



**NORTHSHORE
EDUCATION
CONSORTIUM**

**Northshore Academy
Upper School**

126 Sohier Rd
Beverly, MA 01915
978-339-1450

Student and Parent/Caregiver Handbook
School Year 2026-2027

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Welcome to Northshore Academy Upper

Welcome!

Northshore Academy is a comfortable, fun, exciting, and thoughtful school where our students learn and grow. Some students may be learning social skills, while others are focusing on emotional regulation. Some may be learning history, while others are building their confidence. Whatever our students' needs, Northshore Academy supports our students in meeting them.

We maintain high academic expectations for each of our students. Our curriculum is developed by Special Educators to challenge each of our students appropriately, and ensure that they are learning and growing while here at school. Social Emotional Learning is also embedded throughout much of our curriculum, and addressed specifically in older students' Health and Wellness class. Along with our academic expectations, we also provide each student with access to the NSAU therapeutic milieu.

In order to meet our students' emotional needs as well as academic, each student is assigned a counselor that they meet with regularly. We also hold Restorative Circles weekly. Here, students proactively practice honesty, empathy, and healthy disagreement in a safe and predictable space. As we develop NSAU's model for Restorative Justice, we will communicate to families often, and offer many opportunities to learn more about how it looks in our school. Students are also actively supported by their counselor, as well as the Student Support Team, when necessary, in circles and in the wider school as well. .

Welcome to Northshore Academy Upper School. We hope your young person has a great time here.

Warmly and with excitement,

Morgan Meyer M.A.T., Ms. Ed.



Principal of Northshore Academy Upper School
126 Sohler Rd
Beverly, MA 01915

Contacts

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Extension

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Referrals and Admissions

The Special Education Department of a student's sending school district must make a referral in order for a student to be considered for admission.

The referral packet generally includes a current IEP, psychological and academic testing results, applicable school reports, a psycho-social history, pertinent medical information, and reports from other providers (i.e. Programs, Therapists, DCF, DMH, DYS, etc.) These documents allow us to determine if NSAU may be an appropriate setting for the potential student. If it seems like a good fit, NSAU will schedule an interview and site visit with the student and their caregivers. The NSA team will make a decision regarding admission after a review of written materials and the interview.

Upon acceptance, the student's caregiver will be asked to complete a school permission packet and submit medical information including a recent physical and the student's immunization records. An accepted IEP and Placement are also needed to complete the intake process. A student may start school after all required documents have been completed and submitted.

The above referral process also applies to all students being referred to our Extended Evaluation program, as well as to our Extended School Year program.

Absences, Arrival and Dismissal

Absences

If your student will be absent please contact the school and leave a message. The front desk will communicate absences with the rest of the staff,

- **To report a student absent for the day, call (978) 338-1450 and press 9.**
- **To report an absence for more than one day, please contact the child's counselor.**

If your student will be absent and does not need to be picked up by their bus/van, please call the number provided to you by your school district or transportation company. This call will prevent other students from unnecessary time on the bus/van.

Arrival

Students may enter the building at 7:45am. If students arrive earlier than this, they must remain in their transportation until they enter the building. Upon arrival, they go directly to homeroom.

If they arrive after 8:05, students must check in in the front office and provide a reason for their tardiness. Depending on the reason, make-up work may be required.

Please communicate with the transportation company if you will bring your student to school instead of their normal transportation.

Dismissal

Most students will be dismissed to their arranged transportation at 2:00pm. Some students will be picked up by family members.

If a person that is not familiar to the school is picking up the child, please communicate this to the school as early as possible by completing a Non-Standard Dismissal form and returning it to the child's counselor 24 hours before the change. If you are unable to reach the counselor, please contact the front desk. When collecting the child for an early or non-standard dismissal, come to the main office and the front desk will call for them to come to the front.

If someone other than the student's caregiver is picking them up, please indicate this with as much detail as possible. When they arrive, they must present identification to the front desk, who will scan it and put it on file. This is only necessary the first time. Please note that any non-family member picking up a student must be at least 18 years old.

When collecting your child early (eg. for an appointment) contact the front desk as soon as possible. Advance notice within 24 hours is ideal.

Please communicate with the transportation company if your student will be dismissed early or use other transportation home that day.

If a student leaves school property without consent of their guardian **and** prior communication to the school, NSAU will make the appropriate contacts and determine appropriate consequences.

Dress Code

At NSAU, we value a safe and stable community. In order to create this, please ensure that your student is dressed comfortably and appropriately. This includes no clothing indicating drugs or alcohol, nothing with hate speech, as well as nothing portraying weapons or other upsetting visuals.

Please ensure that all student clothing does not reveal an inappropriate amount of skin. Keep in mind this will change depending on the weather.

Academics and Therapeutic Environment

NSAU provides a therapeutic educational program that supports the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs of students in grades 7–12. We recognize that many students also benefit from explicit instruction in executive functioning skills, including organization, planning, task initiation, time management, emotional regulation, flexible thinking, and self-advocacy, as well as content.

We embed executive functioning skills, social/emotional learning, and therapeutic skills as often as possible using structured routines, predictable classroom environments, individualized instruction, counseling services, therapeutic behavioral supports, regular access to a counselor, and collaborative problem-solving. Our goal is to help students become ready for success in school, post-secondary education, employment, and life.

Curriculum

NSAU offers a comprehensive curriculum aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

Core academic courses include:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- History and Social Studies

Students also participate in a variety of enrichment, vocational, and elective courses that support creativity, career exploration, physical wellness, and life skills. Course offerings may include:

- Visual Arts
- Music
- Media and Technology
- Culinary Arts
- Physical Education
- Health
- Outdoor Adventure
- Animal Science
- Horticulture
- Philosophy
- Other electives based on student interests and program availability

Students also participate in psychoeducational and therapeutic programming designed to strengthen social-emotional learning, executive functioning, independent living skills, transition planning, and self-determination.

Course Credits

High school students earn graduation credits through successful completion of coursework. A final course average of **65% or higher** is required to earn credit.

Credits are awarded using a time-on-learning formula.

Class Schedule	Credits Earned per Quarter
50-minute class meeting once per week	0.25 credits
50-minute class meeting twice per week	0.50 credits
50-minute class meeting five times per week	1.25 credits

Additional credit opportunities may be available through approved independent studies, mentoring, community service, work-based learning, or other individualized educational experiences. These opportunities are considered on a case-by-case basis by the student's educational team and sending school district.

In order for students to receive a diploma, they must meet the graduation requirements of the state and of their sending school district. Our guidance staff work closely with sending school districts around any necessary modifications.

Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning experiences may be available for eligible juniors and seniors as part of a student's transition plan.

Participation is determined collaboratively by NSAU and the sending school district based on the student's academic progress, transition goals, work readiness, and individual needs. When approved, graduation credit is awarded by the sending school district in accordance with district policies.

Dual Enrollment

Students may have the opportunity to enroll in college courses when appropriate to support their academic achievement and post-secondary transition goals.

Dual enrollment is considered for the individual student by the educational team. Families are responsible for tuition, fees, books, and transportation unless other arrangements have been made with the sending school district.

Grading

Teachers use multiple metrics to evaluate student learning and progress. A teacher may consider:

- Class participation and engagement
- Assignments and homework
- Projects and presentations
- Quizzes, tests, and other assessments
- Demonstration of academic growth
- Attendance and consistent participation

Grading practices are designed to reflect student achievement while recognizing each student's individualized learning needs.

Homework

Homework expectations vary by course and teacher. Assignments are designed to reinforce classroom learning while considering students' individualized educational and therapeutic needs.

Families are encouraged to communicate with teachers regarding homework expectations, accommodations, or concerns.

Attendance

Consistent attendance is essential for academic progress and student success. Students who miss instructional time also miss important learning experiences, class discussions, and assignments.

Students who accumulate eight (8) or more absences from a class during a quarter will meet with their counselor, teachers, and/or administrators to develop a plan for completing missed work and demonstrating mastery of course content.

Students who are absent from a class fifteen (15) or more times during a quarter may receive a numerical grade for work completed; however, they may not earn a passing quarterly grade or course credit unless otherwise determined through applicable accommodations, administrative review, or district policy.

Breaks and Wellness

The daily schedule includes a morning break and lunch break to promote emotional regulation, physical wellness, and readiness to learn.

Students have assigned breakspaces, and may access our outdoor space (weather permitting). During breaks and lunch, students are also able to work in or purchase food from our snack bar. The snack bar is consistently supervised by an adult but staffed by students working on social skills, simple math, and/or preparation for work.

Progress Reports

Students who are at risk of earning a grade of D or F receive a mid-quarter progress report.

We encourage caregivers to contact teachers to discuss academic concerns and collaborate to support student success.

Progress toward Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals is reported separately each quarter.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued at the conclusion of each quarter and are shared with families and the student's sending school district.

Report cards include:

- Course grades
- Credits earned (when applicable)
- Attendance information
- Academic progress

Student Records

Student educational records are maintained in accordance with the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Parents, guardians, and eligible students have the right to inspect and request amendment of student records as provided by law.

Statewide Assessments

NSAU administers statewide assessments in accordance with the requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Students participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and, when applicable, ACCESS for ELLs. Students with disabilities receive testing accommodations identified in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students who meet state eligibility criteria may participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt).

Although MCAS is no longer a statewide graduation requirement, participation in required state assessments remains an important component of Massachusetts' educational accountability system. Families with questions regarding statewide testing should contact the school administration.

Graduation Requirements

Students earn a diploma by meeting the graduation requirements established by their sending school district.

NSAU works closely with students, families, and sending school districts to monitor academic progress, credit accumulation, graduation requirements, and transition planning. Course grades and credits earned at NSAU are reported to the sending school district for inclusion on the student's official transcript.

Students who successfully complete the graduation requirements of their sending school district receive their diploma from that district. They will also be recognized and celebrated by NSAU in a highly personalized ceremony for meeting our expectations of being an amazing young person.

Official Transcripts

Official high school transcripts are maintained by each student's sending school district.

NSAU provides grades, credits, and other academic records to the sending district to support the preparation of official transcripts. Students and families requesting transcripts for college admissions, employment, military service, or other postsecondary opportunities should contact the guidance office or counseling department of their sending school district.

Behavioral Expectations and Responses

In alignment with the Northshore Academy Upper School's values, students are expected to behave appropriately, safely, and kindly at all times. There are multiple ways that we respond to behavior, depending on the severity and disruptiveness. The following behaviors do not meet NSAU's expectations for how an amazing young person should act, and could be addressed in the following ways -

Behaviors that may be addressed in the classroom

- Inappropriate language directed at peers
- Inappropriate language directed at staff
- Work refusal
- Sleeping
- Inappropriate access of teacher's areas (behind teacher desk, opening a closed closet)
- Use of a phone or technology
- Other distractions that interrupt learning

Behaviors that may require removal from the classroom

- Verbal assault resulting in the discomfort of others
- Inappropriate use of a computer or technology
- Repeated use of a phone or technology
- Repeated distractions that interrupt other's learning
- Repeated inappropriate access of teacher's areas
- Violating the personal space of others, with or without consent

Behaviors that may require support from our Student Support Center

- Aggressive verbal assault
- Physical assault on staff or peer
- Use or possession of a vape (nicotine or THC)
- Repeated use of a phone or technology
- Presence in an unallowed area, in or out of a classroom

Behaviors that may require suspension of up to 10 days

- Repeated physical assault of staff or peer
- Severe physical assault of staff or peer
- Use or possession of a weapon
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Repeated use or possession of a vape (nicotine or THC)
- Intentional property damage

When possible, NSAU will use a progressive discipline strategy, with repeated behaviors requiring a more impactful response. However, significant behaviors will be addressed immediately.

If your student is suspended from school, they will still have access to their school work in GoogleClassroom. Completing their work online will prevent them from falling behind academically.

Technology Policy

Teachers use technology in their classrooms strategically. They may be used to provide accommodations for students, a teacher to provide feedback, or for independent learning. Students are not expected to use laptops without supervision.

Students' phones will be collected at school and returned to them at the end of the school day.

We ask that students not bring Smartwatches, handheld gaming devices, or tablets to school unless an explicit plan has been discussed and developed with multiple staff members.

A more detailed technology policy will be developed by the staff of NSAU soon.

