



**NORTHSHORE
EDUCATION
CONSORTIUM**

**Topsfield Vocational Academy
& STEP Program**

**248 Boston Street
Topsfield, MA 01983**

**1-978-887-8881
TVA / STEP Program x 1522**

**STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK
2020 / 2021**

September 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Northshore Education Consortium TVA / STEP Program. We are very excited to begin this school year and look forward to providing your child with an exhilarating, challenging, and satisfying learning experience.

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint our students and their parents/guardians with pertinent policies and procedures. These policies and procedures were created to assist us in developing and maintaining a safe and therapeutic learning environment. The TVA / STEP Program strives to provide a respectful, safe and compassionate climate of learning where academic, social/ emotional and vocational development can take place each day.

As a parent/guardian with an enrolled student, it is important that you review this information. Doing so will help you understand the learning environment in which your child will spend his/her valuable time.

After reviewing the handbook, please sign and return the last two pages stating that both student and parent/guardian have read the handbook and accept the policies and procedures.

In closing, please keep in mind that the single greatest factor determining the success or failure of a student at the TVA / STEP Program is the cooperation, collaboration and consistency of the adults in the student's life. The school, parent/guardians, and community workers must work and speak as one cohesive team to optimize student success. I strongly encourage you to be an active member of this team.

We look forward to a successful year.

Sincerely,

Charles LeBuff .
Director

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Contact Names/Numbers/Email

| Main Number (978) 887-8881 | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|--|
| Name | Title | Phone/ Ext. | e-mail |
| Charles LeBuff | Director / Principal | 1522 | clebuff@nsedu.org |
| Sue Martini | Executive Assistant | 1521 | smartini@nsedu.org |
| Tim Fontana | School Counselor | 1531 | tfontana@nsedu.org |
| Kathy Lombard | School Counselor | 1528 | klombard@nsedu.org |
| Paula Purcell | School Nurse | 1525 | ppurcell@nsedu.org |

REFERRAL and ADMISSION PROCESS

STUDENTS IN THE TVA / STEP PROGRAM ARE GRADES 9 THROUGH AGE 22

To be considered for admission, a referral will be made by the Department of Special Education of the student's sending school district. 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 collaterals (i.e. Programs, Therapists, DCF, DMH, DYS, etc.) This information is beneficial in evaluating the appropriateness of placement in our school.

After a thorough review of materials, if it is deemed that TVA / STEP may be an appropriate placement, an interview with the student and family/guardian/program will be scheduled.

After review of written materials and the interview a decision regarding admission will be made by the TVA / STEP team. Notice of acceptance or refusal will be communicated as soon as possible to both the family and the referring school district. Upon acceptance, the student's parent/guardian is asked to fill out a school permission packet and submit medical information including a recent physical and the student's immunization records. A student may start school after all required documents have been completed and submitted.

The above referral process is also applicable to all students being referred to our 45-day educational assessment program, as well as to our summer school program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

MISSION STATEMENT

To Build a Respectful and Responsible community dedicated to academic and personal success.

In order to support the TVA / STEP PROGRAM mission, the program contains the following components:

- An underlying philosophy that emphasizes building positive and meaningful relationships between all students and staff.
- Small, structured classrooms with a low student to staff ratio
- Individualized attention and programming within the context of the student's known and evolving academic, social, and emotional needs.
- Student support services aimed at promoting academic success and personal development.
- Structured and unstructured opportunities for social and emotional development.
- Clear and constructive school rules and expectations, with ongoing modeling by, and feedback from, caring, dedicated, trained professional staff.
- A team approach to student success, which includes input from students, families, community collaterals as well as staff.

The TVA / STEP Program recognizes that learning, as well as personal growth and development, occur not only in the classroom, but during social experiences as well. Students at TVA / STEP often need adult support and guidance when certain psycho-social stressors are encountered and learn valuable social and life-skills in our therapeutic milieu.

Highlights of our Program:

- We strive to aid students in gaining insight into the various factors affecting their social and academic functioning, and to internalize the belief that respectful, self-disciplined behavior is necessary to succeed in life.
- We intend to teach our students that when we conduct ourselves responsibly and respectfully, there are usually positive outcomes.
- Conversely, when our behaviors and choices offend others or break the rules of our community, there are frequently negative consequences.
- The students' strengths and successes are praised and celebrated, while issues that interfere with academic and personal success are addressed within the context of caring and professional relationships between staff and students.

- All staff are committed to helping students to develop skills and strategies that not only promote safe and adaptive responses to life and its many challenges, but also enhance relationships, and facilitate goal attainment especially with regard to a student's academic progress and performance.
- Students are not only supported with our program structure and embedded supports, but also within the structure of our school community.
- We strive to strengthen and enhance the peer community through community building activities, opportunities for student involvement and leadership, as well as many types of community service and internships
- Students are encouraged to take responsibility for participating in community events and contributing to a positive school environment.

General Policies

Attendance

Massachusetts General Laws Ch 76, Sec 1, mandates a student's daily attendance at school.

- Regular school attendance is a critical component in every student's academic success. If your child is going to be absent or late, please call our absence line (see below) and leave a detailed message regarding the reason for the absence. If we do not receive a call, we will attempt to reach you to verify your child's absence.
- Students can expect absences and tardiness to directly impact their progress as well as potentially jeopardize credits/grades.
- Any absence or tardy without a parent/guardian communication or a note will be considered a truancy issue and may lead to disciplinary action. School counselors will reach out to parents/guardians to obtain information about absences and offer support if needed.
- Please inform the school of any planned absence. This will eliminate any unnecessary telephone calls, and will help your child work with his/her teachers to stay up to date with class work and/or homework. Please note our school does not condone or encourage family vacations or trips during designated school time. If such a trip is arranged, all work missed during the time will be completed at the discretion of and according to the schedule arranged by the classroom teacher.

- Extended absences and habitual tardiness is reported to the Director of TVA / STEP as well as to the student's sending district and, as needed, to other community collaterals.
- Excessive absences may lead to Juvenile Court intervention through the CHINS process (Child In Need of Services).

ABSENT LINE: (978) 887-8881 ext. 1521

Arrival

Students are expected to arrive at school between 8:00 and 8:15 a.m. Any student dropped off or arriving at school before 8:00 a.m. is likely to be unsupervised, thus creating a potentially unsafe situation.

- Students are considered in school the moment they arrive on campus (by bus, foot, car or bicycle). All school rules apply from the moment a student arrives on campus in the morning until they leave campus at the end of the day.

Transportation

Student transportation needs are arranged through the special education department of your sending school district.

- 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 courtesy call will prevent other students from unnecessary time on the bus/van.
- Please communicate with the transportation company if your student will not travel home on the bus/van if dismissed early or sent home sick or has another form of transportation for the day.
- Students who exhibit problematic/unsafe behaviors on their bus/van will be subject to consequences such as short or long term loss of bus privileges.
- Students are expected to take the bus transportation provided to them by their sending school district. Any alternative plans for transportation are discouraged, but if necessary a request must be in writing and approved by the TVA / STEP director and the sending school district to avoid any complications.
- Parents/guardians who transport their children to school are asked to drop the student at the front door and wait until the student enters the building. At dismissal, parents/guardians should line their cars up in the middle parking lot (not in the line used for the numerous buses and vans).

Student Driven Automobiles

A student car approval form must be filled out and approved before a student brings a car to school. In addition, students must present a valid driver's license and registration. Failure to do so will result in the loss of permission to drive to school. These forms are available in the main office. Students who fail to demonstrate safe

operating procedures may lose their driving privileges. Additionally, student drivers may not transport any other student from school.

Dismissal

Students will be **dismissed at 2:15 p.m.**

Early Dismissal Procedure

- Please report any changes in your child's dismissal (i.e. early dismissal for an appointment or a change in transportation) to the school as soon as possible, via a written note stating the reason for and time of early dismissal and preferably with 24 hours notice. If you are unable to send a written note with your child, it is best to call your child's school counselor and confirm that staff is aware of the change so that there is minimal confusion. If you are unable to reach your student's school counselor, please leave the information with the front desk and it will be directed toward the appropriate staff.
- We ask that if your student is to be dismissed early please enter the main office, and the student will be called for dismissal and appropriately sign out of school.
- If someone other than the parent or guardian is picking up the student, please indicate this on your note. Identification will be required if office personnel do not know or recognize the person picking up your student. Please note that all individuals who pick up students must be 18 years of age or older.
- If a student walks out of school and/or off school property prior to dismissal and/or without the appropriate permission, 1 x one day out of school suspension may be incurred.

Inclement Weather/School Closings

School delays or closings due to inclement weather follow the Topsfield Public School cancellations.

- If the city or town in which you live has cancelled school and **Northshore Education Consortium has not**, parents / guardians are responsible for transportation on that day ***if they so choose.***
- Northshore Education utilizes a phone alert system that will call and/or email families that are registered in the system. If you find that you have not received a cancellation call please contact the program director.
 - Announcements can be heard on the following radio stations: WBZ 1230, WEEI 850. They can also be viewed on the following television stations: WBZ Channel 4, WCVB Channel 5 and WHDH Channel 7.
 - Websites often offer the most up to date information. Some sites include:

<http://www.thebostonchannel.com/closings>

<http://www3.whdh.com/stormforce>

TIP: Many websites also allow you to sign up for a text message if your school district cancels school.

School Safety Policies:

General Safety:

After students have arrived at school, all school exterior doors are locked. Entrance to the school will require use of the buzzer and intercom system located at the front door. Notification prior to any visitation is recommended.

Visitors to the building

All visitors, including parents and relatives, must report to the main office upon arrival to the building. Every visitor needs to sign in and the identified person with whom they will be meeting will come to greet you at the office. Parents are not to go directly to their child's classroom without approval from the office.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are routinely held as a safety measure and to keep everyone alert to proper procedures. Fire drills are to be taken seriously. When the alarm is sounded, students and staff, remaining together in the class in which they are in, will exit the building quietly and in an orderly manner, according to fire drill procedures posted in each room of the school. Teachers will take attendance once all students have exited the building to ensure all students are accounted for. Returning to the building will commence upon notification by the Director or his designee.

Lockdown and "Stay in Place" Drills

The NSEC has partnered with the Local Police Department to develop crisis response drills to help prepare students and staff for emergency situations.

"Zero" Tolerance Drug Policy: *The use, possession or distribution or sale of drugs or alcohol on school property may result in suspension, expulsion and police notification.*

Drugs and Alcohol

Students will not be under the influence, use, possess, distribute and/or receive any drugs, alcohol or other related paraphernalia on school property. If a student is suspected of the above, he/she will be removed from the milieu for further assessment by the appropriate staff. When appropriate, guardians will be notified of the situation and dismissal may be planned. If deemed necessary, the student will be sent for medical evaluation and /or treatment at the local hospital. The Director or his designee will respond to the situation and begin a student search if warranted. Depending upon the situation, the Director may also inform local authorities. In addition, termination proceedings may be initiated at the discretion of the Director. Due to the seriousness of such an incident, an emergency TEAM meeting may be arranged prior to the student's return to school.

Smoking /Vaping

In compliance with the Board of Health and the Attorney General we will be enforcing the Health Tobacco Control Regulation, Section 111, A6, which prohibits smoking of tobacco products on school property.

Please be advised: *There is no smoking or vaping of any kind allowed on Northshore Education Consortium property or during any school activity, field trip or event.*

Weapons

The Northshore Education Consortium aims to provide a safe environment for students and staff at all times. Weapons such as guns, knives, martial arts equipment, chemical sprays, or any item that can be used to hurt, threaten and/or intimidate others are not permitted in our school community. Any student discovered or suspected of bringing a weapon to school, or concealing a weapon at school will immediately be referred to the Director. Any/all weapons will be confiscated by staff and will not be returned to the student. Students suspected of being in possession of a weapon will be subject to a search, which will include any bags or personal items that students may have. If a student refuses to cooperate, he/she may be suspended and police may be called for a safety assessment.

Students who bring a weapon to school may be terminated at the discretion of the Director. The Northshore Education Consortium reserves the right to report the incident to the local authorities, including the specifics of the offense and the name of the offender.

Violence and Aggressive Behaviors

Any student who is presenting with threatening or intimidating behaviors, or who is assaultive in any way will be subject to school discipline. Police and other appropriate providers may be notified.

Destruction of Property and Vandalism

Additionally, the Northshore Education Consortium expects all students to refrain from destructive behaviors. If any school or personal properties are destroyed as a result of student actions, the student will be subject to school discipline, and police and other appropriate providers may be notified.

Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy

Northshore Education Consortium does not discriminate on the basis race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, religion, limited English speaking ability, sexual orientation or homelessness. This applies to student admission, access to services or treatment, and employment in all NEC services and programs.

Any concerns, complaints, or grievances related to discrimination or harassment should be brought to the attention of your School Principal, Program Director, the NEC Executive Director, or NEC Compliance Coordinator for Title IX, Title II, and Section 504 Nancy Macedo at nmacedo@nstedu; 112 Sohier Road Beverly, MA 01915; 978-232-9755 ext. 1255. Grievances will be addressed in a prompt and equitable manner.

Harassment and conduct of a sexual nature consists of:

- Unwelcoming sexual advances
- Requests for sexual favors
- Sexually motivated physical conduct
- Use of sexually explicit or sexually suggestive language or gestures

Examples of prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to the following:

- Use of negative or offensive slurs or epithets
- Name calling, teasing, jokes or other dehumanizing remarks
- Unwelcoming physical contact in sexual or suggestive manner
- Any act of physical intimidation or bullying
- Use of symbols, notes, cartoons, graffiti, pictures, drawings or computer generated messages, or clothing intended to offend.
- Suggestive or intimidating looks, leering or gestures.
- Retaliation with the intention to do harm to an individual for opposing acts of discrimination or participating in an investigation.

Reporting and Investigation of Discrimination and Harassment

Any student or staff member who believes that he/she has been subjected to or that some other person has been subjected to any conduct prohibited by this policy, should, as soon as possible, report the conduct to the Director, school counselor or a teacher.

Discipline

Any student who is found to be in violation of this harassment policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension. An incident report to the Juvenile Police Officer of the Local Police Department may be filed and if appropriate contact with the student's Probation office may be made. Disciplinary action will be consistent with the requirement of applicable Massachusetts and Federal Laws.

Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy

TVA / STEP Program is invested in providing an educational environment that is safe from harassment and bullying. All acts of bullying as defined by Massachusetts law are prohibited as described below:

Acts of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation are prohibited:

- on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or

- used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school and
- at a location, activity, function or program that is not school -related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on their rights at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Bullying is defined by Massachusetts law to include the following:

- the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, or school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:
 - causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property;
 - places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;
 - creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
 - infringes on the rights of the victim at school; Or
 - materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- Cyberbullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones,
 - cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages,
 - text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 for the legal definition of
 - cyberbullying.
- Hostile environment, as defined in M.G. L. c. 71, § 370, is a situation in which bullying causes the
 - school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe
 - or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.
- Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who
 - reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has
 - reliable information about bullying.

- Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria
- workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support
- staff, or paraprofessionals.
- Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

All forms of harassment in cyberspace, often referred to as Cyberbullying, are unacceptable. As defined by Massachusetts law, 'Cyberbullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to,

- any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to,
 - electronic mail,
 - internet communications,
 - instant messages or
 - Facsimile communications.

Cyberbullying shall also include

- the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions described above that falls under the definition of bullying
- the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions described above that falls under the definition of bullying.
- Cyberbullying includes online actions as a means to harass, tease, intimate or terrorize another person via inappropriate or hurtful use of technology, including text messages, digital pictures or images and web site posting. All reports of cyberbullying will be investigated fully.

If we become aware that any type of bullying or cyberbullying has taken place, whether in school or out of school, between or amongst any Northshore Education Consortium students, we will take appropriate and necessary action which can include, but is not limited to, disciplinary action, police notification, parent/guardian meetings and expulsion.

Hazing Policy

The Northshore Education Consortium TVA / STEP Program policy on hazing uses the following state regulation:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court, assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Chapter 269 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following sections:

Section 17: Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one hundred (100) days or by both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Section 18: Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in Section 17 and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcing official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00)

Student Search Policy

Search procedures are established to ensure that each student has a reasonable right to privacy during school hours. This policy ensures a safe learning environment that is free of all contraband, including but not limited to drugs, alcohol, weapons and stolen property.

Any student who is suspected of having a weapon, illegal substance, alcohol, stolen objects or other contraband will be subject to a search. Students who threaten a staff person or student may be subject to a search upon the discretion of the Director. The student will be brought to an office or other private area with his/her belongings. The student will be asked to empty out all pockets and all personal items will be given to a staff person for inspection. Bags, coats, pockets, etc. will be inspected with the student present.

Any student who refuses a search may be suspended. The student and a parent/guardian may be required to attend a meeting to discuss the search policy. A student may be asked to sign an agreement indicating his/her understanding of the search policy and waiving the right to refuse searches in the future. In order to protect our school, we reserve the right to involve the local authorities in such situations.

Physical Intervention Policy

Staff at the Northshore Education Consortium are trained in the use of physical intervention. Physical intervention is used as a last resort and only in the event that a student presents a situation that may be harmful to self or others and is not responsive to less restrictive interventions.

Medical Policies

A registered nurse is on duty at Northshore Consortium each day school is in session.

Medications

- We are obligated to adhere to the policy of the Massachusetts Department of Education, and Department of Public Health which states that no prescription medication is to be administered unless accompanied by written authorization from the student's physician and parents. Forms are available from the school nurse.
- Information required must include the name of the medication, dosage and time to be administered. Medications administered at school must be in a prescription bottle (you can request a duplicate or extra bottle for school from the pharmacy) or if not a prescription medication, in the original container. No medications will be accepted in plastic bags or plastic containers (Tupperware).
- Non-prescription medications need to be accompanied by written authorization from the student's parent or legal guardian and given to the school nurse. The medication must be in the original container.
- Medications must be brought to the school by a parent/guardian and given to the school nurse. **Please do not send medication to school with your child.** The medication will be counted (when necessary) and locked in the medication cabinet.
 - *Please contact the school nurse if you need to make other arrangements in order to get necessary medications to school.*
- A student, regardless of age or prescription, should never be in possession of medication while on campus. The only exception to this policy is for an Inhaler, and when appropriate this will be approved by the school nurse.
- Students found in possession of any type of medication, prescription or non-prescription will be subject to the Drugs and Alcohol Policy. Bringing medication to school can lead to very serious consequences.

It is critical that nurse and appropriate staff be informed about ALL medications that our students are taking, not just the ones given at school.

Please be sure to fill out the medication form in the intake packet, and call the school nurse and/or your school counselor with ANY and ALL changes in medications.

Inhalers

- In the case of inhaled medications for Asthma, with required documentation (letter from physician), a student may be allowed to self-administer prescribed inhaled medication with adult staff supervision. Students must show competency in self-administration. Inhalers must be kept in the nurse's office and an adult supervising must log in usage.

Allergies & Epi-Pens

- If your child has a known allergy, please identify this allergy to staff prior to admission so that safety measures can be communicated to all staff. If an Epi-Pen is prescribed by your child's physician, please provide one to the school nurse for use in case of an allergic reaction.

Illness

- Student's who are vomiting, have a fever over 100, have diarrhea or present with other indications of an illness should stay at home. **Please call the school if your student will be absent due to illness.**
- Should a student become ill in school, the nurse shall determine if the student is able to remain in school for the day. When a student is deemed too ill to remain in school, the parents or those delegated by the parents/guardian should be notified and asked to pick the student up. If that is not possible, parents or the school, after discussion, may call transportation to have the student transported home. In no case shall the student be released without proper delegate notification.
- Students who are seen by the nurse and do not have an elevated temperature or obvious signs of illness will be returned to class at the discretion of the nursing staff.

Communicable Disease /Contagious Illness:

- If your child has **symptoms** of an illness known to be contagious (i.e. conjunctivitis, chicken pox, strep throat, etc.), please keep your student home and have him/her seen by a physician. Sending a contagious student to school compromises the health and safety of your child as well as other students and staff.
- No student shall be admitted to the school while ill with a communicable disease, and students are only to be readmitted after such an illness with a note from a physician.
- If a reportable communicable disease has been introduced into the school and others have been exposed, parents and guardians will be notified immediately.

Isolation Requirements

The following are the isolation requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health:

Chicken Pox –One week from appearance of rash

Measles - One week from appearance of rash

German Measles -Three days from date of rash

Mumps - One week from onset of disease

Scarlet Fever Or Streptococcal (Strep) Throat – Twenty-four hours after start of treatment, students may return to school

Flu- 24 hours of being fever free without the use of a fever reducing medication such as Tylenol or Motrin.

Injuries

If a student is injured at school, the school nurse will complete an assessment of him/her. Every attempt will be made to contact the parent or guardian when a student obtains a serious injury. If the student needs to be taken to the hospital, a staff person will accompany the student to the hospital and wait with the student until the parent/guardian arrives. It is our expectation that the parent/guardian will make every effort to arrive and meet their child as soon as possible.

Psychiatric Emergencies

If a student is assessed by our clinical team to be in psychiatric distress requiring an emergency response, we will immediately attempt to notify the parent or guardian to discuss the appropriate options given the student's current support network. If there is imminent risk with regard to safety concerns police and ambulance services will be requested. Access to a mobile crisis team is also an option. If a student needs to be taken by ambulance to the hospital emergency department for further assessment, a staff person will accompany the student to the hospital and wait with the student until the parent/guardian arrives. It is our expectation that the parent/guardian will make every effort to arrive and meet their child as soon as possible.

Proper Hygiene

Parents/guardians are encouraged to be sure that students maintain proper hygiene while attending school. This includes wearing clean clothing, bathing or showering on a regular, age-appropriate basis, and maintaining proper oral hygiene. Depending upon the individual needs of a student, specific plans to address hygiene issues may be developed with the support of the school nurse, the student's counselor and the parent or guardian. A student arriving with exceptionally poor hygiene can be disruptive to the learning environment, and if necessary, guardians will be contacted to discuss an appropriate manner to respond to such situations.

Wellness Policy

The Northshore Education Consortium TVA / STEP Program promotes healthy programs supporting wellness, good nutrition, regular physical activity appropriate to each student's strengths and challenges, and positive dietary and lifestyle practices as part of

the total learning environment. Our school contributes to the basic health status of students by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Improved health optimizes the student's performance potential and ensures the students' need to be healthy to learn.

Occasionally students may be supported by individualized plans that address their wellness needs.

We are encouraging students who bring beverages to school that they be caffeine free and of some nutritional value such as drinks with at least 50% fruit juice or vegetable juice. Bottled water is always welcome. Low fat and low salt snacks are encouraged as well.

Immunization Required by State Law

Chapter 76, Section 15 amended in 1967: No student shall be admitted to school except upon presentation of a physician's certificate that the student has been successfully immunized against Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella and Poliomyelitis unless they are exempt - see below:

Medical Exemption: A written statement from a physician indicating the reasons why one or more of the immunizations should not be given is required before admission to school. Such certification is required for each year thereafter.

Religious Exemption: An affidavit signed by an official of a church or religious denomination stating that the parent or guardian objects on religious grounds to immunization must be submitted before the student is admitted to school. Such affidavit is required at the beginning of each school year thereafter.

Current Physical Required by State Law

Any new student has to have a recent physical on file before entering the school building. Returning students need a physical every 3 years unless participating in sports, then a physical exam is needed every year.

Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

If it is suspected that a student has been a victim of child abuse or neglect, the staff will make the determination if immediate medical attention is needed. All staff at the TVA / STEP Program are mandated reporters and all suspected cases of abuse or neglect must, by law, be reported to the Department of Child and Family Service.

COURSES/ CREDITS/ GRADING

Course Offerings:

TVA / STEP offers classes based on the grade level requirements outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Core classes include Math, Science, Social Studies/History, and English Language Arts. Elective classes are provided and have previously included Health, Technology, MCAS/other test Prep, to allow students to be exposed to a well-rounded education.

Credits

Students receive credit/grades on a quarterly basis for any subject for which a grade of 65% or above is achieved. If the student's final grade at the end of the year is 65% or above, the student will receive credit or a passing grade for the full year.

Examples:

50 minute class 1 x per week = .25 credits per quarter

50 minute class 2x per week = .5 credits

50 minute class 5 x per week = 1.25 credits per quarter

Additional credit earning opportunities are available via Mentoring, Independent Studies, Volunteering, and Internships.

Grades

Each teacher has a method of grading students that takes into account attendance, class participation, test and quiz grades, applicable project grades, completion of class assignments, and conduct.

Field Trips

Students take occasional field trips by bus for recreational and learning purposes. All field trips should be considered a school "class" occurring off campus, and all school rules and expectations will remain in place. Staff will review any changes in expectations with the students and, as needed, with parents/guardians, before the trip. A permission slip for field trips is enclosed in the Student Information Packet. This will provide permission for all walking field trips for the school year.

How attendance affects grades:

Missed class time means missed learning opportunities and missed assignments. Students who miss excessive days or classes during a quarter can expect lower grades. If a student is absent more than 8 times from a class in a quarter, he/she must meet with each teacher in order to develop a contract to obtain missed information, materials and make-up work to ultimately earn a passing grade and credit. Once a student is absent in excess of 13 days, although a numerical grade will be assigned for determining final grades, a passing quarterly grade cannot be earned.

Progress Reports

IEP progress reports are sent home on a quarterly basis.

Report Cards

Report cards are sent home and to the sending district at the close of each quarter. Grade equivalents, credits, and attendance data are outlined on the report cards.

School Records

Student record regulations ensure parents and students the right to confidentiality, inspection, amendment and destruction of student records.

MCAS:

The following information can be found on the Department of Education Website:

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Overview

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is designed to meet the requirements of the Education Reform Law of 1993. This law specifies that the testing program must

- *test all public school students in Massachusetts, including students with disabilities and English Language Learner students;*
- *measure performance based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework learning standards;*
- *report on the performance of individual students, schools, and districts.*

As required by the Education Reform Law, students must pass the grade 10 tests in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics and one of the four high school Science and Technology Engineering tests as one condition of eligibility for a high school diploma (in addition to fulfilling local requirements).

In addition, the MCAS program is used to hold schools and districts accountable, on a yearly basis, for the progress they have made toward the objective of the No Child Left Behind Law that all students be proficient in Reading and Mathematics by 2014.

Graduation

In order for students to receive a diploma, they must meet the graduations requirements of their sending school district

Transcripts:

Official transcripts, necessary for college and other post high-school opportunities, are available through the guidance department of your sending school district. Your school counselor can help your district compile a final transcript.

BREAKFAST/ LUNCH

Breakfast:

The TVA / Step Program offers a free breakfast each morning. The breakfast program runs from 8:00 am to 8:30 am.

Lunch:

- The TVA / STEP Program provides lunches to students free of charge. There is a charge for desserts.
 - Refrigerators are available for students who choose to bring lunch.
 - Microwaves are available to heat items as needed.
-

PERSONAL PROPERTY / ELECTRONICS

Electronic Devices (Such as I Pods, Game Boys, PSPs, etc.)

- Students are allowed to use these items during bus rides & break times.
 - **Students who choose to bring personal electronic devices to school do so at their own risk.** Many of these devices are quite expensive. NSEC takes NO RESPONSIBILITY for lost, stolen, damaged, broken, or other problems that occur with electronic devices.
 - Students may bring CD games for the computer to school and use them at break time. These games must be screened and approved by staff in the Technology or Media Lab. No swearing, obscenities, or inappropriate graphic content will be allowed.
 - The use of headphones is subject to the specific program and classroom expectations and may vary based on the individual needs of the student.
-

Cell phones

The TVA / STEP Program recognizes that many of our students have cell phones for personal and family communication. Cell phones must be powered off and turned into staff each morning.

Other Valuables

- Students are discouraged from bringing valuable items to school. This includes jewelry, large amounts of money, MP3 Players, Game Boys, etc. Students should not bring items to school to sell, trade or buy. In addition, we strongly discourage lending or borrowing of valuables. Students who bring valuables to school do so at their own risk.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION:

Telephone Usage and Messages –

- If a parent/guardian needs to reach their student during the school day, please call the student's teacher or the main office staff. 978-887-8881
Ext. 1522 (Principal)
Ext.1521 (Main Office)

Change of Address:

Please notify the school as soon as possible with any change in home/program address or telephone number. For student safety it is critical that we have accurate information regarding contact names and numbers in case of emergency.

Title IX

Northshore Education Consortium policy is not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, color or national origin in any of its programs or activities.

Sexuality Issues

The Director will, prior to any course or curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues, will notify Parents/Guardians of TVA/STEP Program students in writing. Such notification will include a brief description of the curriculum and will inform parents/guardians that they may exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum without penalty. Parents/guardians may arrange with the Director to inspect and review instructional materials of those curricula.

Parent(s) can request full policy manual and can request translation

Release of Student's Name

The Northshore Education Consortium does not issue the names, addresses and personal information about students to any outside agencies without the consent of the student and parents in accordance with Massachusetts Law 603 CMR 230.07 (4).

SUPPORT SERVICES

School Counselor:

Sessions can be scheduled according to individual needs.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The following are the expectations for student behavior and presentation while at school:

- **Demonstrate respect at all times**

In order to maintain a positive and supportive school community, all students are expected to act in a respectful manner towards peers and staff. Understanding that this can be challenging during times of distress, there are many support services available that can assist the student in learning and using appropriate coping and self-management skills.

- **Use Respectful Language (See section below)**
- **Be considerate of other people**
- **Treat people with civility, courtesy, and dignity.**
- **Never intentionally ridicule, embarrass, bully or hurt other people.**
- **Accept personal differences and choices.**
- **Solve problems without violence.**
- **Take Responsibility for your actions and your academic success.**

By enrolling at TVA / STEP, students have acknowledged a desire to obtain an education in an alternative setting. Success can only be truly achieved with daily attendance, completion of assignments, and self-advocacy. While there are many resources available to you to help you optimize your education, most of it is up to you.

- **Follow through on your commitment**
- **Answer for your own action**
- **Take care of your own matters.**
- **Be trustworthy.**
- **Always use your head.**
- **Don't put things off.**

- **Demonstrate Integrity**

Integrity is a quality characterized by honesty, reliability, and fairness. Your integrity is something you demonstrate over time.

- **Have personal standards and live up to them.**
- **Be honest, reliable, and loyal;**
- **Have the moral courage to stand up for what is right**
- **Do not cheat, steal, or lie.**

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS, RESPONSES AND CONSEQUENCES

***"You are free to make your choices,
You are not free to escape the consequences".***

Our educational program rules and expectations are:

- 1 To promote individual social/emotional growth.
- 2 To maintain a healthy and safe school environment.

To reach these goals, students receive the most normal, logical or natural consequences for their behavior. All staff will assign consequences on a case-by-case basis.

Discipline System

Depending upon the level of behavior and the disruption and/or impact upon the school and other students, various levels of disciplinary response will be utilized. This can start at very low-level responses that includes verbal re directions and dismissal from class for short periods of time. Additionally, in school detentions/after school detentions and suspensions can be implemented.

School expectations

Consequences will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the staff and team. When appropriate, a behavior plan may be developed by the team to address behaviors and encourage change and growth. When verbal redirection and specific requests are not sufficient to help students follow school rules and expectations, and negative choices are made, a variety of consequences can result. The level of response is directly related to how disruptive, destructive or dangerous a student may be:

Dismissal from Class: A student may be dismissed from class if his/her behaviors are disruptive and hinder other students from learning. If a teacher dismisses a student from a class, they may be asked to take a break and/ or to check in with staff. If a pattern of behaviors leading to repeated class dismissal is evident, the student will also meet with his/her school counselor.

In-School Detention

In-School Detentions usually occur when a student has demonstrated an inability to meet the schools expectations for conduct. The student support staff, based on the student's behavior and attitude, determines length of time.

This is an opportunity for students to:

- Focus on schoolwork away from the mainstream.
- Demonstrate their ability to cooperate with staff and comply with school expectations.
- Think through, process, and internalize alternatives to their inappropriate behavior.

A student who refuses to attend in-school detention when requested or who disrupts detention will receive further disciplinary action.

Suspensions

- **In school suspension:** Depending on the severity of the incident and its impact on the school environment, a student may be given the opportunity to serve their suspension time in school under the following criteria:
 - The student has committed to meeting in school suspension expectations.
 - The parent/guardian is available to pick up the student if needed in the event that the student is unable to comply with the expectations of the in school suspension.
- Suspension from school is a serious behavioral consequence used at the discretion of the Director or director designee for extreme misbehaviors, such as violations of our safety rules and/or continuous disruptive behavior.

- Every effort will be made to notify parents/guardians and/or appropriate involved agency on the day of suspension
- Written notice regarding the incident, the date of the incident, and the suspension will be sent to parents as well as districts within 24 hours.
- A re-entry meeting with parents/guardians may be required the following day.
- When the accumulated suspensions approach a total of 7 or more days, a TEAM meeting will be called to review the I.E.P. and possibly the appropriateness of the placement. If the NSEC team has significant concerns about the student's ability to be successful following any suspension, a TEAM meeting may be called to address the continued issues and concerns.
- Unless determined eligible for an in-school suspension, students who are suspended out of school are prohibited from being on or near school property before, during or after school hours.

The following actions may result in suspension:

- Violating any of our school's safety policies
- Leaving the TVA / STEP Program school building or designated community worksite without permission
- Refusal to cooperate with search due to suspicion of weapons, drugs, alcohol, contraband or threatening a student or staff person.
- Destruction of Property
- Pulling a false fire alarm
- Behavior requiring Physical restraint
- Bullying/Harassment of another student
- Dangerous behaviors especially if they result in injury to another person or destruction of property

Individualized Behavior Plans: **If the team determines that a more individualized and specific plan will best help a student meet school expectations, an Individualized Behavior Plan will be written and reviewed with the student and family/guardian.**

OTHER EXPECTATIONS

Use school property responsibly.

Students are expected to treat all school materials and property with care and respect. Any student who willfully damages the school or personal property or steals school or personal property will be held responsible for repairing and/or paying for the damages or returning the stolen item(s). When damage or theft has occurred the following may happen:

- Parental notification
- Suspension
- Police notification
- Community service to repair or contribute to property maintenance

Respect Physical Boundaries

For the safety and comfort of all students, it is a school wide policy that there is no physical contact of any kind. The one exception to this rule is courteous handshakes or “high 5’s”. There is absolutely no horseplay, hugging, hand holding or other form of person-to-person contact allowed.

Use Respectful Language

All members of TVA / STEP Program are expected to use appropriate language. Swearing and disrespectful manners of communication are never acceptable. Those who continue to use unacceptable language will receive consequences per the disciplinary code.

Follow Classroom Behavior Expectations

The TVA / STEP Program teachers have the freedom to determine the behavior expectations of their own classrooms within the guidelines of the school mission. Students failing to meet the stated expectations will receive consequences as determined by the teacher and the school discipline system.

DRESS CODE

We ask everyone to dress in a manner appropriate to a school environment. Students should dress in clothing that is clean and safe. Clothing that is provocative and/or detracts from the learning environment will not be permitted.

The following are prohibited:

- Clothing that depicts illegal activities, drugs, alcohol, obscenities or violent themes.
- Wearing hoods, bandannas, do-rags, sunglasses, or other items covering a student's head and/or face.
- Clothing/accessories that are known to represent gang affiliations.
- Clothing that exposes undergarments.
- Clothing that does not cover a student's midriff.
- Clothing that is revealing or provocative in nature
- Open back shirts or shirts with straps that are less than two fingers in width
- Skirts and shorts that do not reach the bottom of the length of the student's arm and hand when extended by their sides.
- There should be no risk of clothes falling down (i.e. baggy pants). Secure clothing with a belt or as otherwise necessary.

Any attire deemed inappropriate by staff will be discreetly addressed and, if the concern cannot be addressed at school, the student may be required to return home to change or have appropriate clothing brought to school. When possible, students will be offered clothing that has been donated to the school.

The following are guidelines regarding student attire:

- Please label your student's clothing if you are concerned he/she may misplace them.
- Please send your student with warm clothing during the winter months (coats, hats, gloves. etc.) so they may spend time outside during break time if weather permits.
- Encourage older students to dress appropriately given the weather, as well as the school dress code.
- If backpacks, coats or other personal items become a distraction to the learning environment, students will be asked to keep these items in their homeroom or the student support center.

Parent/Guardian Participation

Parents/Guardians are valuable members of our team at the Northshore Education Consortium. Some means of communication with parents/guardians may include daily notebooks, written progress reports, report cards, parent meetings, phone calls, home visits and yearly team meetings. We encourage parents to contact us with any pertinent information regarding their child. This may include medication changes, changes in family dynamics or other school/home issues.

Parents/guardians are also encouraged to be in contact with their student's team to get updates, address concerns or simply discuss their progress. We believe ongoing communication is vital to the success of students.

Complaints

In the event that a student or a parent has a complaint about some aspect of our school program, the first procedure would be to discuss the issue with the student's teacher or counselor and attempt to reach a resolution. If the problem has not been resolved satisfactorily, the Program Director should be contacted to assist in finding a solution.

INTERNET

Connecting to the internet expands our students' access to resources, information, collaboration and innovation. We hope to utilize these resources to assist students in achieving curriculum goals and outcomes.

It is important to note that the Internet is an open system that contains offensive material and may only be used under faculty supervision. However, as faculty members are not able to monitor student use at every moment, we expect students to become responsible users.

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. Students are expected to follow the user guidelines, as well as those given orally by the staff and to demonstrate ethical behavior that is of the highest order in using the Internet.

For students to use the internet, they must obtain parental permission through the use of the form found in our parent permission packet.

USER GUIDELINES

- 1 Students' use of the Internet must be in support of education and research consistent with the objectives of the TVA/STEP Program.
- 2 Students may not post personal information such as their home address, telephone number or the name and location of their school without teacher permission.
- 3 Students are prohibited from making prejudicial, harassing, threatening, obscene or hateful remarks and other anti-social behavior.
- 4 Students are prohibited from using the Internet to access or process pornographic material, inappropriate text files, information that advocates illegal acts or information that lacks any educational value.

- 5 Students should immediately tell a teacher or other school employee about any material that you feel is not appropriate or that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- 6 Students should be aware that no communications are guaranteed to be private. Internet use is monitored. Illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
- 7 Student should note that plagiarism is the taking of material created by others and presenting it as if it were one's own. It will not be acceptable to plagiarize material from the Internet.
- 8 Students should note that all communications and information accessible via the Internet should be assumed to be private property.
- 9 Students may not use the Internet for commercial purposes, product advertisement or political lobbying. Products or services may not be purchased or offered. The students and his/her parents will be responsible for any liabilities stemming from such unauthorized uses of the Internet.
- 10 Students may not use the Internet for illegal purposes or for the support of illegal activities. Cyberbullying is prohibited, especially with the use of computers that are school property. Please see policies with regard to cyberbullying for more information.
- 11 Student use of the Internet must not serve to disrupt its use by other individuals or connecting networks.
- 12 Students' passwords are confidential. All passwords shall be protected by the user and not shared or displayed. Individual users shall, at all times, be responsible for the proper use of accounts issued in their name.
- 13 Students who violate district policy or administrative procedures will be subject to suspension or termination of system/network privileges and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action and/or prosecution.

"Bullying", the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

"Perpetrator", a student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation

Cyberbullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G. L. c. 71, § 370, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

II. Collaboration with Families

It is the expectation of the Northshore Education Consortium that parents and/or guardians be a part of the solution.

A. Parent education and resources. Northshore Education Consortium will offer education programs for parents and/or guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school.

Student Handbook Signature Page

I have read and understand all the information provided to me in the Northshore Education Consortium TVA / STEP Program Handbook for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

Student Name (please print)

Date

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

***This page must be returned to school by the close of the next school day.**