational equipment is available on campus.
- Students may not keep pets of any type in the dormitory. In an effort to build community, social skills, good study habits, and a healthy lifestyle, use of gaming consoles, including computers, deemed to be excessive or inappropriate by a faculty or staff member may result in the confiscation (temporary or permanent) of the equipment.
- Because of the various dangers it poses, gambling involving real stakes (money, property, services, etc.) is not permitted.
- Listed below are the times for curfew and lights out. Students must get the permission of the on duty staff in order to extend any of the times

Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy

MSSM supports a safe and healthy learning environment for students that are free of the detrimental effects of drugs and alcohol. Maine State Law and the Maine School of Science and Mathematics prohibit the use, possession, or distribution of controlled substances, such as drugs and alcohol on school grounds.

On Campus Curfew

Sunday - Thursday: All students must be on campus between 9:30pm - 6:00am

Friday - Saturday: All students must be on campus between 10:30pm - 6:00am

ON WING TIMES

- *Sunday - Thursday:* 9:30pm
- *Friday - Saturday:* 11:00pm

IN ROOM TIMES

- Sunday - Thursday: 10:15pm
- Friday - Saturday: 11:15pm

LIGHTS OUT TIMES

- Sunday - Thursday: 10:30pm
- Friday - Saturday: 11:30pm

Technological Devices

At the request of parents, technological devices can be collected at certain times (nightly, weekday nights, etc.). Please reach out to the Director of Student Life to coordinate such requests.

The collection of technological devices can also be arranged at the discretion of the Director of Student Life if a student is behind in their work or community commitments.

Fire Safety and Prevention

- Students may not smoke, burn, or ignite anything while in the dormitory.
- Having a kitchen in the dormitory is a unique opportunity that comes with significant responsibility to avoid fire safety risks. Disorganization, dirt, and irresponsible use all pose real risk to the student body and the School will take immediate steps in the event of concern, including closing student access to the dorm kitchen.
- Under no circumstances can cooking utensils, hot pots, air fryers, electric blankets or heaters, candles, kerosene or gas lamps, upholstered furniture, combustible fluids or other items of a similarly hazardous nature be kept or used in dormitory rooms.
- Extension cords are expressly prohibited. Use of power strip outlets - (Must be "relocatable") is strongly encouraged and these are required for stereo, computer and larger electrical needs.
- All other electrical equipment such as lamps, radios, and stereos are permitted but may be confiscated if they are a danger to the dorm.
- All light fixtures must use compact fluorescent (CFL) or LED bulbs, no incandescent or halogen bulbs are permitted.
- No hangings may be suspended from the ceiling or on the walls or in any way obstruct entrances and exits from rooms. Cloth decorations are not allowed and other wall decorations should not cover more than 20% of the wall surface.
- Fire exits should be checked regularly and must be kept free of obstructions.
- Hall and corridor lights must be left on at night, not only to aid the student in exiting the building, but also to aid firefighters in their task.

- Rooms must be kept in orderly condition. Cluttered rooms are hazardous. All dormitory room mattresses must rest on a bed frame and not directly on the floor.
- The layout in which the furnishings are found in the fall is designed to keep the window and door exits free. Therefore, moving furniture requires the permission of the Director of Student Life.
- Fire extinguishers must not be removed from their proper locations or tampered with in any way. Students should be familiar with their location and method of operation. Any tampering with fire extinguishers or fire equipment, such as lights or alarms, is prohibited and may be grounds for dismissal.
- Fire drills will be performed multiple times throughout the year.

Fire Procedures

- At the first sign of smoke or fire, pull the fire alarm and alert the dorm staff and others in the dorm, and then proceed to the nearest exit.
- Do not attempt to take anything when you leave.
- When feasible, make sure that windows and doors are closed and that the lights are left on.
- After arriving at the check-in point and checking in with the residential life staff, stay nearby until they give further instructions. This may include notifying the Executive Director, aiding the fire department in getting to the right building, and so on. Under no circumstances re-enter the building until it has been officially determined safe by the Fire Chief (or their designee), Residential Life staff or Executive Director.

Room Inspections and Searches

School employees including Residential Life staff may enter student rooms for inspection, for health and safety purposes, as well as for disciplinary reasons. Such entry does not in and of itself constitute a room search. Investigation of a room's contents beyond simple entry and observation is considered a room search, for which the approval of the Director of Student Life and Executive Director is required. A search of a student's room and/or possessions may be warranted if a member of the faculty or administration has good reason to believe that a disciplinary infraction or the existence of physical or other potential harm to the student or others will be discovered. Generally, when a search is undertaken, a representative of the residential life staff and the student whose room is being searched, shall be present. At the discretion of the Director of Student Life, a room search may be undertaken without following the above procedure. The school may also search students' possessions, including, but not limited to mail, locked trunks, backpacks, purses, mobile devices, personal computers and vehicles if the school suspects a violation of law or school rule, or student safety is a concern.

Searches or inspections may include, but are not limited to, the following circumstances:

- Maintenance: MSSM maintenance personnel have access to student rooms at all times in order to perform their duties as assigned by MSSM. They are expected to report any inappropriate activities or items they observe while performing their duties.
- Room Inspections: RAs will conduct Room Checks to ensure students are following cleanliness guidelines. Residential Staff will conduct scheduled room inspections with prior notice to students, and will inspect each room after the Dorm is closed for long weekends and vacation periods. Unannounced inspections: From time to time, Residential staff will conduct unannounced inspections of student rooms
- Enforcement of school rules: The administration may authorize entry of student rooms or vehicles at any time without prior notice to ensure compliance with school rules and state law. As much as is possible, students will be present for such searches.
- Canines, metal detectors, and devices: In conducting room or vehicle searches or inspections, MSSM may utilize methods designed to detect the presence of illegal substances or objects.
- MSSM may also utilize the services of law enforcement personnel or other qualified persons who have expertise in these matters.

If any activity violating MSSM rules or state law is discovered during the course of any inspection or search, the student(s) will face the consequences.

At certain times, the school may offer an amnesty period where students can anonymously turn in any restricted items in their possession without consequences. These will be announced and overseen by the Director of Student Life and are at the sole discretion of the School.

Mail

Students will be notified when they have mail. Mail will be brought down to the dorm's RI Office where they can pick it up. *Parents: If you are mailing medication, please address it to the School Nurse.

Student mail should be addressed as follows:

Student Name
MSSM
95 High St
Limestone, ME 04750

Meals

In addition to helping maintain a student's physical health and nutrition, meals are an important time for developing connections with members of the community. All students are encouraged to eat regularly in the dining hall with their peers. Proper behavior must be maintained at meals, and good manners are expected at all times. To-go meals should only be taken out for academic purposes. We strongly encourage our students to eat in the dining hall with the community.

Breakfast

Monday-Friday

- 8:00am - 8:30am (7:30am for early class only)
- 8:30am - 9:00am Late Breakfast

Saturday & Sunday (Continental)

- 9:30am - 10:00am

Saturday & Sunday (Brunch)

- 11:00am - 12:30pm

Lunch

Monday - Friday

- 12:15pm - 1:15pm

Monday - Friday (Grazing)

- 2:00pm - 6:00pm

Dinner

Monday - Sunday

- 5:00pm - 6:00pm

Religious and Dietary Needs: Any students with special dietary or religious needs should make those needs known to the FLIK Staff, school nurse and Director of Student Life as soon as possible. The School will make every effort to accommodate any such needs.

FLIK Director of Dining Services

Email: flik@mssm.org

Student Spending Accounts

MSSM regulates your students' account using [My Kids Spending](#). Students may charge weekend activities and expenses for other programs that the school offers as long as their account contains a positive balance.

DORM STORE

The Dorm Store provides students with convenient access to snacks, drinks, personal care items and everyday residential essentials without having to leave campus. Designed around the needs of students living away from home, the store serves as both a practical resource and another opportunity to build independence within the residential community. Students can make purchases with cash, their My Kids student spending accounts and/or Venmo.

Student Health & Wellness Services

All MSSM students are required to have complete medical insurance coverage before they will be allowed to enroll and attend classes.

School Nurse:

Kristin Damboise, BSN

Office: 207-325-3798

Email: damboisek@mssm.org

Fax: 207-325-3614

Licensed Social Worker:

Dustin Damboise, LSW

Office: 207-325-3616

Cell: 207-554-9915

Email: damboised@mssm.org

Student Support Services

The Licensed Social Worker (LSW) is available to students to discuss a wide range of topics and is familiar with the problems that students face. The LSW's office is open each day, and appointments can be made easily. The social worker works with our students around topics such as school adjustment, peer relationships, and homesickness, as well as other mental health issues related to substance use and sexuality. However, this is not an exhaustive list, and other issues are discussed as they arise. The LSW will assist with telehealth referrals for outpatient services for students who might need long-term therapy. In part, this information is obtained to comply with state law; it is also needed to keep the School well-informed of the health of all students. The School is sensitive to the privacy of this information and is committed to protecting the confidentiality of students and their families. Parents agree that the School Nurse and the LSW are authorized to disclose health-related information, including information related to drug and alcohol evaluations and testing, to employees and agents of the School when, in their opinion, it is appropriate to meet the health or safety needs of the student, the school community, or the legal responsibilities of the School.

Health Services

MSSM employs a School Nurse, who is available Monday-Friday. The Health Services office is located within the dormitory and office hours are posted on the door. Health Services include assessing needs and performing first aid services, providing health care counseling, overseeing the distribution of medication, and aiding students in making unavoidable medical and dental appointments while at MSSM. Please note that routine health care appointments should be scheduled during times when students are at home. Students and their families are responsible for all costs incurred by these appointments. If a student feels ill during the daytime, they should visit the Nurse on Lower C. If it is outside health services hours, they should notify the dorm staff on duty. In the event a student needs medical care outside of the School Nurse, your child may be taken to one of the Walk-In Clinics. If a student becomes sick while at home or on break, please contact the Director of Residential Life and School Nurse, who will coordinate a plan for return to campus. Parents should make this contact early on so we can develop a plan that is least disruptive to the student.

Parents/legal guardians must sign permission forms allowing their children to receive treatment in the event of an illness or accident. Parents/legal guardians of students taken to the emergency room shall be notified by an MSSM

staff member as soon as the situation allows. In most cases, parents/legal guardians are called before students are brought to the emergency room.

Dorm Illness/ Preventing Outbreaks

The Nurse may recommend that the student be seen and tested at Walk-In Care. If so, the nurse will notify the parents/guardian before being tested. If we have an outbreak of illness in the dorms, it is a requirement to have this completed to contain the illness as much as possible and prevent spread. If a family refuses to have their child tested while presenting symptoms, we will ask that the student be picked up or sent home due to the unknown diagnosis that the student may have. Once a student tests positive for a contagious illness (COVID, Flu, Norovirus), arrangements will be made to have the student sent home. If this is unable to be accommodated, quarantine will be provided if the rooms are available.

Medications

MSSM's Medication Policy applies to both prescription and non-prescription drugs, as well as over-the-counter (OTC) medications. ALL medications (prescription/non-prescription) that students bring to MSSM must be turned into MSSM's Health Center within three hours of arriving on campus.

Medication Policy

All medications must be updated in Magnus annually.

The school works with Frontier Pharmacy in Caribou for medication management. If your child takes medication at school, the school nurse will provide direction on prescription management and medication policies. The School will only administer medications provided accompanied by a treating prescriber's order and in original pharmacy containers.

All prescription and non-prescription medications are administered under the supervision of the School Nurse or designee. The nurse's office is responsible for storing and dispensing all medications for students. Medications are not to be stored in a student's room unless authorized by a doctor's direct order.

Students on prescribed psychotropic medications must be stable on said medications when returning to campus. Any student who shares prescription medications with another student will be subject to serious disciplinary measures.

MSSM expects that students on medication will be responsible and obtain the medication from the school nurse as the doctor has ordered.

Morning medications are administered in the Health Center between 7:30am-8:30am as prescribed. Evening and weekend medications are administered in the dorms by residential life staff.

The school nurse will assist and encourage your child to take their prescribed medications however, it is the responsibility of your child to come to the Health Center for their medications. Parents and the Director of Residential Life will be notified of each missed dose.

The medication form needs to be filled out by the student's PCP prior to arrival to campus. Any medication not listed on the form will not be permitted for the student to take until the form is completed.

If a student misses their medication, it is important they reach out to the School Nurse or a Residential Life staff member. If a student regularly forgets or misses their medication, a call/email will be made to the family to inform them and to decide if a meeting should be scheduled to address medication management.

With parental permission, students are allowed to self-medicate OTC's listed on the health form. Small amounts of OTC medications may be kept in student's rooms. The amount of OTC medications students are permitted to keep in their rooms is determined by the kind of medication they wish to have. Generally, medical staff allow students to possess the amount of medication that would be recommended for a particular week. If more than that is needed, the parents/legal guardians will be contacted. Students found with more than the allowed amount of OTC medications will have the medication removed and a meeting will be called with the Director of Residential Life and the family.

With parental permission, students may have emergency prescription medications such as asthma inhalers and Epi-Pens in their possession, but need to bring their own supply.

With prior approval of parents/legal guardians and the School Nurse, certain non-emergency prescription medications, such as birth control and acne medications, may be kept by students. To ensure the health and safety of everyone in the community, students will NOT be permitted, under any circumstances, to have in their possession the following non-emergency prescription drugs:

- Schedule I drugs (example: prescription pain-killers)
- Schedule II drugs (example: ADHD/ADD medications)
- Psychotropic medications such as antidepressants, mood stabilizers, anti-psychotropic, etc.

These medications must be kept under lock and key in the Health Center and given only by trained medication administration staff.

Except in the case of emergency or through special arrangement, parents/legal guardians are required to have all prescriptions sent to Frontier Pharmacy in Caribou Maine: (207) 493-7771. It is the responsibility of the family to have the prescription co-pay prepaid and insurance RX number provided to the pharmacy before a MSSM staff member can pick up the medications.

Other Health Information

All Students

If you are unable to attend classes due to illness or injury, it is assumed you are therefore unable to participate in sports or activities. If you are excused from the academic day or work assignment you may not attend practice, activities or trips unless an exception is made. Exceptions may only be given by the nurse, LSW or Director of Residential Life.

The school nurse will notify the Registrar regarding absences - these absences will then be considered excused. Students are responsible for contacting advisors and teachers regarding missed work and to arrange a time for makeup.

The school nurse does not excuse students from exams. Make-up or extensions on exams can only be done in collaboration with your teacher or Student Support.

Annual Physical Exam and Immunizations

For the safety of the student, MSSM requires that each student have a complete physical exam every year and that current immunization status is maintained. This information must be on file in Magnus before the student arrives at

school. All students who enroll in the School are required by Maine law to present a certificate of immunization or evidence of immunization or immunity against poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chicken pox). MSSM requires in addition that all students be immunized or show evidence of immunity from hepatitis A and meningitis. MSSM also recommends that students be inoculated with the appropriate flu vaccine every year.

A student will not be allowed to participate in athletics, co-curricular, or weekend activities without the required completed health forms. All injuries related to sports activity will be seen by the school nurse.

Where MSSM is a residential School where students are in close proximity for extended times, it is particularly important that students are immunized.

Non-immunized students shall not be permitted to attend school unless one of the following conditions is met:

- The parents/legal guardians provide to the school written assurance that the child will be immunized within 90 days of enrolling in school or his/her first attendance in classes, whichever date is earlier. This option is available only once to each student during their school career; or
- The parents/legal guardians provide a physician's written statement each year that immunization against one or more diseases may be medically inadvisable (as defined by law/regulation); or
- The parents/legal guardians state in writing each year that immunization is contrary to their sincere religious or philosophical beliefs.
- The parents/legal guardians grant written consent for their child to be immunized by a public health officer, physician, Director of Health Services or other authorized person employed by or acting as an agent of the School.

The Executive Director shall exclude from the School any non-immunized student when there is a clear danger to the health of students, staff, and the general public as provided by law. If a student is absent from the School due to conditions in this paragraph for more than ten days, the Executive Director shall make arrangements to meet the educational needs of the student. Any student not immunized shall be sent home in the event of an outbreak of any illness or disease stated above-stated for which the student is not immunized. Unvaccinated students in the case of an outbreak of disease in which they are not vaccinated against will be excluded from School for at least 16 days from the last identified case. The student will be allowed to return to the School once the School's medical personnel deem it appropriate. In the event that the student is sent home due to the conditions in this paragraph, the School is not required to provide tutoring, off-site classes, or other academic accommodations.

The Executive Director, in consultation with School medical personnel, has broad authority to modify the requirements of this policy as conditions and events change.

Students who are exempt from the state's immunization requirements may be prohibited from attending school and participating in school activities in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease. Students excluded from the School for this reason will not be permitted to return until (1) the danger of the outbreak has passed; (2) the student becomes ill with the disease and completely recovers; or (3) the student is immunized. In determining whether there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, the School may consult with appropriate medical professionals and/or state and federal public health agencies.

Communicable Illness

The school may exclude from school any student who (a) has a communicable illness, (b) has been exposed to an infected person, or (c) has traveled to an area impacted by a communicable illness, if the School determines that such exclusion is appropriate for the welfare of the student or the school community. The School may also screen students or require students to be screened by appropriate medical professionals to determine whether they pose a risk to the community. The School's decisions shall be based on current and well-informed medical judgments concerning the illness, the risks of transmitting the illness to others, the symptoms and special circumstances of

each individual who has a communicable illness, and an analysis of the identified risks and available alternatives for responding to an individual with a communicable illness. If and 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, as well as required steps to be taken in the event of an epidemic or outbreak. We encourage all parents and guardians to contact medical professionals with any questions or concerns about communicable illnesses or immunization issues.

Sexuality and Intimate Relationships

The school recognizes that sexuality is a normal part of human nature, and its discovery is a normal part of adolescence. However, any level of sexual intimacy can bring with it physical, psychological, and emotional challenges that can be overwhelming to students. In a residential community such as the school's there are additional considerations: the campus is shared public space, and all members of the community have the right to be free of unwanted exposure to the intimate sexual behaviors of others. The school has the same expectations for students regardless of their sexual orientation.

Students who would like to talk about the meaning of sexual intimacy can talk with a trusted adult, the school nurse, or the LSW so that appropriate support may be provided.

We follow all relevant state laws regarding sexual behavior and reporting. If students are found engaged in sexually intimate behavior, or in a situation that suggests they have been sexually intimate (but where such activity does not necessarily violate the law), the school will generally respond to the situation as a health issue, which may include notification of parents and, as appropriate, referral to the school nurse or LSW. When such behavior is accompanied by violations of other school rules (such as rules governing curfew or dorm intervisitation), the School may respond with disciplinary action.

Community Information

Work Assignments and Student-Managers

Work Assignments provide students with an opportunity to take an active role in caring for the community they share. Through regular responsibilities throughout the residential program, students contribute to maintaining clean, organized and welcoming common spaces while developing habits of responsibility, consistency, teamwork and pride in their environment.

Student-Managers offer an additional layer of student leadership by helping oversee work assignments, organize responsibilities, communicate expectations and support their peers in completing tasks successfully. Rather than simply checking whether work is finished, Student-Managers help create a culture of shared ownership and accountability while serving as a connection between students and staff.

The program reinforces a simple principle that everyone who benefits from the community also contributes to it. Work Assignments teach students that seemingly small responsibilities matter, while Student-Managers gain meaningful experience in leadership, organization, communication and managing a team. Together, students learn not only how to live independently, but how to take care of the people, places and community around them.

Student Activity Board

The Student Activity Board plays an important role in creating a vibrant, inclusive and responsive campus community. Working alongside staff, students help identify the interests, needs and emerging trends within the student body and use that information to help shape weekend activities, events and community experiences.

Beyond planning activities, the SAB helps track participation and engagement to better understand who is getting involved, which programs are connecting with students and where additional opportunities may be needed. Student feedback, participation patterns and observations help inform future programming and ensure that activities continue to evolve with the community.

Through this process, students have a meaningful voice in creating the experiences available to their peers while developing leadership, collaboration, communication and planning skills. The goal is not simply to keep students busy, but instead to intentionally create opportunities for connection, belonging, exploration and fun while ensuring that every student can find meaningful ways to engage in the MSSM community.

Student Ambassadors

Student Ambassadors serve as welcoming representatives of MSSM and play an important role in sharing the school experience with prospective students and families. As authentic voices of the student body, Ambassadors help bring MSSM to life by sharing their experiences, answering questions, providing campus tours and helping visitors understand what it truly means to live, learn and belong within the MSSM community. Their involvement provides prospective students with a valuable student-to-student perspective while helping the school showcase its academics, residential experience, opportunities and unique community culture.

Beyond campus tours, Student Ambassadors support admissions events and help coordinate New Student Day, welcoming incoming students and helping them begin building connections before they officially arrive on campus. Through their leadership, enthusiasm and school pride, Ambassadors serve as an important bridge between current and future Penguins. They help prospective students picture themselves not simply attending MSSM, but becoming part of it.

Clubs

Students and faculty do, and may, take the initiative to start clubs based on personal interests and/or needs of the community. Club opportunities and schedules will be distributed early in the academic year. The Director of Student Life oversees all clubs. Any group who wishes to start a club is required to apply, and will be approved by the Student Senate.

Policies and Procedures

Dressing and Grooming

The MSSM School Dressing and Grooming Guidelines are designed to ensure safety around authentic self-expression and help promote necessary hygiene practices. We respect the individual and unique potential each member of the community offers, and support their freedom to express themselves. No member of the community 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. Our goal is for MSSM students to prepare their best selves each day by being role models in what they wear, taking accountability for their hygiene, and being supportive in the freedom of expression of others. MSSM requires school dress, as defined below, for all school obligations.

ACADEMIC BUILDING DRESS CODE

- Clothing will not have graphics or language that is offensive to our community.
- Clothing worn to academic events will not be clothing designed specifically for sleeping, lounging or bathing (pajamas, sleepwear, undergarments, bathing suits). Example: wearing pajamas at the Holiday Dinner gathering.
- Clothing will not interfere with good hygiene practices or the range of motion required
 - Students should dress in clean clothing each day. Additionally, clothing must be laundered regularly to be clean (free of odor and stains).
 - Open garments like skirts, dresses, and shorts must cover the body enough to sit without exposing undergarments to public chairs/surfaces.
 - Clothing must allow for daily movement around campus that promotes student comfort, flexibility, and range of motion.
- Hearing must be unrestricted during classes and meetings (no headphones or other hearing restrictions) - with the exception of school approved accommodations or religious observance.
- Some classes or campus jobs may have specific clothing requirements for physical safety or movement. For example, oversized clothing may not be allowed in Science Labs, Makerspace. Instructors will provide guidance for this at the beginning of the term.
- Wear appropriate clothing for each of the seasons including footwear. This would include boots or shoes for winter, pants and a jacket.

School personnel shall not enforce the school's dress code more strictly against students because of diversity in 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.

In conversations about dress code issues, students shall not be shamed or required to publicly display their body or clothes in front of others (students, parents, or staff) in school.

Attendance

Established as a residential school, in-person participation is a core component of MSSM's program. Students are expected to attend all required academic and student life programming. The goal of our student support services is to teach the skills necessary for students to meet their responsibilities rather than excuse them from those responsibilities.

While we recognize that there are reasons that students may need to be away from campus while school is in session, we ask families to minimize those times by taking advantage of planned breaks. Travel days are scheduled to avoid conflicting with student responsibilities. Students that do need to be away are asked to notify the school a week in advance using the procedures below.

Excessive absenteeism - excused and/or unexcused - may jeopardize awarding of credit or continued enrollment at MSSM.

Attendance and Extracurricular Participation

Students are expected to meet all academic responsibilities in order to be eligible for participation in extracurricular activities. Students are ineligible for practice or games if they are absent from any classes that academic day. In addition, if students are unable to meet their academic obligations the day after an athletic competition, they may be prohibited from competing in the next game.

Absence Procedures

School sponsored activities and health related absences will be shared with faculty and students do not need to take any action. For example, if a student needs to miss class for an athletic competition the roster and excused absence will be shared with faculty and the student doesn't need to request permission.

In order to request a health day, students must meet with the nurse or social worker who will assess the student and determine a course of action. When either the nurse or social worker is unavailable, students should meet with the director of student life. Our goal is to help students develop the skills to meet their responsibilities when facing challenges rather than avoiding them. We also recognize that missing classes adds to workload and can be detrimental to student well-being.

If a student needs to miss classes for a non-school sponsored reason, they must complete a Pink Form and submit it to the Executive Director, who (with the Leadership team) will determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. Pink Forms should be submitted a week in advance and are encouraged earlier if students are aware of an absence. The forms are located in the Academic Building's main office. The Executive Director will inform the student of the decision by Friday of the week the pink form is submitted. We encourage you to submit pink forms as early in advance as possible so that we can provide that decision to help inform student and family decisions. In the event that the Executive Director is unavailable, students should submit Pink Forms to the Director of Student Life.

We recognize that emergencies may arise that prohibit submitting a pink form a week in advance. In those cases, students/families are asked to notify the Executive Director as soon as you become aware of the need to miss classes.

Short / Extended Breaks (Vacations)

There are a total of **7 breaks** throughout the school year in which students must depart campus.

Google Transportation Forms (Please Complete Before Each Break)

In order to plan transportation needs for each break, parents will be required to complete a google transportation the week prior to each break. Notifications will be sent out via the Penguin Weekly email. **Students may travel on the school-provided buses for free or make their own plans.**

Presque Isle Airport / Cyr Bus Dates and Requests For Transportation

Certain dates have been designated to bring students to/from the airport/bus station for free before/after breaks. Please see the below chart and column entitled, "Airport/Cyr Bus Dates."

**If a student wishes to receive a ride to and/or from the Presque Isle airport/Cyr Bus station outside of the dates listed below, there will be a \$25 fee.

Below is a chart with important travel dates:

Break	School Buses Depart MSSM	School Buses Return to MSSM	**Airport/Cyr Bus Dates
1 - Short	Friday, 9/18/26	Tuesday, 9/22/26	Saturday, 9/19/26 Tuesday, 9/22/26
2 - Short	Saturday, 10/17/26	Tuesday, 10/20/26	Saturday, 10/17/26 Tuesday, 10/20/26
3 - Extended	Saturday, 11/21/26	Sunday, 11/29/26	Saturday, 11/21/26 Sunday, 11/29/26
4 - Extended	Friday, 12/18/26	*Sunday, 1/10/27 *Sunday, 1/24/27	Saturday, 12/19/26 *Sunday, 1/10/27 *Sunday, 1/24/27
5 - Extended	Saturday, 2/13/27	Sunday, 2/21/27	Saturday, 2/13/27 Sunday, 2/21/27
6 - Short	Friday, 3/19/27	Tuesday, 3/23/27	Saturday, 3/20/27 Tuesday, 3/23/27
7 - Extended	Saturday, 4/17/27	Sunday, 4/25/27	Saturday, 4/17/27 Sunday, 4/25/27

Sign In/Out Procedure

While MSSM cannot guarantee knowledge of all students' whereabouts at all times, regulations governing signing out are designed to give the staff a reasonable knowledge of each student's location, and thus a way of reaching them in the event of an emergency.

The sign in/out process requires the student to fill out a REACH leave request and must check out with the staff member on duty to obtain approval.

Students must sign out any time they leave campus for a non-sanctioned school trip. Permission from the Residential Life staff is needed for any unsupervised trip lasting longer than two hours or extending outside of Limestone town limits.

REACH

REACH coordinates Leave Request procedures for School Staff, Parents, Hosts and Students by creating an easy to use, paperless system that you can access from anywhere at any time and from any device. REACH is available for you to use from any PC or mobile device 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. The following sections are all coordinated through REACH during the school year. **Please submit all REACH requests at least 24 hours in advance.**

1. Going Off-Campus

Students must sign-out each time they wish to leave campus. Students may sign-out if he/she/they are in good standing with academics and within the boarding community, has the proper permissions, and acts in accordance with the guidelines set in place by the Residential Life Handbook. Students must sign back in upon return to campus.

2. Leave Requests

Students are permitted to leave campus on the weekends to visit family and friends, provided the student is in good academic and social standing and has no work hours scheduled with the Residential Life Staff.

3. Overnight Permission

Students seeking permission for an overnight excursion are required to submit an Overnight Leave Request through REACH. Students given permission to go on a non school sanctioned overnight trip must check out with the staff member on duty to obtain approval.

Automobiles

Automobiles on campus are a privilege. Students may have vehicles on campus from August 22nd - November 21st. Students may return to campus with their cars upon arrival from April break. When students arrive on campus with vehicles, they must park their vehicles in the assigned area and report directly to the residential staff to turn in all their keys for the vehicles. Students who have brought cars to school may use their cars only when departing for extended weekends or vacations or for special circumstances approved by the Director of Student Life. All exceptions to this must be approved by the Director of Student Life. Student vehicles are subject to search at any time while they are at MSSM.

Bicycles

Students who bring a bicycle to campus are required to register it with the Director of Student Life. Registration helps maintain an accurate record of bicycles on campus, promotes responsible ownership and allows staff to better assist students if a bicycle is lost, misplaced or left behind.

Bicycles must be stored in the designated bike shed or secured to an approved outdoor bicycle rack with a lock when not in use. Bikes should not be stored in dorm rooms, hallways, stairwells or other residential common areas where they may create clutter or interfere with safe movement through the building.

Students are responsible for properly securing, maintaining and storing their bicycles throughout the year. These expectations help protect personal property, maintain safe and organized residential spaces and reinforce the shared responsibility everyone has for taking care of our campus community.

Senior Privileges

Recognizing that MSSM seniors are leaders and stewards of the community, they may earn special responsibilities and privileges not extended to students in the lower grades. MSSM expects its older students to conduct themselves appropriately, cultivating a positive tone and decorum. The School offers certain privileges in the spirit of responsibility and leadership. Senior privileges will be determined at some point during the first semester - in an effort to ensure we build community expectations and in the spirit of privileges are earned and not an entitlement, the School does not generally institute any senior privileges until after Academic Progress Reports. Seniors coordinate with the Director of Student Life, residential life team, and the administrative team on identifying appropriate senior privileges.

Athletic Info

Athletics (Varsity/JV), Intramurals and Club Sports

Athletics at MSSM extend far beyond winning and losing. They are an essential part of developing healthy, confident and well-rounded students. Through varsity and junior varsity athletics, intramural sports, club sports and diverse Physical Education tracks, MSSM provides opportunities for every student to challenge themselves, build meaningful relationships and discover new passions regardless of their experience or skill level. Athletics encourage students to step outside their comfort zones and embrace challenges while valuing sportsmanship, perseverance, teamwork, leadership and personal responsibility.

Participation in athletics and physical activity helps students develop habits that extend far beyond their time at MSSM. Whether representing the school in varsity competition, enjoying the camaraderie of an intramural league, exploring a new interest through a club sport, or pursuing personal wellness through a Physical Education course, students learn the importance of discipline, resilience, communication and balance. These experiences foster confidence, reduce stress, promote lifelong health and strengthen the sense of belonging that defines the MSSM community.

At its core, athletics is another classroom where students learn by doing. Every practice, game, workout, nature walk, tournament and recreational activity provides opportunities to grow as teammates, leaders and individuals. By emphasizing participation, character, wellness and community alongside achievement, MSSM's athletics program prepares students not only for success in sport, but for healthy, active and fulfilling lives long after graduation.

SEASONAL INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS

- *Fall:* Boys Varsity Soccer, Girls Varsity Soccer, Boys/Girls Varsity Cross Country
- *Winter:* Boys JV Basketball, Girls JV Basketball, Boys Varsity Volleyball, Girls Varsity Volleyball
- *Spring:* Boys/Girls Track & Field

SEASONAL CLUB SPORTS

- *Fall:* Boys/Girls Club Golf
- *Winter:* Boys/Girls Club Nordic Skiing
- *Spring:* Boys/Girls Club Tennis

SEASONAL INTRAMURALS SPORTS

- Student General Manager(s) will organize the intramural seasons and choose sports based on popular choice. Sports can include: Floor Hockey, Basketball, Volleyball, Futsal, Pickleball and Badminton

Physical Education Tracks / Health Curriculum

Student Life supports a health and fitness curriculum that provides opportunities for students to develop durable skills for lifelong wellness. At MSSM, health and fitness is embedded within daily routines, programming, and

course offerings. Student learning occurs through formal instruction, campus culture and expectations, and robust support systems.

Health Education (HE) is guided by the State of Maine's required standards. MSSM meets these standards through access to qualified staff and residential requirements. Students are supported in accessing opportunities, understanding health concepts and engaging in communication.

Physical education (PE) is a school requirement delivered through the student life program. Each year, students select a Physical Education track of their choice. These tracks promote skills needed for lifelong physical activity.

Student-Led Booster Club

The Student-Led Booster Club brings students together to build school spirit, increase awareness of MSSM athletics and create a stronger sense of community around our teams and student-athletes. Led by students, the club helps make athletics a visible and celebrated part of the overall MSSM experience, regardless of whether a student competes on a team.

Members help promote upcoming games and events, encourage student attendance, recognize teams and individual accomplishments, develop game-day traditions and create opportunities for the entire community to show its Penguin Pride. The Booster Club can also collaborate with Student Life, athletic teams and other student organizations on spirit events, theme nights, promotions and community-building initiatives.

Most importantly, the Booster Club gives students ownership of school spirit. Through creativity, leadership and enthusiasm, students help create an environment where showing up for one another matters, accomplishments are celebrated and wearing MSSM colors represents being part of something bigger than yourself.

Athletic Merchandise

Custom MSSM athletic merchandise and apparel will be offered at select times throughout the year, providing students, families and members of the school community with opportunities to show their Penguin Pride and support MSSM Athletics.

Special apparel releases may be connected to athletic seasons, individual teams, rivalry games, championships, spirit events or other moments throughout the year. Offerings may include limited-edition designs and team-specific gear that celebrate our student-athletes while creating greater visibility and excitement around the athletic program.

Academic Eligibility for Interscholastic Athletics

The Maine Principals Association (MPA) requires student athletes to meet specific academic standards at the conclusion of each semester of high school. Failure to meet those standards at the end of any semester of high school results in a student being declared ineligible for the subsequent semester. Therefore, using MPA's guidelines, the School will determine a student's eligibility three times per semester: Progress Reports, Academic Updates and Semester Grade. If an athlete has two C-'s or one or more F's during any of these grading periods, they will be deemed ineligible until the following academic grading period.

In the event that a student is consistently failing to submit academic work, the School may limit participation in athletics (or other extracurricular activities) in an effort to remove barriers to meeting MSSM's academic expectations.

Attendance and Extracurricular Participation

Participation in either extracurricular or interscholastic art, athletic, and academic performances or competitions requires the student to meet all academic obligations on the day of the event. Academic obligations (i.e. tests, papers, etc.) must also be fulfilled. Students who have an unexcused absence from any academic class during a

school day may neither practice nor participate in any after-school activity that day. Any exception to this policy must be approved by the Director of Student Life.

Uniforms

Each student will receive an athletic uniform at the beginning of their season. They will be responsible for maintaining their uniform throughout their season. On the last day of their season, they will be required to return their uniform to the Athletic Director. If the uniform is not returned, or it is returned with damages of any kind that were not reported to the Athletic Director during the season, the student will be charged with a replacement uniform.

Inclusive Community

Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics that all employees and students are able to enjoy a work, educational, and living environment free from all forms of distraction, including discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, age, sect, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, status as a veteran, or other protected status. Offensive or harassing behavior is not tolerated against any student or employee.

Harassment is illegal under state and federal laws. This policy covers vendors, visitors, and others who enter our facilities, as well as all students and employees. Administrative personnel are responsible for taking proper action to end such behavior. In an effort to prevent harassment from occurring, this policy against harassment will be communicated to each student and employee. No student or employee of MSSM is exempt from this policy. Offensive conduct or harassment is strictly prohibited. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Offensive physical actions, written or spoken, and graphic communication (i.e., obscene hand gestures or sexually explicit drawings)
- Any type of physical contact when the action is unwelcomed by the recipient; i.e., brushing up against someone in an offensive manner
- Expectations, requests, demands, or pressure for sexual favors
- Slurs, jokes, posters, cartoons, and gestures that are offensive
- Inappropriate or offensive email

All such offensive conduct is considered a form of harassment when any of the following is true:

- There is a promise or implied promise of preferential treatment or negative consequence regarding employment, educational decisions, or status
- Such conduct has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or living environment; or unreasonably interferes with a person's work performance
- A third party is offended by the sexual conduct or communications of others

Harassment is a form of misconduct. Disciplinary action, including termination of employment or expulsion from MSSM, may be taken against any employee or student engaging in this type of behavior. Any employee who has knowledge of such behavior and does not report it to an MSSM official is also subject to disciplinary action.

Anyone who believes he/she is being discriminated against as a result of harassing behavior based on any protected status is encouraged to report it. Complaints should be made to a school official. Once notified, an immediate investigation of the allegations will be conducted and necessary corrective action will be taken. All complaints will remain as confidential as possible.

Hazing Policy

Maine statute defines injurious hazing as "any action or situation, including harassing behavior, that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of any School personnel or a student enrolled in a public School." Injurious hazing activities of any type, either on or off School property, by any student, staff member, group or organization affiliated with this School, are inconsistent with the educational process and shall be prohibited at all times.

"Harassing behavior" includes acts of intimidation and any other conduct that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of a student or staff member.

"Acts of intimidation" include extortion, menacing, direct or indirect threats of violence, incidents of violence, bullying, statements or taunting of a malicious and/or derogatory nature that recklessly or intentionally endanger the mental or physical health of another person, and property damage or theft.

No administrator, faculty member, or other employee of the school shall encourage, permit, condone, or tolerate injurious hazing activities. No student, including leaders of students' organizations, shall plan, encourage, or engage in injurious hazing activities. Students who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action which may include suspension, expulsion, or other appropriate measures. Administrators, professional staff, and all other employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

In the case of an organization affiliated with this school that authorizes hazing, penalties may include rescission of permission for that organization to operate on school property or to receive any other benefit of affiliation with the school. Persons not associated with this school who fail to abide by this policy may be subject to ejection from school property and/or other measures as may be available under the law. These penalties shall be in addition to any civil or criminal penalties to which the violator or organization may be subject.

The Executive Director/designee shall be responsible for administering this policy. In the event that an individual or organization disagrees with an action—or lack of action—on the part of the Executive Director/designee as he/she carries out the provisions of this policy, that individual or organization may appeal to the Board of Trustees. The ruling of the Board of Trustees with respect to the provisions of this policy shall be final.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

MSSM does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, ancestry, national origin, genetic information, or disability in its programs and activities.

- Gregory Hamlin
- Title IX Coordinator, Affirmative Action Officer
- Cell: 1 (607) 301-3922
- Email: titleix@mssm.org

For further information on notice of non-discrimination you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights. Web: <https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/index.html>; Phone: 1-800-368-1019; Email: OCRMail@hhs.gov; TDD: 1-800-537-7697

**If information in this handbook is contrary to MSSM policy,
the policy supersedes this handbook.**

MSSM Community Handbook

2026-2027

I have read and understand the Community Handbook. I agree to follow the terms, expectations, policies, and procedures outlined in the handbook.

Printed Name

Signature

Date