



Parent and Student Handbook 2025-2026



VHS Learning VHS Learning Academy is full-time online private high school based in Maynard, Massachusetts. We offer a rigorous teacher-led curriculum. Students choose from the VHS Learning catalog which includes 31 College Board-approved Advanced Placement courses and unique and engaging electives. Learning takes place within a safe, secure, and supportive environment. Join Us!



Dear Families,

Welcome to VHS Learning Academy! We are excited you are interested in pursuing a diploma from our flexible, fully online school, where students are given opportunities to realize their potential and increase their love of learning.

VHS Learning Academy is the culmination of 30 years of experience providing students with rich, engaging online learning opportunities through VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.). We believe in getting to know our students and providing them with a curriculum that meets their academic needs and improves their independence, communication, and self-advocacy.

Students at VHS Learning Academy are supported by certified teachers, administrative staff, and a parent/guardian who work together to ensure students stay on track, understand expectations, and complete their courses on schedule. Teachers engage with students to ensure they understand the material they are learning and to help resolve any confusion and clarify expectations as needed. Teachers grade student work and provide supportive feedback, so students know just what needs improving, and the areas in which they excel.

I am proud to have been a part of this organization for more than 20 years and know that our dedication to student success and robust learning experiences will benefit many students who desire a full-time online program of studies. I look forward to working with your family and wish you the best of luck as you begin your journey at VHS Learning Academy!

All the best,

Amy Michalowski

Amy Michalowski
Dean

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Mission and Beliefs

At VHS Learning Academy, we believe in high quality, collaborative learning where student exchange and interaction is integral to the instructional process. We believe education should not be limited by barriers of time, place, or availability. We believe that online learning offers students the benefits of highly qualified faculty and an innovative curriculum made up of diverse, exciting learning opportunities in a global classroom.

The mission of VHS Learning Academy, powered by VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.), is to help students graduate from high school and succeed in life by providing an engaging, challenging, and supportive learning environment that meets the needs of students and families.

Each year, thousands of students engage with classmates from across the country and around the world in VHS Learning courses. Each course section is limited in size, ensuring students and teachers form a learning community to explore course concepts together. With a robust catalog of courses offered each semester, we meet students' academic needs and provide opportunities to explore career interests.

Overview

VHS Learning Academy is a full-time, online school offered by VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.), a non-profit organization with thirty years of experience providing high quality, collaborative, online courses to students and schools. We believe all students can benefit from access to a robust variety of core, elective, and Advanced Placement courses. We have worked with schools and families since 1996 and are proud to offer a full-time high school option for students desiring a private, fully online education.

Central to our program is the curriculum, which consists of courses developed by experienced classroom teachers and aligned to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks or appropriate national content standard. Certified teachers instruct all courses and we maintain course enrollment caps of 25 students to ensure students can form relationships with their teachers and peers and to foster a vibrant learning community. Students are expected to work on a paced, asynchronous schedule, with individual and collaborative assignments due each week, but with the flexibility to work at a time that suits each individual student's needs. The balance of flexibility and structure at VHS Learning Academy helps build individual accountability that will be invaluable in post-secondary pursuits.

Our team works closely with each student's learning coach, who is generally a parent or guardian that will support the student in the home environment. Learning coaches have access to the student's grades and are expected to communicate with the student's academic liaison and our school counselor on a regular basis to ensure any challenges are understood and addressed in a timely manner.

As a small program, opportunities to engage with other full-time students in a variety of extracurricular activities are limited but will be shared as they are available.

Program Approval

Accreditation

VHS Learning Academy is offered by VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.), which is accredited by Middle States Association (MSA-CESS) and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). VHS Learning Academy is recognized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as an approved, diploma-granting, private school, pursuant to requirements set forth in M.G.L. c. 76, § 1. VHS Learning Academy is accredited as a full-time, private school by MSA-CESS.

NCAA

Student athletes can visit the NCAA website for information on NCAA eligibility and to find a list of courses approved for initial eligibility. Please use CEEB code 221356 to search for NCAA-approved courses. VHS Learning Academy (NCAA code is 850943) uses NCAA courses approved under VHS Learning. Specific questions on NCAA eligibility can be answered by the student's counselor.

College Board/Advanced Placement

VHS Learning Academy is pleased to offer a comprehensive list of courses fully approved by the College Board for Advanced Placement (AP) credit. Course titles can be found in the [course catalog](#).

Learning Team

Though our students work online, they do not work alone! Our students are supported by their teachers, learning coach, and our staff. Each of these critical support components are described below:

Teachers

Our teachers are certified educators who have received additional training in the pedagogy of online instruction. Teachers are committed to working with each student to ensure the best possible chance for success. We require teachers to be present and engaged in the classroom throughout the week and to respond to student inquiries and grade student work promptly.

Learning Coach

The learning coach is typically a parent or guardian, though it can be any responsible adult. The learning coach plays a critical role in providing mentoring for the student and helping to facilitate communication with teachers and staff if problems arise. The learning coach has access to student grades and receives grade updates by email on a regular basis.

Academic Liaison

Each student is assigned an academic liaison, a member of our staff who will be the primary contact for the student and learning coach. The academic liaison meets with the student regularly via phone, webinar, or at the Maynard office, to review progress, connect with the student, understand their unique circumstances, and troubleshoot issues that might arise during the academic year. The student is required to meet with the academic liaison as a layer of accountability and support. Students who miss more than 2 meetings are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the school.

School Counselor

Our school counselor helps students plan their program of studies and provides support for the college admissions process. Although our school counselor provides college planning support, engaging with a professional college counseling organization is an option available to your family. Choosing a college counseling organization is a personal decision and should be made after consulting with multiple companies. We do not endorse any specific organizations.

Our school counselor is available to support the social-emotional health of our students and can refer students or families to additional support services as needed. Our school counselor uses email and phone calls as the primary method of communication with students and can meet a student and parent/guardian at the VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.) Maynard office if desired.

Support Staff

Support staff work with teachers and learning coaches to ensure students are supported throughout their journey at our school. Each student works with an enrollment counselor to ensure course selection compliments student abilities and post-secondary goals. During the academic year, our administrative team is available by phone and through our [Service Center](#) to resolve issues or answer questions.

Curriculum

Most of the curriculum is provided by VHS Learning, an accredited program with a catalog of more than 250 core, elective, and Advanced Placement courses taught by certified teachers. Students select courses to meet their graduation requirements. If a student requires a course that is not available, our team will source the course at no additional cost.

Curricular Approach

Our curricular approach includes a variety of objective and open-ended assignments, weekly discussion board activities, collaborative activities, and hands-on lab assignments. Students participate fully in the community of learners in their course and must login to the course at least four times per week to collaborate with their teacher and peers. Some courses are available in a self-paced model. Students may combine paced and self-paced courses with the approval of the counselor.

Course Materials

Most courses do not require additional materials. All courses use a variety of open educational resources and web-based materials. Most core courses and all Advanced Placement courses utilize eBooks. If a student desires an additional hard copy textbook, they can request the ISBN for the book and purchase it at their own expense.

When required, lab kits are provided to students so that they can complete hands-on lab activities. Students who do not live in the Continental U.S. will be required to pay for shipment of lab kits to their home address. In rare instances, with VHS Learning approval, the student may be allowed to procure lab materials independently, if materials are purchased before class starts.

Technology and Course Platforms

Student information is contained within our [Student Information System](#) (SIS). The SIS is used for course registration, student documentation (IEP/504 plan documentation, transcripts from previous schools, test results, etc.), monitoring grades, and for transcript generation.

Courses are delivered on the [Brightspace by D2L](#) or [Agilix Buzz](#) learning management system. After enrollment, students receive instructions for accessing the correct learning management system.

Technology Requirements

Our courses use the Internet as the primary vehicle for instruction. Students must have Internet connectivity and have access to the Internet daily.

Courses may contain links to outside websites, and while every effort is made to maintain these links, we cannot guarantee that users following links from within a course will not encounter sites hosting malware or viruses. We strongly recommend all users install malware/virus protection from a reputable vendor, and make sure that the definitions are updated regularly to prevent infection.

Students can view lesson content, submit course assignments, and fully participate in most courses on mobile devices, including iPads, iPhones, and Android devices.

The following features within the learning environment will not work on portable devices:

- Some software is not compatible with iOS devices (iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch).
- Courses which use installed software may require regular access to a desktop/laptop computer for installation and use.

To view specific technical requirements that may be required for each course, review the course descriptions in the [course catalog](#).

Technology Support

All courses contain instructions that provide step-by-step explanations for technical tasks. Students have 24-7 access to submit a [support request](#) to request support or ask questions. Requests for support are resolved from 7 AM – 5 PM ET, Monday through Friday. Phone support is available Monday through Friday from 8 AM – 5 PM ET by calling 978-897-1900. Students also have access to Private Topic areas within their courses to ask course instructors for assistance as needed.

Student Orientation

Students complete Student Orientation, a self-paced module that provides an overview of course structure and navigation. Students remain enrolled in Student Orientation throughout the year, so they always have access to this resource. In addition, each course contains a module that introduces academic policies, provides tips for time management and organizing work, and explains additional elements of our courses.

Enrollment Process and Admissions Policies

Application Process

Students may apply to VHS Learning Academy at any time. Start dates are at the beginning of the fall or spring semester each academic year. Students must be in grades 9-12, under the age of 21, and must desire a high school diploma. Go to [our website](#) to learn more about the application process and submit the information form to receive information about applying to our school.

Acceptance to VHS Learning Academy

Our admissions team reviews each student's application and academic transcript to determine if the student has the foundation necessary to be successful in our program. We speak with each family considering enrollment to ensure our program is the right fit. Factors such as past academic record, discipline records, grade point average, and personal statements are considered during the application process. Not every student applying to our school is accepted.

Application Appeal Process

Students who are denied admission to VHS Learning Academy can appeal the decision by submitting a written letter of appeal to the Dean. The Dean will convene a review panel to review the application materials and determine if there are extenuating circumstances that warrant admission. Decisions of the review panel will be final and will be delivered to the appellant within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

Dual Diploma Application

Students who wish to remain matriculated at a local school and earn credit towards a VHS Learning Academy diploma can apply to our Dual Diploma Program. In this program, students take at least 5.5 credits from VHS Learning Academy. Generally, students will take 2-3 years to complete the 5.5 credits that they require from VHS Learning Academy.

Student transcripts are evaluated to ensure their transfer credits and VHS Learning Academy credits meet the graduation requirements and prepare students for the college application process. Dual diploma students are considered VHS Learning Academy students and will have access to the support of academic liaisons and the school counselor for course planning, student support, and college admissions support.

Dual diploma tuition is based on the total number of credits the student will complete during their time at VHS Learning Academy and will be shared with the student and family before admission is finalized.

English Language Learners

VHS Learning courses are written in English, so students who attend VHS Learning Academy must have appropriate English language skills. Students should have a WIDA score of 4 or higher in reading and writing to enroll in VHS Learning Academy.

Enrollment Requirements

Once accepted, the following documents are required before students will be considered successfully enrolled in VHS Learning Academy:

- VHS Learning Academy online general information form
- Proof of identification via I-9 form (copy of birth certificate, passport, and/or driver's license)
- Student responses to application essay questions
- Health information form
- Academic records, transcripts, and release of records form
- Application fee and first semester tuition payment
- Signature agreeing to tuition and refund requirements
- Signature agreeing to adhere to handbook policies
- Placement tests (as required)

Registration process

Once application requirements have been met, transcripts are analyzed to determine course requirements for graduation. The student and learning coach approve the course plan before course enrollments are finalized. Enrollment notification and links to the learning management system are sent via email once registration into courses has been finalized.

Supplemental Students

Students interested in taking online courses on a supplemental basis may do so via the VHS Learning supplemental education program. Students enrolled in VHS Learning courses are not enrolled in VHS Learning Academy unless they have completed the application process and have been accepted to VHS Learning Academy. For information about VHS Learning please visit the [VHS Learning website](#).

Tuition

Families will be notified of tuition for the upcoming year not later than August 1. Tuition includes enrollment in up to 6 credits of classes and materials (eBooks and lab kits with domestic shipping), support of our school counselor, technology staff, and academic liaison. Students who require credit recovery will be granted a 25% discount on credit recovery enrollment fees. Students who wish to enroll in more than 6 credits should ask their academic liaison for a determination of whether additional fees will apply.

Withdrawal Policy

Parents/guardians of students under 18 must submit, in writing, a request to withdraw from VHS Learning Academy. Tuition will be refunded according to the tuition agreement signed upon admission. A student who withdraws from VHS Learning Academy will be required to share feedback, a reason for withdrawal, and a plan to ensure continuity of the student's education. Any student under 18 will be reported to the appropriate state/local agency to ensure continuity of the student's education, per local requirements.

Adherence to VHS Learning Handbook

As a program of VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.), VHS Learning Academy adheres to all policies outlined in the [VHS Learning Handbook](#). In lieu of a site coordinator, all VHS Learning Academy students are assigned to an Academic Liaison. When interpreting the VHS Learning Handbook, please refer to your Academic Liaison anytime a site coordinator would be involved in your learning.

Because VHS Learning is a supplemental program, the additional policies included in this Handbook augment and supersede VHS Learning Handbook policies, as applicable.

Additional Academic Policies

Academic Accommodations

VHS Learning Academy does not complete academic testing for students with disabilities that impact their learning. If a family believes a student would benefit from accommodations that require a mental health diagnosis or neuropsychological evaluation, the family must seek those evaluations and determinations through their own clinicians. Students who attend VHS Learning Academy might be eligible to receive academic testing, therapy, and related services through their district of residence.

Teachers will provide accommodations for students who might need extended time. Additional academic support or specialized services are the responsibility of the family. For students enrolled in AP courses, VHS Learning Academy requires families to request accommodations from the College Board using the [parent request protocol](#).

Advanced Placement: Exam Registration

VHS Learning Academy does not offer AP exams. VHS Learning Academy students must locate a site in their local area where they can take the exam. The College Board provides [information for homeschooled and virtual students](#). Be aware of the timeline for this process; the College Board recommends contacting their AP Services for Students number (888-225-5427 or 212-632-1780) in September to obtain names of local testing sites as exams must be ordered during the fall.

Audit Request

Students that experience hardship can request to audit a course (remain enrolled for the purpose of enrichment rather than earning credit). Audit requests should be made to the school counselor or academic liaison and will be approved after consultation about the impact of an audit on graduation or grade level progression. **Audited courses will be recorded on the student's transcript as a withdrawal.**

Course Change Requests

Students who wish to change the level of a course must file a support request so their school counselor or academic liaison can discuss the request with the learning coach. Changes in course level, as available, are allowed through the first term of a course. Decisions about the appropriateness of the change are made on a case-by-case basis.

Course Enrollment

Course selection is a collaborative decision made by the student, parent/learning coach, school counselor, and school staff. Prior grades and transcript analysis are key components of the placement decision, as are math readiness assessments, as needed.

A typical full-time student course load is 5.5 - 6 credits. Students can elect to take a combination of paced and self-paced courses; students are not allowed to take only self-paced courses.

There is flexibility for students to reduce course load if they receive credit for out of school experiences or an exemption for elective or physical education requirements. Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 4 credits per academic year to maintain enrollment in VHS Learning Academy.

Course Failure and Repeat Credit

Students must earn a final grade of 60% or better to pass a course. Courses required for graduation must be retaken or remediated, depending on the student's final score. Students who pass a course (earn a grade higher than 60%) are not allowed to retake a course for a higher score.

Students who fail a course with a grade between 45-59% are eligible for course remediation using the credit recovery program. If a student fails the course with a grade lower than 45%, the course must be retaken in its entirety. Once the new course is completed, the grade from the second attempt will count towards the student's GPA. The failed course will be recorded on the student's transcript but will not count towards the GPA.

Course Offerings

As a full-time program of VHS Learning (VHS, Inc.), VHS Learning Academy provides students with the opportunity to enroll in any of the courses in our catalog. In addition, we will source courses from accredited providers if a student requires access to a course not offered in our catalog. Course descriptions, objectives, and requirements can be found in the [course catalog](#).

Dropping Courses

Students under age 18 who wish to drop a course must have a parent/guardian submit the request, in writing, to the academic liaison or school counselor. The request must include the student's name, parent/guardian name, name of course to be dropped, and reason for the request. The request can be faxed to 978-897-9839 or scanned and emailed to the academic liaison or school counselor. School counselors review the requests and determine if the course drop will be approved. Until an official determination is made, students should continue working in their courses.

Dual Enrollment Courses

College courses will count towards graduation requirements with approval of the VHS Learning administration.

- Courses taken prior to admission will be considered as part of the student's application and initial course transcript.
- Credit will be earned on a semester basis. Semester-length college courses will translate into 0.5 credit each on the VHS Learning Academy transcript.
- College courses will be noted as transfer credit on a students' transcript.
- College courses will not count towards a student's GPA.
- The maximum number of college credits a student can apply to the VHS Learning Academy diploma is 5.5 credits.

Failing Grade/Numerically Not Possible to Pass

We make every effort to support students who are struggling to be successful in our program. If there comes a time when a student is no longer able to pass a course, the following options are available. Dropping the course could affect graduation date; this option should be discussed with the school counselor prior to finalizing a decision.

- Drop the course to focus on other courses and attempt it again in a future semester.
- Remain enrolled in the course and remediate the failed grade in accordance with the Course Failures and Repeat Credit policy.

Grade Point Average (GPA) / Weighted GPA

Grade point average is determined by dividing the number of quality points earned by the number of credits attempted. Failed courses will be included in calculated GPA as attempted credit unless the course is remediated according to the Course Failures and Repeat Credit policy. GPA is determined using final course grades and is calculated once per year at the end of the academic year. Cumulative GPA is determined using all courses completed at VHS Learning Academy only. VHS Learning classes taken prior to enrollment will count towards GPA. Transfer credits, college courses, and credits taken with partner providers are not used to calculate cumulative GPA. To acknowledge the rigor and expectations of honors and AP classes, GPA will be weighted according to the table below.

Grade Scale and Quality Points

Numeric Score	Transcript Grade	Quality Points Standard	Quality Points Honors	Quality Points AP
97-100	A+	4.3	4.8	5.3
93-96	A	4.0	4.5	5.0
90-92	A-	3.7	4.2	4.7
87-89	B+	3.3	3.8	4.3
83-86	B	3.0	3.5	4.0
80-82	B-	2.7	3.2	3.7
77-79	C+	2.3	2.8	3.3
73-76	C	2.0	2.5	3.0
70-72	C-	1.7	2.2	2.7
67-69	D+	1.3	1.8	2.3
63-66	D	1.0	1.5	2.0
60-62	D-	0.7	1.2	1.7
50-59	F+	0	0	0
0-49	F	0	0	0

Grade Level Promotion

Students must earn a minimum of 22 credits to graduate. Students who fail one course each year will be allowed to be promoted to the next grade, so long as they have achieved minimum credit accumulation according to the following guidelines:

- to be considered Grade 10, a student must have earned at least 5 credits;
- to be considered Grade 11, a student must have earned at least 10 credits; and
- to be considered Grade 12, a student must have earned at least 16 credits.

Parents/guardians of students under age 18 will be notified that their student has not earned enough credit to progress to the next grade.

Graduation Requirements

Subject	Years/Credits	Notes
English	4 years (4 credits)	
Mathematics	4 years (4 credits)	
Science	3 years (3 credits)	3 credits of lab courses required
Social Studies	3 years (3 credits)	World and U.S. History, and U.S. Government
World Language	2 years (2 credits) of same language	Students with demonstrated fluency and literacy in a language other than English can complete other elective credits in lieu of world language. Speak with the school counselor for more details.
Health/Personal Finance	1 year (1 credit)	0.5 credit each
Physical Education	1 year (1 credit)	
Arts/humanities	1 year (1 credit)	
Electives	3 credits	
TOTAL	22 credits	

Honor Roll

VHS Learning Academy will publish an honor roll at the end of each semester. To earn an honors designation, confirmed semester grades must be A or B in all classes. Students with grades of A in all classes will be designated as high honors scholars. The honor roll, including limited directory information, may be published in the monthly newsletter, and will be reported to local media outlets for publication at the discretion of VHS Learning Academy.

Student Orientation

Prior to beginning a course, students will complete Student Orientation, a self-paced module that provides an overview of course structure and navigation. In addition, each course contains a module entitled **Start Here to Begin your Course**, which introduces general academic policies, provides tips for time management and organizing work, and explains additional elements of our courses.

Transfer Credit

To receive a diploma from VHS Learning Academy, students must successfully complete at least one academic year of VHS Learning Academy courses (5.5 credits). Students who wish to have credits earned at other institutions accepted for credit towards a diploma must provide official transcripts from other institutions. Students may be asked to provide samples of work to verify rigor of courses, especially in cases where the course name may not provide an adequate description of how the course content would meet our requirements.

Additional Student Policies/Code of Conduct

Attendance Policy

Most courses run on a continuous, 15-week semester calendar with a break between semesters, as indicated on the [academic calendar](#). Given the time commitments outlined in the VHS Learning Handbook, it is expected students will work on their VHS Learning Academy coursework for approximately 6 hours per day, 5 days per week.

We recognize that there are times when students may be absent from class due to illness, family commitments, or other reasons. When issues that impact attendance arise, teachers and support staff work with the student to adapt the course schedule. In the case of a planned absence of 3 days or more, students must notify their teacher and academic liaison in advance, to accommodate for that absence.

Due to the collaborative nature of our courses, successful students will login and participate in class multiple days each week. Frequent or extended absences, as indicated by learning management system user progress analysis, may result in students being re-enrolled in a course in a future program, or withdrawn from the Academy altogether. The Dean makes these decisions, in collaboration with VHS Learning staff members.

Self-Paced courses are available to meet certain requirements. If these types of courses are required, the student must discuss the need with their counselor, so an individualized plan can be made to accommodate the request.

Verification of Attendance

Learning coaches are responsible for ensuring students are engaged with their learning each week. They should maintain a weekly log of time spent in class that, upon request, will be reviewed by school administrators. This document, along with user progress logs, is evidence of student attendance to ensure students are not truant from school.

Truancy

Student user progress, postings in class, and weekly learning coach attendance logs are evidence that students are engaged in their education. A student is considered truant if they fail to login and submit work to class for 7 consecutive days without notification to VHS Learning Academy. In the case of truancy, the parent/guardian is notified of the absence and the fact that the student is in danger of being withdrawn from the Academy due to excessive absences. Upon parental notification, the student must return to class within 24 hours, or the student will be removed from the Academy. If the learning coach is not accessible a certified letter will be sent to the home address notifying the guardian of the attendance issue.

Failure to Follow Code of Conduct: Penalties

Failure to follow our code of conduct guidelines may result in the following:

- Removal from courses and/or programs
- Suspension or expulsion from VHS Learning Academy
- Legal and/or law enforcement action
- Forfeit of student tuition and/or fees paid

Note: Any activity in violation of local or federal laws is considered to also be a violation of the VHS Learning Academy code of conduct.

Due Process

We believe the right to a quality education should not be infringed upon in any way. School administrators are here to help students if a problem should arise. All students are guaranteed due process. Except in the case of extreme infractions, such as felony charges, sexual misconduct, drug/weapons charges, and any other infractions that would jeopardize the safety of VHS Learning Academy, students under consideration of expulsion from the Academy will be informed of the disciplinary offense and provided with an opportunity to respond and participate in a hearing before determination of suspension or expulsion. Written notice of the hearing will be provided to the student and parent/guardian with at least 48 hours' notice of the hearing. The following process will be used at the hearing:

- Student, parent/guardian, and administrators will convene in person or by video meeting. Parent/guardians can request the proceedings be recorded if they wish.
- Administrators will include Dean, Associate Dean(s), and School Counselor.
- The Dean will review the cause for the suspension/expulsion, providing facts and evidence used to determine necessity of this action.
- The student will respond to the description of the incident, providing any relevant information to the administrators for consideration.
- The administrators will ask questions of the student.
- The parents will be allowed to make a statement, if desired, and can invite a member of the faculty to speak on behalf of the student, if desired.
- The student and parents will be provided with a timeframe for the results of the hearing and will be asked to adjourn from the session. They can meet separately with the School Counselor if they have questions about the process.
- The administrators will deliberate and determine whether suspension/expulsion is warranted or whether more information is required.
- The results of the meeting will be delivered to the student and parents within 48 hours.

If the student and parents are not satisfied with the decision of the committee, they may appeal the decision, in writing, to the Dean of VHS Learning Academy at 4 Mill and Main Place, Suite 510, Maynard, MA, 01754. The Dean has the authority to convene a review committee and review the decision at their discretion.

Additional Administrative Policies

Administrative Oversight

VHS Learning Academy reserves the right to review all materials used and transmitted at the Academy, and through VHS, Inc., to oversee safety and determine that the materials are appropriate. Review may be done at any time, without notice, and may include emails, discussion postings, and other such communications. Academy policies are subject to change at any time. Students and families should refer to the most updated policy handbook for current policies and procedures.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

No student will be excluded from participating in VHS Learning Academy based on race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual preference, nation of origin, or disability. Students applying to VHS Learning Academy will be considered for admission based on academic record, potential for success in an online learning environment, and adequacy of support network for the student who will be working in the home environment. Complaints should be filed with the Dean, who will investigate any allegations of discrimination.

Data Directory

VHS Learning Academy abides by the Code of Massachusetts Regulations regarding student information, specifically 603 CMR 23. We maintain limited directory information about students, including a student's name, hometown, dates of attendance, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans. We will release this limited directory information when required to announce academic honors, student achievements, and graduation information. Students or parents who wish to not have this limited directory information released must inform VHS Learning Academy before September 15 of each academic year. Notification should be emailed to: MassMayflower@vhslearning.org or faxed to 978-897-9839.

Student Records

Student academic records are maintained for at least 5 years following withdrawal or graduation date. Requests for copies of academic records must be made in writing. Parents/guardians of students under 18 should contact the office for information and a form to request educational records. A records fee may be assessed should printing and mailing charges be incurred.

Massachusetts Hazing Law

VHS Learning Academy complies with the Massachusetts Hazing Law, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS 269:17, 18, 19

269:17 HAZING; ORGANIZING OR PARTICIPATING; HAZING DEFINED. Section 17.

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one, [sic] year, or both such fine and imprisonment. The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the

physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

269:18 FAILURE TO REPORT HAZING. Section 18.

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

269:19 Copy of secs. 17-19; issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report Section 19.

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post-secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team, or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams, or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its member, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full-time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying

that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communication the institution's policies to its students.

The board of regents and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

Family Information

Welcome to VHS Learning Academy! We are excited that your family has chosen to be a part of our school and look forward to helping your student achieve their educational goals. We hope you have read this handbook so you can understand the policies that guide our program. If you, or your student, have questions about our school or policies, please do not hesitate to call our office at 978-897-1900 or speak with your academic liaison directly.

Benefits of VHS Learning Academy

VHS Learning Academy is a program of VHS, Inc., established to ensure all students have access to a rigorous, flexible, college-preparatory high school experience. We have found there are many benefits to experiencing asynchronous, cohort-based online courses.

Through exposure to our complete program of studies students have access to courses that allow them to discover a possible career of interest. In addition, our model encourages development of self-regulation, self-advocacy, and time management skills. Our class discussion boards give students time to think before posting their responses and offer an opportunity for all students to be heard. Exposure to students from across the United States and from a variety of international locations is also enriching, especially in courses that explore content where global perspective is critical.

Last, but by no means least, our program provides a safe way for students to take online classes. Our rigorous, but supportive courses are great preparation for post-secondary pursuits. Many colleges are using blended or online courses as part of their undergraduate programs. Our former students have shared that online course work in high school was beneficial to them in college.

Getting Help

We view the learning coach as a critical piece of your student's support system. After acceptance into VHS Learning Academy each student is introduced to their academic liaison, a staff member who will be their primary point of contact throughout their time at our school. Academic liaisons are a support system for parents too! They can answer many of your questions about your student's classes. You will also connect with a school counselor who will be your primary point of contact for scheduling and all other student support questions. We are here to help make your time at our school successful – if you need anything please ask.

Parent Advisory Council and Feedback

All parents are invited to participate in the Parent Advisory Council (PAC), a group that will convene at least once each academic year to solicit feedback on specific aspects of our school programs. In addition to the PAC, students and parents will be surveyed each academic year so that administrators can reflect on program quality and identify areas of commendation and of growth. As an organization with a long history of reflection and continuous improvement, we encourage feedback at any time. Simply submit a [support request](#) or email our Dean (amichalowski@vhslearning.org) with commendations or areas of concern.