NEW CANAAN HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026 – 2027



"What we are to be, we are now becoming"

About This Handbook

This booklet is written for our students and their parents. It contains required and useful information intended as a method of communicating to students and parents regarding general school information, rules, and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation, or negotiated agreement, and may therefore be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation, or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time to time without notice. Consult the district website for significant changes.

Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Policy changes affecting portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletters, web pages, and other communications.

Both students and parents need to be familiar with the NCHS Student Code of Behavior, which is intended to promote physical and emotional safety for all in a respectful environment conducive to and supportive of learning.

Statement of Non-Discrimination & Equal Opportunity

In compliance with Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, New Canaan Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, age, economic status, marital status, status as a veteran, status as a victim of domestic violence, familial status, or disability in providing education services, establishing hiring practices, or offering school activities and programs. Race discrimination explicitly includes ethnic traits historically associated with race.

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities. No student will be excluded on such bases from course offerings, athletics, counseling, extracurricular activities, or school resources. Director of Human Resources, Mrs. Darlene Pianka, is the designated District Compliance Officer (Title IX / Section 504 Coordinator), reachable at 220 Elm Street, New Canaan, CT 06840 | (203) 594-4022.

Directory Information Opt-Out Notice

Directory information (student name, address, phone, date/place of birth, major field, grade, photo, email, participation in sports/activities, weight/height of athletes, dates of attendance, degrees/awards) will be released upon request unless written objection is submitted to the Principal within ten (10) school days of receipt of this handbook.



Cover photo: "Dew Drops" — Posey Fox, Class of 2027

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

New Canaan High School is committed to preparing all students to meet the challenges of living in an increasingly global and diverse society. We believe that students learn best in an environment that fosters respect for themselves and others. This allows students to be active participants in their learning, identify and solve authentic problems, and effectively share their learning with the appropriate audiences.

In partnership with parents and the community, we strive to inspire students to the habits of mind and character that will make them lifelong learners and responsible, respectful, global citizens.

Academic Expectations

All students will independently demonstrate:

- 1.1 The ability to apply analytical and creative thinking to identify and solve problems across disciplines
- 1.2 The ability to reflect thoughtfully on their learning for continuous growth and development
- 1.3 Mastery of positive and effective communication skills
- 1.4 An understanding of healthy life choices

Personal and Social Expectations

All students will:

- 2.1 Demonstrate the ability to make healthy life choices, including maintaining a balance between academic and personal needs and choices
- 2.2 Demonstrate respect for one another and the unique beliefs and choices of others
- 2.3 Demonstrate positive interpersonal skills that are essential for collaboration in a diverse society
- 2.4 Work responsibly and productively in both independent and collaborative environments

Civic Expectations

All students will:

- 3.1 Be an active member of and contribute in a positive way to the culture of NCHS and the larger community
- 3.2 Demonstrate the ability to solve problems and make responsible, ethical decisions

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Staff Directory & Contact Information

New Canaan High School

11 Farm Road, New Canaan, CT 06840
http://www.ncps-k12.org/Domain/9
SAT/ACT/CEEB School Code: 070465

Office	Phone
Main Office	594-4600 (Fax 594-4700)
Attendance	594-4672
Health Office	594-4643 (Fax 594-4709)
Interscholastic Athletics	594-4639
School Counseling	594-4649 (Fax 594-4652)
Registrar	594-4647
Special Education	594-4650

Administration

Name	Role	Phone
Mr. William Egan	Principal	594-4686
Mrs. Kristi Carriero	Assistant Principal (Class of 2029)	594-4677
Mr. Ari Rothman	Assistant Principal (Class of 2028)	594-4677
Mr. Larry Sullivan	Assistant Principal (Classes of 2027 & 2030)	594-4677
Mr. Kevin Ryan	Special Education Administrator	594-4650
Mr. Jay Egan	Director of Athletics	594-4638

School Counseling

Name	Role	Phone
Mrs. Sara Drexel	Department Chair	594-4750
Ms. Kelly Clark	School Counselor	594-4658
Mr. Thomas Ferrell	School Counselor	594-4659
Mrs. Lori Keen	School Counselor	594-4657
Mrs. Elizabeth Lato	School Counselor	594-4663
Ms. Lindsay McGarrity	School Counselor	594-4731
Mrs. Mollie Quinn	School Counselor	594-4660
Ms. Julie Rossini	School Counselor	594-4661
Mrs. Erica Schaedler	School Counselor	594-4648
Mrs. Susan Carroll	Director, College & Career Center	594-4664

Pupil Personnel Services

Name	Role	Phone
Ms. Eileen Donellan	Social Worker	594-4754
Ms. Kacey Gormley	Social Worker	594-4632
Ms. Randi Kubick	Social Worker	594-4654
Ms. Samantha Gagliano	School Psychologist	594-4642
Ms. Lauri Miskella	School Psychologist	594-4656
Ms. Kimberly Quintero	School Psychologist	594-4645
Officer Shane Gibson	School Resource Officer	594-4740

School Nurses

Name	Role	Phone
Mrs. Theresa McIntosh	Supervisor	594-4676
Mrs. Betsy Imbrogno	Nurse	594-4643
Mrs. Kim McNamara	Nurse	594-4644
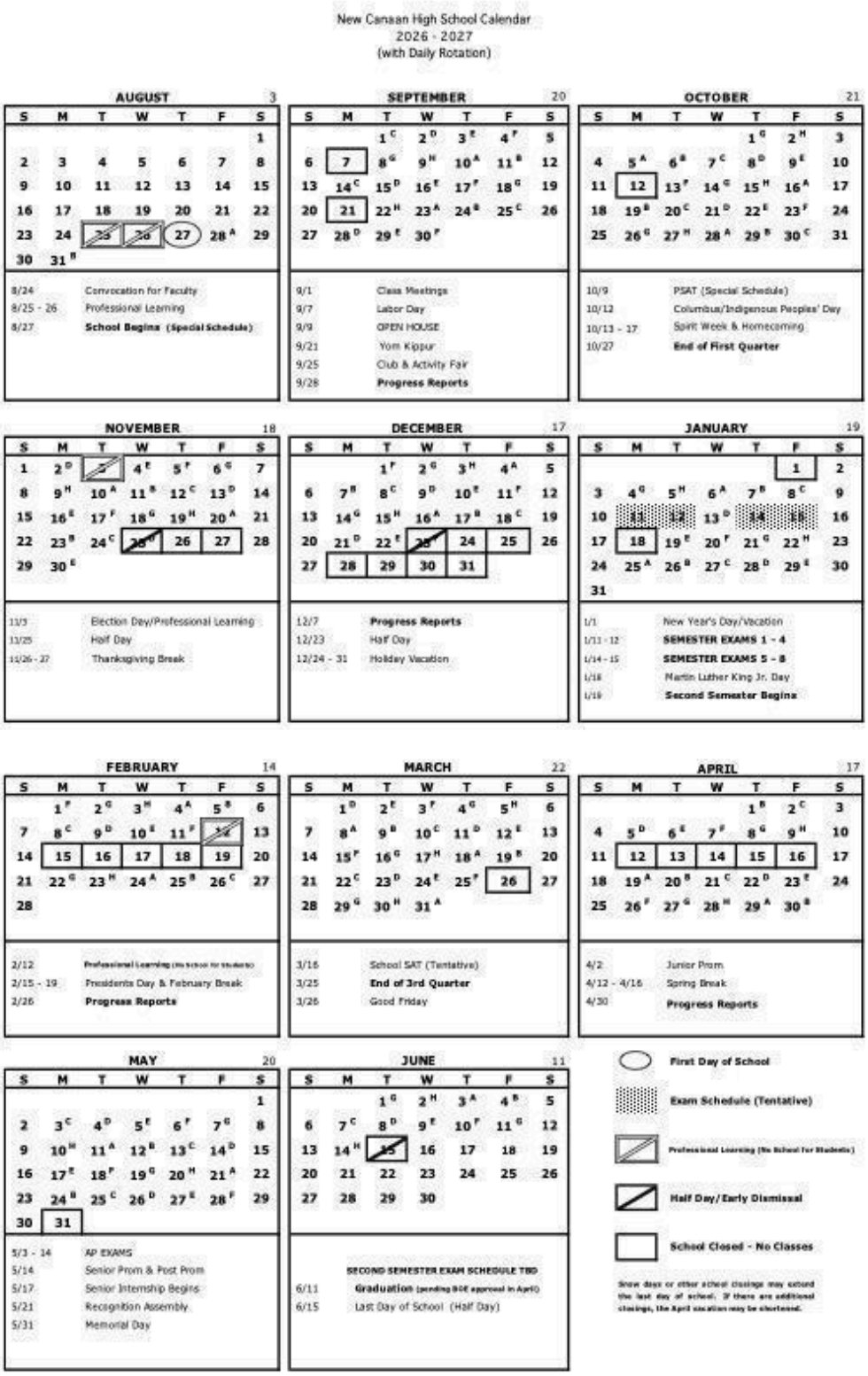
Department Chairs

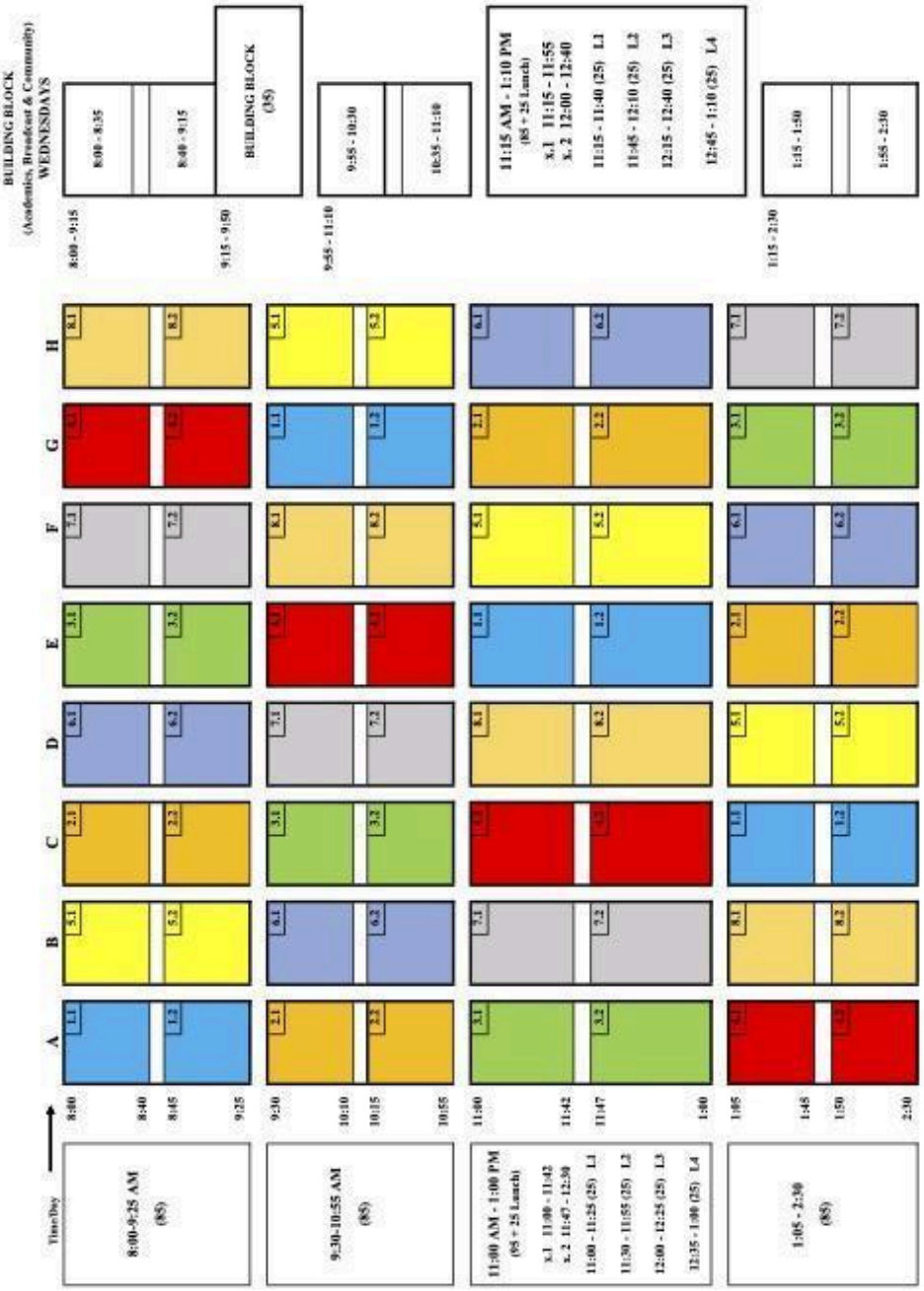
Department	Chair	Phone
Career and Technical Education	Mr. James Zambarano	594-4636
English	Mr. Evan Remley	594-4719
Library	Ms. Michelle Luhtala	594-4629
Mathematics	Mrs. Rebecca Pavia	594-4626
Physical Education & Health	Mr. Jay Egan	594-4638
Science	Mr. Michael LeDuc	594-4695
Social Studies	Mr. Michael Forcucci	594-4678
Special Education	Mr. Chris Parsons	594-4748
Visual and Performing Arts	Ms. Laura Newell	594-4568
World Languages & ELL	Dr. Kemen Holley	594-4559

The e-mail address for any of the above is: firstName.lastName@ncps-k12.org

New Canaan High School Athletics Website: www.ncrams.com

Calendars & Schedules




BUILDING BLOCK
(Academics, Breakout & Community)
WEDNESDAYS
8:00 - 8:35
8:40 - 9:15
BUILDING BLOCK
(3S)
9:55 - 10:30
10:35 - 11:10
11:15 AM - 1:10 PM
(85 + 25 Lunch)
x.1 11:15 - 11:55
x. 2 12:00 - 12:40
11:15 - 11:40 (25) L1
11:45 - 12:10 (25) L2
12:15 - 12:40 (25) L3
12:45 - 1:10 (25) L4
1:15 - 1:50
1:55 - 2:30
8:00 - 9:15
9:15 - 9:50
9:55 - 11:10
1:15 - 2:30
Time/Day
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
8:00-9:25 AM
(85)
9:30-10:55 AM
(85)
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
(85 + 25 Lunch)
x.1 11:00 - 11:42
x. 2 11:47 - 12:30
11:00 - 11:25 (25) L1
11:30 - 11:55 (25) L2
12:00 - 12:25 (25) L3
12:35 - 1:00 (25) L4
1:05 - 2:30
(85)

TWO-HOUR DELAYED OPENING SCHEDULE

10:00 - 10:54 (54)	10:00 - 10:25	1st.1
	10:30 - 10:54	1st.2
10:59 - 12:32 (66 + 27 Lunch) 10:59 - 11:26 L1 11:31 - 11:58 L2 & L3 12:05 - 12:32 L4	10:59 - 11:30	2nd.1
	11:35 - 12:05	2nd.2
12:37 - 1:31 (54)	12:37 - 1:02	3rd.1
	1:07 - 1:31	3rd.2
1:36 - 2:30 (54)	1:36 - 2:01	4th.1
	2:06 - 2:30	4th.2

EARLY RELEASE SCHEDULE

8:00 - 8:57 (57)	8:00 - 8:26	1st.1
	8:31 - 8:57	1st.2
9:02 - 9:58 (56)	9:02 - 9:27	2nd.1
	9:32 - 9:58	2nd.2
10:03 - 10:59 (56)	10:03 - 10:28	3rd.1
	10:33 - 10:59	3rd.2
11:04 - 12:00 (56)	11:04 - 11:29	4th.1
	11:34 - 12:00	4th.2

Graduation Requirements & Standards

Credits Needed for Graduation

In order to earn a diploma from New Canaan High School, a student must earn a minimum of 25 credits, with a required number of credits in each of the following disciplines:

Credits	Discipline / Requirement
9.0	Humanities
4.0	English — Freshman English (2 sem.); Sophomore English (2 sem.); Junior English or AP Language & Composition (2 sem.); Senior English electives or AP English (2 sem.)
3.0	Social Studies — U.S. History (2 sem.); one course in Civics or government (1 sem.)
0.5	Visual & Performing Arts
1.5	Any combination equaling 3 semesters in the above disciplines, World Languages (beyond first year), Graphics, Business Education, and/or Family & Consumer Science
9.0	Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
3.0	Mathematics
3.0	Science
0.5	Career & Technical Education
2.5	Any combination equaling 5 semesters in the above disciplines, or a technology-based VPA course
1.0	Physical Education and Wellness — one semester each in Grades 9–12
1.0	Health and Safety Education — one semester each of 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th Grade Health
1.0	World Languages
0.5	One additional semester in either Career & Technical Education or Visual & Performing Arts
3.5	Seven semesters in any discipline/combination, including the opportunity to earn 1.0 credit through the Graduation Portfolio
25.0	TOTAL

All students are required to complete one half-credit course that addresses personal financial management. While not an additional credit requirement within the 25 outlined above, this can be met through enrollment in any of the following courses: Business Practices & Financial Literacy, Financial Math, Economics, AP Business with Personal Finance, AP Microeconomics, or AP Macroeconomics.

Graduation Portfolio

To earn one credit toward graduation, students will reflect thoughtfully on their own learning during their time at NCHS. In order to demonstrate growth, students must complete an interdisciplinary portfolio that contains three authentic pieces of work drawn from their courses at NCHS that speak to the attributes identified in the New Canaan Public Schools' Portrait of the Graduate.

The student must also complete a reflection that speaks to mastery in the following qualities, with specific references to their own work and how it demonstrates that learning and growth:

- **Adaptability —** Demonstrate flexibility and creativity when acclimating to various roles and situations, as well as originality, imagination, and new ways of thinking about things; embrace the idea that failure is part of success and quickly pivot to keep moving forward; and uncover alternate strategies to achieve goals.
- **Empathy —** Imagine or vicariously experience what others are thinking, feeling, and experiencing; value and embrace diverse cultures and unique perspectives through mutual respect and open dialogue; and demonstrate personal, civic, social, local, and global responsibility through ethical and empathetic behaviors and actions.
- **Communication —** Elicit and seek to understand diverse perspectives and contributions; engage in appropriate communication to resolve disagreements peacefully and productively; and access, select, curate, critically consume, and responsibly produce relevant information appropriately.
- **Critical Thinking —** Identify, evaluate, prioritize solutions to difficult or complex situations; consistently improve the quality of their thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, reflecting, and reconstructing; and recognize perceptions, biases, mental models, and assumptions in all forms of media and communications.
- **Curiosity —** Actively and inquisitively seek knowledge, answers, and understanding; show originality, imagination, and new ways of thinking about things; possess the desire to learn, unlearn, and relearn; and find and maximize opportunities to actively listen and elicit diverse perspectives from others.

The individual pieces, demonstrating growth over time, can be drawn from the work within a variety of courses across the disciplines, and from different years of study (e.g., an essay from 10th grade, a chemistry project from 11th grade, a reflection on changes in their design process from a Career & Technical Education or Visual & Performing Arts course). This should represent the student's best work as it pertains to their learning and growth. With the reflection, the portfolio will include four total artifacts.

The portfolio will be evaluated by an interdisciplinary team of teachers in the spring of each year, as presented through a student-led conference. Scorers determine if work "has met" or "has not met" the standards outlined above. Students will have the opportunity to revise and/or submit new pieces if one or more of the standards have not been met.

Graduation Standards

In addition to the minimum number of credits every student must earn, we require our students to successfully demonstrate competency in each of the following six areas: reading, writing, research, mathematical problem solving, scientific reasoning, and citizenship.

Reading

Students will read, comprehend, and analyze fiction, non-fiction, and technical materials to obtain information and build an understanding of the text, themselves, and the world around them. A student may demonstrate the performance standard by:

- Achieving a score of 480 or better on the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section of the PSAT/NMSQT
- Achieving a score of 480 on the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section of the SAT
- Achieving a score of at least 18 on the Reading section of the ACT
- Successfully completing a Reading Center course in 10th, 11th, or 12th grade

Writing

Students will communicate effectively in writing by applying appropriate structures and conventions. A student may demonstrate the performance standard by:

- Achieving a score of 7 or above on the annual English portfolio assessment in May of the sophomore year
- Achieving a score of 3 based on the School Research Rubric on a research paper in either Junior English or U.S. History

Research

Students will engage in research by locating, critically selecting, interpreting, organizing, and synthesizing information from print, non-print, and electronic sources to increase knowledge, solve problems, and construct meaning. A student may demonstrate the performance standard by:

- Achieving a score of 3 based on the School Research Rubric on a research paper in a Junior English or Junior U.S. History course
- Completing the Senior Independent Research Project in 12th Grade Health

Mathematical Problem Solving

Students will represent a problem using mathematics and will know that math is a necessary tool for understanding the physical and social world. A student may demonstrate the performance standard by:

- Achieving a score of at least 500 on the mathematics portion of the SAT
- Achieving a score of at least 20 on the mathematics section of the ACT
- Achieving a 75% or higher on the Algebra 2 final exam in grades 9, 10, or 11
- Achieving a score of 75% or higher on the Algebra 2 or Pre-calculus midterm exam in grade 12
- Meeting regularly with a faculty mentor and successfully completing a mathematics portfolio in grade 12

Scientific Literacy

Students will apply the scientific method to discover the rules of nature. A student may demonstrate the performance standard by:

- Meeting goal (3 or better) on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) assessment
- Earning a 75 or better in each semester of an Advanced Placement science course
- Earning a 21 or better on the Science section of the ACT
- Completing 6 semesters of science credit with at least two in a physical science and two in a life science
- 80% or better on 2 inquiry-based lab activities from the assured experiences embedded in each science course during junior or senior year

Citizenship

Students will understand the ideals, principles, and practices of citizens that reflect a democratic republic. A student may demonstrate the performance standard by successfully completing a civics course.

Academic Integrity & AI Ethical Guidelines

Academic Integrity is based on trust and mutual respect for your own work and the work of others. Students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members will all work together to ensure that students represent their own work honestly and accurately; acknowledge when the work of others is incorporated; and report to a teacher, guidance counselor, or administrator any behavior which undermines our standards for Academic Integrity.

New Canaan High School students will uphold academic excellence and practice responsible citizenship by adhering to the New Canaan High School standards for Academic Integrity. This goal reflects New Canaan High School's role in preparing students for college and beyond, where Academic Integrity is non-negotiable.

Any student in possession of a phone or device (not in a Yondr case) during an assessment will be viewed as violating this Academic Integrity policy and subject to academic and/or disciplinary consequences.

Student Pledge

Signed at 9th Grade Orientation and each subsequent year:

I, _____, promise to uphold New Canaan High School's standards of Academic Integrity. I promise to treat my own work with integrity and to respect the work of others. I understand that trust, ethical behavior, and fairness are the foundation of a positive learning community and promise to always act with respect for myself and the intellectual property of others. To confirm my ongoing commitment to Academic Integrity, I will add the words "On my honor" to any graded work I submit.

Students' Responsibilities

- Read and know the school's Academic Integrity Policy
- In addition to observing the NCHS Academic Integrity Policy, observe all course-specific rules and consequences established by your teachers
- Do not copy homework or let someone else copy your homework
- Seek only appropriate help from parents, tutors, or other students; check with the teacher to determine appropriateness
- If collaboration has not been specified as permissible, the assignment must be your individual, honest effort
- Take responsibility for doing your fair share of a group assignment
- On writing assignments, do not summarize, paraphrase, or quote without proper attribution
- Do not discuss any aspect of a test with other students until the teacher has returned it or given permission to do so
- Report to the teacher, a guidance counselor, or an administrator if cheating has occurred and how it is being done

Teacher Responsibilities

- Clearly explain expectations to students at the beginning of marking periods, orally and in writing
- Communicate the range of consequences for cheating in class
- Clearly state when collaborative work is allowed — if not explicitly stated, it is not allowed

- Be consistent with consequences of infractions
- Inform guidance counselors, parents, and administrators of any violations of the honor code
- Inform other teachers of any honor code violations observed in class

Parent Responsibilities

- Read and know the school's honor code
- Clearly impart to their child how important academic integrity is, and the expectation that their child will follow the associated rules put forth by teachers and school
- Require students to do their own work
- Support any consequences of honor code infractions
- When helping students with schoolwork, make sure the work remains the student's own

Administrator Responsibilities

- Make available to all students, teachers, and parents a copy of the NCHS Academic Integrity Policy
- Initiate and facilitate ongoing discussions and reflections about the Academic Integrity Policy
- Administer fair and consistent consequences for offenses
- Maintain records of Academic Integrity Policy offenses
- Conduct an annual year-end review and reflection of the Policy

Examples of Academic Integrity Violations

- Using AI to complete an assignment without the direct permission of your teacher
- Presenting information collected, organized, or envisioned by someone else as your own (with or without the author's permission), or allowing someone else to present your work as his or her own, without proper citation
- Taking shortcuts (such as unauthorized use of study aids) that allow you to bypass steps of an assignment
- Using forbidden material to "help" during an exam, such as cheat sheets, unauthorized copies of tests, graphing calculators, or any electronic aid connected to the internet
- Asking about or sharing questions and/or answers to quizzes and exams
- Submitting the same work for more than one assignment without express permission from your teacher(s)
- Altering corrections or scores with the intent of changing your grade
- Misrepresenting yourself in any way to your teachers regarding the work you have done
- Fabricating information to try to earn more time, credit, or grading leniency on an assignment, project, or exam
- Scheduling full or partial day excused or unexcused absences designed to avoid assignments
- Doing more or less than your share of a group project without permission from your teacher
- Inventing excuses (broken technology, feigned illness/crisis, time constraints, etc.) to explain lack of academic production
- Using a computer to translate text from one language to another and submitting it as your own translation

Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

At NCHS, responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is part of our commitment to innovative learning and academic integrity. Students may use data privacy approved AI tools only with teacher permission and within clearly defined guidelines that are set by the classroom teacher.

As with all academic work, students are expected to be honest, transparent, and respectful of classroom expectations. Above all, students have the responsibility to ensure their teacher understands if and how AI was used in any learning activity.

Be Respectful

- **Treat Everyone Fairly:** Don't use AI to bully, spread rumors, or harm others
- **Respect Privacy:** Don't share personal information without permission

Be Honest

- **No Cheating:** Your work should be your own. Don't use AI to cheat
- **Avoid Plagiarism:** Always give credit where it's due. Don't pass off AI-generated work as your own

Be Safe

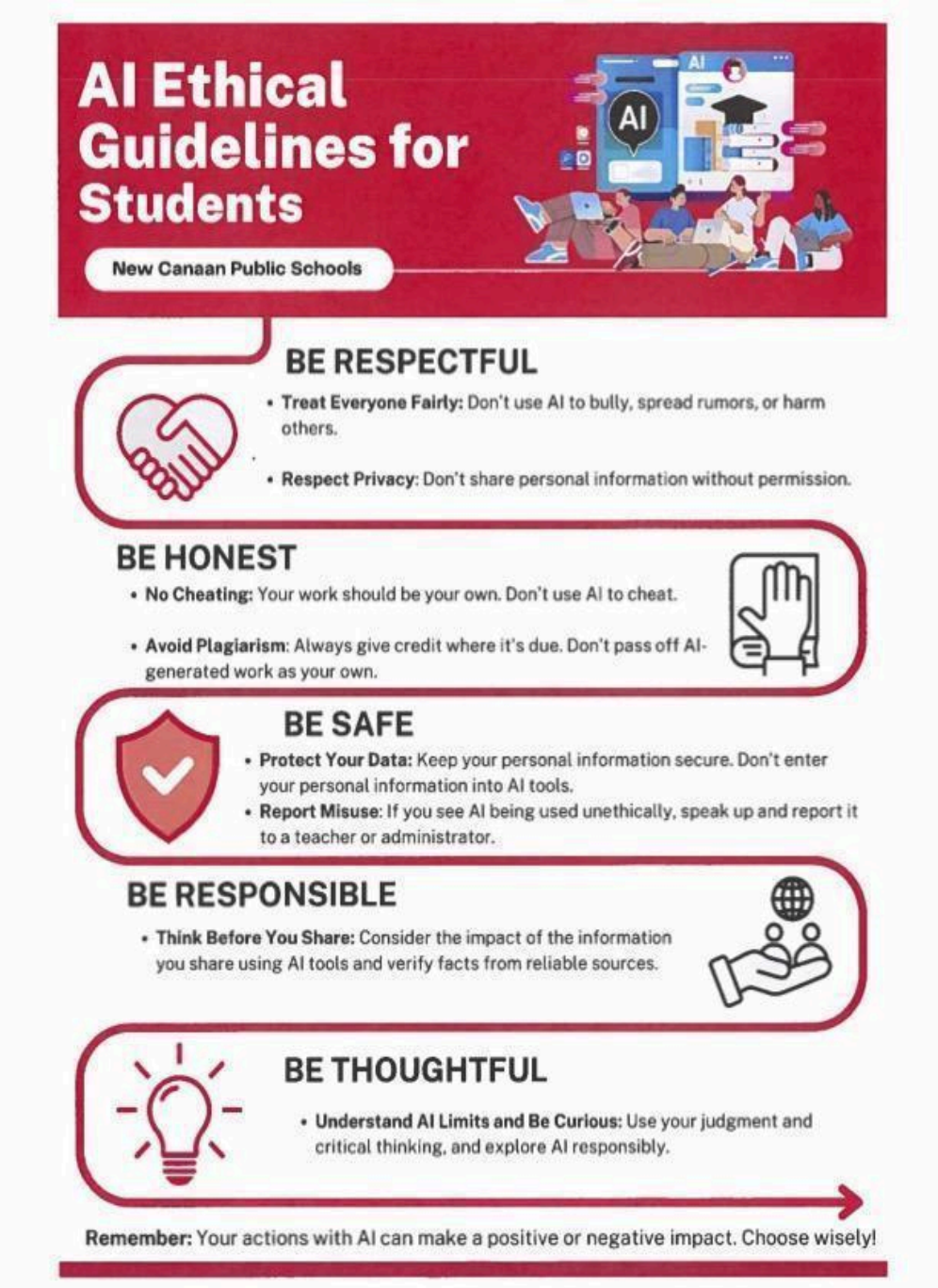
- **Protect Your Data:** Keep your personal information secure. Don't enter your personal information into AI tools
- **Report Misuse:** If you see AI being used unethically, speak up and report it to a teacher or administrator

Be Responsible

- **Think Before You Share:** Consider the impact of the information you share using AI tools and verify facts from reliable sources

Be Thoughtful

- **Understand AI Limits and Be Curious:** Use your judgment and critical thinking, and explore AI responsibly



Remember: Your actions with AI can make a positive or negative impact. Choose wisely!

Communicating with Teachers, Field Trips & Study Hall

Communicating with Teachers

E-mail is a vital means of communication used by staff and students to carry out academic and administrative functions. But while the transmission of electronic correspondence is nearly instantaneous, staff members and teachers may not be able to read and/or respond to your message during the school day.

E-mail is an appropriate vehicle for quick, uncomplicated messages to teachers when time and/or confidentiality are not critical factors. Any email correspondence should be brief and informational in nature. Your child's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioral issues are best addressed through a telephone conversation or by scheduling a personal conference with your child's teacher. E-mail contact between parents and teachers is not intended to supplant the personal responsibility that students have of communicating their assignments and other important school-related messages to their parents.

Field Trips

Field trips provide valuable, enriching experiences beyond the classroom. Students are expected to acknowledge that participation requires them to miss other classes. By participating in a field trip, they must be aware that they are responsible for advising their teachers of their absence in a timely manner prior to the field trip date and arranging to make up any missed work in a timely fashion.

Students also need to understand that if they choose not to participate in a field trip, they may be responsible for completing an alternative assignment for that class. Lastly, all parts of the NCHS Student Code of Behavior are in effect, and every student is responsible for his/her actions as if he/she were on school premises.

If the cost of a field trip or school activity proves burdensome for a student and their family, the School Counselor should be notified.

Grade 9 Study Hall

Purpose: A valuable resource providing scheduled time during the school day to begin homework, meet with teachers, or read. Attendance is required.

Key Rule: While students with first or last period Study Hall may have arrival/dismissal privileges with parental permission, attendance during the middle two blocks is mandatory. Parents may not excuse students to the Library or Cafeteria during their assigned Study Hall.

Homework

In academic courses, students should expect 0–45 minutes of homework per class meeting/per course. Students in advanced and college-level courses (such as AP and ECE) may expect increased responsibilities commensurate with their course designation and weighting, but teachers will make every attempt to assign 45 minutes of homework per class meeting in line with a reading level appropriate to the course.

Students will…

- Check Schoology on a daily basis for assignments
- Manage time in a way that allows for homework completion and healthy sleep habits
- Communicate with the teacher if they have a question or concern
- Be aware that enrolling in multiple accelerated courses may increase the overall homework load
- Uphold the NCHS academic integrity policy, completing homework in a manner that is honest and independent unless otherwise instructed
- Minimize distractions and the use of devices not related to homework
- Communicate with teachers to submit work prior to the deadline in the case of planned absences related to sports, family commitments, doctors' appointments, etc.

Teachers will…

- Reflect and improve on instructional practices during Professional Learning time
- Assign homework that is purposeful and engaging
- Communicate the purpose, directions, expectations, and due dates for daily and long-term assignments
- Post the assigned homework no later than 3:30 PM
- Set assignment due dates aligned with current research on healthy sleep habits for adolescents
- Design homework opportunities at the appropriate level of difficulty for the course
- Consistently communicate with students about how long assignments take them and address concerns as needed
- Monitor the time at which homework assignments are completed and address concerns as needed
- Communicate with parents and/or support personnel if there are concerns

Parents can help by…

- Setting clear homework routines and helping students prioritize assignments
- Encouraging students to complete homework in a manner that is honest and independent
- Creating a distraction-free environment, including removing devices not related to homework
- Ensuring students have the necessary materials for completing homework
- Encouraging students to reach out to the teacher if they have questions or need extra help
- Monitoring the time at which homework assignments are completed to promote healthy sleep habits

NCHS Homework Practices

- This policy assumes an 85-minute AB block schedule and is subject to change upon any adjustments to the schedule
- For the three school days before exams, teachers will not assign or collect new out-of-class work in addition to exam preparation, nor administer or collect graded assessments; class time during these three days may be used to begin part of the exam
- No homework will be assigned over extended school vacations. AP classes may assign work due after break as a long-term assignment, provided it is assigned before the vacation and not due the day of return
- Religious exemptions will be provided upon prior communication with the teacher

Building Block

A Academic

B The Broadcast

C Community & Counseling

New Canaan High School provides each student with a non-evaluative setting where students and educators strive to create a safe and collaborative environment while building community and positive school culture. Connected to the first block class each Wednesday, Building Block is 'flex time' to accommodate extra academic help, the TV broadcast, and counseling, while still allowing for teacher choice in how the community develops and grows. Some of the activities and sessions throughout the year are:

- **Academic Support:** Students may leave class to visit another teacher, the Writing Center, ACES, or the Math Lab. Students with a free may sign up to use the Library.
- **Skill Development:** instruction on executive functioning, time management, study skills, and practical coping mechanisms for stress.
- **Academic and Procedural Guidance:** School Counselors will meet with their students for deeper dives into course selection, elective class details, college application support, and orienting students to school expectations, such as handling absences and midterms.
- **Social and Emotional Growth:** Activities focused on resilience, growth mindset, mindfulness, self-curiosity, empathy, and strategies for building peer connections beyond established existing social circles.
- **Community Building:** Activities designed for inter-grade interactions, allowing students across different age levels to share experiences and advice. Student input on activities is valuable, so student feedback is always encouraged (and needed).

School Counseling

Counselors are trained in personal, social-emotional, academic, and post-secondary counseling; their main concern is advocating for you and working with you toward making realistic choices aligned with your abilities, interests, and goals. It is the joint responsibility of both the student and counselor to become acquainted as soon as possible.

To make an appointment, students see the receptionist in the School Counseling Office any time between 8:00 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.; counselors may also send a pass for students to visit during free periods. Each counselor maintains a daily "walk-in" period from 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. when no appointment is necessary.

Grade Counseling Milestones

Grade	Milestones
Freshman	Meet counselor on Day 1 (Freshman Orientation); individual meeting in Q2 to address academic needs and build a tentative Four-Year Education Plan; complete a Learning and Productivity Inventory
Sophomore	Counseling Building Block sessions explore career pathways and introduce Naviance, connecting strengths/interests to post-secondary goals
Junior	Post-secondary planning intensifies; Naviance guides career exploration and college search; second-semester Junior Appointments cover testing strategy, college lists, and applications
Senior	Mandatory "Nuts and Bolts" Building Block session in early September on application logistics; individual Senior Appointments review the Senior Profile, finalize application lists, and review post-high school plans

Planning Your Schedule with Your Teachers and Counselor

Course selection is one of the most important activities in which you participate. Careful selection will help you achieve the educational goals that you have set for yourself. Academic course placement is based on recommendations by the five academic departments (English, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, and World Language).

In the early spring of each academic year, an updated NCHS Program of Studies is provided (through the NCHS website), and every student meets with their school counselor to discuss course requirements and build a course of study for the coming year. Requests for specific teachers will not be honored. Schedules will be available for viewing and downloading in PowerSchool before the start of school.

The Course Selection Process

The course selection process is a crucial step in shaping a student's academic journey and is structured to help students make personalized and informed choices about their high school program. Students should choose courses that align with their interests, goals and educational requirements. The process is intentionally collaborative, with input from the student, their teachers, families and school counselor, and roughly follows the following timeline:

February

Based on the student's first semester performance and an understanding of the academic and workload expectations of possible next course options in the discipline, the classroom teacher makes an informed

recommendation for all the course(s) within the level they believe that student would be most prepared and has demonstrated potential for success.

In making an informed recommendation for each student with whom they've worked over the course of the first semester, the classroom teacher considers the demonstrated academic skills and habits of mind that have historically defined success at the honors or college levels, as well as the student's demonstrated proficiency with increasingly-rigorous content and multi-step assignments (i.e., the type of work the student will be expected to do independently at the accelerated level). Other considerations include:

- the focus and responsibility to handle rigorous pacing of instruction and the pressures inherent within an advanced level of study
- the motivation and discipline to independently complete all short- and long-term assignments and written work in a clear, concise and timely manner
- the ability to independently collect, manipulate and analyze information and/or data, problem-solve and work with abstract concepts
- the ability to acquire and successfully utilize and apply a great amount of discipline-specific content, vocabulary and, as appropriate, quantitative formulae
- demonstrated persistence in the face of challenging content

Additionally, each discipline draws upon, emphasizes and/or requires independent utilization of various well-developed talents, higher-order skills and prerequisite content mastery (as required, for example, in curricula from the College Board and/or the University of Connecticut). Therefore, criteria for recommending placement in specific accelerated courses may vary somewhat within a discipline and across disciplines. These are described in department listings.

The classroom teacher will discuss with the student the basis for their recommendation. If, at that point, the student expresses interest in a different course (accelerated level), the teacher acknowledges content prerequisites, if any, and explains the specific behaviors and levels of performance they will be looking for over the course of the 3rd quarter.

March

Reflective of the recommendation(s) entered in PowerSchool by the student's current teachers, courses for the next year are selected by the student. If the student seeks enrollment in a course and/or level other than the original recommendation(s), they complete and submit an Appeal of Placement form by the established due date, April 1st.

March/April

The school counselor meets with the student to review all recommendations and discuss any appeals under consideration. It is in these meetings that the implications of the combination and balance of the set of course recommendations – projected overall workload, expectation of independent learning, the student's learning profile, as well as availability of time outside of the school day – are addressed. The school counselor's goal in these discussions is to support the student's goals and aspirations while maintaining a healthy balance overall.

April/May

Having reviewed the appeal and consulted with the classroom teacher after another quarter of working with the student, the department chair provides the school counselor either a revised or reiterated recommendation: the student has demonstrated a greater potential for success at the accelerated level, or the student has not demonstrated a substantive increase in potential for success at the accelerated level.

The committee charged with reviewing appeals - composed of school counselors, department chairs and members of the various departments - considers requests and determines what is in the student's best interest. Final decisions are mailed home in mid-May.

If a student is ultimately enrolled in a course for which they have not been recommended, the student and parent/guardian will acknowledge the course's daily workload, rigor and pacing of instruction, expectation of independent learning at the outset, potential impact upon the student's other courses, reasonable opportunities for extra help (not re-teaching of pre-requisite content), et al, as well as the possibility of significant impact on the student's schedule if the course is ultimately switched.

The highly-developed skills required for success in accelerated courses take time to develop, as students discover and utilize effective strategies for success, as they acclimate to the expectations and rigor of the new course. Therefore, students are expected to remain in the course for a minimum period reflective of the teacher's opportunity to effectively assess the student's mastery of course content and skills, typically at the end of the first month of the course, when an interim progress report is made.

If, after such a period of time, the decision is made to change courses, the grade from the course in which the student was originally enrolled will be incorporated fairly into the new course's quarter or semester grade (depending on when in the beginning of the year the schedule change is made).

If the appeal is made after the school year has begun and, based on the review process detailed above, the student is to be enrolled in the accelerated course or the student opts to change courses ('drop down a level'), the department chair will identify the section (if more than one) the school counselor may place the student. It is the responsibility of the department chair to maintain a comparable balance of class sizes and optimal learning environments among sections of the same course.

At no time should a student be enrolled in a course different from that for which they have been recommended without an appeal discussion involving the department chair.

Schedule Changes

It is expected that student schedules will remain firm, and there will be few substantive reasons for requesting changes. Any unusual problems related to correct placement or course conflicts will receive immediate attention from a counselor.

Requests for course level changes require a completed Level Change Request Form, available in the School Counseling Office. Submitted forms will be formally reviewed for final approval or denial.

The School Counseling Department is unable to accommodate teacher requests or schedule changes based on teacher preference. Building the school schedule is a highly detailed process designed to create balanced and equitable classes for all students, and honoring this longstanding policy allows us to maintain that balance.

College and Career Center

An important component of our program is the College and Career Center, located in the School Counseling Suite and open every day during the school year from 8:00 AM to 2:45 PM. Concentrated especially in the fall semester, more than 175 college and university representatives visit the CCC, and seniors are encouraged to attend these

information sessions. The schedule of visits is posted in the School Counseling office, on Naviance, and on the NCHS webpage.

In addition to other post-high school planning resources, such as information on careers, pursuing a "gap year," or joining the military, the College and Career Center has information on summer enrichment programs, also available on the College and Career Center page of the NCHS website.

College Admissions Standardized Tests

The School Counseling department recommends that ALL juniors take the PSAT (Preliminary SAT) in October of their junior year for practice. Registration takes place at the NCHS College and Career Center in early September.

The SAT consists of evidence-based reading and writing, mathematics, and an optional essay portion. SAT Subject Tests are one-hour examinations that determine knowledge in a specific subject; only selective colleges require submission (usually two tests). Register at www.collegeboard.com; contact your counselor for details.

The ACT is an alternative to the SAT, consisting of reading, mathematics, writing, and science sections. Register at www.actstudent.org.

Students enrolled in an Advanced Placement course are expected to take a national examination given in May. Students must register in the School Counseling Office in late winter. Exam scores range from 1 (low) to 5 (high) and are considered by many colleges for course requirements, exemptions, credit, or advanced standing.

Y.E.S. (Youth Employment Service)

The Youth Employment Service is located in the College and Career Center. It provides information on part-time and/or temporary jobs for students, most listed in the New Canaan/Stamford/Norwalk area. This is a free service for students who are invited to register with Y.E.S. The office is open 8:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., Monday through Friday during the school year. Phone: 203-594-4664.

The office is also where Working Papers may be obtained. Students must present a letter of employment from their workplace stating hours to be worked and pay per hour, along with a copy of their birth certificate. During the summer, when Y.E.S. is closed, Working Papers may be obtained at the reception desk of the School Counseling Department.

Student Learning Support Team & Additional Resources for Students

Counselors are one component of the Student Learning Support Team that includes school psychologists, social workers, school nurses, the school resource officer, and the grade-level administrators. Convening regularly, this group is dedicated to monitoring the school climate and developing programs that enhance the learning process for all students.

Resource List for NCHS Students

There are many people at NCHS who are here to support you, academically and emotionally, throughout your time here. Below is a list of some of the people in school and outside of school who are here for you during times of stress or need. Please feel free to contact any one of the people below for assistance at any time.

NCHS Student Support Office (in the Counseling Suite)

- School Counselors: Mrs. Drexel, Ms. Clark, Mr. Ferrell, Mrs. Keen, Ms. Lota, Mrs. McGarrity, Ms. Quinn, Ms. Rossini, and Mrs. Schaedler
- School Psychologists: Mrs. Gagliano and Ms. Miskella
- School Social Workers: Mrs. Donellan, Ms. Gormley, and Ms. Kubik

NCHS Administrators (Main Office)

- Mr. Egan — Principal
- Mrs. Carriero — Grade 10
- Mr. Rothman — Grade 11
- Mr. Sullivan — Grades 9 & 12

School Nurses (Nurse's Office)

- Mrs. Imbrogno
- Mrs. McIntosh
- Ms. McNamara

School Resource Officer (in the Math Office)

Officer Shane Gibson — (203) 594-4740

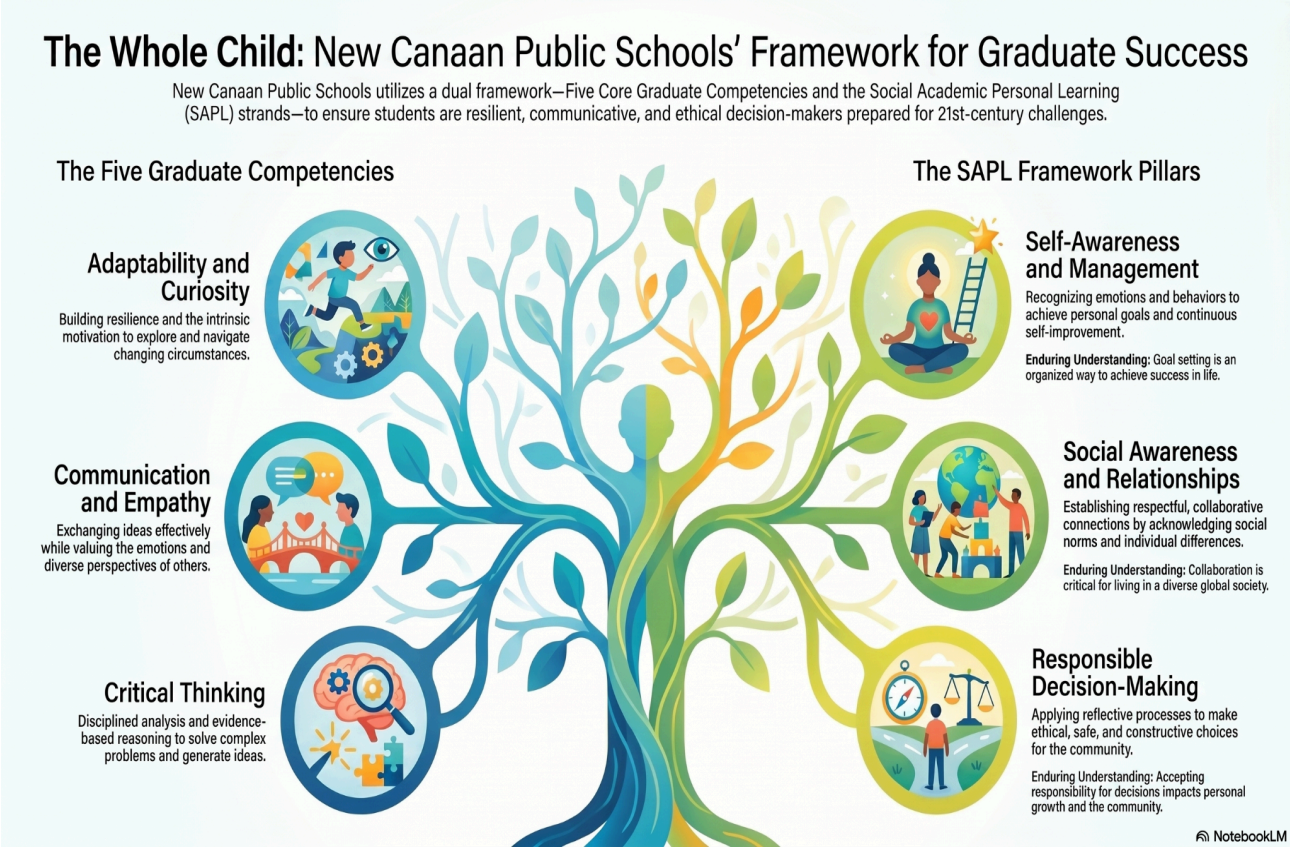
Campus Monitors (in the Main Lobby and Gym Entrance)

- Hampton Dais
- Patrick Maninolfi
- Robert Mueller
- Richard Pelletier

Resources Outside of School

- **Kids in Crisis:** 24 hr. hotline (confidential) (203) 661-1911.
- **988 – Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:** Free and confidential lifeline 24/7. Call or Text.
- **CT Infoline-211:** for confidential hotline/crisis intervention services 24/7. Dial 211 from any phone. www.211ct.org
- **The Assessment Program at Silver Hill:** A FREE resource for all residents of New Canaan that provides mental health assessments and referrals for children, adolescents, and adults. The phone number is 866-542-4455, and an appointment is necessary.
- **Sandy Hook Promise Say Something Anonymous Reporting System:** allows you to submit secure, anonymous safety concerns to help someone who may hurt themselves or others. 1-844-5-SayNow.
- **New Canaan Dept. of Youth Services:** For help accessing community services or assistance with financial or counseling needs, call Jackie D'Louhy at (203)594-3081. The New Canaan Town website also has a Directory of Youth Services that identifies a list of local counseling agencies and other resources for youth.

A Directory of Youth Services is also available online on the New Canaan Town website, listing local counseling agencies and other resources for youth.



Grades and Grading Policies & Options

Assessment is embedded in the instructional process within every class and is used to improve learning and inform instruction. As part of their daily classroom practice, teachers use a variety of methods designed to gauge student understanding of the curriculum, including, but not limited to, class participation, homework assignments, quizzes and tests, pieces of writing, and any variety of means through which students can demonstrate their understanding of the content and skills that comprise a course's curriculum.

For each quarter of the school year, numerical grades represent the teacher's informed evaluation of the quality of assigned work over that roughly ten-week period. For each semester, the two-quarter grades and the midterm or final exam are averaged for the semester grade for that course; it is the semester grade that is on the student's transcript.

New Canaan High School uses numerical grades for reporting purposes. The final grade for a quarter and a semester may range from 100 to 60 for passing and from 59 to 50 for failure, with the lowest quarter grade used to calculate the semester average being a 50.

Even though a number of our courses meet for the full year, credit is earned by the semester and, therefore, a full-year course will appear on the transcript as two semester grades (e.g., "Freshman English S1 and S2," each with a grade and 0.5 credit earned).

Credit-No Credit Policy

For various reasons, students may opt to take certain courses on a 'pass' or 'fail' basis, which will be reflected on their report card and transcript as either "CR" (credit earned) or "NC" (no credit earned). This decision should only be made in consultation with the signed approval of the student's parent, the teacher of that course, and the student's counselor.

The student must complete the application no later than two (2) weeks before the end of the first quarter the course meets (for a full-year course, this means within the first quarter of that course). All interested students should inquire with the School Counseling Department for complete details and the necessary forms.

Withdrawal from a Course

It is the school's expectation that students will remain in all courses they begin throughout the semester, even when the course proves difficult or a passing grade is unlikely. However, if it is no later than two weeks before the end of the first marking period in a course (normally about six weeks into a semester), a student may withdraw. For the second semester of a full-year course, the deadline for withdrawal is ten school days from the start of the semester.

Even if a withdrawal is discussed or planned, the student is required to continue attending the class until the schedule change is made official. If withdrawing would put the student below the minimum enrollment requirement for their grade, the student must enroll in another course meeting the same number of times per cycle; all grades and accumulated absences carry over, and the responsibility of making up work rests with the student.

If the student is failing, any withdrawal after the dates mentioned above will lead to a designation of WF (Withdraw/Failure), which will be printed on the report card and included on the permanent transcript. For

purposes of computing the GPA, the WF converts to a grade of 50. No student should receive a WF without the consent of the teacher, the counselor's recommendation, and the administration.

Grade Point Average

Grade Point Averages (GPAs) are reported on a student's transcript. The Comprehensive GPA includes all courses (except Physical Education and those graded Credit/No Credit). The Academic GPA comprises grades from Mathematics, Social Studies, English, Science, and World Language, as well as courses earning college credit. A grade of WF is computed as a 50 in the GPA.

All Honors and college-level course grades use a multiplier of 1.075 in determining a student's GPA. All other courses use a multiplier of 1.000.

In accordance with Board of Education policy, New Canaan High School does not report rank in class. To provide colleges with information on where a student stands relative to classmates, a grade distribution graph for each class is included with the student's transcript.

Honor Roll

The Honor Roll acknowledges students whose quarterly grade average is 85 or better over the nine or so weeks of the quarter. Students attaining an overall quarterly average of 90 or better earn High Honors.

Outstanding Obligations

It is extremely important that all students accept responsibility for school-owned property issued to them as part of their academic or co-curricular program. If a student has an outstanding obligation for textbooks and/or other instructional materials, parking fines, or athletic equipment, his/her final transcript will be withheld and not released until all obligations are reconciled.

Exam Attendance Policy

Our end-of-semester exam schedule is carefully designed to maintain academic integrity and support student success. All students are expected to take their exams during their scheduled blocks. Requests to reschedule exams for personal convenience — such as adjusting a schedule for preference or extending a vacation — will not be approved, as these disruptions undermine the educational purpose of the assessment period. Exceptions are made only for genuine emergencies or official administrative permissions.

Senior Final Exam Waiver

Seniors in their second semester have the option of waiving the end-of-semester summative assessment for a class, if they meet all of the following criteria: (1) they have a Fourth Quarter average of at least 85 in that class; and (2) they have no more than five (5) absences in that class throughout the Second Semester and no unexcused absences or the equivalent in tardies.

Under no circumstances will any aspect of the Attendance Policy be reconsidered in light of this policy. Neither the grade-level administrator nor the Principal can reconsider the application of this policy.

Academic Balance and Assessment Policies

The "Three-Assessment" Rule

To support student wellness, NCHS ensures that no student is required to take more than two major tests in a single day. If you have three or more major assessments on one day, students have the right to request a reschedule for one of them. A "Major Assessment" is defined as:

- Unit test or multi-chapter exam
- Assessments that count for a high percentage of grade
- Assessments requiring multiple days of study.
- In-class, timed, on-demand essays.
- **Note:** Short quizzes, lab reports, and long-term projects do not fall under this policy.

How to Request a Reschedule

If you see a "three-assessment day" coming up, follow these steps to advocate for yourself:

- Check the Calendar: Requests must be made at least 3 school days in advance (e.g., email by Tuesday for a Friday test).
- Send ONE Email: Send one joint email to all three teachers. CC your School Counselor and your Parent/Guardian so everyone is in the loop.
- Propose a Time: Suggest which test you'd move and when you are free (Free periods, before school, or after school). However, the time chosen will be up to your teacher.

Sample Email: "Dear Teachers, I have three tests scheduled for this Friday. I am requesting to move my [Class B] test. I've CC'd my counselor and my parents so they are aware of the change. I am free to take it during my free on Thursday. Thank you!"

Partnering with Parents & Families

We believe academic balance is a team effort. We ask our NCHS parents to:

- Monitor the Calendar: Help your student look ahead at their Schoology to spot "three-test days" early.
- Encourage Advocacy: Coach your student on sending the request email themselves. This builds essential self-advocacy skills for college and beyond.
- Support the Window: Understand that rescheduled tests may need to happen before/after school or during a free period to keep the student on track with their class.

Important Details

- The Window: Expect to take the test within two days of the original date (Could happen before the scheduled day).
- The Location: Your teacher will designate the time and location (usually their classroom or department area).
- Advanced Courses: In AP/Honors/ECE classes, the pace is fast. Teachers will work to accommodate conflicts, but the makeup date may be non-negotiable to ensure the student doesn't fall behind.
- Day-of Requests: Generally not granted except in emergencies.

Other Academic Opportunities

Early College Experience (ECE)

Students have the opportunity to earn college transfer credit from the University of Connecticut or Norwalk Community College for the successful completion of designated honors courses. Check the Program of Study or speak with your School Counselor for more information.

Summer Academic Make-Up Program

The Summer School Program includes remedial courses to earn back credits on courses failed, or audit courses for personal skill growth. Courses offered are determined based on enrollment. It is held each year from late June to the end of July. Tuition, which includes lab and special fees, must be paid at the time of registration.

If a particular course is not offered through our program, students may earn credit through coursework in another school's summer program. To ensure that credit earned through another school's program is accepted, students must first get approval from their school counselor and then present the curriculum to the appropriate Department Chair for approval.

National Honor Society

Membership in the NHS is an honor, not an entitlement. To be considered for membership, students must attain a comprehensive weighted grade point average of at least 92 and have an exemplary record of leadership, service, and character.

Students are eligible for membership after five semesters (halfway through junior year). An application complete with documented activities must be submitted. The NCHS Faculty Honor Society Council will select students.

Attendance Policy

New Canaan High School's attendance policy reflects the philosophy that attentive presence in class is essential for academic success. Legislation mandates school attendance in all scheduled classes (including Study Hall); therefore, excessive absence from a scheduled class will result in the loss of credit for that class.

Parents are asked to work with the school in implementing the policy's provisions and ensuring attendance and active participation in all classes on their child's schedule.

State law mandates school attendance for children ages 5 to 18. Students 17 years old may withdraw only with personal parent/guardian appearance and signed consent acknowledging educational alternatives.

New Canaan High School will only excuse absences due to personal illness, death in the family, court appearance, religious observance, college visits, or emergency medical appointments. Additionally, students attending to their emotional well-being may take, with parent approval, a "mental health wellness day." Such a day would count as an excused absence and may not be taken more than twice in a school year, nor on consecutive school days. School-affiliated activities (field trips, suspensions, standardized testing, athletic events, and special assemblies) that cause absence from class are the only absences that do not count towards loss of credit.

Absences Permitted Before Loss of Credit

Course Type	Absences Permitted
Semester courses meeting every scheduled period	8 absences
Science courses meeting six times per cycle	10 absences

Any absences (excused or unexcused), or groups of four tardies (four tardies = one absence), beyond the above numbers will result in loss of credit. Students not enrolled for a course's entirety will have their attendance requirement prorated. Students changing courses mid-semester continue their attendance record from the previous course into the new one.

Parents are asked to call or email the Attendance Office between 7:45 and 8:45 AM (594-4672 or nchsattendance@ncps-k12.org) if their child will be absent from school. A parent or guardian telephone call or email for any absence is required upon the student's return to school or, at most, within 48 hours of the absence, and must include the student's name, date(s) of absence, the reason for absence, and a daytime phone number where parents can be reached to verify the note. Unexcused absences from class will not only jeopardize a student's academic performance but will also lead to disciplinary actions.

Excused absences on days when there is an assessment will be recorded as VMA (Verified Missed Assessment). Unexcused absences will be recorded as UMA (Unverified Missed Assessment). This does not change the number of absences permitted in each course before credit is lost.

Requirements for Excused Absences

A telephone call or written explanation for any absence is required upon the student's return to school or, at most, within 48 hours of the absence. Notes must be from a parent or legal guardian, regardless of the student's age, and must include the student's name, date(s) of absence, the reason for absence, and a daytime phone number where parents can be reached to verify the note. There is no negotiation of an absence after the 48-hour

grace period. Upon returning to school, students with valid excuses for missing class must meet with their teacher(s) and arrange if, how, and when the student can make up the class time that was missed.

Doctor and dental appointments should be scheduled for after-school hours. If after-school arrangements are not possible, written notice from the physician is required for the absence to be considered excused.

The school strongly discourages family vacations during school time; any absence due to vacation will be treated as any other non-school-related absence and will count toward loss of credit. If extended vacations contribute to excessive absence, an appeal for reinstatement of credit will not be possible. Teachers are under no obligation to provide missed lessons or give extra help to students who miss their classes due to vacations or any unexcused absences.

Any student who needs to be dismissed during the day must bring proper notification from their parents to the Attendance Office by 9:00 AM on the day for which it is being requested.

Students may not go home for illness or injury during the school day without going through the Nurse's Office. The nurse, with parental agreement, will make the decision to dismiss the student from school. Missing class to go home without the permission of the nurse will cause any absences for illness to be unexcused.

Excused Absences (10 or more days): State law requires: if a student is absent nine days or more over the course of the school year, Connecticut General Statute 10-210 regarding school attendance and truancy requires the school to record that student's future absences as unexcused unless one of the following conditions is met — (1) student illness verified by a licensed medical professional; (2) observance of a religious holiday; (3) death in the family or other emergencies beyond the family's control; (4) mandated court appearances; (5) lack of transportation normally provided by another district; (6) pre-approved extraordinary educational opportunities; or (7) military deployment leave (up to 10 additional days under PA 14-198).

Mental Health Wellness Days (PA 21-46): Students may take up to two (2) excused mental health wellness days per school year with parent approval. These cannot be taken on consecutive days.

Tardiness

Unless the tardiness is excused by the parent or guardian, students are to report directly to class as soon as they arrive at school. If their reason for being tardy can be excused, a parent or guardian should call or email the Attendance Office that day for verification. Four (4) offenses of tardiness to any course, regardless of the number of minutes late, will constitute one absence. Students missing more than 15 minutes of a half-block class (40 minutes) or 30 minutes of a full-block class (85 minutes) are considered absent and noted accordingly, counting as 1 point toward the Loss of Credit calculation.

Right of Appeal

The Attendance Policy is not designed to deny credit to students who, through no fault of their own, are unable to attend school or class due to legitimate illness or other conditions beyond the student's/parent's control. In January and June, students who have lost credit may have an opportunity to appeal to have credit reinstated. To be eligible, students must continue classroom responsibilities and attend class faithfully. Should they lose credit in that class, students with three or more unexcused absences (or the equivalent in unexcused tardies) in any one class forfeit the right to appeal.

When a student has lost credit, a letter is sent explaining the procedure for requesting a hearing from the Appeals Board: submit a written request and supporting documentation to the Attendance Office by noon on the first day of that semester's exam period. Supporting documentation must include justification for all absences and

verification that the student has continued all classroom responsibilities since the loss of credit occurred. If a student has been absent due to chronic illness, a statement from a physician must be on file with the school nurse. All cases will be considered on an individual basis, and the final decision is a majority vote of the Appeals Board, composed of staff, School Nurses, and the appropriate Grade Level Administrator.

In reaching decisions on reinstatement of credit, the Appeals Board will reference all absences to the non-school-related Requirements for Excused Absences. Credit will be reestablished only if demonstrated that there were extenuating circumstances absolutely beyond the student's and parents' control.

If credit is lost, the student's transcript will report 0.0 credits next to the course grade. The grade will be included in the student's grade point average and may be used as a course prerequisite. If a student does not have valid reasons for appealing loss of credit, or credit is not reinstated through the appeals process, the student should contact his/her counselor to identify ways to make up the credit.

Chronic Absenteeism & Truancy

A student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school is considered to be a "chronically absent child." Such a student will be subject to review by the school and the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education. The District will also collect and analyze data on student attendance, truancy and chronic absenteeism for students with disabilities.

In order for any of the student's future absences due to illness to be recorded as excused, medical documentation that explains each absence will be required. Until such documentation is submitted and verified, absences will be recorded as unexcused and thus subject to Connecticut truancy statutes. A student with 4 unexcused absences in a month or 10 in a school year is classified as Truant.

Co-Curricular Attendance Eligibility

A student who is not present for at least two full block classes on a single day will not be eligible to participate in ANY co-curricular activity, team practice or game, and/or theatre rehearsal or performance.

The Nurses' Office

The New Canaan School District's School Health Services provides registered nurses with expertise in school health and pediatric care in each school. State of Connecticut mandated screenings, immunization compliance, and mandated physical examinations are managed and documented by your school nurse.

Parents should notify the School Nurse if their child has any medical problems, e.g., allergies, injuries, chronic illness, vision or hearing difficulties, recent surgery, etc. The School Nurse will work with the child's physician, parent, and other school personnel to meet special health needs in school so that all children may benefit from their educational program.

Medications

The nurse administers all medications during school hours. Only metered-dose inhalers, EPI-pens, and insulin pumps may be self-administered with appropriate completed forms; students are not allowed to self-administer any other OTC or prescribed medications during school. A physician's order and a parent's signature are required for all medications. Medications will be kept in the nurse's office. Students in possession of medication not covered above will face disciplinary consequences.

High school students can receive Ibuprofen and/or Acetaminophen in the nurse's office ONLY if given permission from their parents via PowerSchool. Forms for medication administration are available in the Nurse's Office or on the NCHS website under the "Nurse's Office" section.

Dismissal

If students become ill or injured during the school day, they should report to the nurse for evaluation and care. The nurse will contact the parent if it is necessary to dismiss the student. Students who leave school without going through the nurse's office will be marked unexcused.

Statement of Food Allergy Policy

The primary focus of the policy is to support parents in managing food allergies and to maintain a safe school environment. At the high school level, we encourage our students to develop independence in managing their food allergies by reading labels, not sharing food, developing strategies to minimize exposure, and managing an emergency. Staff members are not responsible for determining safe foods.

Screening Tests

Hearing tests and vision tests are available upon request at any time. Policies of the New Canaan Board of Education, in accordance with Connecticut State Law, require all students new to the New Canaan Public Schools to have a physical examination and immunization records on file in the School Nurse's Office prior to the first day of school.

Immunization Requirements

Please check the NCPS website (District Info/Health Information) for the most up-to-date requirements and information.

Please visit the NCPS district website under "Nurse's Office" for guidance when your student is sick. Staying home will likely shorten the length of the illness, and hopefully we can interrupt the "sharing of germs" in school.

Psychotropic Drug Use

School personnel are prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors may recommend that an appropriate medical practitioner evaluate a student. Further, the District is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for Special Education, or receive Special Education services.

NCHS: A Safe, Caring Community

School Climate

School climate means the quality and character of school life based on patterns of students' parents' and guardians' and school employees' experiences of school life, including, but not limited to, norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures. In order for teaching and learning to occur there must be a positive climate in which students are appreciative and accepting of individual differences and behave responsibly toward others. Students are encouraged to report bullying, discrimination or harassment to any faculty member or administrator and may request anonymity.

We expect all students to participate in creating a safe, caring community at NCHS. Therefore, students are responsible for being alert and responsive to classmates who are at risk for self-harm or harm to others. It is then essential to share this information with school personnel such as teachers, administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, or social workers.

Mandated Suspected Child Abuse Reporting

All school employees, including teachers, superintendents, principals, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals, and other professional school staff including guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, and licensed nurses are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services.

Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receive yearly training in their use. Reporting child abuse and neglect is a responsibility that is taken seriously. A report will be made if there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse or neglect. In all cases, the school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means, or injuries that are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment, such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment, or neglect, is also considered child abuse.

Homeless Students

Homeless students, as defined by federal and state legislation, will have all programs, services, and transportation that other students enjoy and may continue to attend the school of origin. The Assistant Superintendent for Student and Family Services is the local liaison for homeless children.

Migrant Students

The district has a program to address the needs of migrant students. A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs, and elective classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation, and evaluation of the migrant program.

Student Code of Behavior

It is the responsibility of students to conduct themselves respectfully. Students must govern their behavior so as not to infringe on the rights and personal freedom of others. The school staff will appropriately deal with any extremes in social behavior that disrupt the educational process or jeopardize the safety and welfare of others.

The following breaches of conduct on school property and transportation, or in attendance at any school-sponsored event or activity, are unacceptable behaviors. Non-violent student misconduct will be addressed using evidence-based restorative practices aimed at accountability, repairing relationships, and community reintegration. They can lead to disciplinary action, as well as removal from class or the activity, in-school seclusion, suspension, or expulsion.

- Behavior endangering persons — causing or attempting to cause damage to another student or staff member; fighting; using obscene or objectionable language toward another student or staff member
- Conduct endangering property — including causing or attempting to cause damage to school or private property and/or theft
- Possession, transmission, use, or knowingly being in the presence of tobacco in any form, e-cigarettes or vapor cigarettes (minimum of three days); controlled or illegal substances, drugs or alcohol, fireworks, weapons, and steroids/performance-enhancing drugs — such infractions shall result in immediate suspension (minimum of five days) or expulsion and referral to the Youth Officer
- Insubordination, including inappropriate use of devices
- Unauthorized absences from school, classes, or school grounds
- Harassing language/behavior toward others — name-calling, insults, innuendo, explicit language, touching, or violent acts rooted in a bias against gender, race, religion, national origin, or other personal attributes
- Using electronic device(s) for taking, creating, modifying, transmitting, or circulating images and/or messages embarrassing or hostile to anyone — at no time during the school day or at school events may photographs or recordings be made of any student or staff member without their explicit permission
- Counterfeiting, forgery, and/or possession of any school document, communication, or school-issued materials
- Repeated violations of academic integrity expectations, such as presenting others' work as your own, unauthorized use of study aids or connected devices during an exam, sharing quiz/exam questions or answers, altering scores, misrepresenting yourself to teachers, or using translation software and submitting it as your own translation

To ensure safety, a student may be asked to take a breathalyzer to prove they are not under the influence of alcohol at school or at a school-sponsored or school-related event or activity. Students who refuse to take the breathalyzer will be suspended for five (5) days.

Harassment

It is the policy of New Canaan High School that no person shall harass, annoy, embarrass, or cause any duress toward any member of the school community, either verbally, through gestures, in writing, or by physical contact. Any student experiencing harassment should report this behavior to a counselor, teacher, or administrator.

Sexual harassment is unwanted and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with a student's right to learn, study, work, achieve, or participate in school activities in a comfortable and supportive atmosphere.

Students are legally protected against sex discrimination and sexual harassment by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, a federal law prohibiting discrimination in schools on the basis of sex. Sex discrimination is also covered under Connecticut state law, and any or all forms of it are expressly prohibited in school settings and will not be tolerated in any form.

Sexual harassment shall include, but not be limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, direct or indirect demands or requests for sexual favors, sexual comments, gestures, or other physical actions of a sexual nature. While the majority of incidents of sexual harassment involve a male harassing a female, harassment also can involve female-to-male, male-to-male, or female-to-female behaviors. Harassment may be student-to-student, teacher-to-student, student-to-teacher, or teacher-to-teacher.

All reported incidents of sexual harassment will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Any school community member who believes that they have suffered sexual harassment by an employee, a student, or by anyone on school property shall report the alleged harassment by notifying the principal. Where appropriate, the principal may require that the complaint be submitted in writing.

The Title IX Coordinator for the New Canaan Public Schools is the Human Resources Director, reachable at (203) 594-4022 or 220 Elm Street, New Canaan, CT 06840.

Bullying (Public Act 23-167)

Bullying behavior is strictly prohibited at New Canaan High School. It is defined as unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

- **Challenging behavior —** behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee
- **School environment —** a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether on or off school grounds, including at a school bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle, and may include other activities occurring outside a school-sponsored activity if bullying there negatively impacts the school environment
- **Cyberbullying —** any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone, or other mobile electronic devices, or any other electronic communication
- **Teen dating violence —** any act of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing, and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship

Parents, students, or staff who have concerns about bullying should immediately reach out to their grade-level administrator. The report regarding concerns about bullying is linked on the district website under "School Climate." All concerns about bullying will be thoroughly investigated.

You may also contact the district School Climate Coordinator, Dr. Susan Bliss (susan.bliss@ncps-k12.org or 203-594-4655), with any concerns or questions regarding bullying investigations or policies. Concerns about bullying can be communicated confidentially if desired.

In accordance with Connecticut Public Act 23-167, New Canaan Public Schools is committed to implementing restorative practices as part of our comprehensive approach to school discipline and climate improvement. Restorative practices are defined as evidence- and research-based system-level practices that focus on (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (B) holding each student accountable for

any challenging behavior, and (C) ensuring each student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.

When addressing incidents of challenging behavior and student conflict that are nonviolent, our disciplinary approach prioritizes restoration over punishment, emphasizing personal accountability, relationship repair, and community healing. These practices complement our traditional disciplinary measures and support our commitment to maintaining a positive learning environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Bus Conduct

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditional upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Students may be suspended from transportation services for unsatisfactory conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a Board policy or the above behavioral expectations.

NCHS Student Phone Policy: Yondr Pouch System

At NCHS, we are committed to fostering an environment focused on learning, deep engagement, and vibrant social connection. To support this, our campus utilizes the Yondr Pouch System to maintain a phone-free environment. This is a strict "bell-to-bell" policy. From the moment the morning bell rings to start the school day until the final dismissal bell, all personal electronic devices must remain completely put away and locked.

The Policy

From the first warning bell at 7:55 AM, and upon returning to campus from an off-campus privilege, all students must place their cell phones, smartwatches, and wireless listening devices (e.g., AirPods) into their assigned Yondr pouch. Pouches must be locked and remain securely locked in the student's possession throughout the entirety of the school day.

- **School-Wide Expectations:** This policy is not limited to the classroom — it extends to all community spaces, the cafeteria, the library, hallways, restrooms, and any outside community spaces on school grounds
- **Off-Campus Flexibility:** Students may unlock and use their devices only when they are legally off school grounds. Upon re-entering the NCHS building or returning to school property, devices must immediately be placed back into the Yondr pouch and locked
- **Transitions:** Devices are strictly prohibited and must remain locked if a student is utilizing a pass to visit the restroom, the nurse, or any administrative office

Approved Medical Exemptions

NCHS requires official documentation from a licensed healthcare professional to support any tech-related exemptions. If a student has a verified medical necessity requiring the use of a personal device, the device must be used exclusively for that specific medical purpose. Using an exempted device for any other purpose will be treated as a policy violation.

Accountability & Logical Consequences

Adherence to the Yondr policy is an expectation for all students. If a student is found with an 'unpouched' device, an unlocked pouch, or a damaged/counterfeit pouch anywhere on school grounds during the school day, the following consequences will apply:

- **First Offense:** The device will be confiscated by a staff member and turned into the Main Office. The student may pick up their device at the end of the school day
- **Multiple Violations:** Repeated failure to follow the policy will result in escalated intervention, possibly including: requiring a parent or guardian to physically pick up the device from the main office; loss of student privileges such as open campus, parking permit, study halls, or free periods; and disciplinary action for insubordination, which may result in formal school discipline (e.g., detention or suspension)

Property Damage: Yondr pouches are the property of NCHS. If a student loses, intentionally damages, destroys, or manipulates a pouch, they will be responsible for the replacement cost of the pouch ($30) in addition to possibly facing disciplinary action.

NOTE — Until the Yondr pouches arrive, we will continue with "Off and Away" throughout the school campus, including outside the building and in community spaces such as the Library and Cafeteria. That policy will be in place from 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM.

Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) Acceptable Use

Students are encouraged to use the district's ICT resources for legitimate educational purposes; personal use of these resources is prohibited. In addition, if the law generally prohibits a particular behavior or activity by Board policy or by school rules or regulations, the use of ICT resources for the purpose of carrying out such behavior or activity is prohibited. Students are expected to always adhere to the following standards and expectations for conduct:

Behave ethically and responsibly when using ICT resources

- Handle ICT resources and equipment with care. Refrain from deleting, destroying, modifying, abusing, or moving resources without permission, or accessing unauthorized ICT resources
- Refrain from utilizing proxy gateways or similar technologies to bypass ICT monitoring and filtering. Do not breach or disable network security mechanisms or compromise network stability or security in any way, nor download or modify computer software in violation of the district's licensure agreement(s) and/or without authorization from the ICT Department

Use ICT resources for legitimate, educationally relevant purposes

- Refrain from sending any form of communication that breaches the district's confidentiality requirements or the confidentiality of students
- Refrain from using class or school-wide e-mail distribution lists/directories without the explicit permission of school administration
- Refrain from sending any form of communication that harasses, threatens, or is discriminatory
- Refrain from accessing any material that is obscene, harmful to minors, or prohibited by law
- Refrain from using social network tools for personal use

Respect the privacy of others

- Maintain the confidentiality of your username and password by not sharing them with others and not using another person's username and password
- Maintain the integrity of files and data by not trespassing, modifying, copying, or deleting files of other users without their consent; protect the confidentiality and safety of others when sharing work and images
- Share, post, and publish only within the context of the district's Publishing Guidelines
- Respect copyright and fair use laws; these policies and procedures apply in digital contexts as well. Plagiarism is prohibited

The full text of the Acceptable Use Policy may be found on the District website.

Media & Library Collections Policy

In accordance with PA 25-168, NCHS maintains clear policies governing library collection development, maintenance, displays, and formal material review/reconsideration procedures to safeguard equitable access to diverse educational media.

Campus Policy

Unscheduled student time during the school day should be devoted primarily to academic and other constructive educational activities; however, inherent in being a high school student is the responsibility of using free time well.

Sophomores, juniors, and seniors may be granted off-campus privileges as outlined in the NCHS Off-Campus Procedures. It is important that all students and families review these procedures to ensure they understand the rules about leaving campus. For students to maintain this privilege, they must demonstrate to their parents, teachers, and administrators responsibility and maturity. Parent/guardian signatures must be collected for students seeking off-campus privileges; to grant or deny permission, parents/guardians must log into the PowerSchool portal, click "forms," and submit the off-campus permission form annually for each student.

Any student who leaves school without permission will be subject to disciplinary action, unexcused absence recording, and loss of open campus privileges. Students should not expect permission to go home for equipment, uniforms, projects, or assignments — if they have forgotten anything, they will have to miss the activity or call their parents to bring the needed materials.

Driving and Parking

Driving on campus is a privilege and not a right. All the rules of road safety apply on the school grounds. The speed limit on school grounds is 15 MPH, the legal limit for all school zones.

Members of the Classes of 2027 and 2028 may park on campus with a valid 2026-27 parking sticker. A new sticker is required each school year. Seniors and juniors may request a parking sticker for one vehicle only. The parking fee for this school year is $40. Payments can be completed online through "My School Bucks" (VISA, MasterCard, or eCheck), or by check made out to "NCHS Activity Fund." A copy of the receipt with a parent/guardian signature must be handed to the Attendance Office to receive a parking sticker, along with the completed NCHS Motor Vehicle Registration Form and agreement.

Students may not park in faculty parking lots or visitor spaces behind the school (east side), as this area is for district school buses or South School. Students who drive should plan on arriving at school early enough to allow additional walking time and account for morning traffic congestion. There are no separate junior and senior parking lots.

Violation	Consequence
Two parking citations	Parking privileges revoked for two weeks
Third citation	Parking privileges revoked for the remainder of the 2026-27 school year
Forged parking sticker	Loss of parking privilege and a $200.00 fine
No valid sticker displayed	Ticketed — $25.00 fine per instance

To ensure a safe campus at NCHS, all drivers must observe the 15 mph speed limit, be aware of pedestrians, and abide by the "Driving Restrictions for 16- and 17-Year-Olds" as outlined on the Connecticut DMV website.

Students with an outstanding fine or obligation will not be issued their parking sticker until all fees are paid in full (see Mrs. Pescatello in the Main Office).

If a situation arises in which a student will be driving a vehicle unregistered with the school, the student must notify the attendance office upon entering the building to receive a temporary parking pass and avoid a ticket. A student's car parked on school property and its visible contents are subject to all prohibitions in the NCHS Student Code of Behavior (such as liquor, drugs/paraphernalia, weapons or facsimiles); discovery of such items may result in the same disciplinary action, including referral to appropriate authorities, as if found in the student's possession.

Lockers and Storage of Personal Belongings

A school locker to hold books and garments is available to each student, and it is expected that it will be used throughout the school year. A gym locker is also provided to each student while enrolled in a Physical Education class. We recommend that students not share their combinations with others. If it is absolutely necessary to bring valuables to school, they should never be left in either locker, but may be brought to the Main Office. Personal property of any kind must not be left in public areas of the school building or locker rooms, as we cannot be responsible for its safekeeping.

School lockers should not be decorated, since removing decorations drains the time and energy of our maintenance staff. Students will be held responsible for any damage that occurs to their assigned lockers.

Lost and Found

Any articles found in the school or on school grounds should be turned in to the Main Office. Loss or suspected theft of personal or school property should be reported through a completed Report of Lost Property form available in the Main Office.

Pesticide Application

Only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas to receive pesticide applications will be posted, and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years.

Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry, and such notice will be provided as required by law. Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide applications inside their child(ren)'s school assignment area may contact the Director of Facilities.

Athletics & Co-Curricular Participation Guidelines

Welcome & Athletic Philosophy

Welcome to the New Canaan High School Athletic Program. We believe that interscholastic athletics are an integral part of the total educational process. Participation in athletics provides student-athletes with opportunities to develop physical skills, emotional maturity, leadership, self-discipline, and strong character.

Mission Statement: To foster personal growth, academic excellence, and sportsmanship through competitive and inclusive athletic experiences.

Program Goals & Objectives

- **Learn Teamwork:** Develop self-discipline, respect for authority, and hard work while prioritizing team goals over personal desires
- **Strive for Success:** Learn to handle success and defeat with earnest dedication, constantly aiming to excel to the best of one's ability
- **Display Good Sportsmanship:** Treat opponents, teammates, and officials with respect, emotional control, honesty, and dependability
- **Continually Improve:** Maintain focused and consistent practice habits
- **Enjoy the Experience:** Appreciate the personal rewards derived from sports participation

Eligibility & Academic Standards

All NCHS student-athletes must adhere to both local and Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) eligibility rules:

- **Grade & Semester Limits:** A student must be in grade 9, 10, 11, or 12. Students have eight consecutive semesters of eligibility starting from 9th-grade enrollment
- **Course Load & Academic Standing:** Student-athletes must take at least five (5) major subjects, pass at least four (4) major subjects, and maintain regular class attendance
- **Academic Recovery:** Ineligibility caused by failed courses can only be rectified during the next marking period; student-athletes must wait until official report cards are issued to regain eligibility
- **Single-Sport Season Rule:** A student cannot play or represent NCHS in more than one interscholastic sport per season

Codes of Conduct & Expectations

Participation in athletics at NCHS is a privilege, not a right. High standards of behavior are expected on and off the field.

Parent & Guardian Code of Conduct

- Encourage student-athletes with positive reinforcement and cheer enthusiastically for all players
- Respect officials, opposing coaches, visiting teams, and fellow spectators at all times
- Avoid "sideline coaching" or shouting instructions during practices and games
- Refrain from approaching coaches immediately following a contest to discuss complaints or concerns

Spectator Sportsmanship Guidelines (FCIAC & NCHS)

NCHS and the Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference (FCIAC) strictly enforce positive sportsmanship.

Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

- Maintain academic eligibility and attend all scheduled classes
- Demonstrate respect toward teammates, opponents, coaches, and contest officials
- **Substance Abuse Policy:** Absolute prohibition on the use, possession, or distribution of tobacco, alcohol, performance-enhancing substances, or illegal drugs
- **Hazing Policy:** Hazing in any form — physical, verbal, or emotional — is strictly prohibited on or off school grounds, at any time. Hazing violates school policy and Connecticut Criminal Statutes (assault) and will result in disciplinary action, potential arrest, and civil liability

General Team Logistics & Operational Rules

- **Attendance & Practices:** Student-athletes are expected to attend all scheduled practices and contests, including those during school vacations. Injured athletes must attend practice sessions unless officially excused by the Athletic Trainer
- **Team Travel:** Student-athletes are required to travel to and from away contests on the official team bus under coach supervision. Exceptions require prior administrative approval
- **Valuables & Lockers:** Valuables should be left at home. Belongings kept in locker rooms must be locked at all times; NCHS is not responsible for lost or stolen items
- **Equipment & Uniform Responsibility:** Athletes are financially responsible for lost or unreturned equipment and uniforms. Financial obligations must be settled within one week following the end of the season. No athletic awards or future gear will be issued until all prior financial obligations are cleared. Gear retained past the end of the season without authorization will be treated as stolen property. All equipment must be returned directly to the Equipment Manager during assigned hours

Communication & Conflict Resolution Protocol

Athletic participation can be emotional and time-consuming. When concerns arise, open and honest communication via the proper chain of command ensures efficient resolution.

Three-Step Resolution Process

- **Step 1 — Student-Athlete / Coach Discussion:** The athlete should present the issue directly to the coach (if impractical, a team captain may assist, or a parent may initiate contact at an appropriate time). Times to avoid: prior to, during, or immediately after a contest; during active practice; in the presence of other students/spectators; or when time is insufficient. Best approach: request an appointment via email, phone, or a note left in the Athletic Office
- **Step 2 — Athletic Director Review:** If Step 1 does not yield a resolution, contact the Athletic Director after informing the coach. A joint meeting will be scheduled if necessary
- **Step 3 — Principal Appeal:** If the concern remains unresolved after speaking with the Athletic Director, an appeal may be made to the High School Principal

Anti-Retribution Guarantee: Students and parents are strongly encouraged to express legitimate concerns through proper channels. The Athletic Department guarantees zero retribution against any student-athlete whose parent raises a concern. Any suspected retribution should be reported immediately to the Athletic Director.

New Canaan Board of Education Grievance Procedure

I. Informal Level

Any student, parent, staff member, or applicant to a program who feels that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, or handicap shall contact the designated Compliance Coordinator within 30 days of the alleged occurrence to discuss the nature of the complaint.

The Coordinator shall maintain a written record containing: the full name and address of the complainant; the full name and position of the person(s) who allegedly discriminated; a concise statement of the facts constituting the alleged discrimination; and dates of the alleged discrimination.

The Coordinator will direct the complainant to the appropriate principal or director, who will investigate the complaint and send a written report to the Coordinator. The Coordinator shall then meet informally with the complainant and the individual(s) against whom the complaint was lodged, provide confidential counseling where advisable, and seek an informal agreement between the parties. This process shall take no longer than ten (10) working days from the time the complaint is received.

II. Formal Level

If the complainant is not satisfied with the informal procedures, within twenty (20) workdays from the date of the original discussion with the Coordinator, more formal procedures may be initiated:

- The complainant shall present the written alleged discrimination complaint to the superintendent, who may resolve it alone or with the appropriate principal/director
- The superintendent shall inform all parties of the date, time, and place of the grievance hearing and of their right to present witnesses or representatives. The Coordinator shall assist parties in understanding the process, and a written record of the hearing shall be kept
- The superintendent shall hear and fully review the case within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the complaint. A written decision shall be sent to the complainant and the individual(s) against whom the complaint was lodged within five (5) days of the superintendent's decision
- If the complainant is not satisfied, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Board of Education within fifteen (15) days of the superintendent's decision

With at least five (5) days' notice given prior to the hearing, the Board of Education shall inform all parties of the date, time, and place of the hearing and of the right to present witnesses and legal counsel or other representation. The Board shall hear all aspects of the appeal and reach a decision within twenty (20) days of receipt of the written appeal. The decision shall be presented in writing to the complainant at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Time limits noted throughout may be extended by mutual written agreement.

Any person may also file a complaint of illegal discrimination with the Office of Civil Rights, 33 Arch St, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02110, or O.C.R., Washington, D.C., at the same time he/she files a grievance, or without using the grievance process at all. If filed with the Office of Civil Rights, it must be in writing no later than 180 days after the occurrence of the possible discrimination. The New Canaan Board of Education has designated the Director of Special Education as the Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 Coordinator.

Educational Records

Confidentiality & Access

All school staff are directed to maintain the confidentiality of personally identifiable information contained in a student's education records. Each person who has access to education records is responsible for ensuring personally identifiable information is protected from disclosure at the collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages. Disclosure of information is permitted only in accordance with Board policy and consistent with state and federal law.

- Parents and/or an eligible student have the right to inspect and review all education records of the student unless such rights have been waived. Parents' rights are restricted to information dealing with their own children; for eligible students, to information concerning the student. All requests for access must be in writing
- Requests must identify the record(s) sought; the district will notify the parent/eligible student of the date, time, and location for inspection
- Parents or eligible students may designate in writing a representative to inspect and review the records
- A school professional shall be present at all inspections and reviews and shall respond to reasonable requests for explanations
- For regular education students, the Board will make records available within 45 calendar days of a written request
- For special education students, the Board will comply within 10 days of the request, or within 3 days if requested to prepare for an IEP meeting or due process proceeding
- Parents of students eligible for special education (or the eligible student) have the right to one free copy of the child's education records, provided in writing within 5 school days of the request; copyrighted test instruments may not be copied, though the parent retains the right to review and inspect such information
- Staff, employees, and other school officials may access a student's records only with a determined legitimate educational interest
- The district maintains a record of all parties that have requested access to education records
- Non-custodial parents retain their rights to review their child's education records upon divorce unless the district has been provided evidence of a court order or legally binding document revoking those rights; school notices are mailed to non-custodial parents at the same time as custodial parents
- The district cannot charge a fee to search for or retrieve education records; the Board reserves the right to charge for copies

If circumstances effectively prevent a parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review records, the district shall provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for review.

The Release of Records or Personally Identifiable Information

The school system or its designated agent(s) may not permit the release of education records or any information from such records which contains personally identifiable student information to any outside individual, agency, or organization without the signed and dated written consent of the parents or eligible student, except as provided in NCPS Policy Series 5000, Section VII, available through the district website.

Written consent must be signed and dated and must specify the records that may be disclosed, state the purpose of the disclosure, and identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made. Education records are not public records, and any disclosure other than to persons authorized to receive the records without the prior consent of a parent or an eligible student violates the law and Board policy, except as provided in federal and state statutes.

The school district may disclose directory information about students after they are no longer enrolled. The district will continue to honor any valid objection to disclosure made while a student was in attendance unless the student rescinds the objection. An objection to disclosure of directory information shall not prevent the district from disclosing a student's name, identity, or institutional email address in a class in which the student is enrolled.

Directory Information

The school district will notify parents/guardians (of currently enrolled students) or eligible students annually of any categories of information designated as directory information, providing an opportunity to object to disclosure. An objection is good for only one school year. In all other circumstances, directory information will not be released to a third party unless determined by the administration to be in the educational interest of the district and consistent with state and federal law. Parents/guardians have exactly ten (10) schools from receipt of this handbook to object to the release of directory information.

Student Information Released to the Military or Institutions of Higher Education

School districts are legally obligated to provide military recruiters or institutions of higher education, upon request, with the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of secondary school students, unless the student or parent objects in writing. Such objections must be in writing and are effective for one school year.

Child Abuse Reporting

Nothing in this policy shall limit a mandated reporter's responsibility to report suspected child abuse or neglect under the Board's Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy (NCPS Board Policy 5531).

Disciplinary Records

Nothing in this policy shall prevent the school district from: (1) including in a student's education records appropriate information concerning disciplinary action taken for conduct that posed a significant risk to the safety or well-being of that student, other students, or other members of the school community; (2) disclosing such information to teachers and school officials with a legitimate educational interest; and (3) facilitating, in accordance with state and federal law, the transfer of records of suspension and expulsion to officials of any private elementary or secondary school in which the student subsequently enrolls or seeks, intends, or is instructed to enroll.

Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications

Parents have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s), including certification for the subject matter and grade taught, undergraduate major, and any graduate degrees or certifications. Parents will also be advised, if requested, whether the child is provided service by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

Title I Comparability of Services

All district schools, regardless of whether they receive Federal Title I funds, provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Staff, curriculum materials, and instructional supplies are provided to ensure equivalency among district schools.

Title I Parental Involvement

Parents of a child in a Title I-funded program will receive a copy of the district's parental involvement policy, including provisions for an annual meeting and involvement of parents in the planning, review, and implementation of Title I programs.

Transportation Safety Complaints/Procedures

All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Transportation Coordinator/District Business Manager. A written record of all complaints will be maintained, and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

Environmental Practices

Green Cleaning Programs

A green cleaning program to clean and maintain the school has been implemented since 2011. The program provides for the procurement and proper use of environmentally preferable cleaning products in the school. The cleaning products used meet standards approved by the Department of Administrative Services and minimize potential harmful effects on human health and the environment. Parents/Guardians may request a written copy of the District's policy pertaining to the green cleaning program and a written statement which includes the names and types of environmentally preferable cleaning products used in the school and where in the building they are applied; the schedule for applying the products; and the names of the school administrator or designee whom the parent/guardian or student may contact for more information.

No parent, guardian, teacher, or staff member may bring into the school facility any consumer product which is intended to clean, deodorize, sanitize or disinfect.

Asbestos

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. The District has on file plans showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Requests to review these plans may be made in the district office.

School Cancellation, Emergency Contact & Protocols

The New Canaan school system operates except during hazardous weather conditions. If you think that school may be canceled, please do not call the school — check the district website. Parents and students should refrain from calling the Police, Fire Department, or radio stations for information. The high school should be called only if absolutely necessary.

Additionally, the district utilizes an automated phone calling system for school cancellations or delays and in emergency situations.

Evacuation Drills & Emergency Preparedness

Evacuation and safety drills are held at regular intervals throughout the school year as required by state law. Students are expected to follow the emergency response protocols and act quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

ALL SAFETY DRILLS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN ADVANCE.

Emergency Response Protocols

Fire Alarm

When the fire alarm sounds, follow these procedures:

- Students are to move quickly to the nearest exit and stand at least fifty (50) yards from the building, checking in with their teacher or another staff member only if they cannot locate their teacher
- The teacher takes attendance, and students should remain with their teacher
- Re-enter the school only after the 'all-clear' signal has been given

Lockdown Procedures

All students are expected to follow appropriate lockdown procedures. Students and staff need to be prepared to stay in lockdown for an extended period. The lockdown will end only after an administrator or another school or town official calls all clear.

In the case of a real emergency, parents will receive information via electronic communications, and students should use their devices only to contact 911.

Shelter in Place

All students are expected to follow appropriate procedures for sheltering in place. Students and staff need to be prepared to remain in their current locations, but class instruction can continue. The shelter in place will end only after an administrator calls all clear.

NCHS Library & Study Tips and Strategies

In support of the New Canaan High School (NCHS) core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, the NCHS library program's purpose is to help each student excel and achieve their maximum potential by creating a 21st Century learning environment, fostering a love of reading and learning, and promoting the effective use of information and communications technology (ICT). Through collaborative interactive learning experiences, the librarians partner with the larger NCHS community to empower students in becoming lifelong learners, responsible citizens, creative thinkers, and industrious problem solvers.

New Canaan High School librarians empower learners to develop the dispositions and skills that are integral to ethical and productive citizenship. Through close collaboration with their instructional partners, they integrate literacies across disciplines, cultivating collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, and curiosity. Mindful of patron needs, the library faculty delivers virtual and face-to-face, real-time instruction throughout and beyond the school day.

To provide instructional consistency and equity of access, the virtual library is open to members of the NCPS learning community. A simple button click on any nchslibrary.info webpage connects learners with a certified NCHS school librarian who will support learning inquiry, provide readers' advisory, or simply connect them with tech support personnel.

The comprehensive library collection, which provides access to digital, print, and multimedia content, is curated to seamlessly align with the taught curriculum at NCHS. All digital resources are visible, accessible, and searchable from every teacher's virtual classroom in Schoology, the school's learning management system. Representation and voice are key focuses for collection development — our goal is to offer a selection where all NCHS learners will see themselves throughout the collection.

The library program promotes independent reading. NCHS librarians are attentive and responsive to their patrons' reading needs. They partner with their New Canaan Library counterparts, sharing resources and developing collaborative programs, including a successful summer reading program designed to promote recreational reading. The NCHS library film collection includes many film adaptations of its literary offerings to pique student interest in literature and improve reading comprehension.

Students are involved in selecting materials for the library, determining book discussion choices, and selecting summer reading. The library program features two book clubs — a face-to-face group and a virtual group that includes clubs from other states. Librarians lead book talks in classes, and an ongoing online book discussion enables all NCHS learners to share their reading experiences with others, both within and beyond the New Canaan community.

For more information about the NCHS library program, please visit www.nchslibrary.info

Time Management Tips

Here is a handy list of reminders on how students can take control of their time. Having a plan and sticking to it will help reduce stress and keep you on track.

- **Make a to-do list every day.** Tackle the hardest tasks first.
- **Keep your work with you.** This way, you can get something done if you have extra time.
- **Don't be afraid to say no.** It's OK to say “no” if a friend asks you to hang out but you have a test the next morning. Instead, find a time that works for both of you to get together.
- **Find your productive time.** You'll be more efficient if you work when you're at your best.
- **Create a dedicated study time.** Set up a time devoted only to studying or homework. Shut off your phone. Respond to calls or texts only when your work is finished.
- **Budget your time.** Figure out how much time you usually spend on your activities. Then create a weekly schedule to follow, including time to relax.
- **Don't get sidetracked.** If you find that you're wasting time on unimportant things, you need to stop, check your to-do list, and get back to what's at the top. You may be procrastinating because you need to figure out how to move forward on a school project. Or you may just need to get a snack or some fresh air.
- **Get a good night's sleep.** Your brain needs rest to perform at its peak. If it's time to sleep, put the things you still need to accomplish on the next day's to-do list, and go to bed.

SQRW: A Strategy for Reading Textbooks

A four-step strategy for reading and taking notes from chapters in a textbook, SQRW will help you understand what you read and prepare a written record of what you learned — valuable for class discussion and for studying for a test. Each letter stands for one step in the strategy.

Survey

Think about what you already know about the topic of a chapter — this quickly prepares you for learning more. To survey a chapter: (1) read the title, introduction, headings, and the summary or conclusion; and (2) examine all visuals such as pictures, tables, maps, and/or graphs, and read the caption that goes with each.

Question

Having questions in mind as you read gives you a purpose for reading and helps you stay focused. Form questions by changing each chapter heading into a question (if a heading is already a question, use it). When a heading contains more than one idea, form a question for each idea; skip the Introduction, Summary, or Conclusion. Use How, Why, and What for main ideas, and When, Where, Which, and Who for details. For example, for the heading "Uses of Electricity," you might ask "What are some uses of electricity?"

Read

Read the information that follows each heading to find the answer to each question you formed. You may decide to change a question or add several to be answered. Stay focused and flexible so you can gather as much information as you need.

Write

Write each question and its answer in your notebook. Reread each written answer to be sure it is legible and contains all the important information needed to answer the question. Leave out "filler" words (a, as, an, the, have) and use abbreviations to save time and effort (e.g., Info=information, hsty=history, PSN=photosynthesis).

As you practice using SQRW, you will find that you learn more and have good study notes to use to prepare for class participation and tests.

Test-Taking Strategies — Multiple Choice

- Read the directions carefully
- Know how much time is allowed (this governs your strategy)
- Preview the test. Read through it quickly and answer the easiest questions first — you may pick up cues for answers from the first reading. If time allows, review both questions and answers

Improve Your Odds — Think Critically

- Cover the options, read the stem, and try to answer. Select the option that most closely matches your answer
- Read the stem with each option. Treat each option as a true-false question, and choose the "most true"

Strategies to Answer Difficult Questions

- Eliminate options you know to be incorrect. If allowed, mark words or alternatives in questions that eliminate the option
- Give each option the "true-false test" — this may reduce your selection to the best answer
- Question options that grammatically don't fit with the stem
- Question options that are totally unfamiliar to you
- Question options that contain negative or absolute words — try substituting a qualified term (e.g., "frequently" for "always") to see if you can eliminate it
- "All of the above" — if you know two of three options seem correct, "all of the above" is a strong possibility
- Number answers: toss out the high and low, and consider the middle range numbers
- "Look-alike options" — probably one is correct; choose the best but eliminate choices that mean basically the same thing and thus cancel each other out
- Echo options: if two options are opposite each other, chances are one of them is correct
- Favor options that contain qualifiers — longer, more inclusive items often better fill the role of the answer
- Guessing: always guess when there is no penalty for guessing, or you can eliminate options
- Use hints from questions you know to answer questions you do not
- Change your first answers when you are sure of the correction, or other cues in the test cue you to change
- Remember you are looking for the best answer, not only a correct one, and not one that must be true all of the time, in all cases, and without exception

General Tips to Help with Studying and Preparing for Semester Exams

- Take good notes in class
- Save all of your work to use for review
- Pay careful attention to rubrics used for assignments
- Have a quiet work area, free from the distractions of social networking, iPods, TV…
- Ask questions in class or make an appointment to see the teacher

- If review sessions are offered, take advantage of them and bring any questions you have

The following is advice from department leaders for freshmen preparing for their first exam week. Most of it is useful for success in any class.

Social Studies

- Know that the midterm in social studies mimics, in a small way, college assessments students will face someday
- The material in class is interconnected, so it is important to look for these connections and to save all semester work
- In some classes, the midterm might even be connected to the final exam, so it is a good idea to keep all work in year-long classes
- The midterms will reflect the learning that has occurred over the course of the semester (so it shouldn't feel as if it is coming out of left field)

English

- Midterms vary within the department — some are more traditional, and others use exam time for sharing a significant piece of writing or reviewing a writing portfolio
- Use the Writing Center (a drop-in service open every period of the day, staffed by a Social Studies or English teacher) to help prepare
- Be aware of writing, reading, and research rubrics
- Be aware of "essential questions" used by the teacher

Math

- If your teacher hands out a review packet, do all of the problems. Try to finish a few days before your exam so you can ask for help on questions you're unsure about. Review old tests
- It is always better to do the problem yourself instead of just reading someone else's solution — as with sports, you can't expect to "play" just by watching someone else do it
- If there's something you've been struggling with, get help as soon as you can, even if that means going over an old test with your teacher — don't wait until the end of the semester
- Take advantage of review sessions offered by your teachers before or during exam week and come prepared with questions

Science

- Seek extra help as needed and keep up to date on assignments
- Begin reviewing several weeks before the exam (early January)
- Find a study buddy or small study group
- Keep an organized notebook for the quarter and semester exams
- Continuously read and review information, especially for honors courses — midterm and final cover immense concepts that cannot be left for the last minute if you want to feel prepared

World Languages

- Periodically review your notes and assessments throughout the semester
- Keep an organized binder to facilitate review

- See the teacher as soon as you are experiencing difficulty
- Don't leave preparing/studying for the night before
- Go over "review packets" and/or exam outlines as soon as possible and see the teacher with questions — review and start studying first, then bring specific questions to get the most out of your review