

Community High School of Arts & Academics

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Student and Family Handbook 2019-2020

Introduction

This is a general handbook designed for parents, students, faculty and board members of Community High School of Arts and Academics in Roanoke, Virginia. Its purposes are various: we intend to offer it as a quick and easy guide to the theoretical underpinnings of CHS as well as to provide the answers to the many practical considerations of daily life at the school.

Who We Are

Community High School of Arts and Academics (CHS) is a small, secular, independent high school located in the Roanoke Valley in Southwest Virginia, with a commitment to small, seminar-based classes and to providing excellent scholars and artists as faculty. We are fully accredited by the Virginia Association of Independent Schools (VAIS).

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Community High School

Statement of Mission and Philosophy

Community High School is a small, secular, independent, college preparatory high school grounded in the liberal arts, founded with a commitment to seminar-based classes, and located in Roanoke's city center.

Our Mission is to develop creative and independent problem solvers with diverse backgrounds and abilities who are scientifically and culturally literate, globally conscious, locally engaged citizens.

Our Pedagogy is founded upon academic inquiry, which emphasizes how knowledge is learned. Our students' endeavors reflect the nature of intellectual and creative work in each respective field of study. Our students are assessed comprehensively and narratively in regard to their personal growth.

We Value trust, humor, empathy, curiosity, respect for the free exchange of ideas, and the acceptance of failure as an inevitable and essential part of real learning.

We Approach the Arts as an essential form of intellectual inquiry and as a foundation of academic, emotional and social development, regardless of a student's eventual academic field of study or career goals.

We Partner with area colleges, universities, cultural and civic organizations, and provide cultural programming for the community at large.

Our Students are respected as scholars, citizens and individuals, encouraged in their curiosity, active in their own education and responsible for their own achievement, as defined by their particular passions, goals and circumstances.

Our Community of students, faculty, families and board share our essential commitments to compassion, citizenship, scholarship and the intentional nurturing of place.

History and Facilities

Community High School was founded in 2002 by a group of parents, most prominently college professors from Hollins, Washington & Lee and Virginia Tech, looking for a more innovative and responsive high school environment for their own children, a school that would more thoroughly prepare them for a complete liberal arts education and a fulfilling adulthood. Many of those involved had long associations with Community School, which has provided a child-centered alternative at the elementary level since 1971 and for middle school students since the late 1980s and with whom we maintain close ties, though we have always had our own governance and financial structure.

In its first year, CHS had only a dozen students and two full-time faculty. We were originally conceived as a museum school, and located downtown specifically so that our coursework could be augmented by the facilities and by the faculty of area museums and cultural institutions. We were housed in a portion of the Jefferson Center, and offered classes in buildings around downtown. As national and local funding structures for not-for-profit organizations began to change, many of the institutions with which we had originally

partnered began to shrink and transform; at the same time, our own student body, and faculty, began to grow. We therefore had to relocate, and for several years, we were housed in a former bank near the offices of the Roanoke Times. Our lease was generous, but our facilities frustrating; our theater productions took place at the Dumas Center, and our laboratory classes in the Higher Education Center.

Beginning in 2011, Community High moved to a beautiful and permanent home in a restored historic warehouse in downtown Roanoke. Our building, located at 302 Campbell Avenue, has allowed us to consolidate and grow in classroom facilities deliberately and specifically designed to meet our own pedagogical needs. It boasts original wide plank flooring, exposed brick walls, and heart pine timbers, along with a flexible 150-seat theater, band rehearsal facilities, a public art gallery, painting and film-editing studios, and fully equipped science laboratories. Our location allows our students direct access to downtown, including regional institutions like Center in the Square and the Taubman Museum of Art. Our own facilities have already allowed us to partner with outside cultural organizations including Off the Rails Theatre, No Shame Theatre, and Music after Midnight, and to bring in outside cultural organizations, including Joe Richman of *Radio Diaries*, playwright Mike Wiley, the American Shakespeare Center, Roanoke's Art by Night, and local readings.

Curriculum

Community High was founded by university faculty trained in the liberal arts tradition; our curriculum reflects those origins and the mission they forged. At CHS, we hire teachers whom we presume to be wise, humble and curious, and trust them to develop and pilot their own courses as professors in liberal arts colleges do. And just as most liberal arts colleges allow students to exceed minimal requirements in areas where they have special interest or talent, so do we strive to allow students to take more classes than would be typical in math, science, art, language or the humanities.

We offer our students a college preparatory **Humanities** curriculum in a format different from that of other schools in our region. Our courses are generally offered by semester, and conducted in small, multi-age seminars. The dominant model is that of college. Instead of English 9, 10, 11, and 12, for example, this year a student may take a class on Timbuktu, Tokugawa Japan, Beowulf, and so on. As many preparatory schools and colleges do, we require all students to take two semesters focusing on American history¹, and we often offer courses in Geopolitics or academic writing focused on the developmental needs of underclassmen.² Most classes, however, are likely to contain both literary and social science content, so that students are required to approach an individual course's content focus from a variety of curricular perspectives. Critical and creative writing, independent research, seminar discussion and close reading are all emphasized.

Students select courses investigating the literature, art, political and social history of several cultural regions (among them, specifically, the United States, Latin America, the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa, Arabia, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Eastern Asia, Southern Asia) and eras (which divide by region). No class could reasonably contain all modes of inquiry—archaeology is more applicable in some courses, political science in others, for example—but over the course of their time at the school, students will be exposed to the research methodologies of a wide variety of social sciences. Similarly, students will be exposed to a wide variety of literary forms, not presented abstractly, but in their appropriate

¹ In addition to this, we ask all students to undertake one of a variety of courses offered focusing on targeted historical themes and literatures of post-WWII America.

² In recent years, we also required freshmen to undertake specific coursework in these areas. We have since opened these requirements to allow students more agency in their early course selection.

historical, formal, and cultural contexts, aspects of literature too often neglected in English classes.

Classes are small, capped at 16 and rarely exceeding 12 students; the lion's share of teachers' work is therefore concentrated in editing, coaching and continuing scholarship.

Though content performance varies in Humanities classes, evaluation of performance and academic growth is typically clustered around progress in consistent areas. These include: *academic writing, problem solving and critical thought, test performance (including, but not limited to, memorization, extemporaneous argument and deductive reasoning), independent research, participation and seminar discussion, formal presentation, and academic reading.* Faculty discuss expectations in each of these areas with students and among themselves with the goal of graduating students who are prepared to excel in college-level scholarship and assessment.

Our **Math** courses are yearlong, and more closely align with those offered in peer institutions. As noted above, we do not generally offer AP courses at CHS, as we value the ability to develop responsive and independent curricula; our math department is an exception, as we do offer AB and BC Calculus courses for students who are prepared to pursue them. We also offer Statistics as an advanced course, with the recognition that for many professions and fields of study, grounding in statistical analysis is more valuable than Calculus. For students who take longer to master mathematical concepts, or whose pre-high school preparation prevented them from progressing to either Statistics or Calculus by the time of graduation, we provide necessary interim courses, such as F.S.T. (Functions, Statistics and Trigonometry). Occasionally, as appropriate, we also have offered terminal courses in practical applied mathematics in personal finance and related fields for students whose IEP's indicate that a more conventional preparatory path in higher mathematics is unwise.

The modes of assessment in mathematics center around testing, as one might expect, but our small class sizes allow teachers to observe students engaging in mathematical work every day. Class participation is therefore not merely a measure of quiet, respectful citizenship, but of creative quantitative analysis. Our primary goal is not the mastery of process, but the nurturing of independent abstract reasoning.

Our **Science** curriculum contains relatively conventional high school survey courses in Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Science and Biology. (We do occasionally offer an AP Biology option as well.) Such courses are often multi-age, though Chemistry and Physics have a minimal math requirement, and can be taken in any sequence. All of our teachers have experience teaching on other campuses, including colleges, public and independent schools, and design their classes to meet or exceed normal college preparatory expectations in content knowledge. We do, however, in consonance with our mission, take special care to focus not only on knowledge mastery, but also on how science works, on how knowledge is learned. We require that all students pursue two of their three Science Courses with an additional Lab class and credit, so that they may actively engage in experimentation throughout their time at CHS. Assessment of students is therefore based on thorough and engaged participation in the laboratory process, as well as in testing, academic writing, research and formal presentation.

In addition to the courses described above, we are also able to offer special topic classes on subjects as diverse as Paleoanthropology and Astrobiology. Such courses are offered in three or four-year rotation, and allow students to explore subjects they wouldn't otherwise be exposed to until college or university.

At Community High, courses in the **Arts** are considered “core” classes, and are required and weighted in the same way as those in languages, humanities, math and sciences. Evaluation is based not on “talent,” a slippery concept in any case, but in progress in creative thinking, in risk-taking, in sustained work ethic, in the full execution of ideas, in discipline and precision in that execution, in collaboration and openness to critique, and in the acquisition of skills relevant to the course.

Given that processual focus, CHS also requires that students pursue additional relevant coursework focusing on the history and **Theory** of arts disciplines. Since Band class is performance-based, for example, music students must also undertake survey courses in theory. Film Production class teaches camera use, lighting, screenwriting, and so on, while Film Genre and History courses contextualize that applied knowledge. Evaluation here depends on the course, but is mostly done according to the criteria established for the Humanities.

At CHS, we teach four **languages** other than English, including Latin, German, French and Spanish. With the exception of Latin, all courses are taught with a greater emphasis on oral and aural fluency than is sometimes typical of high school language instruction. This is the benefit of exceptionally small enrollment, since classes in this division typically range from four to eight. Students are expected to attain vocabulary and grammar skills with the goal of entering college language instruction at a high enough level that fluency at college graduation in an additional language is possible regardless of a student’s major. Students who wish to pursue additional languages, from Korean to Norwegian, are allowed to do so through individual instruction, online instruction or college enrollment.

Physical Education exposes students to a variety of fitness programs and sports, with a goal of creating life-long fitness. We have partnered with Roanoke’s nearby YMCA so students may augment outdoor sports activities—soccer, hiking, etc.—with programs of personal fitness, yoga and gym literacy. Students who already participate in travel sports or ballet as part of their busy schedules have typically been exempted, though some continue to participate.

Each year, qualified students supplement CHS classes with college courses at Hollins University, Roanoke College and Virginia Western Community College. In the fall of 2017, these range from courses in Criminal Justice to Post-Colonial African History and Sociology. This option is typically limited to upperclassmen who have exceeded expectations earlier in their high school careers, and are undertaken for full college credit as well as toward high school graduation requirements.

Students with specialized or esoteric interests are also encouraged to pursue internship opportunities at some of the many downtown institutions, ranging from the library’s Virginia Room archive of historic documents to the Roanoke Children’s Theatre. Such Internships may be pursued for credit, and are evaluated by a sponsoring faculty member to whom the student reports and documents her work.

Graduation Requirements

Math: 6 required, 8 recommended

Foreign Language: 6 in 1 language or 8 in 2 languages, 8 total recommended

Fine Art: 6 required

Humanities: 14 required, 16 recommended

Elective: 6 required

Physical Education: 2 required

Science: 8 required, 6 of which must be lab; 10 recommended

Note: With the exception of lab sciences, 1 credit equals one semester's work.

Department	Required	Recommended
Science	8 total (6 lab)	10
Math	6	8
Foreign Language	6 in one or 8 in two	8
Fine Art	6	8
Humanities	14	16
Elective	6	6
Physical Education	2	2
Total	50 (52)	58

Assessment

Community High does not use a grading scale, either numeric or letter-based, to evaluate our students. All classes are offered Credit/No Credit. More significantly, each student's acquired knowledge and skills are described *narratively* and in detail for each class, each semester. Taken together, these narrative evaluations provide students clear goals for improvement over time, and college admissions offices the opportunity to understand the student more deeply and less subjectively.

In knowledge acquired and skills displayed, there are broad and stable standards for earning credit, roughly equivalent to a 70 or better in a 100 point graded system. Narratively, however, students are evaluated on an individual basis, according to their own objectives and strengths, and are not compared to one another for evaluation purposes. For these reasons, Community High School does not internally rank students, by G.P.A. or other means.

Credit

Community High School is an ungraded educational environment where students optimally view one another as collaborators rather than competitors. Detailed narrative evaluations are preceded with an evaluation of either "Credit" or "No Credit," based on criteria explained at semester's start in the course's syllabus.

Audit

Occasionally, students are allowed to Audit a class instead of taking it for credit. A student who audits a class does so for the purpose of self-enrichment and academic exploration. They are expected to attend classes and participate in discussions, but are exempt from any classwork (tests, papers, projects, homework, etc.) that would be evaluated/graded. Audit will be recorded on their transcript in place of Credit.

The School Day

Doors to the school will be open from 8:00 am – 5:30 pm, unless otherwise stated. We cannot be responsible for students before or after these times, unless previous arrangements have been made between parent or guardian and appropriate faculty or staff. The class day is from 9:00 am–5:00 pm, Monday – Friday. Unless otherwise negotiated, students are required to be at school, including for school-related events, from 9:00 am until at least 3:00 pm or until their final last period class has been dismissed, on all regular school days. This means that students may leave school at 3:00 pm if they do not have a class scheduled during arts block on a particular day. Students taking college courses are excused

from campus while travelling to and from campus. Seniors may be granted additional off campus privileges at the discretion of the Administrative Director (see *Senior Privileges* section).

College Counseling

At Community High, we work with each student and family to ensure that the college chosen is appropriate and suited to a student's individual talents and goals, as well as to the family's financial reality. In doing so, we take our ethical obligations seriously, discussing the application process at length with students but allowing the work and writing, in conception and execution, to be their own. Toward that end, we leave campus for two days each fall for a seniors' retreat, a time when we examine the admissions process in depth, and provide a quiet and dedicated time and space to craft admissions essays. Throughout the year, we host admissions counselors from a variety of institutions, and we often and consistently visit various institutions of higher learning when on field trips. We encourage our students to broaden their searches to include institutions across the country, but maintain an awareness of each family's individual financial and cultural background. Below is a list showing the range of colleges that have accepted our students in the past four years.

Agnes Scott College	Furman University	Radford University
Alfred University	George Mason University	Randolph College
American University	Gettysburg College	Randolph-Macon College
Bard College	Goucher College	Roanoke College
Beloit College	Grinnell College	Rochester Institute of
Bennington College	Guilford College	Technology
Berea College	Hampton University	Sarah Lawrence College
Brevard College	Haverford College	Skidmore College
Bryn Mawr College	Hampshire College	Stevens Institute of
Carleton College	Hendrix College	Technology
Christopher Newport	Hollins University	St. Mary's College of
University	Ithaca College	Maryland
Clarkson University	James Madison University	St. Olaf College
Colby College	Jefferson College of Health	University of Michigan
College of Wooster	Sciences	University of North
College of the Atlantic	Juniata College	Carolina--Asheville
College of William and	Kalamazoo College	University of Glasgow
Mary	Macalester College	(Scotland)
Colorado State University	Marlboro College	University of Portland
Connecticut College	Marymount Manhattan	University of Richmond
Davidson College	Marymount University	University of St. Andrews
Dickinson College	Mary Washington	(Scotland)
Drexel University	University Honors College	University of Virginia
Drew University	Marquette University	VCU Honors College
Earlham College	McGill University (Canada)	VCU School of the Arts
Eckerd College	Mount Holyoke	Virginia Tech
Elon University	The New School	Virginia Tech School of
Emerson College	Oberlin University	Music
Emory & Henry College	Otterbein University	Wake Forest University
Fordham University	ODU School of Engineering	Warren Wilson College

Service and Cultural Outreach at Community High

Although it is a private school, Community High takes its responsibilities as a citizen organization seriously; we do not wish for our students or our faculty to work or live separately from the community at large. Towards that end, we were the founding sponsors of the Roanoke Marginal Arts Festival, which ran for over six years, with annual attendance

of over 3,000 and partnerships with educational and cultural institutions across the region, including Hollins University, Roanoke College, the Eleanor D. Wilson Gallery, the Moss Arts Center, and the Taubman Museum of Art.

These collaborations reflect one of the core principles of our school: exploration of our community and the world through active and intellectually engaged participation in the Arts. We believe strongly in the value of diversity of ideas and cultures, and we work to bring to our area artists and scholars, local and international, who share our commitment to pushing limits and exploring boundaries. In sponsoring cultural events, we hope to make Roanoke a better place, and to teach our students that culture is a dialogue to be maintained, not a product to be passively consumed.

Indeed, our students are often integrally involved in such efforts. Outside instructors and students annually participate in "Lycée Days," special bi-annual instructional days given over to diverse topics of special interest. In the past few years, students have organized and/or taught courses in subjects as diverse as the History of Cryptids, Introduction to Jazz Dance, and the history of Urban Renewal in Roanoke.

In addition to serving as a learning and exhibition space for our students as artists and curators, our gallery, Liminal Station, hosts several artist-curated exhibitions a year, with work ranging from local to international, from obscure to academically established in a non-commercial, intimate environment devoted to experimental work which our students would not be able to experience otherwise.

The June M. McBroom Theatre is similarly committed to diverse and public programming. It is an acoustically and visually rich performance space in the heart of downtown that comfortably seats 150 patrons; as such, it has been a draw for both touring organizations ranging from Bluegrass wizard James King to the American Shakespeare Company, and local arts organizations including theater companies, literary organizations and medical lecturers. It also serves as home to our own events, including our annual Pi Day festival of maths and sciences.

Service, of course, extends beyond intellectual programming. Our central location allows our students to intern or volunteer at a variety of institutions devoted to refugees, the elderly, social justice and the environment. Collectively, we have undertaken several projects during devoted campus-wide service days, and have in the past joined with the First Baptist Church in the upkeep of Old Lick, Roanoke's civically neglected historical cemetery for African-Americans, as well as working with Clean Valley Council, and numerous other social justice and environmental charities such as Habitat for Humanity, Total Action for Progress, the Boys & Girls Club, Ronald McDonald House, and Feeding America, among others.

Faculty Biographies

Josh Chapman: Academic Director (josh@communityhigh.net)

Josh Chapman has been with Community High School since its inception. He attended Yale University, where he earned his B.A. in Anthropology in 1996; he also holds graduate degrees in Social Science and Creative Writing, both from Hollins University. Josh oversees faculty, curriculum and the college admissions process, and teaches courses across the Humanities. Josh also has occasionally taught graduate courses in Literature and Film at Hollins University, and has served as Curator for Community Engagement at the Taubman Museum. His fiction has appeared in a number of magazines in the United States and Canada, and has been anthologized in *New Stories from the South*.

Meg Giuliano Snow: Administrative Director and Admissions (meg@communityhigh.net)

Meg Snow is responsible for the administration of staff, finances, and the physical plant at Community High School, and she also teaches environmental science and oversees the admissions process. Meg graduated from Williams College in 2005 with a B.A. in Biology, and holds a master's degree in environmental management from Duke University. Previously, Meg has taught at environmental education non-profits in New England, and worked as an

energy efficiency and sustainability consultant with the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy in Washington, D.C. Outside of the classroom, she enjoys playing and singing music, spending time outdoors, and growing and cooking delicious food.

John McBroom: Director of Development (mcbroom.johnw@communityhigh.net)

John McBroom has taught Music Performance, Algebra and Geometry since the early days of Community High. In addition to teaching, his current responsibilities primarily focus on development and fundraising in order to ensure a sustainable future for Community High School. John has also been a touring and recording musician for more than a decade, playing in jam bands, bluegrass and jazz ensembles. He has been involved in more than a dozen CD projects as a musician, producer and executive producer. John also serves as the CFO of FloydFest, the region's largest contemporary music festival.

Linda Thornton: Director Emerita

Linda Thornton is a founding member and the first director of Community High School. She graduated from Hollins in 1972 with a B.A. in English and then attended Brown University, graduating with an MAT in 1973. When she returned to Roanoke she began working at Community School under her earlier mentor from St Catherine's School, Susanna Turner. For the next twenty-five years she worked with and educated her children at Community School serving at various times as teacher, administrator, Director and Chairwoman. Having helped the school create its Middle School Program, it fell naturally to her when parents and community members insisted on the creation of a philosophically similar high school. After nine years as Director, she now chairs the Board of Trustees of Community High School. When not on the CHS campus, she is actively involved in her family farm, and is Chief Financial Officer of H.L. Lawson & Son Inc. She has served on various community boards including the Taubman Museum and The Historical Society of Southwestern Virginia.

Erin Coogan: Registrar (erin@communityhigh.net)

Erin graduated from Community High School in 2009, and earned a B.A. in History from Goucher College in 2013. In the years since, in addition to working with children from pre-K to grade 12, Erin served as the coordinator for the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation. In 2016, she became registrar at Community High School, where her duties include record maintenance, scheduling and communicating with colleges and universities.

Brian Counihan: Arts and Humanities (brian@communityhigh.net)

Brian Counihan is a founding faculty member of Community High, where he teaches courses in the humanities, art history, curatorial studies and studio art. Brian grew up in the Republic of Ireland and received a degree in painting and printmaking from Crawford School of Art, in Cork City. He also has a B.A. in Art History *summa cum laude* from Northwestern University and was awarded *The Elizabeth Dipple Award* for his M.A.L.S. thesis that explored the work of James Joyce and contemporary culture. Prior to joining Community High School, Brian taught studio art at Randolph Macon Women's College and Lynchburg College. Additionally, Brian is very involved in the regional art community, having served on the Art Museum of Western Virginia/Taubman Museum's education committee for six years and served as the Taubman Museum's Curator for Community Engagement. He is the co-director of Liminal Station, an alternative artspace in downtown Roanoke, and an active member of a variety of cultural organizations in the region.

Les Epstein: Arts and Humanities (les@communityhigh.net)

Les Epstein teaches courses in Theatre and the Humanities. He received undergraduate degrees in Theater Performance and English from Otterbein College, an MA in English from Miami (Ohio) University and continued with studies in Literature at New York University and in Theatre Education at The Ohio State University. He completed his teacher training at Mary Baldwin College. Les spent 20 years in theater and opera management, including ten

seasons as education director and production coordinator for Opera Columbus (Ohio) and seven as the executive director for the Children's Theatre of Winston-Salem (N.C.). He is also a seasoned stage director, librettist and playwright, and in those capacities has worked for companies across the United States.

Sandra Farmer: German (sfarmer@communityhigh.net)

Sandra Farmer teaches German II. She graduated from the University of Florida in 1993 with a B.A. in Russian Language and Literature and a minor in German Language and Literature. In 2012, she received her Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction in Teaching English as a Second Language and German Language Education for K-12. She is a native speaker of German and has taught German at the college level at Virginia Tech.

Warren C. Fry: Arts and Humanities (warren@communityhigh.net)

Warren C. Fry moved to Roanoke in 2010 after working with Community High School faculty and area cultural workers during the 2009 and 2010 Marginal Arts Festivals. He is a graduate of the Columbus College of Art and Design, and earned an M.F.A. in Event and Performance from Rutgers University in 2007. Prior to joining Community High, Warren taught art history at Bergen Community College and William Fleming High School. His creative practice encompasses writing, performance, game design and comedy. He participates in a number of experimental, creative networks. At Community High School Warren currently serves as Afternoon Coordinator, co-organizer of Liminal Station and teaches classes in the Arts and Humanities.

Nate Hansard: Math and Science (nate@communityhigh.net)

Nate Hansard has been teaching since 2000, and since then has taught just about every mathematics course available at the high school level. He frequently leads courses in higher Algebra, Pre-Calculus, Statistics and Physics. Nate graduated from Mary Washington College in 1992, where he was awarded the Theodore Schwartz Award for Excellence in Mathematics. He then did some graduate work at the University of Louisville. Over the years he has taught mathematics at all levels in Newport News, Botetourt County, Bedford County and Roanoke City high schools. At different points he has also been a historical interpreter for Colonial Williamsburg, a roofer, a glazer, a factory worker, an office worker and a number of things to boot. Nate enjoys keeping a variety of critters at his home in Buchanan. The menagerie includes a small flock of chickens, a small herd of goats, a cat, some fish and about one hundred thousand honeybees.

Sebastian Hobson: French (sebastian@communityhigh.net)

Maria Jernigan: Spanish (maria@communityhigh.net)

Maria Jernigan holds two Bachelor of Arts degrees from Virginia Tech: one in Philosophy and one in Spanish. Her deep-seated passion for improving U.S. high schools has led her to complete funded international research with innovative, project-based learning educators in Finland, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and across the United States. In 2017 she founded an education-technology start-up company called Redshift Education, which builds hands-on, project-based lessons in virtual reality. While not teaching Spanish at CHS or being the CEO of Redshift, Maria serves as a Lifelong Learning Fellow for SummitAhead, a California-based nonprofit that spearheads initiatives around the future of learning and the workforce in the 21st century. An avid traveler of 15+ countries, Maria firmly believes that speaking another language is the gateway to understanding other corners of the world, and she aims to equip her students with that superpower.

Carolyn Lowe-Thompson: Math (carolyn@communityhigh.net)

Carolyn Lowe-Thompson teaches math ranging from Algebra to Calculus. She earned her BS in Operations Research from Carnegie Mellon University in 1992 and her MST from

University of New Hampshire in 1999. Carolyn has taught math for over twenty years in many different states including California, New Jersey, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and now Virginia.

Olchar E. Lindsann: Humanities and Arts (olchar@communityhigh.net)

Olchar E. Lindsann teaches Humanities and Creative Writing courses, oversees the Writing Lab, and oversees the Library. He took his B.F.A. in Visual Art from Columbus College of Art and Design, and his MA in Performance Writing at Dartington College of the Arts, an experimental, multidisciplinary programme in the UK where he concentrated on critical theory, experimental performance, arts organizing and literary history. He has published many books of experimental poetry, fiction, literary and social theory, and the history of intellectual subcultures, and has lectured and performed extensively in the United States and England. He administers a small press specializing in avant-garde writing, theory and translation, and has organized and co-organized numerous cultural events and symposia, including many years on the steering committee of the Roanoke Marginal Arts Festival.

Stephanie Martin: School Counselor, Humanities, SPED Coordinator, Testing Coord., Head of Special Projects-VAIS, College Counseling (stephanie@communityhigh.net)

Stephanie Martin graduated from Randolph-Macon in 2000 with a B.A. in English Literature and Education, and also holds graduate degrees in Special Education and Applied Behavior Analysis from VCU and FIT, respectively. Stephanie taught in Richmond, VA in alternative education settings for a number of years before undertaking counseling positions in the Roanoke City and Roanoke County Public Schools. Stephanie is currently coordinating Special Education and Counseling services for Community High School, serves as the Head of Special Projects (including heading up the accreditation process with VAIS), and conducts Community Outreach.

Mellisa May: PE, Dance, and Administrative Assistant (mellisa@communityhigh.net)

Mellisa has served as an adjunct PE instructor for Community High since 2016. Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, she attended Eastern Michigan University, where she earned her B.S. in Health Administration and Masters of Business Administration from Eastern Michigan University. She has served as an adjunct wellness professor for Virginia Western Community College, and is currently an ACE certified personal trainer. In addition to providing physical fitness training, dance and yoga opportunities and calisthenics for students and staff, Mellisa will be assisting the Registrar and Director of Admissions with administrative tasks.

Kris Neal: Latin (kneal@communityhigh.net)

Simon Nolen: Humanities, Arts, College Counseling (simon@communityhigh.net)

Simon Nolen teaches courses in the Humanities, Animation, Film Theory and Production, and has been a member of the CHS faculty for over a decade. He graduated from Temple University in 2002 with a degree in Film and Media Arts. He is a winner of the Comcast Philadelphia Screenwriting Award and is a former touring musician, with additional academic interests in African American Culture, Philosophy and Theology. In addition to his classroom work, Simon is also part of the College Counseling team.

Tom Ohmsen: Arts (tom_ohmsen@yahoo.com)

Tom has been teaching Music Theory and Composition classes at Community High School since 2004. A graduate of James Madison University, Tom is the author of four critically acclaimed guitar and mandolin instruction books, including *Music Theory For Modern Mandolin* and *Music Theory For Modern Guitar*. With over 30 years of experience in the audio engineering field, Tom has engineered, produced and/or played on over 500 albums, CDs, and film and TV projects, and has worked on projects from such artists as Bill Monroe, Ralph Stanley, Buster B. Jones, Zakiyah, The Agents Of Good Roots and The Dave Matthews Band.

As a musician, he has recorded several albums as a member of various bands (Blue Mule and Butch Robins' Imagination, most recently), as well as under his own name. Tom is currently the chief engineer at Flat Five and is also president and founder of the company.

Jen Sosnowski: Science (jen@communityhigh.net)

Jen Sosnowski received Bachelor's degrees in both Biology and Music from Salem College, and teaches courses in Science at Community High. She graduated from the University of Virginia with a Master's in Biology and attended Virginia Tech for her education coursework, which leaves her feeling rather conflicted during football season. Jen's background in Molecular Biology research and interest in interdisciplinary curriculum design gives her a wide range of experiences to draw upon when creating her classes.

School Governance

As is standard in private educational institutions, the Board of Trustees is the governing body of Community High School. It is responsible for the financial well-being of the school, for setting policy and for hiring the Directors of the school in accordance with the Bylaws of Community High School. CHS is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. The Directors serve at the pleasure of the Board and are evaluated annually by the Chair. It is the board members' duty to support and stand behind their chosen Directors. The Directors in turn are charged with the task of hiring faculty and staff in accordance with the mission, policies and financial guidelines set forth by The Board of Trustees. It is the Directors' job to manage, support, encourage, help and discipline their faculty and staff.

Parents are considered active stakeholders in the school. Should they have concerns regarding their children's education, they should not hesitate to speak either to the appropriate teacher or to either of the Directors. This handbook contains contact information for faculty and staff, and it can also be found on the Community High School website. Should the issue involve policy or governance, the concern should be brought to an appropriate member of the Board. Their email addresses are available by calling the school.

The Current Board of Trustees

The Executive Committee

Linda Thornton - Board Chair

Peter Coogan - Treasurer

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Susan Thompson - Secretary

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The Board of Trustees meets four times each school year. The meetings are open to the CHS Community at large. However, non-members may only address the board if they have made a previous request to the Chair to be placed on the agenda.

Faculty Expectations Regarding Professional Decorum

Teachers are mentors and role models. Students tend to form close bonds with CHS teachers and count on them to be responsible and participating members of the CHS community and of the world. The school is modeled on respect and trust. Therefore, it is incumbent on our faculty and staff to embrace and uphold those standards of honesty, integrity, tolerance, and open-mindedness, which are fundamental to the mission of the school and to the wellbeing of our community. As a community we strive to be intentional, sensitive, respectful, courteous, and attentive to the needs of others. Individual differences deserve respect and no form of harassment will be tolerated. Teachers and administrators must be ever cognizant of their relationships with colleagues and with students so that no private boundaries are breached and power relationships are sensitively recognized. Any misconduct will, of course, be handled by the Directors on an individual basis, even as the Directors will be held accountable by the Board of Trustees with due respect and sensitivity for everyone involved.

The Role of Parents

At CHS, we work hard to develop independence and responsibility in our students. We expect them to keep track of their assignments and to manage their own work schedules. Faculty and staff will initiate contact if we have concerns about a student's health or safety, but unlike at some schools, we do not reach out to parents with the results of individual assignments. We believe it's important that students learn to negotiate relationships with faculty and school prior to attending college, not once they get there.

Because of this philosophy, and because of the rigor of the work, students at CHS may occasionally encounter setbacks they might not meet elsewhere. This can be difficult for students and parents who are used to straight "A's"; but we strongly believe that unflagging success is not a good teacher, and that failure often can be.

As just mentioned, the workload can occasionally be daunting at CHS. Expectations for writing and reading, especially at the upperclassman level, are much higher than at many of our peer institutions. This allows students to learn how to plan and prioritize; those who take these challenges seriously routinely report being far better prepared than their peers for college work.

Independent schools have the fortune and obligation to teach differently, and to teach different material as well. At CHS, courses are designed by faculty. Faculty members also choose the texts. Sometimes those texts, even the canonical ones, contain difficult material that students may be encountering for the first time. We believe that school should be an appropriate and nurturing place to grapple with such content.

Classroom discussion is an essential part of our pedagogical model. Consistent attendance is therefore required. Parents are strongly encouraged to assist us in emphasizing timeliness. Please see the *Attendance Policy* section.

Families are responsible for daily transportation to and from CHS; this includes classes off campus at area colleges.

Normally, students in good standing may leave campus to eat downtown at lunchtime, though many students prefer to bring their lunches from home. Parents are expected to

provide meals and/or lunch money. Students share access to a microwave and a refrigerator.

Although CHS provides a great deal of the material required for education, including most of the books used, families are occasionally asked to purchase books and supplies. This helps us to keep instruction costs down, and tuition accessible. If this is unduly burdensome, please inform the teacher in question in a timely fashion. Otherwise, students are expected to come to school with appropriate notebooks, paper and writing materials. Personal computers are useful—teachers require that papers be typed and printed—but not required, as a computer lab is provided for student use.

As noted earlier, the CHS school day runs from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. Activities and arts classes, which might be considered extracurricular elsewhere, are curricular here, and have the same expectations and weight as others.

Parents are encouraged to bring concerns directly to faculty, all of whom should easily be reached by email. Occasionally, a parent may feel it necessary to communicate directly with administration instead. As with faculty, email is the preferred and most efficient mode of communication.

Although formal conferences are consistently scheduled only at semester's end, parents or faculty may request conferences at other times during the year. Conferences can be requested by emailing the Registrar.

Parents seeking opportunities to volunteer are encouraged to approach faculty and staff to discuss their abilities and interests.

The 100% Participation Fund

Unfortunately, the cost of a student's education in a private school is rarely covered by the tuition. At CHS, current tuition covers less than 50% of the cost of each child's education. Happily, the school is fortunate to have loyal and very generous donors who guarantee its financial stability. Those donors make it possible for the school to be effectively needs-blind and thereby award financial assistance as needed to ensure a diverse and well-balanced student population.

Nevertheless, CHS needs parents' financial help and personal commitment. Therefore, the board created the 100% Participation Fund. Each year, every family is encouraged to contribute above and beyond the cost of tuition. All families receive a letter regarding the 100% Participation Fund, which may be followed up by a personal call. It is important to note that the board does not set monetary goals. Instead, families are asked to give as they are able. This may mean volunteering time or talents to the school as an in-kind gift rather than giving money. To date, CHS has been 100% successful in its efforts to get 100% participation; when we apply for outside grants, this level of demonstrable community dedication is essential.

Donations can be made on the CHS website, at www.communityhigh.net, or by check (made out to Community High School).

SCHOOL POLICIES

Academic Support

A student is placed on Academic Support when he or she has not received credit in two or more classes in a single semester, and/or if faculty members have determined that a continuing issue has affected the student's performance in two or more classes. The probationary period includes the following semester. Faculty will set clear goals for improvement at end of semester conferences prior to the onset of the probationary period. These goals will include receiving credit in all classes, as well as individualized goals to assist toward that end, and will be listed on a contract that acknowledges the terms of Academic Support. The student, his or her parent/guardian(s), and a faculty member will sign the contract at conferences. The goal of Academic Support is not to punish the student, but to assist him or her in improving performance.

Students on Academic Support will meet every 2-3 weeks with a designated member of the faculty to assess progress on said goals. Communication with the student's parent/guardian(s) should occur at least once within the semester in addition to the end of semester conferences. The student's participation in extra-curricular activities and his or her use of free time within the school day may be restricted as appropriate.

Admission

Not every student who applies to Community High School is accepted. Indeed, in recent years broad interest and limited space have required the school to become quite selective. Our acceptance policy is not based solely on quantitative measures of merit or talent, but on the creation of a community of learners of diverse backgrounds, abilities, and interests. We seek students whose enrollment will benefit the community and whom the school can serve in a way that other institutions cannot.

Arrival, Dismissal, and Leaving School During the Day

Upon arrival at CHS each morning, students are required to sign in with their name and time of arrival using the log book located on the counter by the front door. At the end of the day, students must sign out with their time of departure using the same log book. Students may leave school at 3:00pm if they do not have a scheduled arts/PE class, or at the conclusion of their arts block class. Students may NOT sign another student in or out. Students who leave CHS at any time and for any reason during the school day are required to sign out (and back in if appropriate) in the log. Students should indicate where they will be going and what time they are leaving in the spaces provided. Failure to properly sign in or out five or more times will result in the suspension of off campus/lunch privileges for a period of time to be decided by the Administrative Director.

Seniors in good academic standing may be awarded additional off-campus privileges, referred to as "senior privileges" (see *Senior Privileges*). All other students must get permission from an administrator to leave school at any time other than lunch (see *Lunch*) or end-of-the-day dismissal. If an administrator is unavailable, students may request permission from other faculty members. If an instructor is taking a class out of the school building, special permission is not required, but students are still required to sign out and back in using the log book.

Attendance Policy

Acceptable reasons for absence include illness (see *Illness Policy*), death in the family, subpoenaed court appearance and medical appointments. Please contact the school as soon as possible to alert us and send notes and other backing documentation upon return to school. Family travel may also be acceptable, however, such absences should be planned well in advance, with attention paid to the number of days a student has missed otherwise. In the case of such travel, please contact the school and a student's individual teachers at first opportunity to minimize the impact of missing instructional time.

A parent or guardian is the only one able to give permission by phone (540-345-1688), email (erin@communityhigh.net) or signed note. If we have not heard from the parent or guardian of an absent student by 9:15AM, we will call to check on the status of the student.

Each semester, we will contact a parent or guardian by phone after five absences or tardies to discuss the consequences of the missed days. We will contact the parent or guardian in writing after ten absences or tardies to discuss the consequences of the continued absences/tardies. After fifteen days of absence in a single school year, it is at the discretion of the school to remove the student from the class rolls. Please note: in many courses, class participation is an essential form of learning and assessment. Therefore, teachers of such classes may have no discretion in waiving attendance rules regarding credit, or in establishing "make-up work"; a student in such a course may be automatically removed from the roll if he or she misses 17% of classroom instructional hours in a given class in a semester.

Calculators

All students in Algebra II, FST, Pre-Calculus, Statistics, Physics, AP AB or BC Calculus are required to have their own TI-84 graphing calculator. Students should make sure their name is on their calculator. There are a limited number of calculators available to rent for \$25/year.

Commencement, Graduation and Peer Laudations

Each school year at CHS concludes with a ceremony to celebrate the graduation of the senior class. Unlike other schools, students are not chosen to address their class based on rank. Rather, each graduating senior is presented and discussed in a tradition we call *Peer Laudations* began with our first commencement ceremony. Non-seniors are a key part of this ceremony, and should attend and participate as appropriate.

Conferences

Students will have a conference with a teacher and at least one parent or guardian at the end of every semester. Conferences are important opportunities to teach self-evaluation, so students are encouraged to be active in discussion. At semester conferences, evaluations from the student's instructors are given to families. New students, seniors, and students who are not performing well may have more than two conferences per year. The conference is an opportunity for all parties to touch base and feel comfortable about the path of learning we are providing to the student and the work that the student is giving to us. It is an excellent venue for asking questions. There are no classes scheduled on conference days. Parents, students, or faculty may request an additional conference outside of our regularly scheduled semester ones at any time.

Semester conferences should be scheduled through the Registrar. Instructions on how to schedule semester conferences will be sent home in the email newsletter, beginning a few

weeks before the scheduled conference date. The Registrar will follow up with a phone call if CHS receives no email response from a family.

Downtown Boundaries

Students leaving campus on foot during lunch or (with permission) at other times of day must stay within the following boundaries unless special permission to be somewhere else has been granted:

- Students may only access downtown Roanoke by walking under the overpass near the Taubman. They may NOT cross at the intersection of Williamson and Campbell Ave.
- Students may not walk down Campbell Ave. in an easterly direction (away from downtown).
- Students are allowed to be in the central commercial district of downtown Roanoke, from CHS to the Roanoke Public Library (Main Library) on Jefferson, and as far west as the Kirk YMCA.

New students will be taken on a tour of downtown Roanoke so that they can learn the boundaries during Orientation. These boundaries do not apply to seniors who have been awarded senior privileges.

Dress Code

Generally, most students' dress is accepted as a creative part of our students' personalities. However, if dress is sufficiently offensive or revealing to bother other students, faculty or staff, students may be asked by staff or students to change clothing. Occasionally, CHS hosts outside guests. When this occurs, students will be notified to be particularly careful in their dress. We are not in the business of policing fashion; however, we do ask students to use good judgment in what they wear.

Driving

Students in any year who have their drivers' licenses are allowed to drive themselves to school. See the *Parking* section for more information. Non-seniors who have their licenses are NOT allowed to drive off campus during the day, including during lunch, unless they have explicit permission from CHS administrators and their parents/guardians to drive to a college class, a medical appointment, or a volunteer/internship opportunity. Students must not drive other students unless the appropriate permission forms have been signed by parent/guardian(s).

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Electronic Cigarettes

Students at Community High School are expected to comply with the law, to respect their own health, and to behave in ways that reflect positively on the greater community. Students who violate these expectations with regards to the consumption of illegal or restricted substances will face strong consequences, which may include expulsion from the school.

Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Because CHS is a private school, we are exempt from the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). However, we choose to follow FERPA guidelines as best practices for protecting our student's privacy and records. Questions or requests for records should always be directed to the Registrar.

Field Trips

In addition to smaller field trips connected to particular classes, we occasionally take longer cross-curricular field trips. Through these longer field trips, we seek to build community

amongst groups of students with diverse interests and to expose them to places and experiences that provide a variety of unique learning experiences. CHS also takes its obligation to expose students to colleges and universities seriously, and we therefore schedule regular trips to visit campuses. Whenever possible, the school will cover all costs for travel and activities, as well as some meals. Specific information on any field trips will be provided to parents/guardians prior to the trip, along with a trip permission form that must be signed in order for students to participate.

Illness Policy

If a student becomes ill while at school and needs to go home, faculty and staff will contact a parent or guardian to pick them up. If CHS is unable to reach a parent or guardian, and determines that the child must go home, the emergency contacts provided on the student's Emergency Treatment Form will then be called.

Community High School uses the following guidelines when determining if a student is too ill to remain or attend school. If a parent has questions about a specific illness, absence, or protocol, those questions should be directed to the Registrar.

1. Students must be fever free (<100.00°F), no vomiting and/or diarrhea within the past 24 hours; unassisted by medication, in order to return to school.
2. When a student is placed on an antibiotic for a contagious illness, they must be on the medication for 24 hours before turning to school.

Parents and guardians agree to contact CHS within 24 hours or the next business day if any of the immediate household members have been exposed to a reportable communicable disease.

In accordance with Virginia State law, any student exempted from the immunization requirements will be required to stay home in the event of an outbreak, potential epidemic, or epidemic of a vaccine-preventable disease in the school.

Inclement Weather

Because Community High School does not have bus service, we are sometimes open when other schools are closed due to inclement weather. We understand however, that our students come from various locations, and that driving may be hazardous for some students, but not all. For this reason, if at any time a student or parent does not feel that driving is safe, the student should not come to school. Please call us and let us know. In the event that school *is* closed, families will be notified via the methods below:

- The CHS voicemail at 7 a.m. on the morning of the event; (540) 345-1688.
- The Community High School website, www.communityhigh.net
- Mass email from the school
- WSLS –TV NBC (Channel 10) and WDBJ – TV CBS (Channel 7)
- Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/CommunityHighSchoolRoanoke>)
- Twitter (<https://twitter.com/CommunityHS>)
- Mass text message (to join the text messaging service, provided through www.remind.com, by texting @bdc88g to the number 81010 from your cell phone)

Internet Usage

In the past, we have had internet filters in place on shared computers. Deficiencies in those filters, and the profusion of hand-held internet devices have rendered such filters impractical. For those reasons, we have chosen to impose instead an honor-based system

regarding internet usage. Students are on their honor to respect and abide by these guidelines. If they do not, the school will respond as necessary.

The following rules apply to all computers used on campus, whether they belong to the high school or to individuals. Personal computers—a category that includes phones, tablets—may be confiscated by faculty for a time if rules are not observed.

- Students using public computers for purposes not directly related to class can be asked to turn them over by students who need them for academic reasons. The settings on public computers should not be altered.
- Programs should not be downloaded to public computers without faculty permission.
- Students should never download copyrighted material (songs, movies, video games, etc.) they have not paid for. Illegally downloading copyrighted material is punishable by law and any copyright infringement notice we receive is taken seriously. Students found to have illegally downloaded content or used a Peer-to-Peer (P2P) software on the school internet will have their access revoked indefinitely.
- Email may be checked on shared computers. It is the preferred mode of communication with teachers—social media and texting are not professional modes of communication.
- Recreational activity—including the use of social media, playing appropriate games, listening to music, watching videos, etc.—is permissible on personal computers outside of class, so long as a student is in good academic standing and not bothering other members of the community.
- Research does not always have to directly apply to school. Just as we encourage students to follow their own passions in the library, we encourage them to read, watch films, find music, etc., on the internet. That said, we expect students to show good judgment regarding content.
- Pornography, violence or hate speech is not welcome on this campus. We understand that all of these categories evade precise definition; if a student wants clarity regarding a specific site, they should consult faculty. Should a student encounter inappropriate material on the internet inadvertently, they should alert faculty.
- Digital identity and possessions are as real as their more tangible counterparts and must be respected as such.
- Social media, like email, may be checked on shared computers, but is not a privileged activity. Academic use of shared computers has immediate ask-off priority.

Internships

A student wishing to pursue an academic-credit bearing internship must be in good standing with the school and at least a sophomore or older. Students must have a faculty sponsor and fully complete and document each aspect of the program to receive credit. Students should see the Internship Coordinator for detailed requirements and deadlines.

Library

Each bookcase is designated with a letter A—J; signage gives the letter and the sections contained in each. The bookshelves to your left as you enter (A and B) contain check-out forms and materials for initiating inter-library loans. They also include special sections for current classes, with the books from all sections most likely to be helpful to you for papers and assignments. You should use these books on-campus and photocopy what you need so that they remain available to fellow students. Shelf C, facing the door, contains reference books of all kinds and pamphlets & books produced by CHS students, as well as books on visual art and film.

Because it is a small library, we do not use the Dewey Decimal system; books are organized according to how you are most likely use them for your classes. There are sections for each academic and artistic discipline you will work with at CHS. Some sections are organized by author, some by title, and the history books by chronology. Some books (mainly Drama, Foreign Language and many Math and Science books) are kept in the corresponding classrooms, but the catalog will tell you where you can find them.

To find a book: There is a full library catalog on Shelf A, and each bookcase is provided with its own catalogue; you will also be emailed a pdf version of the library at the beginning of the year, which you can search using the 'find option'. If you know what book you're looking for, search the online catalog. This will give you the section it is in, and the order of the books within that section. The heading for each bookcase indicates which level of the shelf each section is on and how it's ordered. If you're not sure exactly what you're looking for, first look at the section for your class near the entrance. If you don't find what you need there or you're not looking for class-related material, you can browse the appropriate shelf.

To check out & return a book: There is a clipboard with a check-out sheet on Shelf A. Simply write your name, the title and author of the book you're checking out. There is no due date, but if another student needs to use the book you'll be asked to share. To return a book, simply place it on the top of Shelf A, and Olchar will process it and return it to the shelves. If you use a book at school but don't check it out, put it in with the returns; *do not* place it back where you got it. Not only does this ensure that all books are re-shelved correctly, it also lets us keep track of what books are most helpful to our students and build a more useful library.

If you don't find what you need: We'll do what we can to help you get a book once you know you want it. If the source is over 100 years old, you might find a free online version at *archive.org*, *gutenberg.org*, or *books.google.com*. If not, use keywords to find potential sources online via *openlibrary.org* and *worldcat.org*. These will tell you what nearby libraries have the book. As a CHS student, you have limited borrowing privileges at Roanoke College and Hollins University. See the library info shelf for guides on how to use those libraries. If at any point in the process you need help, see Olchar.

Ground Rules: The library is also the computer lab and study area, which necessitates a few ground rules. NO FOOD and NO OPEN DRINKS are allowed in the library, to protect computers and books from preventable accidents.

The library is the school's area for quiet study. School computers should be used only for school-related work; they should not be used for gaming or social networking. Conversation should be limited to tutoring and school-related questions.

Lunch

Lunch is from 12:10 pm – 1:00 pm each day. Students may go downtown for lunch (see *Downtown Boundaries*) after signing out (see *Arrival, Dismissal, and Leaving School During the Day*). Students should note the time of departure and anticipated location in the sign-out log. Students should be back from lunch before 1:00 pm and are responsible for making it to their next class in a timely manner.

Mandated Reporting

Faculty and staff are considered mandated reporters under Department of Social Services regulations. This means that any allegations or evidence of abuse will be immediately reported to Child Protective Services. Drug use and paraphernalia on school property must also be reported. For more info see <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/localagency>.

Mature Content in Classes

At Community High School, we believe that the best way to handle the difficulties of the adult world is to approach them together in a frank, open, and nurturing classroom environment. Some classes will therefore necessarily expose students to mature content - content that may be avoided at other high schools. We expect students to handle disagreements about the meanings of such content that arise from personal opinion, life experience, faith, and family culture with an appropriate degree of respect and empathy.

Medical Withdrawal

A Medical Withdrawal is an official status granted a student in cases where the student is unable to do the necessary schoolwork and /or has too many absences due to illness in a given semester. Such a withdrawal will be made in coordination with the parent or guardian, the Administrative Director, and the Academic Director and in consultation with an appropriate attending physician.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Community High School seeks to create and maintain an environment that is safe and welcoming to all of its students, faculty and community members. We therefore prohibit discrimination against and harassment of any community member because of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law.

Off-Campus Classes

Community High School is willing and able to offer individual enrollment for students of appropriate academic ability and maturity - and in good academic standing in all classes at CHS - at a number of area colleges and universities. All courses must be approved by the Registrar and the Academic Director prior to enrollment. CHS is not responsible for the cost of books, materials, parking, or travel to and from off-campus classes. The tuition costs for outside courses are broken down below.

Virginia Western Community College - CHS pays full cost of the class.

Hollins University and Roanoke College - CHS pays half the cost of the class. Families will be billed by CHS for the other half.

Parking

The Big Lick Junction parking lot spaces are reserved for faculty and visitors. If students wish to drive their own vehicle to school, they may park in the pay lot across the street, and are responsible for parking costs. Students who wish to purchase a parking pass for that lot through CHS should contact the Administrative Director. All driving students should give vehicle information (Make, Model, License Plate Number) to the Administrative Director for school records. If a student parks in a free public two-hour parking spot, he or she may not leave a class in progress to move the car, even if a parking ticket is possible.

Personal Computers

Students are expected to have their own laptop, Chromebook, or tablet with external keyboard and word processing capabilities that they can bring to school when needed. If this presents a hardship for your family, please contact the Administrative Director for assistance. Desktop computers are available in the library for student use, and in each classroom to be used for presentations. CHS also has a number of Chromebooks that are available for quick use, but that should not be relied on for constant use or availability.

Beginning this year, students who want to use a Chromebook will have to check it out and return it before they leave for the day.

Personal Effects

Students are provided with cabinets at school in which to stow their possessions. These cabinets do not lock, and may be checked by staff when necessary. Other students, however, must respect the privacy of these cabinets and keep out of those not assigned to them. Food or other vermin-attracting perishables should not be stored overnight at school. Students must clean out their cabinets at the end of every semester.

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications

Emergency medications, such as Epi-Pens and inhalers, may be carried by students. All emergency medications carried by a student must be listed on their Emergency Treatment Form. Other prescribed medications that need to be taken during the school day should be presented to a designated faculty/staff member to be administered appropriately, along with written dosage instructions signed by a parent or guardian.

Parents and guardians provide authorization on the Emergency Treatment form for faculty and staff to administer the following over-the-counter medications to students: Benadryl, Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, antacid tablets, throat/cough drops.

Profanity

Different teachers may tolerate different levels of crude language in the classroom; all members of the community, however, are expected at all times to avoid words that stigmatize or hurt others because of gender, orientation, ethnicity, faith, race, or other aspects of cultural or biological identity. See the section on *Social Conflict*.

Publicity Release

Consent in the publicity release portion of the Emergency Treatment Form allows CHS to use pictures taken by the school that include that student in our social media posts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, newsletters), on our website, and in our marketing materials. Students are not identified by name in conjunction with their picture, except in special cases (i.e. congratulations/recognition for accomplishments). Minors will be listed only by their first name and last initial, unless permission is given by a parent.

Refrigerator and Microwave

Students are responsible for supplying their own cups, flatware, etc., and for cleaning and maintaining the shared kitchen facilities, including the CHS-provided student refrigerator and microwave.

Senior Privileges

Seniors in good academic standing may be awarded additional off-campus privileges, referred to as "senior privileges." Seniors must obtain permission from their parents/guardians for this special status, and have approval from the Administrative Director. Students with senior privileges are required to be on campus for all classes, labs, meetings and announcements, but other times are left to the student's discretion. Senior privileges will be immediately revoked if the student does not remain in good standing in all classes or misses any scheduled classes, labs, meetings or announcements. Students with senior privileges are not allowed to drive non-seniors off campus during the school day unless they have explicit permission to do so.

Services for Students with Disabilities

At Community High School, we seek to define learning differences in a broader sense than simply Learning Disabilities (LD), Dyslexia or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD or ADHD). A student's mental, physical and emotional states all play a part in whether he or she is able to learn. A student with chronic insomnia has difficulty learning, as does a student whose home life prevents him or her from getting homework done in a consistent manner.

We believe that, with the proper support, most students who are committed to their education and are willing to collaborate with teachers and staff can have a positive educational experience at Community High School. This policy is intended to clarify what the school expects from students and what students can expect from the school.

- 1.** Community High School accepts students whom we feel will benefit from our small classes and seminar-based approach.
- 2.** Community High School's goals and practices may diverge from the needs of some students with learning differences, as outlined in their IEP or 504 plans, or psycho-educational reports.
- 3.** Some of our practices are helpful to students with learning differences. However, Community High School does not provide accommodations that conflict with our Mission Statement or place an undue burden on our staff.
- 4.** We do not specifically recruit teachers or staff with training in special education, nor do we represent ourselves as experts in dealing with learning differences. We do make available resources and professional development opportunities to educate our staff about these issues.
- 5.** One of the characteristics of Community High School is the dynamic nature of our classes, which are structured yet flexible enough to permit student interest and input to shape classes on an ongoing basis. Some students with learning differences perform better in a more rigidly structured environment than ours will provide.
- 6.** All students at Community High School are expected to fulfill their academic requirements. Therefore, we may ask some students, at their parents' expense, to receive outside support in order to succeed in our academic program.
- 7.** All students at Community High School are held to the same standard of behavior. Community High School is not an appropriate environment for students that present ongoing behavior problems.
- 8.** Parents must provide the school with all documentation of learning differences, and keep the school informed of changes in circumstances, including medications, that may affect their child's ability to learn. We reserve the right to ask for, at the parents' expense, testing or evaluations that will better inform the staff about the particular challenges faced by the student.

Sexual Expression

Affection and touch are healthy in appropriate contexts, but overt expressions of sexual affection are distracting and can be detrimental to the school's learning environment.

Social Conflict

Physical conflicts are not tolerated at Community High School. When other forms of social conflict occur, it is the community's expectation that they be handled through peaceful discussion, and, if necessary, mediation. Bullying or intimidation, harassment, malicious gossip, rumor-mongering, etc. are forms of violence and harm the victim, the community and the perpetrator in turn. We expect all members of the community to treat one another with kindness, when possible, and respect at all times.

Standardized Testing

Community High School is philosophically opposed to any monolithic measure of learning, and is especially opposed to overreliance on expensive and reductive modes of inappropriately quantitative analysis. We do not use standardized tests for evaluation of either student or faculty achievement. Having said that, we do occasionally use them as tools for internal guidance. With the exception of seniors, we administer the PSAT to all students every year in October. Students are, of course, encouraged to learn how such tests work, and to do their best on the ACTs and SATs.

Student Contract

Community High School is a unique learning environment. Our philosophy is based upon trust of one another. For this reason, students are asked to sign a contract at the beginning of school promising to be trustworthy. Students who break school rules, participate in illegal activities, or prove to be untrustworthy in any fashion will be counseled by the Academic Director and/or the Administrative Director. Depending upon the severity of the issue precipitating the conference, the student may be disciplined up to and including dismissal from CHS.

Transcripts and Letters of Recommendation

Transcripts for college admission can be ordered using the Parchment link on the College Counseling page of the CHS website. Transcript/records requests for any other purpose should be made in writing to the Registrar, preferably by email. Please allow up to a week for transcripts to be compiled.

Letters of Recommendation take some time to generate. Students requesting them for college admissions, scholarship, or transfer purposes must respect the tight schedules of the faculty and staff. All requests for Letters of Recommendation must be made in writing.

Weapons

Weapons, including, but not limited to, knives, firearms, body armor, or brass knuckles are both restricted by law and prohibited on campus. Possession of them will be handled with severe consequences, up to and including expulsion.