

SHELDON ACADEMY

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Sheldon Academy was granted renewal of general and special education independent school approval for ages 5-22 in grades K-12 on August 23, 2016. This approval is valid until June 30, 2021. Sheldon Academy has submitted all reapproval information as required for FY22 & FY23; however, due to COVID, the Agency of Education's site visits are delayed. As of July 2023 an updated tuition rate has been submitted and accepted by the AOE. A Site visit has not yet taken place. We will update you when the process is completed.

16 VSA § 166 (b)(3) An approved independent school shall provide to the parent or guardian responsible for each of its students, prior to accepting any money for a student, an accurate statement in writing of its status under this section, and a copy of this section. Failure to comply with this provision may create a permissible inference of false advertising in violation of 13 V.S.A. § 2005.

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SECTION 1

General Information

Welcome to Sheldon Academy!

As a part of The Vermont Achievement Center, we feel strongly that our school philosophy embodies the mission of VAC.

- *All people are capable of change.*
- *Individuals flourish when they are nurtured, valued and treated with respect.*
- *Education is empowering.*
- *The family is the primary influence in a person's life.*
- *Children belong in a family.*
- *Families are enhanced by support of the community.*
- *Children and family services are flexible and responsive to changing needs.*

Our faculty and staff will treat you with respect, give you care and nurturing, guidance and support. Most of all they are going to teach you to trust in yourself and embrace your positive attributes. You are an important part of our community; we will work with you to find your best learning style, use your interests to grow your skills and find ways to overcome your challenges. While you are with us we ask that you try new ways of thinking, give old experiences new chances and new experiences a fair try. The information in this handbook is to guide you and your family in getting to know our supports and expectations. We know that there will be tough times and great moments. We will take this journey together.

Have a wonderful school year!

Jennifer Dattoli
Director of Education

Non-Discrimination Policy

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Higher Education Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the rules and regulations promulgated by the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, it is the policy of Sheldon Academy that no person, upon the basis of race, color, national origin, creed or faith, gender or age, handicapping condition and/or disability, shall be excluded from participation in any educational program or activity at the school.

Gender Policy

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and 9 V.S.A. 45021 protect all students from sex discrimination, including transgender students and students who do not conform to traditional gender stereotypes. It is the policy of the Vermont Achievement Center to provide a safe, orderly, civil and positive learning environment for all students, regardless of perceived or actual sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. This policy is designed to provide direction for administrators, staff, students, and parents to address issues that may arise concerning the needs of transgender and gender nonconforming students. Understanding personal identity, developing trust in self, strength in skills and emotional confidence to be comfortable in society are a part of this awareness. It is the position of Sheldon Academy to use a therapeutic approach for the treatment of emotional and behavioral needs, challenges and growth for all students.

Definitions:

- Cisgender: means a person whose gender identity corresponds to their assigned sex at birth.
- Gender Identity: means a person's actual or perceived gender identity, or gender related characteristics that are intrinsically related to a person's gender or gender identity, regardless of the person's assigned sex at birth.
- Gender Expression: means the way a person externally communicates gender to other people such as through behaviors, clothing, hairstyles, voice, mannerisms, activities, or body characteristics.
- Gender Nonconforming: refers to a person whose gender-related identity and/or gender expression does not conform to the social expectations or norms for a person of that sex assigned at birth. Other terms that have the same or similar meaning include gender creative, gender variant, gender expansive, gender fluid or gender atypical.
- Sexual Orientation: is a person's emotional and sexual attraction to other people based on the gender of the other person. Sexual orientation is not the same as gender identity. Not all transgender students identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual, and not all gay, lesbian and bisexual students display gender nonconforming characteristics.
- Transgender: is a term that describes a person whose gender identity or gender expression is different from the person's assigned sex at birth.

Privacy

- All students have the right to privacy. Consistent with those rights provided under the Family

Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 a transgender or gender nonconforming student will be able to discuss and express their gender identity and gender expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much of their private information to share with others.

- In addition, school staff will respect any requests to use a name and pronoun that corresponds to the student's gender identity that the student asserts or wishes to assert at school. Students will not be required to obtain a court ordered name and/or gender change or to change their pupil personnel records as a prerequisite to being addressed by the name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity.
- There may be times when disclosure to school staff or employees of a student's transgender status is necessary in order to fulfill a school's obligations to the transgender student with respect to safety and health, education and anti-discrimination efforts. In all cases the school will work closely with students and families in devising an appropriate plan regarding the confidentiality of a student's transgender status that works for both the student and the student's family while meeting competing legal requirements. To the extent possible and consistent with all competing legal requirements, school personnel will endeavor throughout to maintain the confidentiality of the student's transgender status.

Student Records

- Record keeping procedures will ensure that all students' personally identifiable information is maintained in compliance with FERPA and state and federally mandated reporting requirements.
- To the extent that the school is not legally required to use a student's legal name or gender on school records and other documents, the school will use the name and gender preferred by the student.
- Where a student's record(s) may not be changed absent court order due to state and federal law, efforts will be taken to maintain those records in strictest confidentiality in order to preserve the student's transgender status and, where appropriate, for an amended version to be maintained which preserves the confidentiality of that transgender status where a review of the record is required for educational purposes by either school personnel educating the student or personnel who will be evaluating the student.
- A student (or parent in the case of a minor student) who is currently enrolled may request retroactive changes to that student's record including name and gender. Such requests will be handled on a case by case basis with consideration of the need to maintain legally accurate records consistent with state and federal mandated reporting requirements with the school's ongoing efforts to maintain internal student confidentiality regarding a student's transgender status.
- Former student permanent pupil records will be changed by request of a parent of a minor student, or former students who have reached the age of majority, upon receipt of documentation that such legal name and/or gender have been changed pursuant to applicable state law.

Facility Use

- It is the school policy for students to use a bathroom facility one person at a time regardless of the availability to accommodate multiple people. When that is not feasible to do so, facilities are monitored by school staff to ensure student safety and privacy.
- A transgender student should not be required to use a locker room or restroom that conflicts with the student's gender identity.
- Any student who expresses a need or desire for increased privacy will be provided with

reasonable alternative arrangements. Reasonable alternative arrangements may include the use of a private area, or a separate changing schedule, or use of a single stall restroom. Any alternative arrangement will be provided in a way that protects a student's ability to keep their transgender status confidential.

School Activities

- In circumstances where students are separated by gender in school activities (i.e. overnight field trips), students will be permitted to participate in accordance with their gender identity consistently asserted at school. Activities that may involve the need for accommodations to address student privacy concerns will be addressed on a case-by-case basis considering the factors listed above.

Policies Statement

The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are subject to the comprehensive policies adopted by the Vermont Achievement Center-Sheldon Academy, set out in the Policy Manual. Therefore, the policies and procedures in this handbook are subject to change, revision or amendment by the Vermont Achievement Center-Sheldon Academy, with or without direct notice to students.

Adult Code of Conduct

Sheldon Academy/VAC is committed to maintaining learning environments that are physically and emotionally safe for all children and adults. The Sheldon Academy/VAC Adult Code of Conduct informs us all of expectations for behavior while on school premises, and when communicating with other adults involved in the care and education of the children in our school community.

All adults (school employees, affiliates, parents, grandparents, family members, and guardians) are expected to adhere to the following standards of conduct:

- Prioritize the education of our community's children by ensuring timely, regular school attendance, and by participating in school conferences.
- Recognize that the education of a child is a joint partnership between home and school.
- All communication and correspondence between home and school will be conducted fairly, respectfully, and in a timely manner.
- Students and their learning should be at the center of all communications and priorities.
- Adults shall conduct themselves respectfully and professionally in all interactions.
- Adults shall consider the impact of social media comments on the greater community and model being set for children, prior to posting on social media sites.

Sheldon Academy/VAC will not tolerate the following conduct:

- Adults using abusive, threatening, insulting, or demeaning language or tone toward other adults or children.
- Participation by adults in any school activity while under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs.
- Threatening to do bodily harm to a member of the school community.
- Abusive or threatening email, text, voicemail, or other forms of written or verbal communication.

Adults who are not able to meet our expectations for conduct will be asked to leave the premises immediately, and to schedule a time to meet with school administration when they are able to conduct themselves in a safe manner. Sheldon Academy and/or VAC administration/board of directors reserve the right to deny future access to the school and school activities if the Code of Conduct is violated. We trust that all adults within our communities will help our school in implementing this procedure, and we thank you for your support of our school environment.

Due Process

Student discipline shall be consistent with due process of the law. The parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible by an administrator of an offense and course of disciplinary action to be taken. The administrator or parent/guardian may request a meeting between parties involved in the incident and may subsequently request a following meeting with the building principal. Discipline, suspension or dismissal of students and recommended procedures for education, and for referral for treatment and rehabilitation shall be in accordance with state law. [VT Law: Title 3, Chapter 25 VSA]

Student Admissions Procedure

Students enrolling at Sheldon Academy for the first time are welcomed without judgment of previous school experiences and will be given every opportunity to succeed in our program. The enrollment process begins with setting up a meeting with the student's parent/guardian and School District of Residence/LEA. Families may have other support personnel attend meetings as well such as parent advocate, mental health and DCF case managers. During this meeting, the student's needs and behavior challenges will be discussed. Sheldon Academy will give a general overview of the program or class that may meet the child's needs. We ask that the family share reports from previous schools, providers or placements including IEP, FBA, Neuro-psychological reports and most recent school evaluation. The Sheldon Academy team will review reports and discuss within reason if the program can meet the needs of the student. Once placement is determined to be a good fit for meeting the child's behavior and learning needs then enrollment forms will be provided to the family and school district to be completed and submitted before attendance can begin.

Once forms are received, a plan is developed with the team and family that will allow the student to ease into the new environment in a manner that works for the student/family and Sheldon Academy. A reasonable start date will be provided that allows for program teachers and staff to prepare space and materials for the child. Students are assigned a classroom support person until they feel comfortable accessing multiple teachers and staff in the classroom and school. Behavior and academic data will help to decide the kind of ongoing support that is needed for the student to maximize their positive behavior skills.

Teacher Credentials

Parents have the right to request information regarding the credentials of their child's teachers. They can request the teachers' level of certification, areas of licensure, and "highly qualified" status. Requests for information should be made to the school building principal.

Arrival & Dismissal

All students should arrive at school for the start of the day at 8:30. Students are dismissed at 2:30. In the event that a half day is to take place, dismissal is at 12:30.

Cafeteria Information

The Cafeteria is open to all students for breakfast and lunch daily. Breakfast is offered from 8:30 to 8:55 and lunch is offered during a lunch period between 11:30 to 12:30. Meals are served on half days. VAC is a Nut Free facility. Students are able to choose from the menu for breakfast and lunch, alternative options are listed. Students are welcomed to bring food from home; a microwave and toaster oven are provided for student use.

Philosophy

We believe every child is unique and possesses wonderful gifts. It is our mission to nurture and cultivate every child's gifts and to help them find and understand the world around them and their place in it.

Purpose

To empower children and their families to reach their highest potential, by providing a therapeutic day school for students with emotional and behavioral challenges, who are not thriving in a traditional school environment but can be successful in other ways.

Vision

To continue to improve the lives of individuals and families by making a meaningful change in the educational experience and providing a dynamic academic and social/emotional curriculum to students ages 5-21.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE LISTINGS

VAC Main Building (802)-775-2395

Sheldon Academy Education Department

Name	Title	Extension
Jennifer Dattoli	Director of Education	2304
Debbie Holmes	Administrative Assistant	2404
David Wiezalis	Program Supervisor	2302
Patrick Genovesi	Assistant Program Supervisor	2091
Tammy Robitille	Program Clinician	2617

All phone calls should be directed to Debbie Holmes Ext. 2404. If there is an emergency, you may contact classrooms directly. When contacting a specific staff person please use the VAC main number and the dial by last name directory or refer to the updated phone directory provided separately.

SECTION 2

Academic Information

Academic Program

Sheldon Academy is a Vermont State Board of Education approved independent school serving general and special education day students. Our education program encompasses the individual academic needs of each student, while taking into account individual development and special education needs. The program promotes academic growth utilizing appropriate techniques or curricula that are individualized to meet the needs of each learner, while modeling the regular curriculum of a public school. The focus of the academic program is to instruct each student at a level such that his or her academic skills are commensurate with his/her potential. The school program also incorporates a behavioral intervention program designed to affect change in the student so that they will be ready for learning and able to cope with stress while meeting the expectations of school and society. The goal is to maximize a student's positive behavior and achievement. Groups overlap in grade level intentionally so students may be placed with a group within their age range that best matches their individual academic and social learning needs. A child's maturity level is a factor when deciding class placement.

All groups focus on basic skill acquisition and use, content area knowledge: social studies, science, STEM, art, music and humanities are all studied. We emphasize learning that meets a student's areas of interests and incorporate learning through traditional methods, hands-on investigation, computers and digital learning. All students have access to a ChromeBook, a digital camera and are assigned login/user information for the website platforms we use for fun and supplemental learning support. Whenever possible community based learning takes place through short outings in the local Rutland area and whole day field trips within Vermont and bordering states.

Each student attends class from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM Monday through Friday. The curriculum and schedule represent best practices, state standards, graduation requirements and common core establishments of evidence based practices. In addition, clinical services including individual counseling, social skill groups and case management are offered. Students are able to participate in physical education, fine arts, culinary, music, swimming, community outings and field trips.

Primary Level: Grades 1-4

The primary classroom students in grades 1 through 4 utilize classroom organizers, calendars, sensory integration tools, and respectful learning tools, etc. to help control and regulate their behavior. The behavioral supports are based upon what is found to be developmentally age appropriate and rewarding. Materialistic items and trinkets tend to be what they like to collect, as well as spending meaningful time with peers through play and adventure. The classroom works during their academic blocks, which are consistently delivered for an average of 20-30 minutes throughout the day. After each block of time the students have a short break and the opportunity to check in with classroom staff regarding their behavior points and tokens earned toward free choice activities. All free choice activities are connected to the level system of privileges and are distributed to encourage more controlled behavior in order to achieve the higher desired activities. Students in this group are learning to learn, are being introduced to consistent levels of expectations and support and are beginning to learn the boundaries and nuances of social communication with their peers, staff and not always being in control of the situation.

Academic instruction focuses on learning basic skills concepts and developing automaticity in using and applying this information. The basic skill areas are math numeracy and fluency, reading and language decoding and fluency, writing letters, numbers and sentences and developing a use of classroom

resources. Computer applications such as typing, email, online learning and website navigation are all part of classroom instruction.

Elementary Level: Grades 4-6

The elementary classroom is designed to accommodate individual learning and social emotional needs with an emphasis on group cooperation and problem solving to make a change in a person's actions. Students in this age group are learning to balance the desires and discoveries of childhood with gaining more independent thinking and responsibilities. The staff provides a multi-modal teaching style designed to create learning through physical and hands-on learning, combined with interest based projects incorporating themes and sensory integration into lessons. Basic skill areas continue to be focused on but are also incorporated into larger thinking concepts within class projects and theme based learning. As in the younger grades, computer applications such as typing, email, online learning and website navigation are all part of classroom instruction. Additionally, students are learning to complete assignments in digital formats, edit their work before finalizing their assignments and using digital tools such as calculators, google applications for uploading information and digital storage drives.

Middle School: Grades 6-8

The Middle School Class is designed to optimize the focus on independence, growth and the acknowledgement of moving from childhood into teenage years. Students in this group are learning to balance the increase in expected maturity with the odd changes in physical growth and social aspirations at this stage in life. Instruction, support and resources are designed to guide the student to making positive, healthy choices that will begin the strong foundation for independent living and career identification.

Academic content focuses on using basic skills confidently, applying secure skills to complete assignments with moderate to minimal support and having a self-directed approach to learning what they need to grow. A strong connection is made to real life applications of skills and information and beginning to identify how they want to contribute to society as an adult. Older Middle school students may participate in job interest surveys and review job skill requirements as one way of gaining more information in their areas of interest.

ASD/Life Skills: Grades 5-12

The ASD/Life Skills class is designed to focus on the individual learning, developmental and personal care needs of specifically identified students. Students are learning to balance many similar expectations as other classes with a more individualized timeline and emphasis on accessing and integrating into the social world in meaningful ways. Skills such as communication, following a schedule, health & fitness, group socialization, and pre-employment and vocational skills are practiced daily in addition to identified academic and basic skill content. Students may be assigned one to one Paraeducator support to be successful during the school day. A strong focus is placed on community learning, getting to know community based supports and consistency in self and skill demonstration.

Transitioning Students

Transitioning to and from our program is monitored in multiple ways; entering into Sheldon Academy for the first time, returning from another placement (residential or mental health facility, different school, relocated residence) and moving on from Sheldon Academy.

First time enrollment

Students enrolling at Sheldon Academy for the first time are welcomed without judgment of previous school experiences and will be given every opportunity to succeed in our program. A plan is developed with the team and family that will allow the student to ease into the new environment in a manner that works for the student/family and Sheldon Academy. Students are assigned a classroom support person until they feel comfortable accessing multiple teachers and staff in the classroom and school. Behavior

and academic data will help to decide the kind of ongoing supports that are needed for the student to maximize their positive behavior skills.

Returning Students

It is not uncommon for a student or family to seek additional support from the community or state that may result in the child visiting a mental health or related facility. If this were to occur and the nature of the visit is short-term, Sheldon Academy will continue to participate as a member of the child's IEP/504/CSP team. An agreement with the LEA will be made to hold a place for the student until they are able to return such the recommendation to do so is written. If it is decided that the student will not return to this placement, then Sheldon Academy will participate in the transition process and share information where appropriate.

Program Completion

Every student has a different timeline to which they enter and exit Sheldon Academy. Not setting a specific timeline allows for students to develop new skills and change undesired behavior in meaningful ways, not rushed to meet a schedule. Students who are on a transition level within the program have demonstrated success in target areas and are beginning a return to their local school. Mainstreaming may be scheduled for designated time periods within the receiving public school with an emphasis placed on recreating the previously designed environment and therapeutic management systems in the new environment. The overall program of each student focuses on learning the academic, emotional, social and behavioral skills needed to make a successful transition to an inclusionary school placement. Once a student demonstrates the overall criteria of skills, a schedule is designed that notes when a student has completed the transition and will begin to attend the new placement regularly. Sheldon Academy will participate in the meeting process to change placement and IEP for the new environment.

Individual Education Program (IEP)

An IEP is written, maintained and updated for each student by the sending School District, in consultation with Sheldon Academy's education and treatment team.

504 Plan

A 504 plan is written, maintained and updated for each student by the sending School District, in consultation with Sheldon Academy's education and treatment team.

Student Assessments

Classroom teachers and special educators conduct assessments of student learning on a scheduled basis. These assessments are informal, teacher and curriculum information used to guide instruction and provide the most up to date interventions for teaching practices based on researched curriculum components.

Sheldon Academy students who are Vermont residents are required to be offered Vermont State Assessments. Teachers will identify appropriate and allowable accommodations for taking the test and the level at which the student should be assessed.

Informal and Formal Assessments

Formal evaluations for special education eligibility are the responsibility of the School District/LEA. The testing may take place in the Sheldon Academy setting and we encourage evaluators to conduct in-class observation of the student when appropriate. Sheldon Academy will complete any checklists or other forms when asked by the evaluator or school psychologist and/or the special educator as deemed necessary for special education 3 year re-evaluation or other assessments.

Academic Reports/Report Cards

Report cards will be distributed three times per year outlining current achievement and IEP goals: December, March and June

Grading System

Sheldon Academy participates in the Proficiency Grading System. Students are given outlined criteria for assignments that indicate how they can demonstrate learned skills and use of their knowledge. Teachers give students opportunities to meet one-to-one, revise, edit and redo their assignments to achieve a higher score towards proficiency.

Graduation Requirements

Students in grades 9-12 are given the opportunity to earn high school credits. Sheldon Academy and the LEA/Identified High School will work together to keep a transcript of the student's classes and credit hours of completion toward graduation. The student will be required to earn the number of credits outlined by the LEA/Identified High School.

ACT 176 - High School Completion Program

Established through 16 V.S.A. 1049, the High School Completion Program allows a person not enrolled in school and between the ages of 16 and 21 to be eligible to request an individual graduation plan in order to obtain a high school diploma. Educational services may be provided by a public/independent high school, an approved provider, or a combination of these. School Districts shall award a high school diploma to persons who successfully complete their approved graduation education plans

Report Card Assessment Key & Grading Definition

E	**Exceeding**: Student performance is above the standard. Able to demonstrate thorough in-depth understanding of essential and extended concepts and skills. Performance is characterized by the ability to apply and extend the concepts and skills with consistent accuracy, a high level of quality, and independence. Numerical grade = 4
P	**Proficient**: Student performance is meeting the standard. Able to demonstrate understanding of essential concepts & skills. Performance is characterized by the ability to apply the concepts & skills with accuracy, quality and independence. Numerical grade = 3
D	**Developing**: Student performance is working toward the standard. A beginning understanding of essential concepts and skills. Performance is characterized by the ability to begin applying the concepts and skills with increasing success. Numerical grade = 2
IP	**In Progress**: The student is not meeting the standard at this time. They are not demonstrating an understanding of essential concepts and skills. Performance is demonstrated with assistance, assignments are differentiated and modified. Numerical grade = 1
NC	**Not Complete**: There are insufficient work samples or exposure to content to evaluate this area at this time
U	**Unable to Evaluate**: The student is not willing to attend class or complete assignments at this time.

HOMEWORK:

Students may be required to complete homework assignments. Each student is responsible to transport completed assignments to and from school or submit them electronically. Homework assignments will be collected and graded accordingly. Homework may be a determining factor when grades are issued as each teacher makes the determination to assign homework. Homework assignments may be a percentage of the student's final grade.

The following is a general homework guide:

- Students may be given homework assignments by the classroom teacher.
- Homework will be checked in the classroom and in some cases collected.
- An assignment will be considered complete if it meets the communicated expectations or if it is determined that a student put forth his/her best effort.
- Any assignment that is incomplete, illegible or missing will be considered not complete

School-Provided Materials

School–provided materials are loaned to the students and students are asked to take proper care of them. Students are responsible for: Chromebooks, textbooks, workbooks, cameras etc, under all circumstances, and if it is lost or damaged, students will need to pay the replacement cost.

Field Trips

The purpose of a field trip is to enhance and reinforce the classroom experience. While on the trip all participants are a representative of VAC. All school rules apply. Proper conduct will reflect on the student, the school, and the community. Occasionally, a student may not be permitted to attend a field trip due to safety, behavioral plan levels, or behavior problems on prior school outings, or the discretion of the student's treatment team due to ongoing behavior and safety challenges

Student Appointments

It may be necessary for a student to be absent from class to attend an outside individual counseling session, physician or dentist appointment. At times, student/family meetings are also scheduled during school hours. It is the responsibility of each student to make up an assignment(s) missed while away from school, if appropriate. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify Sheldon Academy if their child will be missing school for an appointment.

Summer Program Participation

Sheldon Academy operates a four to six week summer program for students enrolled in our school year program. Attendance in the program is determined by the IEP/504 team and takes into account the needs, behaviors and supports in place to help the student maintain their current level of functioning as well as any regression the student has demonstrated over a period of time.

SECTION 3

Student Rules of Conduct

1. Cigarette smoking/chewing tobacco/ vape pens, Juuls, e-cigarette/ nicotine/ smoking products are not permitted within school buildings, school buses, VAC vehicles or on the VAC campus.

   In addition, it is a civil violation for a person under the age of 18 to possess or purchase tobacco/nicotine products. It is also a civil violation to furnish tobacco products to a person under the age of 18. Violations of the statute can result in fines and loss of driving license.

2. Drugs and alcohol are considered contraband articles and are not allowed in school buildings, on school property or on school buses or VAC vehicles. If use or possession is suspected by the staff, parents will be contacted, police may be notified and drug screening may be required. **Parental permission must be obtained before any medication will be given at school**. This includes non-prescription medicines. All medication will be kept in a locked cabinet and is to be dispensed only by authorized personnel.

3. Weapons of any kind are considered contraband articles and are not allowed in school buildings or on school property. All weapons will be confiscated by staff and turned over to the Rutland City Police Department, and parents will be called to school to talk with police and school personnel.

4. All students are required to participate in Physical Education and all other regularly scheduled physical activities unless they have an excused medical reason documented by a physician. Proper footwear is expected to be worn for PE activities. Students may borrow needed items from school for the activity as needed and available.

5. Physical assault toward staff/peers is criminal behavior. In addition to school consequences, if the seriousness warrants it, assault charges may be filed with the Rutland City Police.

6. Students are responsible for all intentional damage done to school property or other students' personal property. Students will be responsible to repair damage or make retribution in the form of school related community service activities. At the discretion of staff, damage bills may be paid off by performance of school-related activities. If a student transfers out of the program having not completed student damage retribution, a damage bill may be issued to the parent-guardian for payment at the discretion of the Director of Education.

7. VAC is not responsible for any students' personal property brought to school.

8. Students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior while being transported to and from school.

9. No student is allowed to leave the school building or VAC campus without permission and only if accompanied by an adult. If the student leaves the VAC campus without permission, staff will make every effort to persuade the student to return to school. If the student refuses to return, parents and the police will be called as soon as possible. Parents are asked to contact the school if they locate the student first.

School Dress Code

Students are encouraged to dress appropriately but comfortably. They are expected to wear or have available clothing available for the current season, climate or activity. When possible VAC may have available resources to lend to students for activities during the school week. Example: Snow boots, gloves, hats, bike helmets, etc.

Clothing*:* The following articles of clothing are inappropriate in school: ripped clothing, shirts with holes, tank top/sleeveless shirts, "bikini" shorts, clothing with inappropriate advertising (beer, cigarettes, sexually explicit, etc.) and anything else deemed inappropriate or offensive by Sheldon Academy personnel.

Jewelry and Makeup: Jewelry that consists of heavy chains, ropes, spikes or studs is considered inappropriate. Extremely heavy or distracting makeup will not be permitted.

Footwear: Steel toe or similar style hard-toe boots and high heels are not permitted. Flip flops or open-toed sandals are permitted only to and from the pool area or during water-related events but are not permitted otherwise.

Telephone Usage

School telephones are for emergency use only. They are not for casual use by students. Students must obtain permission to use the telephone, and a Sheldon Academy staff member must be present.

Mobile Phones/ Cell Phone/ Electronic Devices

Students are encouraged to keep mobile phones and/or electronic devices at home at all times.
Calls, texting, messaging and any social media-related applications are not permitted for general use during the school day.
Mobile devices are to be out of sight, so they are out of mind, kept on silent and not on a student's physical person. Devices are not permitted in a student's desk or open cubby. Students are encouraged to keep devices secured in their backpack if brought to school. Each homeroom will offer a lockbox location if the student prefers. After the third violation, students must leave the device at home or, upon arrival, give device(s) to a designated staff person each day for one month.

Contraband Articles

The following are considered contraband articles and **will not be permitted** to be brought to VAC or be in the possession of the youths without staff supervision:

- **DRUGS -** Alcohol and any items containing alcohol, marijuana, pills, acid, mushrooms, etc.
- **CIGARETTES** and **CHEWING TOBACCO**
- **DRUG PARAPHERNALIA** -Matches, lighters, pipes, rolling papers, etc.
- **WEAPONS** -Guns, knives, bows, slingshots, fake weapons, bats, ropes, chains, studded bracelets, brass knuckles, glass, sharp objects, knitting needles, rug hooks, tools, nails, screws, etc.
- **PORNOGRAPHY** - Pictures, magazines, videos, CDs, tapes (nothing with sexually explicit language, nudity, swearing, violence, etc.)
- **VANDALISM ITEMS** - Bleach, rubber cement, all types of glue, whiteout, spray paint aerosol cans, permanent markers and all such materials.
- **MEDICATION**—Prescriptions and over the counter medications need to be kept in a locked cabinet in the Health Office.
- **CLOTHING** - with violent, sexual or alcohol/drug contents (hats, t-shirts, etc.).
- **ELECTRONIC DEVICES** - Cameras, hand-held gaming systems, etc. are not permitted at school. However we understand exceptions may arise and such a conversation with the student's classroom teacher and School Administration will take place to determine appropriate permissions in advance of the items coming into school.

There may be other individual items that need to be confiscated if they are deemed unsafe or non-therapeutic for that particular youth. This decision will be made by the School Administration. Any items that have been confiscated *must* be picked up by a parent or legal guardian. Students will not be allowed to transport these items home.

Building and Grounds

We are fortunate that our community has provided us with some of the best facilities available. We owe it to them to take the best possible care of the building and grounds. For any flagrant misuse or abuse, students and their parents will be required to pay for damages resulting from vandalism or inappropriate behavior.

Discipline Policy

It is our belief that all children have certain needs which must be met. These needs, as outlined by Curwin and Mendler (Discipline with Dignity), include:

1. To feel and believe they are capable and successful. (Mastery)
2. To know they are cared about by others. (Belonging)
3. To realize that they are able to influence people and events. (Power)
4. To remember and practice helping others. (Generosity)
5. Fun and stimulation.

It is our premise that behavior, both positive and negative, is exhibited in an attempt to satisfy the aforementioned needs.

In our attempts to modify the behavior of children we care for, we agree to abide by the following principles and guidelines:

- Absolute respect for the dignity and integrity of the child.
- All members of the community, including staff, are entitled to exist in a safe environment.
- Decisions will be made collaboratively with input from all appropriate stakeholders and based on appropriate data.
- All discipline efforts will be as non-intrusive as possible and attempt to move the locus of control from external stimuli to internal.
- All practices will be humane and recognize successive approximations of behavior change on the part of children.
- All interventions will be based on sound theoretical practice that staff understand and can articulate to justify their actions.
- Staff have responsibility for creating a positive, responsive environment and act as appropriate models for children.

Discipline procedures will be implemented that are in alignment with the idiosyncratic needs of particular behavior support plans or particular children. Consideration will be given to the importance of viewing behavior in its context. This means that such elements as student physiology, physical environment, relationships to others and instructional design and implementation may all affect behavior. Interventions should be holistic in nature and address the broad array of variables that may affect children. Practices will be clearly defined and communicated to all stake-holders. There should be a comprehensive data collection system to help guide decision making.

Procedures should be considered along a continuum from least intrusive to most intrusive. All procedures should be subject to the following criteria outlined by Curwin and Mendler:

- It must work to stop disruptive behavior and/or build constructive, prosocial behavior.
- Anyone would find the method acceptable if they were on the receiving end. Teachers should use their feelings as a guide to the relative emotional benefits or liabilities of any and all methods.
- The method(s) are geared toward teaching responsibility (better decision-making) even when compliance is necessary (i.e. safety).
- Teachers are willing to model the method, not merely preach it.
- Teachers can identify and explain how following a rule or procedure can provide both immediate and long-term benefits.

This Discipline Policy and all discipline measures are subject to approval by the administrative staff.

Suspension/Expulsion

Whenever possible, Alternative In-School Instruction will be used as a replacement for a decision to suspend a student from school. We believe that this will allow a student to draw a greater connection to the consequences of their actions. A team meeting with the child's parent/guardian, LEA and Sheldon Academy will take place to determine a length of Alternative In-School Instruction. Once this is identified, the plan will begin the next school day. The student will be in an alternate space with school personnel to complete assignments and activities from each class. The student will have breakfast and lunch in this space. The student's behavior responses, types of behavior displayed and level of work completion throughout the day will determine the types of resources, activities, breaks and choices that are offered.

If, at any point, the Sheldon Academy Team is feeling as if a student should be expelled from our program, we would then warn an IEP/504 meeting to discuss other options or change in placement to another school. These decisions are only considered after a period of time of trying different interventions and supports and an agreed upon determination that the Sheldon Academy program is no longer able to meet the student's educational and behavioral needs.

Sheldon Academy Behavioral Data Tracking

- Data tracking is compiled for the purpose of checking student progress on IEP goals and looking for behavior trends or patterns.
- Behavior data is collected during each academic period, as well as, free choice and reward time.
- Recorded throughout the day are the frequencies of target/undesired/inappropriate behavior in order to formulate individual behavior plans to decrease challenging behaviors. These behaviors include, but are not limited to: Leaving without permission, negative language, rule breaking, verbal threats and physical aggression. Date is also tracked noting the number and type of directed and self-chosen, self-timeout events.

- Behavior Data tracking is a 5 point system, per activity and time period
- Behavior performance is based on these 5 areas

    - Rules and Routine
    - Expected Behavior
    - Expected Communication
    - Participation
    - Level of Independence

- Transitions to and from activity are also tracked as a positive or a negative

Crisis Intervention and Physical Management

All staff are trained in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention through the Crisis Prevention Institute. They follow this model as a very proactive, de-escalation model throughout their school day. Care, Welfare, Safety and Security is of the utmost importance to everyone within our environment. Physical management is the last resort and always follows the above program rules. All staff have immediate communication systems set up (walkie-talkies) in order to ensure constant and consistent communication. All physical management is conducted through a team approach to safely manage a student's out of control behavior. All physical management situations are documented following a process and procedure that is reviewed with staff. Family is always notified of any incidents that lead to the level of physical management use.

Annual Rule 4500 notice to Parents/ Guardians

Thinking-Feeling Room Use / Alternative Space Time Out

Our Thinking-Feeling Rooms are areas available for a student to safely de-escalate, regain control and prepare to meet expectations with a goal for the student to return to his or her classroom or program successfully. Thinking-Feeling rooms are to be used in conjunction with a behavior management intervention in which a student is removed to a supervised area in order to facilitate self-control or to remove a child from a potentially dangerous environment. A Thinking-Feeling room should only be used in conjunction with a behavior management program which teaches and reinforces acceptable behaviors or when a student is in crisis.

Seclusion and Restraint
Department of Education- State Board Rule 4500

The Vermont Department of Education has adopted a rule regarding the use of seclusion and physical interventions in all Vermont schools. This rule became effective on August 15, 2011. **The Sheldon Academy located at the Vermont Achievement Center is in compliance with Rule 4500.**

The purposes of Rule 4500 are to:

- Create and maintain a positive and safe learning environment in schools
- Promote positive behavioral interventions and supports in schools
- Ensure that students are not subjected to inappropriate use of restraint or seclusion

In part, this rule requires schools to:

- Have key staff trained in state-approved physical intervention techniques;
- Notify and inform parents, administration, and in certain circumstances, principal and Vermont Department of Education in the event that seclusion or physical intervention is required;
- Notify parents of the school's compliance with Rule 4500.

Seclusion and Restraint Incident Reporting

Any staff person who administers a restraint or seclusion procedure shall report the incident to the school administrator as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the school day. Additionally, Rule 4500 requires that each use of seclusion and restraint be documented in a written report containing all of the required information listed in the Rule and sent to the building administrator.

Following an incident, two reports are required for compliance. One is the parent/guardian form and the other is the School District Administrator form. Sheldon Academy services students from several different school districts, a designated administrator at Sheldon Academy will fax the "Administrator" form to the sending-school district's *Special Education Coordinator* or the *Out-of-District Coordinator* within a 24-hour period, if not by the end of the incident day. Sheldon Academy staff will also complete the Parent/ Guardian forms by the end of the incident day to be sent home with the student.

For more information on Rule 4500 please visit:
http://education.vermont.gov/state-board/rules/4500
The complete text of State Board Rule 4500 can be found here:
http://education.vermont.gov/documents/4500.pd

Positive Behavior Support System

Sheldon Academy faculty and staff focus on providing a supportive educational environment using age appropriate responses to social interactions that are based upon guiding emotional support and abilities with behavioral responsibilities tied to them. There is a strong focus on the elements that are tracked through our behavior data collection system. We feel strongly that the data collected helps to inform support staff on the individual components and challenges of a student's needs. Each area is defined below. While the language below indicates expectations of behavior, we know that it is our job to guide students towards making positive changes and that challenging behaviors will likely be demonstrated at some point during a student's overall progress.

Rules/Routine: the student's ability to recognize order and organization, permissible actions and the steps to succeeding with limits and boundaries. Our environment provides a high level of structure and consistency. Expectations and support are communicated with students on an ongoing basis. We want students to see this as a comfort and way to know what to expect from the system.

Expected Behavior: the student's ability to control their actions. The type of actions for a task will always be communicated to students. We expect that students will be able to choose the actions that match the activity and emotional output that goes along with the event.

Expected Communication: the student's ability to use secure language in respectful manners to share information, thoughts and ideas, to help advocate for themselves and have needs met. We expect that students will choose the style of communication that matches the activity and emotional output that goes along with the event or information being shared.

Participation: the student's ability to use their skills, resources and supports in meaningful ways, to demonstrate new learning and thinking. We expect that students will join class and group activities with identified supports to engage in tasks, projects and assignments.

Independence: the student's ability to use internal and external supports and resources to self-guide their day and make positive, healthy choices. We expect that students are able to care for themselves when engaged in age and developmentally appropriate tasks, self-care and community skills.

Levels of Interventions

Primary Level: Grades 1-4

The primary classroom students in grades 1 through 4 utilize classroom organizers, calendars, sensory integration tools, and respectful learning tools, etc. to help control and regulate their behavior. The behavioral supports are based upon what is found to be developmentally age appropriate and rewarding. Materialistic items and trinkets tend to be what they like to collect, as well as spending meaningful time with peers through play and adventure. The classroom works during their academic blocks, which are consistently delivered for an average of 20-30 minutes throughout the day. After each block of time the students have a short break and the opportunity to check in with classroom staff regarding their behavior points and tokens earned toward free choice activities. All free choice activities are connected to the level system of privileges and are distributed to encourage more controlled behavior in order to achieve the higher desired activities. Students in this group are learning to learn, are being introduced to consistent levels of expectations and support and are beginning to learn the boundaries and nuances of social communication with their peers, staff and not always being in control of the situation.

Elementary Level: Grades 4-6 The elementary classroom is designed to accommodate individual learning and social emotional needs with an emphasis on group cooperation and problem solving to make a change. Students in this age group are learning to balance the desires and discoveries of childhood with gaining more independent thinking and responsibilities. The staff provides a multi-modal teaching style designed to create learning through physical and hands-on learning, combined with interest-based projects incorporating themes and sensory integration into lessons.

Middle School: Grades 6-8

The Middle School Class is designed to optimize the focus on independence, growth and the acknowledgement of moving from childhood into teenage years. Students in this group are learning to balance the increase in expected maturity with the odd changes in physical growth and social aspirations at this stage in life. Instruction, support and resources are designed to guide the student to making positive, healthy choices that will begin the strong foundation for independent living and career identification.

ASD/Life Skills: Grades 5-12

The ASD/Life Skills class is designed to focus on the individual learning, developmental and personal care needs of specifically identified students. Students are learning to balance many similar expectations as other classes with a more individualized timeline and emphasis on accessing and integrating into the social world in meaningful ways.

Home/School Communication

Students will bring home a daily communication sheet that shows the data collection from that school day. Included in this information are comments about the student's performance and behavior. Additional information pertaining to school events and important dates are found on this sheet. Parents are provided a space to write information and respond to questions. Parents/guardians are expected to sign or initial to indicate that they received and read the information. At the end of each month, the sheets are copied and sent home for parents/guardians to keep for their records. If a student is not able to successfully transport the communication sheet to and from school, then, alternative arrangements will be made with the parents/guardians.

Bus & Transportation Conduct

Bus/Van Rules:

1. **Students will stay in their seats with the seatbelt buckled for the entire ride.**
2. **Students will obey and respect the vehicle driver.**
3. **Students will stay in their personal spaces and have no physical contact with others.**
4. **Students will not throw anything inside or outside of the vehicle.**
5. **Students will use a quiet voice.**
6. **Students will treat the vehicle and equipment with respect.**
7. **Students will use polite and respectful language with everyone.**
8. **Students will not eat or drink in the vehicle.**

Students who exhibit unsafe behaviors in any vehicle that is transporting Sheldon Academy students to or from school, may receive two warnings depending upon the nature and severity of the behavior exhibited while in the vehicle.

Consequences for a Challenging Vehicle Ride:

First Warning

- Assigned seating, if already in place then a change will be created
- Time out in the Thinking/Feeling Room
- Loss of privilege time
- Parents notified in communication book

Second Warning

Includes the consequence from the first warning plus:

- Change in level to a lower set of privileges
- Parents called
- Suspension while on the vehicle

Third Warning

Includes the consequences from the first and second warning plus:

- Repair plan with an apology to the driver and riders
- Community Service
- Short term removal/Suspension from vehicle transportation
- Change in transportation arrangements if/when necessary

Consequences for an Unsafe Vehicle Ride

Any actions that jeopardize the safety of anyone in the vehicle will result in an immediate change in transportation plan including but not limited to change in seating, placement of an aid in close proximity, change to an alternate vehicle, transportation provided by parent/guardian.

Suspension from the bus is NOT suspension from school. The student is still welcome at Sheldon Academy and will be expected to arrive at school by transportation arranged by the parent/guardian. If your student is suspended from a vehicle - VAC's or School District's- a team meeting will be scheduled to discuss the student's behavior and a plan going forward. This meeting will include Sheldon Academy, LEA and parent/guardian.

End-of-Day Transportation

If a student has had a challenging day, most of the day and especially the last 75 minutes, demonstrating unsafe and/or aggressive behaviors or other behaviors deemed unsafe, then the student will not be permitted to board the vehicle or ride home on school provided transportation. A parent/guardian will be contacted and expected to pick their child up or make arrangements for their trip home within a reasonable amount of time. If the parent/guardian is not able to be reached then Sheldon Academy will contact the listed emergency contacts in the student's file. Additionally, if the emergency contact is not reachable or able to reach the parent/guardian then Sheldon Academy will contact the LEA and a plan to get in contact with parent/guardian from other means will be made and alternate arrangements for transportation might be arranged. If no one is reachable then a call to the local Police and DCF will be made.

SECTION 4

Policies

Attendance Policies

Overall student achievement is directly related to consistent school attendance. It is expected that all students will attend school on a regular basis maximizing the opportunities for students to take full advantage of all that is available to them. Developing good habits regarding attendance and punctuality will prepare the student for transition to public school and meeting career and job expectations. School hours are 8:30 A.M. – 2:30 P.M. daily. Students should arrive no earlier than 8:20 and be in class by 8:30. During inclement weather a grace period will be given in the morning for safe traveling.

Attendance Procedures

Child Secure Program*:* The Child Secure Program is designed to protect your child. The school takes attendance by 9:00 A.M. daily. Sheldon Academy staff will begin calling the homes of all students listed as absent to verify the absence.

It is extremely helpful if the parent/guardian calls the school when their child will be absent.
Please call Debbie Holmes at 775-2395 (ext. 2404) if your child will be late or absent. You may leave a message late at night or early in the morning.

It is also the Parent's/Guardian's responsibility to contact your child's transportation provider. ***The transportation provider is not responsible for reporting your child's absence.***

Daily attendance sheets kept by each homeroom will track students' attendance and tardiness. When and if a student's absence reaches three consecutive days, written or oral notice will be issued to the student's school district and students must bring a note from their health provider explaining the nature of the illness.

Tardiness

Late arrivals will report to the main office immediately upon arrival at VAC. The student should bring a note from their parent/guardian if they have not notified Sheldon Academy ahead of time. A staff member may call home to ensure the parent knows of the late arrival if no information has been received.

Truancy

If the attendance office is unable to contact or receive correspondence from a parent/guardian, a student's absence will be considered unexcused. Pursuant to Title 16 of the Vermont State Education Laws, the following notifications will be sent out:

1. After exceeding 5 days of unexcused absences, a warning letter will be sent notifying a parent/guardian and the Department for Children and Families (DCF) of the number of unexcused absences.

2. After exceeding 7 days of unexcused absences, a letter will be sent to a parent/guardian and DCF to attend a mandatory Truancy Intervention Meeting.

3. After exceeding 10 days of unexcused absences, a letter will be sent to a parent/guardian, and DCF, stating that all future absences will be considered as truant. In addition, an affidavit will be sent to the State's Attorney Office in preparation for filing legal proceedings.

Leaving Early

Students who need to leave school early – for any reason – must notify Sheldon Academy in writing signed by a parent/guardian. The note should include who has permission to pick the child up and the time they will do so. If school staff feel this is not a legitimate form of correspondence then a call to the parent/guardian will be made to follow up. If the person picking up the child is new or unfamiliar to the school staff, identification will be asked for before the child is released into their care.

End-of-Day Pick-Up

If your child will not be taking their usual transportation arrangements home, we require a note explaining the other arrangements. The note should include who has permission to pick the child up and the time they will do so. If school staff feel this is not a legitimate form of correspondence then a call to the parent/guardian will be made to follow up. If the person picking up the child is new or unfamiliar to the school staff, identification will be asked for before the child is released into their care. Bus drivers and VAC drivers are not permitted to transport students outside of their regular routes to and from home/school.

Student Records

The Director of Education is the legal custodian of all student educational and clinical records. Parents/guardians of students (and eligible students over the age of 18) have the right to inspect the student's education records (not to copy them); request amendments to them; consent to disclosure of certain information; and file complaints with appropriate agencies. Please see attached Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements.

Destruction of Student Records

VAC-Sheldon Academy will maintain cumulative student records for approximately five years after graduation. Each summer the records of the graduating class from five years earlier will be destroyed. IEP's and the last comprehensive evaluation will be retained for appropriate students. The LEA/Identified High School will keep students' transcripts in perpetuity.

Parent/Guardian Involvement

The Vermont Achievement Center and Sheldon Academy shall seek to involve parents & guardians in the education of their child by employing the strategies outlined in the school handbook and administrative procedure. Coordination and integration of parent/guardian involvement with strategies for behavior change and coping skills while their child practices new forms of positive behavior shows a supportive nature and interest in helping their child grow and succeed. It also allows the child to see that school and home are communicating and supporting each other with a unified approach to challenging behavior. At times, Parents will be asked to participate in counseling sessions with their child to support emotional growth, planning and use of identified strategies for coping or altering behavior at home. In general, we ask for open communication and collaboration in scheduling and attending meetings, notification of information and keeping up-to-date contact information for good continuity of care for your child.

Discipline Policy

It is our belief that all children have certain needs which must be met. These needs, as outlined by Curwin and Mendler (Discipline with Dignity), include:

- To feel and believe they are capable and successful. (Mastery)
- To know they are cared about by others. (Belonging)
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Crisis Intervention and Physical Management

All staff are trained in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention through the Crisis Prevention Institute. They follow this model as a very proactive, de-escalation model throughout their school day. Care, Welfare, Safety and Security is of the utmost importance to everyone within our environment. Physical management is the last resort and always follows the above program rules. All staff have immediate communication systems set up (walkie-talkies) in order to ensure constant and consistent communication. All physical management is conducted through a team approach to safely manage a student's out of control behavior. All physical management situations are documented following a process and procedure that is reviewed with staff. Family is always notified of any incidents that lead to the level of physical management use.

Annual Rule 4500 notice to Parents/ Guardians

Thinking-Feeling Room Use/Alternative Space Time Out

Our Thinking-Feeling Rooms are areas available for a student to safely de-escalate, regain control and prepare to meet expectations with a goal for the student to return to his or her classroom or program successfully. Thinking-Feeling rooms are to be used in conjunction with a behavior management intervention in which a student is removed to a supervised area in order to facilitate self-control or to remove a child from a potentially dangerous environment. A Thinking-Feeling room should only be used in conjunction with a behavior management program which teaches and reinforces acceptable behaviors or when a student is in crisis.

Seclusion and Restraint

Department of Education- State Board Rule 4500

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The purposes of Rule 4500 are to:

- Create and maintain a positive and safe learning environment in schools
- Promote positive behavioral interventions and supports in schools
- Ensure that students are not subjected to inappropriate use of restraint or seclusion

In part, this rule requires schools to:

- Have key staff trained in state-approved physical intervention techniques;
- Notify and inform parents, administration, and in certain circumstances, principal and Vermont Department of Education in the event that seclusion or physical intervention is required;
- Notify parents of the school's compliance with Rule 4500.

Seclusion and Restraint Incident Reporting

Any staff person who administers a restraint or seclusion procedure shall report the incident to the school administrator as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the school day. Additionally, Rule 4500 requires that each use of seclusion and restraint be documented in a written report containing all of the required information listed in the Rule and sent to the building administrator.

Following an incident, two reports are required for compliance. One is the Parent/ Guardian form and the other is the School District Administrator form. Sheldon Academy services students from several different school districts, a designated administrator at Sheldon Academy will fax the "Administrator" form to the sending-school district's *Special Education Coordinator* or the *Out-of-District Coordinator* within a 24-hour period, if not by the end of the incident day. Sheldon Academy staff will also complete the Parent/ Guardian forms by the end of the incident day to be sent home with the student.

For more information on Rule 4500 please visit:
http://education.vermont.gov/state-board/rules/4500
The complete text of State Board Rule 4500 can be found here:
http://education.vermont.gov/documents/4500.pdf

Substance Abuse Policy and Procedures

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy: It is our policy that no student shall knowingly possess, use, sell, give or otherwise transmit, or be under the influence of any illegal drug, regulated substance, or alcohol on any school property, or at any school sponsored activity away from or within the school. "Drug" means any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other controlled substance as defined by state or federal regulation or statute.

Law enforcement officials will be called if necessary. "School employees are not agents of law enforcement officials." However, search and/or seizure by law enforcement officials on school property may occur when a warrant or other legal basis exists authorizing such search and/or seizure.

Procedure

Regardless of the type of infraction the following procedures will take place:

1. Assess the student for crisis situations and make necessary determinations and follow-up actions if there is a medical emergency.
2. A parent/guardian will be contacted immediately to pick the student up for the remainder of the school day.
3. The School District/LEA is notified of the event.
4. The student (if able), parent/guardian, LEA and Sheldon Academy will meet within 24-48 hours or as soon as possible. At which time, the student will remain out of school until next steps are determined.
5. The student's team will determine next steps regarding suspension, alternative in-school instruction, counseling, or other identified supports.
6. Upon returning to school, a re-entry meeting may be scheduled to review the plan with the student and parent/guardian.
7. The need to call law enforcement will be determined by the Director of Education within 24 hours of the event or when new information is disclosed.
8. Additional procedures are listed under each area A, B, C, D listing specific actions per offense.

A. Students in Possession of Drug Paraphernalia, Alcohol and/or Drugs

1. When students are found in possession of drug paraphernalia, it will be confiscated.
2. Students may be suspended or in alternative in-school instruction for up to 3 days.
3. Evaluation, counseling and/or drug education may be recommended.
4. Backpacks may be searched daily upon return to school.
5. Repeated offenses will be handled at the discretion of the Director of Education.
6. The police may be notified of the incident.

B. Students Under the Influence of Alcohol and/or Drugs

Crisis Situation – The student will be transported to the Rutland Regional Medical Center by a rescue vehicle and his/her parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible.

First Offense

1. An administrator and school nurse or identified designated staff member will be notified. The student will remain in the Health Office until a parent/guardian is able to pick them up.
2. Evaluation, counseling and/or drug education may be recommended.
3. The student may be suspended or in alternative in-school instruction for up to 3 days.
4. Before returning to school, the student may be asked to go to their doctor or to the hospital and have a blood or urine analysis to determine the presence of drugs. Based on results, the student may be required to complete alcohol/drug education and counseling.

5. Backpacks and clothing will be searched upon return to school.

Second Offense

1. An administrator and school nurse or identified designated staff member will be notified. The student will remain in the Health Office until a parent/guardian is able to pick them up.
2. The student will be suspended for 3 days.
3. Before returning to school, the student may be asked to go to their doctor or to the hospital and have a blood or urine analysis to determine the presence of drugs. Based on results, the student may be required to complete alcohol/drug education and counseling.
4. The student will seek and receive an evaluation by an agency such as Evergreen Center or a substance abuse counselor of his/her choice. A written copy of the evaluation will be sent to the school administrator, which includes the counselor's findings and recommendations for the student.
5. Backpack searches will continue; searches of persons may be conducted if there is suspicion.

Third Offense

All of the above will take place with a recommendation to present the student's case to the LIT Team (Local Interagency Team) seeking a placement in a residential facility that is able to focus on youth substance abuse, use and recovery.

B. Students Selling or Furnishing Alcohol and/or Drugs

First Offense

1. The police and DCF will be notified of the incident.
2. Students may be suspended for up to five (5) days.
3. Students may be required to complete a minimum of twelve (12) hours of alcohol/drug education and counseling.
4. Backpacks and clothing will be searched.

Second Offense

1. Police and DCF will be notified of the incident.
2. Students will be suspended for up to ten (10) school days.
3. The IEP Team will be convened to discuss further actions/discipline with a recommendation to present the student's case to the LIT Team (Local Interagency Team) seeking a placement in a residential facility that is able to focus on youth substance abuse, use and recovery.

Outside Referrals

Students and parents/guardians will be given information, when necessary, about outside agencies and encouraged to utilize their services and programs.

Responsibilities of Students

All students are responsible for understanding the school's substance abuse policy. Students who voluntarily request assistance or counseling where no offense has occurred as specified in this section of school policy, will not be punished. It is the intent of VAC to provide students experiencing alcohol and/or drug problems with all possible assistance and support.

Interrogation By Law Officials

1. School employees are not the agents of law enforcement officials. Search and/or seizure by law enforcement officials on school property may occur when a warrant or other legal basis exists authorizing such search and/or seizure.

2. A student in the school may not be interviewed by any authority without the knowledge of a school administrator, and **knowledge and permission of parent or guardian,** unless the interview or interrogation is part of a child abuse or neglect investigation conducted by the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services in accordance with Chapter 49 of Title 33 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated.

3. Any interrogation by non-school personnel must be conducted in private with the Director of Education or his designee present.

4. A student may not be released to the custody of persons other than the parent or legal guardian, unless placed under arrest by legal authority.

5. If a student is removed from the school by legal authority, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) should be notified of this action by school officials as soon as possible.

6. No questioning by non-school personnel of a student under the age of eighteen who may be accused of an offense shall occur unless the parent(s) or guardian(s) have been notified and have been given the opportunity to be present at the time of the questioning. Questioning may, however, take place without notification of parents if such questioning is required due to an emergency or urgent potential danger to life, or property, as determined by the Director of Education, and reasonable efforts to notify the student's parents/guardians are unsuccessful.

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Harassment, Bullying and Hazing Policies

Harassment

Sheldon Academy's Harassment Policy and Procedures conforms with the Model Harassment Policy and Procedures developed by the State of Vermont Department of Education. The complete policy is available by request; following are the major components:

"Harassment: means an incident or incidents of verbal, written, visual or physical conduct based on or motivated by a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity that has the purpose or effect of objectively and substantially undermining and detracting from or interfering with a student's educational performance or access to school resources or creating an objectively intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

A. Types of Harassment

Sexual

Sexual harassment is a form of unlawful misconduct which undermines the integrity of both the employment relationship and the learning environment. All school community personnel must be allowed to work, teach and study in an environment free from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments. It refers to offensive and inappropriate sexual behavior within the total framework of the school community.

a) **Verbal:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexual innuendos, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, threats, unwelcome sexual flirtations, persistent requests for dates, degrading words used to describe the

individual, other verbal comments of a sexual nature, and graphic commentaries about an individual's body.

b) **Non-verbal:** Sexually suggestive or offensive object(s) or pictures, written comments, suggestive or insulting sounds, leering, whistling, obscene gestures to include electronic means of harassment.

c) **Physical:** Unwanted physical contact, which may include touching, pinching, or brushing the body, coerced sexual intercourse, and assault.

Racial

Racial harassment, which means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived race or color, and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, racial slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or visual material, and taunts on manner of speech and negative references to racial customs.

Other Protected Categories

Harassment of members of other protected categories, means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived creed (religion), national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display or circulation of written or visual material, taunts on manner of speech, and negative references to customs related to any of these protected categories.

B. Reporting Process

1. Communicate to the harasser that you object to their conduct and request them to stop. Keep a record of your efforts to dissuade the harasser and of your conversations with any other person regarding the problem.
2. Report the matter to the Director of Education, school clinician or program supervisor. Provide copies of your records, including what happened, when, where, who, and witnesses.
3. VAC shall take appropriate action against any student, teacher or administrator or other school personnel who make a false report of unlawful harassment knowing it to be false.

C. Consequences

If a claim is substantiated, the harasser will receive the following consequences:

1. **First Offense:** The harasser may be suspended from school for a period of three (3) to five (5) days, police may be contacted. Parents or guardians will be notified. A repair plan will be done.

2. **Second Offense:** The harasser may be suspended for five (5) days and the police will be contacted. Parents/guardians will be notified; the LEA (school district) will be notified. A repair plan will be done.

3. **Third Offense:** The case will be discussed with Sheldon Academy Staff, parents/guardians, LEA and a meeting held to determine the appropriate discipline. The Harasser will be suspended until that meeting. Police will be notified and therapy will likely be recommended.

D. False Claims

Sheldon Academy shall take appropriate action against anyone who makes a false report of unlawful harassment knowing it to be false. False claims will be dealt with as severely as those which have been substantiated. There will be no adverse action taken against a person for reporting a complaint of harassment when the complainant has a good faith belief that harassment occurred or is occurring or for participating in or cooperating with an investigation.

E. Independent Review

A complainant who desires independent review under 16 V.S.A. 565(f) because s/he is either dissatisfied with the final determination of the school officials as to whether harassment occurred, or believes that, although a final determination was made that harassment occurred, the school's response was inadequate to correct the problem, shall make such request in writing to his or her school district administrator. Upon such request, the supervisory union shall initiate an independent review, and shall comply with the District's procedures and any applicable rules on this subject promulgated by the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Education. The district may request an independent review at any stage.

Alternative Complaint Process

In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office of Civil Rights of the US Department of Education at the addresses noted below:
Vermont Human Rights Commission
14-16 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
(800) 416-2010 or (801) 828-2480 voice
(877) 294-9200 (TTY)
(802) 828-2481 (fax)
Email: human.rights@state.vt.us
Web: http://hrc.vermont.gov
Office of Civil Rights, Boston Office
US Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square, Suite 90
Boston, MA 02109-3921
(617) 289-0111 (voice)
(877) 521-2172 (TDD)
(617) 289-0150 (fax)
Email: CR.Boston@ed.gov
Web: http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html

Firearms, Weapons, and Fireworks

Student possession or use of firearms, weapons, knives, ammunition, explosives, fireworks, or any potentially dangerous devices or substances of any kind are forbidden and will result in immediate confiscation, notification of parents/guardians, LEA and police. The student will be suspended until a meeting is held with parents/guardians and LEA to decide on appropriate action.

Search and Seizure

Desks, lockers, textbooks, computers, cameras and other materials loaned by the school to students remain the property of the school and may be opened by school employees for cleaning, maintenance or emergencies. When prohibited items are found in the course of routine cleaning or maintenance, or in the case of emergency, they will be confiscated and a report will be made to the principal who will determine whether further investigation is warranted.

School property may also be searched by school employees upon reasonable suspicion on the part of the Director of Education, that a law or school policy is being violated. Searches of school property in the possession of students will not extend to areas or items not reasonably calculated to aid in the enforcement of specific policies or laws.

Searches of the student's person and backpacks will be conducted if there is reasonable cause to believe that a breach of school policy or law is being committed. Search of a student's person will be conducted by a school employee of the same sex and, whenever possible, in the presence of another school employee.

Hazing Policy

It is the policy of the school that we provide safe, orderly, civil and positive learning environments. Hazing has no place in the school and will not be tolerated.

Hazing means any act committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with others, against a student in connections with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with an educational institution; and which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of humiliating, intimidating or demeaning the student or endangering the mental or physical health of a student. Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts. Hazing may occur on or off campus of an educational institution to be considered for disciplinary actions.

Examples of hazing include:

1. Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electrical shocks, placing a harmful substance on or in the body, or other similar activity; or
2. Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, or other activity that creates or results in an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student; or
3. Any activity involving consumption of food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance that subjects a student to an unreasonable risk of harm; or
4. Any activity that induces, causes, or requires a student to perform a duty or task, which involves the commission of a crime or act of hazing.

Reports of Hazing

Students who have reason to believe that an incident of hazing might or did occur shall report such belief to any staff person. Staff members who have received such a report from a student or who otherwise have reason to believe that an incident of hazing might or did occur shall report such belief to the Director of Education.

Investigation of Reports of Hazing

The Director of Education, upon receipt of a report of hazing, promptly shall cause an investigation to commence. The investigation shall be timely and thorough and the findings and conclusions of the investigation shall be reduced to writing. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the investigation shall be concluded in ten school days.

False Report

The school shall take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who make a false report of unlawful hazing knowing it to be false.

Disciplinary Action

If the investigation concludes a student committed an act of hazing or otherwise violated this policy, that student shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in proportion to the severity of the hazing and in line with other similar offenses, including but not limited to suspension, or expulsion from co- or extra-curricular activities or from school.

It is not a defense in a disciplinary proceeding under this policy that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity.

City of Rutland – Safe Schools Ordinance

On February 28, 1995, the City of Rutland Board of Alderman passed Ordinance Number 187. Following is a condensed version of the ordinance and its purpose. A complete copy may be obtained at City Hall.

The people of the City of Rutland find it necessary to prevent disruption of the educational process by prohibiting individuals who have no educational purpose, who disrupt, or may disrupt the educational process from entering or remaining upon school premises must be protected. **To this end, every school in the City of Rutland will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized use of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.**

It is important to point out that "school premises" means any building, public or private which is used primarily for educational purposes, the land upon which it is situated, and any (public) property within five hundred (500) feet of the land upon which the building is situated.

As part of the ordinance, a schedule of fines and waiver fees has been established ranging from $50.00 up to $175.00. Vermont State Law currently establishes that parents are, or can be, responsible for up to $1,000.00 in fines or fees incurred by their children. It is, therefore, extremely important that everyone become familiar with the particulars of this ordinance.

Use of Surveillance Cameras

Video surveillance occurs on Vermont Achievement Center's property.

Responsible Computer, Network & Internet Use

Purpose

The Sheldon Academy recognizes that information technology (IT) is integral to learning and educating today's children for success in the global community and fully supports the access of these electronic resources by students and staff. The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Create an environment that fosters the use of information technology in a manner that supports and enriches the curriculum, provides opportunities for collaboration, and enhances staff professional development.

2. Ensure the Academy takes appropriate measures to maintain the safety of everyone that accesses the Sheldon Academy's information technology devices, network and web resources.

3. Comply with the requirements of applicable federal and state laws that regulate the provision of access to the Internet and other electronic resources by Sheldon Academy

Policy

It is the policy of the Sheldon Academy to provide students and staff access to a multitude of information technology (IT) resources including the Internet. These resources provide opportunities to enhance learning and improve communication within our community and with the global community beyond.

However, with the privilege of access comes the responsibility of students, teachers, staff and the public to exercise responsible use of these resources. The use by students, staff or others of Sheldon Academy Technology resources is a privilege, not a right.

The same rules and expectations govern student use of IT resources as apply to other student conduct and communications, including but not limited to the Sheldon Academy's harassment and bullying policies.

Sheldon Academy's computers and network resources are the property of the Vermont Achievement Center. Users shall have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, receive or display on or over the Sheldon Academy's computers or network resources, including personal files and electronic communications.

The Director of Education is responsible for establishing procedures governing use of technology resources consistent with the provisions of this policy. These procedures must include:

1. An annual process for educating students about responsible digital citizenship. As defined in this policy, a responsible digital citizen is one who:

- **Respects One's Self** Users will maintain appropriate standards of language and behavior when sharing information and images on social networking websites and elsewhere online. Users refrain from distributing personally identifiable information about themselves and others. For the purposes of this policy, "personally identifiable information" shall not include any information listed as "directory information" in the Sheldon Academy's annual FERPA notice.
- **Respects Others** Users refrain from using technologies to bully, tease or harass other people. Users will report incidents of cyber bullying and harassment in accordance with the Sheldon Academy's policies on bullying and harassment. Users will also refrain from using another person's system account or password or from presenting themselves as another person.
- **Protects One's Self and Others** Users protect themselves and others by reporting abuse and not forwarding inappropriate materials and communications. They are responsible at all times for the proper use of their account by not sharing their system account password.
- **Respects Intellectual Property** Users suitably cite any and all use of websites, books, media, etc.
- **Protects Intellectual Property** Users request to use the software and media others produce.

2. Provisions necessary to ensure that Internet service providers and other contractors comply with applicable restrictions on the collection and disclosure of student data and any other confidential information stored in VAC's electronic resources.

3. Technology protection measures that provide for the monitoring and filtering of online activities by all users of Sheldon Academy Technology, including measures that protect against access to content that is obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors.

2 Required by Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), 47 U.S.C. § 254(1); 47 C.F.R. § 54.520(c) (ii)
3 Required by Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), 47 U.S.C. § 254(1); 47 C.F.R. § 54.520(c) (ii)
4 Required by 20 U.S.C. § 6777(c)

4. Methods to address the following three:

- Control of access by minors to sites on the Internet that include inappropriate content, such as content that is:
    - Lewd, vulgar, or profane
    - Threatening
    - Harassing or discriminatory
    - Bullying
    - Terroristic
    - Obscene or pornographic

- The safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, social media sites, and other forms of direct electronic communications.
- Prevention of unauthorized online access by minors, including "hacking" and other unlawful activities.
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, dissemination of personal information regarding minors.
- Restriction of minors' access to materials harmful to them.

5. A process whereby authorized persons may temporarily disable the Sheldon Academy's Internet filtering measures during use by an adult to enable access for bona fide research or other lawful purpose.

Policy Application

This policy applies to anyone who accesses the Sheldon Academy's network, collaboration and communication tools, and/or student information systems either on-site or via a remote location, and anyone who uses the Sheldon Academy's technology devices either on or off-site.

Limitation/Disclaimer of Liability

Sheldon Academy is not liable for unacceptable use or violations of copyright restrictions or other laws, user mistakes or negligence, and costs incurred by users. Sheldon Academy is not responsible for ensuring the accuracy, age appropriateness, or usability of any information found on the Sheldon Academy's electronic resources network including the Internet. Sheldon Academy is not responsible for any damage experienced, including, but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. Sheldon Academy is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through or stored on the electronic resources system including the Internet, or for financial obligations arising through their unauthorized use.

Enforcement

Sheldon Academy reserves the right to revoke access privileges and/or administer appropriate disciplinary action for misuse of its technology resources. In the event there is an allegation that a user has violated this policy, a student will be provided with notice and opportunity to be heard in the manner set forth in the student disciplinary policy.
Allegations of staff member violations of this policy will be processed in accord with contractual agreements and legal requirements.
Sheldon Academy

17 U.S.C. §§101-120 (Federal Copyright Act of 1976 as amended)
20 U.S.C. § 6777 et seq. (Enhancing Education Through Technology Act)
18 U.S.C. §2251 (Federal Child Pornography Law—Sexual Exploitation and Other Abuse of Children)
47 U.S.C. §254 (Children's Internet Protection Act)
47 CFR §54.520 (CIPA Certifications)
13 V.S.A. §§2802 et seq. (Obscenity, minors)
13 V.S.A. § 1027 (Disturbing Peace by Use of…Electronic Means)
13 V.S.A. §2605(Voyeurism)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

    - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
    - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
    - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
    - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
    - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
    - Accrediting organizations;
    - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
    - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
    - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information or technical assistance, you may call (202) 260-3887 (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

Or you may contact us at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

Animal Policy

Sheldon Academy may participate in the Vermont Therapy Dog Program whereby certified therapy dogs visit the classrooms throughout the school year.

Animals Prohibited from School

Rabies is now endemic in Vermont's raccoon and fox populations. Any fur-bearing animal is susceptible to this very serious fatal disease and, if infected, can transmit it to students and staff. The risk in a school or other group setting is that a single wild animal or unvaccinated pet carrying rabies has the potential to expose a large number of children.

The Vermont Department of Health recommends that the following animals be prohibited from schools (i.e., they are not legally prohibited on school grounds):
Wild Animals and Domestic Stray Animals – Wild animals pose a risk for transmitting rabies as well as other zoonotic diseases (diseases which can be transmitted from animals to people) and, therefore, should not be allowed in schools or handled by staff and children. Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and other wild carnivores, these animals should not be permitted on school grounds under any circumstances (including dead animals).

Pet Dogs, Cats, Wolf-Hybrids, Ferrets and Farm Animals – These pets do not belong in the school. They may pose a risk for transmitting rabies, as well as parasites, fleas, other diseases and injuries.

Bat Houses – Bats pose a high risk for transmitting rabies. Bat houses should not be installed on school grounds.

Exception: Guide, Hearing and Other Service Dogs or Law Enforcement Dogs – These animals may be allowed in school or on school grounds with proof of current rabies vaccination. The use of "Therapy Dogs" shall be allowed but limited to the education area and will be under the supervision of the Director of Education.

Guidelines for Other Animals

Any animal that is allowed in the school or on school grounds must be clean and healthy so that the risk of their transmitting disease to students and teachers is minimal. Any education with animals should also be used to re-emphasize proper hygiene and hand washing recommendations. No animals should be allowed in food preparation areas at any time. Food handlers should not be responsible for wastes, and cages and tanks should not be cleaned in food handling areas.

Animal cages or tanks should be cleaned thoroughly on a regular basis. Students should not be allowed to handle or clean up any form of animal waste (feces, urine, blood, etc.) and wastes should be disposed of in a plastic bag or container with a lid. Anyone who cleans a cage or tank should wash their hands immediately after completing the task.

Children with allergies or those with immune deficiencies may be especially susceptible to diseases transmitted by animals or allergic reactions; therefore, special precautions may be needed to minimize risks. Consultation with the school nurse and the child's parents about precautionary measures is recommended.

Birds – Psittacosis is a serious disease that infected birds can transmit to humans. Even birds that appear healthy can be carriers of this disease. Because of the risk of psittacosis, birds

(especially parrots, parakeets, macaws, pigeons, doves, etc.) should not be handled by children and should never be allowed to fly free in the classroom.

Reptiles and Amphibians – Reptiles (iguanas, snakes, lizards and turtles) and amphibians (frogs, salamanders and toads) can spread salmonella to humans, resulting in diarrhea and fever. This disease can be life-threatening in very young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems. These animals should not be handled by children, pregnant women or individuals with infants at home. Anyone handling a reptile or amphibian should wash their hands thoroughly, immediately following contact.

Chicks and Ducks – Chicks and ducks can spread salmonella to humans. This disease can be life-threatening in very young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems. These animals should not be handled by children, pregnant women or individuals with infants at home. Anyone handling chicks or ducks should wash their hands thoroughly, immediately following contact.

Poisonous Animals – Spiders, venomous insects and poisonous snakes, reptiles and lizards are prohibited for safety reasons.

Guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, rabbits – Healthy guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils and rabbits pose a limited health risk. Such animals may be allowed as classroom pets or as occasional visitors with advance notification to the Director of Education and Teacher and under the strict supervision of an adult. Even tame animals may react aggressively in strange situations; therefore, student contact with animals should always be closely supervised, and animals should not be allowed to run loose in the classroom.

Children should not be allowed to “kiss” these animals and should not be allowed to handle or clean up any form of animal waste or clean the animal’s cage. Anyone handling such animals should wash their hands thoroughly, immediately following contact.

Fish – Fish pose a very limited health risk and will be allowed in the classroom. Disposable gloves should be worn when cleaning aquariums and tank water should not be disposed of in sinks that are used for food preparation or drinking water.

Student Athletic Injuries

Sheldon Academy Does not currently offer extra-curricular sports, but this policy is still in place as some students who are eligible and interested may choose to practice or play a sport for their school district.

No student should be allowed to practice or play in an athletic contest if he/she is suffering from an injury. The diagnosis of and prescription of treatment for injuries is strictly a medical matter and should under no circumstances be considered a province of the coach. A coach's responsibility is to see that injured players are given prompt and competent medical attention, and that all details of a doctor's instructions concerning the student's functioning as a team member are carried out. No student who has been diagnosed by a physician, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner or athletic trainer as being injured and unable to participate will be allowed to practice or compete if there is a question whether he/she is in an adequate physical condition. An athletic trainer or physician's approval will be required before an athlete is permitted to return to practice or competition in such instances.

Additionally, a physician’s note is needed to excuse a student from requirements in Physical Education class. Information in the note should acknowledge when the student has permission to engage in physical activity and physical education classes again.

SECTION 5

School Services

Health Services

Sheldon Academy does not currently have a nurse on staff, despite our on-going search for part-time assistance. David Wiezalis will continue to address the basic health and medication needs of our students this coming school year. Dave is a Sheldon Academy Program Supervisor with over 21 years in the Sheldon Program. During a majority of these years, Dave worked closely with a Registered School Nurse, becoming familiar with the documentation and med-give procedures. He will be the appointed school administrator responsible for giving medication with your documented and signed permission. In his absence, he will delegate this important responsibility to another knowledgeable administrator familiar and comfortable with the med-give process.

If you have a child (returning or new) who needs to receive a prescription medication during school hours, it is vitally important that you as a parent/ legal guardian complete (and have physician complete) the required forms/ releases in order for us to even receive the medication at our door.

Please take the time prior to the start of school to read, complete and compile all the forms and medication bottle(s) so there is no delay in your child receiving med(s) on the first day of school. You will need to get a copy of the prescription as well as our Med Authorization Form signed by your child's prescribing doctor. The Medication Authorization form can be found in the Parent Registration packet. Please remember that one form is needed for each of the different prescription medications your child is to receive at school.

Emergency: In case of an emergency, the parent/guardian is always notified. Students in need of immediate medical attention may be transported to the Rutland Regional Medical Center via ambulance or in some cases by agency vehicle. Every attempt will be made to contact a parent/guardian before this is done.

David Wiezalis will continue to operate within his abilities to maintain School health records, which document immunizations, medications and side effects, vision and hearing screenings and dental and medical providers. Records are maintained and kept in the Health Office.

Student Sickness

- If your child becomes ill or is injured in school, medical personnel will evaluate the situation and determine a plan of action. Children with a fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea or with other symptoms that interfere with learning or compromise the health of other students/staff will be sent home.

- Please do not send your ill child to school, especially if there is fever (above 100 degrees in the morning), persistent coughing, rash with fever or behavior change present, vomiting and/or diarrhea.

- If your child is ill and will be absent from school, please call and leave a message at Extension 2404. If your child is out of school for three days or more, we may ask you to provide a note from your health provider that explains the absence and any restrictions on activity needed upon return to school.

Student Medication

Whenever possible, medications should be given at home. If it is necessary for a medicine to be given during the hours of school, they will be given only after the following criteria are met:

- Authorization for Dispensing Prescription Medications form **signed by parent/guardian and physician** must be on file.
- All medications are to be brought to the Nurse Consultant or Program Supervisor on arrival and will be locked in the school health office.
- **Medicine must be brought to school in a properly labeled pharmacy bottle**. Arrangements may be made for daily return home if the medication is a liquid antibiotic. Longer term medications may be sent with a month's supply or whatever suits the need.
- We also make available some non-prescription medication to be used with discretion at school. Parental Consent for Administering Non-Prescription Medication form must be signed by parent/guardian.

Health Screening

All students are screened yearly for possible hearing and vision difficulties. You will be notified if we feel your child needs further evaluation.

Fire Drills/Lockdowns/Evacuation to a Different Location

To ensure everyone's safety during an emergency, regularly scheduled fire drills and evacuation drills are scheduled.

When The Fire Alarm Sounds:

● Students need to leave the building immediately in an orderly manner, according to the directions posted in the room or upon the instruction of their teacher..

●Students are to remain with their group and to follow the instructions of their teacher who will account for all students.

If an announcement is made to "Evacuate the Building":

●Students are to follow the instructions of their teacher and evacuate the building in an orderly fashion.

●Teachers will guide students to the designated evacuation spot which is across the street at the Fay Honey Knopp School where attendance will be taken.

●Students are to remain with their group and follow their teacher's instructions.

When the "Clear the Halls" announcement is made:

●Students need to follow the directions of their teacher who will lock doors and direct students away from doors and windows.

●Students need to remain quiet and move to a discrete location in the room.

School Cancellation

In the event it is necessary to close school for the day, due to inclement weather or other emergency reasons, listen to radio stations, WSYB/Z97, WJJR or tune in to TV Channel 5 (WPTZ) or Channel 3 (WPTZ) for the most up to date closings.

In the event that your district cancels transportation to Sheldon Academy but our school is not closed, the student will not be considered absent.

Child Nutrition Service

The Vermont Achievement Center participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs and The Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program which is monitored by the Vermont Department of Education School Nutrition Program. We also participate in a local CSA where fresh, local fruits and vegetables are delivered to us throughout the growing months. Our kitchen is run by our own VAC culinary staff that is required to take continual training hours each year to comply with safety, nutrition and service standards. We encourage families to take advantage of our program as nutrition plays a critical role in cognitive development and academic performance in children. **All Students are eligible for free breakfast and lunch.**

Household Income Form

Although all Sheldon Academy students are given a free breakfast and lunch based on our organization's exemption, we are still required to ask you to complete the Household Income Forms as this information is used for other purposes. These purposes may include seeking grant funding and reporting to the Agency of Education. We encourage families to fill out all sections of the form to the best of your ability. If you need assistance, either call or visit us and we can fill the form out together. The household income form is included in the annual student forms packet.

Transportation

Transportation of all Sheldon Academy students is the responsibility of the Student's School District/LEA. If you have a problem or concern regarding transportation of students on any school bus or transportation company vehicle, please contact the Director of Education.