



## **Welcome to the Northwest School**

The Northwest School provides an exceptional educational program for middle and upper school students. The environment within which students pursue their coursework combines an engaged faculty, small classes, and a pervasive concern for the quality of personal interactions. We are an intentional community with a wide range of identity backgrounds. We are committed to a culture of care and belonging which supports self-expression and authentic connection.

The Northwest School Student and Family Handbook is designed to provide clarity regarding the school's policies, practices, and expectations. We consider the handbook a living document, and it will be updated on a regular basis. The Northwest School reserves the right to interpret, change, modify, add, or delete any part of this manual at any time.

The Northwest School is centered on the principles of trust, integrity, and respect.

- ❖ Trust as the foundation for our relationships
- ❖ Integrity and honesty in our interactions
- ❖ Respect for ourselves and the rights, differences, and dignity of others.

Accountability is essential for a healthy expression of these values. These principles are interwoven and cannot exist without accountability for our personal behavior and for our role in institutional actions.

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# **The Northwest School Mission and Values**

The Northwest School offers a faculty who engage each student in sequential, cross-disciplinary study in the Humanities, Sciences, and the Arts.

We are a diverse community of people who challenge each other to learn in a healthy, creative, and collaborative atmosphere of respect for ourselves, others and the environment.

We graduate students with historical, scientific, artistic, and global perspective, enabling them to think and act with integrity, believing they have a positive impact on the world.

## **Our Philosophy**

These values are foundational to The Northwest School and guide our behavior:

- ❖ Excellence in education is determined by the quality of the faculty.
- ❖ The Humanities, Sciences, and Performing and Fine Arts are the appropriate areas of concentration in secondary education.
- ❖ Ethnic, racial, religious, gender, and economic diversity are essential for the highest quality of secondary education.
- ❖ The development of a sense of responsibility for the immediate environment and concern for the larger community are fundamental to the education of responsible citizens.
- ❖ All interactions in the School community can and should be directed toward the development of mutual support, the creative spirit and independence.

## **Our Core Values**

### Respect

We expect and foster interactions within our community based on mutual respect. Valuing the diversity within our community, we are committed to dialogue that allows us to find common ground, supporting a school culture of care and belonging.

### Integrity

We are committed to honesty and authenticity in our words and actions as we seek to improve our community and our world. We believe that our community is strongest when individuals integrate their values into all their words and actions

### Safety

We take measures to protect the physical, emotional and intellectual safety of students and faculty. Recognizing that a good education involves a certain amount of risk, we are committed to teaching students the skills to assess and appropriately respond to those risks.

# **Communal Expectations**

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## **Online Student Conduct**

we are not all on campus together, when using The Northwest School's online platforms for learning and engagement, you are "at school". The expectations below should guide your behavior as we work together online. We know that not all our students are able to join live/synchronous classes, and we will support students who are logging in from different time zones.

Bring your best self to class. Given the extraordinary nature of online learning in this time, even higher behavioral expectations for school are required. When behavior expectations are not met, teachers may report this to the Deans of Students, as they would when at school. The Deans of Students will communicate with students and families as needed.

Join your class on time and follow all instructions given by the teacher. Teachers will be taking attendance for each class period. Log on before the start of class, so you join the class on time. Only students registered for the class should attend remotely.

Engage in class as expected. Email, Teams chat, Canvas chat, etc. should be used for school purposes only during class time and not in ways that distract other students from participating fully in class. Outside of class time, students may use Teams to connect with one another. Classes will be recorded, and all chats in Zoom (during class and outside of class) will be viewable.

Demonstrate integrity. Maintain trust with your teacher and other students in the school by not sharing videos, documents, chats, etc. with others outside of your class.

### **If you are needing extra support:**

First go to Canvas. If you still have questions or need support, message your teacher to determine a plan. Independent work time and office hours can be used for this communication.

If you are experiencing technical challenges, please email [Helpdesk@northwestschool.org](mailto:Helpdesk@northwestschool.org).

Be patient. Technology may not work quickly, and it may not work at all.

Stay in frequent communication with your teachers through Canvas. Ask clarifying questions and don't delay in reaching out. Message your teachers if you are unable to complete an assignment, as you would while at school, and ask them for help and/or an extension. Use your calendar to set up meetings with teachers during office hours.

Review feedback from teachers in Canvas. Teachers will provide regular feedback so you can keep track of your progress in the course. Always use this as a starting point when maintaining contact with teachers.

Keep distractions to a minimum. Do not use your phone or have unnecessary tabs open that are not necessary for class when meeting with your class

## **Dress Code**

Students must be appropriately dressed on campus, during school functions, and while representing the school in performances and activities. We recognize that the primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and their parent/guardian. The Northwest School is responsible for seeing that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student, and that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student.

Students must wear: a top (i.e. shirt/dress/blouse/sweatshirt), a bottom (i.e. pants/sweatpants/shorts/skirt/dress/leggings), and shoes.

Students cannot wear: violent language or images; images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity) or the use of same; hate speech, profanity, pornography; images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class; visible underwear (visible waistbands or straps on undergarments worn under other clothing are not a violation); bathing suits; helmets or headgear that obscures the face (except as a religious observance).

Students who are in violation of these community standards will be asked to be in conversation with the Division Directors, Associate Director, or Deans of Students.

## **Academic Integrity**

An educational community is a place of dialogue, a forum for the exchange and analysis of ideas and information. The authorship and source of ideas must be clearly acknowledged to preserve the essential integrity of that dialogue in all its forms (essays, exams, lab reports, discussion sessions, etc.). Cheating will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, defined as appropriation and use of another's ideas or writings as one's own, cannot be allowed. The student must give credit where it is due by acknowledging the source or author of the idea or passage. Cheating and willful plagiarism will have serious consequences. An incident of plagiarism or cheating will result in a conference involving the student, teacher, and Dean of Students or Division Directors. Depending on circumstances, an initial incident of cheating or plagiarism can have consequences that include failure on that piece of work and possibly failure for the term. Repeated incidents can lead to permanent withdrawal from the school. All incidents will be reported to the Division Directors.

## **Harassment and Hate Speech/Symbols**

An atmosphere of mutual respect and physical and emotional safety is essential for the Northwest School community. Thus, conduct, language, symbols, or gestures that create an intimidating, hostile, offensive, racist, transphobic, anti-Semitic, sexist, misogynistic or otherwise hateful or unsafe environment are not to be tolerated and may constitute harassment. Harassment may involve a single serious incident or a pattern of physical, verbal, written, electronic, online, or sexual interactions that are hurtful, hateful, intimidating, unwelcome, and unwanted between students, between faculty, between students and faculty, or between parents/guardians and faculty. The use of any electronic communications on social media platforms to harass, bully or threaten another is unacceptable and will be addressed by the administration. Conduct that parallels harassment or hateful behavior in the real world and online in virtual spaces will result in the school needing to act on information received from social networking sites.

Examples of prohibited Hate Harassment include but are not limited to:

1. Verbal abuse, slurs, and jokes. This includes oral or written jokes, slurs, and comments that stereotype individuals or groups based on their race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or other protected class status or characteristic.
2. Graffiti, cartoons, vandalism or other graphic materials (such as pictures and depictions) that are demeaning or hostile towards individuals or groups based on their race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or other protected class status or characteristic.
3. Threats, pranks, and spreading of malicious gossip directed at individuals or groups based on their race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or other protected class status or characteristic.

The school encourages the person experiencing harassing behavior to report their experiences to a faculty member so that they can receive the support necessary to deal with the issues in a safe environment. Furthermore, in order to create a respectful and safe school community for everyone, it is the responsibility of every community member to stand up and speak out on behalf of classmates and peers. Being a silent bystander to harassing and hateful behaviors allows such behaviors to continue. It is critical that all members of the school community report incidents of harassment and hateful behavior promptly to a member of the faculty, such as a teacher, advisor, school counselor, division director, or Head of School.

Reports of harassment and hateful behavior of any kind will be promptly investigated. School administration will follow the same guidelines enlisted in our sexual harassment policy. These reports will be responded to with great care, sensitivity, and thoughtfulness. The Northwest School does not tolerate harassment and hate speech/symbols and an investigation of the alleged perpetrator may lead to disciplinary action up to and including withdrawal from the community.

## **Drugs and Alcohol**

Students may not possess, use or make arrangements for the use of alcohol, marijuana, other drugs, or related paraphernalia on campus, at any school function, or in any way or at any time that interferes with their functioning or the functioning of others at the school. In support of the school's policy, alcohol may not be served at school-related functions where students are present.

The Northwest School recognizes alcoholism, drug addiction and chemical dependency as treatable health problems that require early identification and response. The school, where appropriate, will refer students to professional alcohol/drug assessment, counseling and/or treatment. Our primary purpose is to be helpful in securing the appropriate support. It is also the school's intent to take preventive measures to help students and others avoid the dependencies which can arise from drug and alcohol use and abuse.

The Northwest School believes that it is in the best interest of the entire school community to take steps to promote, enhance, and maintain a drug-free environment. These steps include:

1. Education about the problems of drug and alcohol abuse;
2. Support of students in their decision to remain drug free;

3. Direct and immediate attention and assistance when an individual's use of alcohol or other drugs may be deemed harmful to one's self or to others, or when the capacity to make responsible decisions has been reduced or compromised.

The goal is for NWS students to be in charge of their own lives and make healthy decisions. Students are expected to make well-considered choices based on the reality that drugs and alcohol abuse are contrary to the goals of good physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

## **Smoking**

The Northwest School believes smoking is unhealthy and wants to discourage students from smoking through both policy and education. The School is a non-smoking campus, and smoking is not allowed at school-related functions, including school trips. Under Washington State law, it is illegal for minors to purchase, obtain, or possess tobacco products. Smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, or vaporizing devices fall under the same prohibition. This policy goes beyond the state law in that we require all students, not just those under age 18, to refrain from smoking.

## **Sexual Discrimination Policy and Grievance Procedure**

As noted in its Nondiscrimination Policy, The Northwest School ("Northwest") prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression, in any of its education programs or activities. The following policy addresses Northwest's prohibition against sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual assault, and the procedure to follow if violation of this policy is alleged. Sexual harassment under this policy can occur adult to student, student to student, or can be carried out by a group of students or adults and will be investigated by Northwest even if the alleged harasser is not an employee, such as a volunteer or third-party consultant. For allegations of sexual harassment where an employee is the alleged victim, please refer to the applicable policy in the faculty handbook.

### **Definitions**

For purposes of this policy and procedure, the following definitions apply:

**Complainant.** Person who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment under this policy. Under this policy, parents and guardians may act on behalf of a Complainant, including by filing a formal complaint.

**Education Program or Activity.** Northwest's education program and activity includes locations, events, or circumstances over which Northwest exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the alleged sexual harassment occurred, such as school-sponsored sporting events, field trips, and other off-campus programs and activities.

**Formal Complaint.** Document filed by a Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a Respondent and that triggers Northwest to investigate.

**Remedies.** After a Determination with a finding of responsibility has been made, Remedies are individualized services that are designed to restore equal educational access, protect safety, or deter sexual harassment. Examples include disciplinary sanctions, dismissal, no-contact orders, and grade adjustments.

**Reporter.** Person who makes the initial report of alleged sexual harassment. This person may or may not be the alleged victim and may or may not be an employee of Northwest.

**Respondent.** Person who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct alleged to be sexual harassment.

**Sexual Harassment.** Sexual harassment is defined as:

- ❖ Any instance of *quid pro quo* harassment by a Northwest employee. This includes sexual demands, sexual advances, or requests for sexual favors when submission is a stated or implied condition of obtaining an educational benefit; and/or sexual demands, sexual advances, or requests for sexual favors where submission or rejection is a factor in an academic or other school-related decision affecting an individual.
- ❖ *Unwelcome conduct* on the basis of sex or gender that a reasonable person would find so *severe, pervasive, and objectively* offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the Northwest's educational program or activity.
- ❖ Any instance of *Sexual assault*, which is any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent.
- ❖ *Dating violence*, which is violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim.
- ❖ *Domestic violence*, which is a felony or misdemeanor crime committed by a current or former intimate partner of the victim.
- ❖ *Stalking*, which is engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their or others' safety or suffer substantial emotional distress.

**Supportive measures.** Individualized services reasonably available that are nonpunitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the other party that are designed to preserve or restore equal educational access, protect safety, or deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures may be applied prior to a finding of responsibility and with or without a formal complaint, and include: course adjustments; class schedule changes; counseling; no-contact orders.

## **Required Reporting for Employees**

Any employee who receives a report of or witnesses sexual harassment or assault is obligated to inform the Title IX Coordinator (Director of Human Resources) as soon as possible. This obligation is separate and apart from any mandatory obligation the employee may have under state law to report on reasonable cause to believe that a child is being abused or neglected.

## Filing a Report

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the Reporter is the person alleged to be the victim), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by e-mail, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the Reporter's verbal or written report. Such a report may be made at any time, including during non-business hours, by using the telephone number or e-mail address, or by mail to the office address, listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

## Title IX Personnel

Northwest's response to a report of sexual harassment under this policy and procedure shall be under the supervision and/or with the cooperation of the relevant Title IX personnel, to include the:

- ❖ **Title IX Coordinator** who is the Northwest official charged with receiving and managing the Northwest's response to formal complaints of sexual discrimination.
  - School Year 2020-21, the Title IX Coordinator may be reached at 1415 Summit Ave, Seattle, WA 98122, 206.816.6226 [ruth.donohue@northwestschool.org](mailto:ruth.donohue@northwestschool.org)
- ❖ **Investigator** who is the person charged with fulfilling Northwest's obligation to gather evidence, disclose evidence to the parties, where applicable, and prepare the investigative report.
- ❖ **Decision-maker** who is the person identified to review the evidence obtained by the Investigator and make the Determination applying the standard of proof.

All Title IX personnel shall be free from conflicts of interest or bias for or against the Complainant or Respondent, and shall be trained on the:

- ❖ Definition of sexual harassment,
- ❖ Scope of the Northwest's education program or activity,
- ❖ Conduct of investigations, grievance procedures, appeals, and informal resolution process,
- ❖ Avoidance of prejudgment of facts, conflicts of interest, and bias, and
- ❖ Application of relevance to consideration of evidence.

Any and all materials used to train Title IX personnel shall be posted on the website or made available to the public for review.

## After a Report is Received

After a report of alleged sexual harassment is received, the Title IX Coordinator shall take the following actions on behalf of Northwest:

- ❖ Promptly and confidentially contact the Complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures,

- ❖ Consider the Complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures,
- ❖ Inform the Complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without filing a formal complaint, and
- ❖ Explain to the Complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.
- ❖ Northwest shall offer supportive measures to the Complainant.

## **Formal Complaint**

Following discussion with the Title IX Coordinator, the Complainant may choose to file a formal complaint. Generally, Northwest will respect a Complainant's wishes with respect to whether to proceed with a formal complaint and investigation. However, if the Title IX Coordinator determines that signing a formal complaint to initiate an investigation over the wishes of the Complainant is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator may do so. There is no time limit or statute of limitations filing a formal complaint but, at the time a formal complaint is filed, a Complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the Northwest's education program or activity.

A formal complaint filed by a Complainant must:

- ❖ allege sexual harassment against a respondent,
- ❖ request that the Northwest investigate the allegations of sexual harassment,
- ❖ contain the Complainant's physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicate the Complainant is the person filing the formal complaint, and
- ❖ be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail.

## **Complaint Investigation and Grievance Procedures**

On receipt of a formal complaint, the following procedures shall be implemented within thirty (30) calendar days:

- ❖ Northwest will send notice of the formal complaint and allegations to both parties (Complainant and Respondent).
- ❖ Northwest may, in its discretion, consolidate formal complaints where the allegations arise out of the same facts.
- ❖ Throughout the investigation process, Northwest will send written notice of any investigative interviews, meetings, or hearings, to both parties.
- ❖ Northwest will carry the burden of proof and gathering evidence, not the parties.
- ❖ The presumption of innocence shall apply throughout the process.
- ❖ Northwest will not have access to or use a party's medical, psychological, or other treatment records unless Northwest obtains the party's voluntary and written consent.

- ❖ Northwest will provide equal opportunity for the parties to present inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, including fact and expert witnesses.
- ❖ Northwest may not restrict the ability of any party to discuss the allegations or gather evidence (e.g., no "gag" orders).
- ❖ Northwest must keep confidential the identity of complainants, respondents, and witnesses, except as may be required by law, or as necessary to carry out a Title IX proceeding.
- ❖ Both parties will have opportunity to select an advisor of their choosing, who may or may not be an attorney.
- ❖ Northwest shall send the parties and their advisors, if any, evidence directly related to the allegations, in electronic format or hard copy, with at least ten (10) calendar days for the parties to inspect, review, and respond to the evidence.
- ❖ Northwest shall send the parties and their advisors, if any, an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, in electronic format or hard copy, with at least ten (10) calendar days for the parties to respond.
- ❖ After Northwest has sent the investigative report to the parties and prior to reaching a Determination, the Decision-maker must afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party, in the Decision-maker's discretion. Any decision to exclude questions as not relevant must be explained to the party proposing them.
  - Questions and evidence about a complainant's prior sexual behavior and conduct are *per se* irrelevant and inadmissible unless offered to prove consent or that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged misconduct.

## Determinations

Decision-makers shall apply the same **preponderance of the evidence** standard to the determination of all formal complaints whether the complaint is against a student or an employee. Preponderance of the evidence means that, based on the evidence and witness testimony, it is more likely than not or a greater than 50% chance, that the sexual harassment allegations are true. Decision-makers may not be the same person as the Title IX coordinator or the investigator.

- ❖ If indicated by the evidence, Northwest must dismiss allegations of conduct that do not meet the definition of sexual harassment as stated in this policy. Any such dismissal is only for Title IX purposes and does not preclude the school from addressing the conduct in any manner Northwest deems appropriate.
- ❖ Northwest may, in its discretion, dismiss a formal complaint or allegations if the complainant informs the Title IX Coordinator in writing that they desire to withdraw the formal complaint or allegation(s), if the respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the school, or if specific circumstances prevent the Northwest from gathering sufficient evidence to reach a Determination.
- ❖ Northwest shall give the parties written notice of a dismissal (mandatory or discretionary) and the reasons for the dismissal.

- ❖ All Determinations shall be written, sent simultaneously to all parties with information on how to appeal, and include:
  - Findings of Fact,
  - Conclusions (and findings of responsibility) about whether alleged conduct occurred,
  - Rationale for the result as to each allegation,
  - any Disciplinary Sanctions imposed, and
  - whether Remedies will be provided.

No disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures may be imposed against a respondent if this grievance process has not been followed.

## **Appeal**

Within ten (10) calendar days, either party may appeal a Determination made on a formal complaint on the following alleged grounds only:

- 1) procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the Determination,
- 2) newly discovered evidence that was not previously available that could affect the outcome of the Determination, or
- 3) conflict of interest or bias of Title IX personnel (coordinator, investigator, or decision-maker) that affected the outcome of the Determination.

## **Informal Resolution**

Northwest may, in its discretion, choose to offer and facilitate informal resolution options, such as mediation or restorative justice. In order to attempt informal resolution, a formal complaint must have been filed and both parties must give consent that is 1) voluntary, 2) informed, and 3) written, and the person who facilitates the informal resolution must be well trained. Any party may withdraw and resume the grievance process at any time prior to resolution. In no case may Northwest condition enrollment or continued enrollment, employment or continued employment, or other right, on waiver of the right to a formal investigation and adjudication of a Complaint. Informal resolution is not available for claims alleging an employee sexually harassed a student.

## **Retaliation**

Retaliation is expressly prohibited and no person shall be retaliated against for making a report or for participating in an investigation. Retaliation includes charging an individual with code of conduct violations that do not involve sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX. Retaliation does not include charging an individual with a code of conduct violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a Title IX grievance proceeding or exercising rights protected under the First Amendment. Complaints alleging retaliation for filing a sexual discrimination complaint may be filed and will be investigated under this Grievance Procedure.

## **Questions**

Any questions concerning the application of this policy and procedure or Title IX generally should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator at 1415 Summit Ave., Seattle, WA 98122 [ruth.donohue@northwestschool.org](mailto:ruth.donohue@northwestschool.org) or to the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, [OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov), or Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20202.

*This policy is effective as of August 14, 2020, and addresses Northwest's prohibition against sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual assault, and the procedure to follow if violation of this policy is alleged.*

## **Discipline Approach**

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### **Philosophy**

Students and faculty come to The Northwest School in order to engage in a serious academic and social process involving personal, intellectual, artistic, and community growth. In such a community, rules are necessary to protect the rights of the individual by guiding behavior. The school attempts to apply the rules in an equitable and fair manner with the support of students and parents and guardians, documents the process of each incident, and reviews its documentation of discipline to hold itself accountable to being equitable and fair.

The school expects everyone to act in a way that creates a culture of care and belonging. While the school believes that every individual is responsible for their decisions and actions, the school is accountable for ensuring a culture of care and belonging. When someone has caused harm, it is the individual's responsibility to repair the harm, often with the guidance and in partnership with the school. If the individual refuses to engage in the process of repairing harm or the school determines harm cannot be repaired by evaluation of the individual's behavior and actions, the school must take action which prioritizes its communal values of safety, integrity, and respect. We see discipline as an extension of our teaching, even in its sanctions and consequences, and recognize the developmental stages of young people with respect to their ability to understand what is at stake and to assume responsibility for their decisions and actions.

### **Standard Disciplinary Practices**

Most disciplinary issues are handled by the Deans. That said, to center the well-being of students, and ensure an equitable and anti-racist process, the Deans often work in collaboration with the Advancing Equity Team, Learning Resources Team, School Counselors, and Division Directors. In general, disciplinary issues include the scope of any behavior that harms the school community.

## **Withdrawal from School**

We consider the following serious behavior problems which may result in the withdrawal from school:

These behavior problems include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Hate speech and actions motivated by prejudice on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation, or other identifiers
- ❖ Sexual harassment and assault
- ❖ The possession of weapons
- ❖ Harassment, bullying or intimidation, including physical, verbal and social abuse
- ❖ Stealing or malicious destruction of property
- ❖ Possession and/or distribution of drugs and alcohol
- ❖ Repeated incidents showing lack of academic integrity
- ❖ Repeated violations of the attendance expectations

The school cannot allow actions that jeopardize the health, safety or academic purposes of the community.

Students who have been withdrawn may be allowed to petition for return with the appropriate Deans and Division Directors. Students involved in a petition process may not attend classes or school functions except by advance permission from the Deans.

## **Personal & Academic Integrity**

A student's word is expected to be the complete truth; therefore, lying and forgery are violations of communal expectations. Lying encompasses intentional falsification or denial of fact or intentionally creating a false impression or breaking a promise or pledge. A student's work is expected to be entirely their own, unless research is permitted and properly credited; therefore, cheating and plagiarism are violations of communal expectations.

Cheating encompasses giving, receiving, or attempting to give or receive unauthorized help that could result in an unfair advantage in completing schoolwork. Plagiarism encompasses representing another's ideas or work in any form as one's own.

The property of others is to be respected; therefore, stealing—no matter how minor—is a violation of communal expectations. Stealing encompasses taking anything without the prior consent of the owner.

## **Attendance Policy**

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Student attendance is essential for an engaged educational environment. Students are expected to attend class, advisory, grade level meetings, Community Meeting, and other school functions on time and on task, with few allowable exceptions. Regardless of their grade in the class, students may be deemed not to have passed a course when the Director determines that their absences are excessive. The school reserves the right to refuse credit to students who miss 20% or more of their classes in any course during the trimester. Final decisions

about credit rest with the Director. A pattern of absences will also prompt the Dean of Students to notify the student's parents.

## **Absences**

Absences, when they occur and for whatever reason, are to be handled in the following manner:

1. The parent, host parent, guardian, or residential advisor of the absent student must call or email the school (attendance@northwestschool.org), with the student's advisor CCed, before 9:00 AM to account for the absence; or, in the case of an accident, the school must be notified as soon as possible.
2. When a student knows in advance that they will be absent (reasons for excused absences include religious holidays and observances; illnesses and medical procedures; and family events like graduations, weddings, and college visits), the student must email their teachers, attendance@northwestschool.org, with their parents/guardians cc'd, at least two days in advance. This communication should include an explanation of their absence, as well as a request for information so that the student can keep current with their work. The student is responsible for making up all of their work and any arrangements needed to do so with their teachers.

In general, students who are absent from class are responsible for making up any missed work. Repeated absences may result in a lowering of the student's grade or in the awarding of a Credit ("CR") or Half-Credit ("HCR").

## **Arranging for Religious Holidays**

Respect for religious and cultural beliefs is a cornerstone of The Northwest School's philosophy. In that spirit, the school seeks to recognize major religious holy days, cultural celebrations and practices and to honor every family's choice to participate fully in such observances. Our goal is to work with students so that the choice to miss school for religious/cultural reasons can be made comfortably and without undue burden. When the students return to school, teachers will be available to meet with them to review lecture notes, discussion topics, lab projects, etc.

## **Medical Leave**

Students returning from an extended leave for medical reasons must follow the steps provided below before resuming a normal course of study.

1. Schedule a "re-entry" meeting with guardian/parent(s), student, Division Director, Dean, and a School Counselor.
2. Provide written documentation/clearance from an outside healthcare provider(s) that includes a real-time conversation between a School Counselor and expert provider to establish/confirm student's readiness to return to classes.
3. Establish continuous outpatient care and permission for communication between the school and the care provider on as-needed, ongoing basis.

# **Academic Life**

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## **Terms, Credits and Evaluation**

The school year is divided into three terms, called “trimesters.” Evaluations are sent home from every course at the end of each term.

In the Middle School, students in 6th grade earn credit/no credit, and students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade earn letter grades in most classes. Arts and PE Health and Wellness teachers have the discretion to issue grades or use credit/no credit.

In the Upper School, each completed year-long course is awarded two academic credits, with the exception of Humanities in grades 9-11, which receives four credits. Therefore, upon completion of each trimester, .66 credits (or 1.33 credits in Humanities 9-11) are awarded. While NWS courses generally are full year, occasionally an arts class might be one or two trimesters in length, and credit is awarded accordingly.

Students in the Upper School earn letter grades in most courses, though some courses are credit/no credit (CR/NCR). In all cases, in the evaluation, grade and credit refer to the term just completed. No cumulative grades are given. The grading system and Upper School GPA calculations are based on the following standards:

In general, students who are absent from class are responsible for making up any missed work. Repeated absences may result in a lowering of the student’s grade or in the awarding of a Credit (“CR”) or Half-Credit (“HCR”).

Incompletes may occasionally be given in the case of illness or other clearly extenuating circumstances. In all cases an incomplete will be accompanied by a specific contract and deadline by which the work must be completed. At that time, an evaluation will be written, and an appropriate grade determined.

[Click here to view the 2020-21 Curriculum Guide](#)

[Click here to access the Remote Learning Guide](#)

## **Add/Drop**

Students may drop or add a course only during the first week of the class. If you want to drop or add a course, first consult with your advisor and then obtain the Drop/Add Request Form from the Registrar. In the Upper School, the change must be approved and the form signed by your advisor, the teachers involved, and the Upper School Director. In the Middle School, the change must be approved by the Middle School Dean of Students. The change in enrollment is not official until the Add/Drop form is received by the Registrar and approved.

## **Unsatisfactory Record, Academic Difficulty, and Student Well-Being**

When a student is not thriving at school for any reason, we are concerned—particularly when patterns develop that are difficult to disrupt through appropriate and sustainable interventions and support.

Some indicators signaling a student's inability to manage the demands and expectations of our school environment include low grades; difficulty completing homework, taking tests as scheduled, or meeting other deadlines; failure to keep appointments with teachers; numerous absences and/or late arrivals to school; social or emotional struggles; and minor to major disciplinary concerns and/or breaches of honesty.

Any of these patterns of behavior in a trimester will lead the dean of students and other appropriate member(s) of the administrative team (Director, Associate Director, Counselors) and the advisor to engage the student and parents to address the concerns.

## **Student Life**

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### **Advising**

#### **Overview**

Our Advisory Program is an essential component in creating an intentional community through authentic connections. In advisories, students and faculty collaborate during weekly meetings, special events, and community-wide conversations. Through the advisory experience, students learn to practice healthy decision-making, to develop social and academic skills, to engage in active citizenship and to foster intercultural understanding.

Our Advisory program offers a balance of focusing on advocacy for each individual student and building an authentic community in a small group. While attention to academic progress is an important aspect of Advisory, our time together will have a high priority on the personal and interpersonal development of each student.

#### **Purpose of Advising Program**

- ❖ Each student feels known and valued in the community as an individual
- ❖ Each student's progression from dependent to independent learner is monitored
- ❖ Each student has an adult advocate
- ❖ The mission and values of the school are intentionally taught
- ❖ Students are referred to the Student Support Team (SST) of each division as needed
- ❖ In the Upper School, each student's progress (academic and social) is supported and the student and family have a known connection point with the school that is a sustained relationship throughout their entire time in the Upper School.
- ❖ In the Middle School, the student's progress (academic and social) is supported by an advisor who teaches in their grade level and changes each year of Middle School.

#### **Academic Advising**

Each student is assigned an advisor who assumes responsibility for monitoring their academic and social progress at school. With a regular advisory meeting time in each week, advisors will be the point person in

supporting each advisee and in communicating with their families. The student is ultimately responsible for their own academic progress and their own behavior. The advisor will be a support to student self-advocacy, review all evaluations with students, help students set goals based on the evaluations, and aid in course selection during registration periods. In cases of academic difficulty, an advisor may convene a conference of the student's teachers, often including parents, to develop solutions. Students and parents are encouraged to confer with advisors at any time.

Grade Level Coordinators oversee the advising responsibilities at each grade level and work to promote communication and coordination among faculty.

## **Daily Time Schedule**

[Click here to see the current daily schedule.](#)

## **Office Hours**

It is not required for students to attend office hours, but it is strongly encouraged. All teachers will communicate through their course descriptions if their office hours will be drop-in or by appointment.

## **Dormitory and Student Housing Policy**

All Northwest School students must live in situations with responsible adult supervision. All day students must reside with a parent, legal guardian, or host family designated by their parents. Students may live with non-parent family members or guardians in the Seattle area, subject to the approval of the Middle School Director or the Upper School Director, Associate Director, and Dean of Students. No student may live independently in an apartment or house, or with a guardian or host family who is younger than 24 years of age.

The Northwest School is unique among Seattle-area schools in offering a co-ed dormitory in an urban setting. Our Dormitory is a professionally supervised residence hall that supports academic achievement and emotional growth within an inter-cultural environment. Students whose circumstances do not allow them the opportunity to live in approved situations with responsible adult supervision must live in the Northwest School Dormitory.

If a student violates the Student Housing Policy or any other policies of The Northwest School, the parents/legal guardian are responsible for all living arrangements and/or transportation arrangements and costs incurred as a result of their student's withdrawal from The Northwest School.

## **Counseling Services**

During online learning, the School Counselors are available to offer short-term support, consultation, and referral services to our students and families. We work from a strengths-based, solution-focused lens with the intention of supporting students with their academic program, their social connections, and their mental health and wellness. If counseling needs exceed our ability to support and a student would be better served working with a community-based, NWS Counselors will work with students and families to identify possible providers

School Counseling conversations are considered private except for those regarding identified or suspected harm to self, harm of others, or abuse. In these cases, the school counselors will work with the student to identify and inform the appropriate support systems outside of school (often including, but not limited to, parents/guardians, appropriate administrators and, as dictated by state law, Child Protective Services and/or the Police).

Our School Counselors meet frequently with students, faculty, and families. We aim to be a resource to all members of our community and encourage students and families to reach out with any questions or needs.

Meetings with the School Counselors will be through Zoom and Microsoft Teams and can be scheduled through email and/or through the scheduling program Calendly. Every effort for confidentiality will be made, however, due to the nature of video-conferencing confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

## **Library**

The Northwest School library provides print and digital resources, research support and information literacy instruction for the entire school community. Students and faculty are encouraged to use the library for scholastic pursuits and recreational reading.

The librarians are available to help students and faculty find information in our library and in other local libraries. Our collection is growing steadily, and we have access to the holdings of several large local libraries, including Seattle Public and King County.

Library materials must be returned to the library by the end of each term. If a book has not been returned by the last day of the term, the student's book account will be charged the price of the book, plus a service charge. When the book is returned, the price of the book will be refunded; however, the service charge will remain.

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

At The Northwest School, students and faculty come from multiple regions and backgrounds. We speak different languages and follow different cultural paths. And through these differences we learn and grow. Since its founding in 1980, we have embraced diversity, equity, and inclusion as essential to a robust and quality education. The Northwest School cultivates an inclusive, authentic, and positive experience for its students, faculty, and extended family. In doing so, we provide a home for academic, social, and personal growth and model our values for the larger community. We believe that the education of responsible citizens happens best when a diverse group of students studies a variety of perspectives in an atmosphere of respect.

Advancing equity is an integral part of the Northwest mission. NWS articulates its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion through action. D.E.I. is embedded in the curriculum, the hiring of faculty from diverse backgrounds, admission considerations and institutional priorities. Recognizing there is ample room for institutional growth, our community is nimble, intentional, and deliberate in enhancing our actions. Our goal is

to ensure every member of this community feels welcomed, affirmed and heard.

Diversity is our commitment to build and maintain a mission-congruent community that includes individuals and families who represent a wide variety of identities. Characteristics by which individuals or families may identify include dimensions of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status and family structure, national origin, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, age, political perspectives, learning differences, ability, and more.

Equity is our commitment to acknowledge and overcome the barriers, both historical and contemporary, that prevent individuals and groups from full agency and achievement. Equity requires the fair treatment of all members of our community, including full access to school programs and opportunities.

Inclusion is our commitment to enable and encourage the participation and contribution of all members of our community. Inclusion is the intentional, ongoing practice of creating conditions where all individuals are valued and all voices heard, and where each member of our community feels a sense of belonging, respect, support, and empowerment.

Our dedication to diversity manifests itself in specific ways:

- ❖ A community of students, parents, faculty and alumni from a wide diversity of backgrounds
- ❖ A welcoming school atmosphere marked by respect for differences, mutual trust, celebration of diverse cultures, and thoughtful engagement in open dialogue
- ❖ A belief in the intelligence and good will of all people that allows us to act with personal integrity and consideration for others
- ❖ A cross-disciplinary, multi-cultural, and globally-oriented curriculum that explores historic and current issues of social justice
- ❖ An international program that draws approximately 20% of our Upper School students from around the world
- ❖ A commitment to enrollment, hiring and personnel policies free from bias and discrimination
- ❖ A financial aid program that devotes approximately \$2 million annually to need-based assistance
- ❖ International travel opportunities through which our students explore other cultures

## **Policy for Transgender and Gender Independent Students**

This Policy addresses the needs and concerns of transgender and gender independent students to ensure a safe, affirming, and healthy school environment where every student can learn. This Policy is meant to support transgender and gender independent students in the school environment, if such support is needed. The support and accommodations for each student must be assessed and addressed individually based on the specific requests and needs of each student.

### **Privacy/Confidentiality**

The Northwest School shall ensure that all personally identifiable and medical information relating to transgender and gender expansive students shall be kept confidential in accordance with applicable state, local, and federal privacy laws. Parents/guardians and students should not disclose any information that may reveal a student's gender identity to others, including students, parents or guardians, and school faculty, unless legally required to do so or unless the student has authorized such disclosure.

## **Names, Pronouns, and School Records**

We believe that every student should be addressed by the name and pronouns that correspond to the student's gender identity. Regardless of whether a transgender or gender expansive student has legally changed their name or gender, The Northwest School allows such students to use a chosen name and gender pronouns that reflect their identity.

If the student has previously been known at school by a different name, faculty, staff, and students will use the student's chosen name and appropriate pronouns. To ensure consistency among administrators and staff, every effort will be made to update student education records (as allowed by law) in a timely manner (such as attendance reports, class rosters for substitutes, school IDs, electronic records, etc.) with the student's chosen name and appropriate gender markers.

## **Access to Gender-Segregated Activities and Facilities**

Students will have access to all restrooms, locker rooms or changing facilities that correspond to their gender identity. Any student who is uncomfortable using a shared gender-segregated facility, regardless of the reason, shall, upon the student's request, be provided with a safe and non-stigmatizing alternative. This may include, for example, addition of a privacy partition or curtain, provision to use a nearby private restroom or office, or a separate changing schedule.

However, requiring a transgender or gender independent student to use a separate space threatens to publicly identify and stigmatize the student as transgender and will not be done unless requested by a student. Under no circumstances will students be required to use gender segregated facilities that are inconsistent with their gender identity.

## **Classes and Gender-Segregated Activities**

If gender-segregated activities are necessary, students may participate in such activities in a manner consistent with their gender identity. The school will work with interscholastic organizations to provide transgender and gender expansive students with opportunities to participate in interscholastic athletics in a manner consistent with their gender identity, under the guidelines established by the interscholastic organization.

## **School Trips**

The Northwest School will make efforts to ensure the safety and comfort of transgender and gender expansive students, maximize the student's social interaction and equal opportunity for participation, and minimize any stigmatization and isolation from the general student population. The Northwest School will design sleeping arrangements that best support each student's emotional and physical safety. Generally, separating students into groups according to their stated gender identity is most appropriate, but the composition of the group and/or the nature of the trip environment may require another arrangement.

# **Learning Resources Program**

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## **Philosophy**

We embrace the idea that effective teaching for students with learning differences is effective teaching for all students. Our curriculum, pedagogical practices, and support systems are designed to give a diversity of learning profiles an excellent liberal arts education without identifiable patterns indicating achievement gaps based on demographics.

We want our program to produce a thoughtful, critical-thinking, compassionate, skilled and capable citizenry. We recognize, respect, and work to uphold the dignity of all learners. We want to develop capacity for all students to understand how they learn best, to be self-advocates, to employ supports and utilize tools to help themselves be successful, and to grow towards independent learning\*.

We serve students with learning differences that can be accommodated but do not require significant curriculum modification. They are full participants in the entire school curriculum, supported and guided to become independent learners.

## **Guiding Principles:**

- ❖ NWS has a commitment to a diverse learning community, which includes students with mild to moderate learning differences.
- ❖ We create our own culture, one with inclusive classroom design in curricular and pedagogical approaches.
- ❖ We apply current knowledge and research of neuroscience principles as they apply to student learning.
- ❖ We have a goal of all students building toward independent learning as described by Zaretta Hammond in *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*.
- ❖ We believe in a growth mindset, that each student who joins the Northwest School can, with our support, learn and grow towards that independence.

## **Communication**

Students who encounter academic challenges need a strong connection to their support network. Regular communication between the teacher, advisor, family, and dorm faculty (if applicable) when challenges and successes appear in class are part of the expected partnership in support of the student. School-family communication can be initiated by any member of the partnership – the Learning Resources Team, advisor, teacher, parent/guardian, or dorm – as needed.

Teachers use Canvas, our online Learning Management System, to provide written instructions for large assignments, calendar due dates, lecture notes, links to class recordings, and other course materials for completing work remotely.

Families can anticipate the following communication cycle for a student with an LSP:

- ❖ Initial meeting with Learning Resources faculty and family (with student and advisor present as appropriate) either in the Fall of the student's first year at Northwest, or when the LSP is first created.

The purpose of this initial meeting is to ensure that the student and family understand the plan and its implementation.

- ❖ Throughout the trimester – partnership with teachers and advisors to provide updates on
- ❖ student progress, recommendations, and support as needed.
- ❖ Trimester end and/or beginning of subsequent trimester – communication from advisor regarding growth around independent learning and/or goal-setting with student for upcoming trimester.
- ❖ Prior to the start of a new school year, returning families will receive access to an updated LSP that reflects any changes for effective accommodations

[Click here to access the Learning Resources page on our Web site.](#)

## **The Northwest School Dormitory**

The Northwest School Dormitory is open to support the needs, learning, and community participation of our international students and global population. In order to mitigate risk within the residential community, follow all government protocols, and provide clear and up-to-date guidelines, a Residential Life Community Guide will supersede the usual dormitory student handbook for the 2020-21 school year.

It may be accessed here: [Community Guide.pdf](#)

The Community Guide will be reviewed frequently and updated as appropriate to reflect public health guidelines and recommendations. The community guide sets expectations for both dorm residents and other members of the Northwest School concerning visitors and other matters.

Northwest School dorm students who remain abroad to begin the year will be expected to follow their academic schedule in their own time zone, follow all remote learning expectations and policies, and participate in virtual dorm programming as they are able.

## **Environment Program**

The true stewardship of our immediate surroundings takes place on a constant basis. As an educational structure, during Environment Periods, all members of the school community (students and faculty) are expected to participate in the regular cleaning and maintenance of the campus. This participation is intended to focus our attention on the consequences of our actions in the environment, both immediate and global. The Environment Program thus fosters an attitude of stewardship for both the school campus and the planet. “Leaving it cleaner than we found it” is the operative philosophy and intent.

Students and faculty work in teams assigned to a specific area under the direction and coordination of members of the senior class. All team members are expected to attend all environment assignments and complete their

assigned tasks. The school considers the environment program to be an essential part of its educational mission. In keeping with this philosophy, every student receives an evaluation of their environment work written by the senior team leader each term.

In addition to our assigned environment periods, all Northwest School community members share in a continuous responsibility to maintain the building and our immediate environment.

## **Safety**

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### **School Messenger**

The Northwest School uses School Messenger to communicate with parents, faculty, and students in the event of a school emergency or school closure. School Messenger allows us to send emails, voicemails, and text messages. In order to receive an emergency text message, we ask students and parents to provide us with cell phone numbers. Student cell phone numbers were collected on the Emergency Release form. If you have already submitted the Emergency Release form and did not include your student's cell phone, then contact the main office or let us know via email at [nws-mbp@northwestschool.org](mailto:nws-mbp@northwestschool.org). Directions for parents to opt-in to School Messenger were sent with the summer back-to-school email and are available on My Backpack.

### **Medical Information**

An Emergency Data and Release Form must be submitted for each student at the beginning of each new school year. This record is used in the event of any emergency during the school day or on field trips to help diagnose, treat, and prioritize students according to their individual medical needs.

If you indicated on your student's most recent emergency forms that your student has a medical condition or allergy that can be considered life threatening, please make sure you have completed your emergency forms as completely as possible – we need to know the nature of the condition and what to do in case of an emergent event (this form goes with your student when off campus – from sporting events to trips). If your student has a condition that requires medication, special foods, or other supplies, please make sure that the school has a three-day supply of whatever they may need. We can store these items at school in student specific emergency box or, as needed, in the refrigerator. Please make sure any needed supplies come to school with your student during the first week of school – they can be dropped off in the main office.

Washington State School Immunization Law, RCW 28a.31.118, requires that students be properly immunized in order to attend school and that a Certificate of Immunization Status (CIS) be on file for each student before the first day of school.

# **Academic Administration and Support**

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## **Grades 6-12 Administrators**

Acting Head of School & Assistant Head of School  
Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management  
Director of Environmental Education and  
Stewardship Director of Learning Services  
Director of Global Marketing and Programs  
Director of Athletics  
Food Services Director

Meg Goldner Rabinowitz  
Michele Sanchez  
Jenny Cooper  
Hillary French  
Dmitry Sherbakov  
Britt Attack  
Bethany Fong

## **Upper School Administration**

Director  
Associate Director  
Dean of Students  
Director of College Counseling

Amy Berner-Hays  
Cecilia Tung  
Kevin Alexander  
Erin Miller

## **Middle School Administration**

Director  
Middle School Dean of Students

Sue Maul  
Maria Moses

## **Student Support Faculty**

Dean of Residential Life  
Associate Director of College Counseling  
Learning Resources Coordinator  
Educational Technology Coordinator  
Registrar  
Counselors

Justin Peters  
Rachel Fumia  
Rae Page  
Zach Groshell  
Susan Kurlinski  
Erin North

## **Grade Level Coordinators**

Class of 2020 – Kathryn Wallace  
Class of 2021 – Elvin Jones  
Class of 2022 – Jeremy Scheuer  
Class of 2023 – Christian Stallworth  
Class of 2024 – Maddy Huggins  
Class of 2025 – Richard Ha  
Class of 2026 – Erica Bergamini, Jen Ford

## **Admissions**

Assistant Director of Admissions  
International Admissions Coordinator

Maggie Ball  
Jack Lloyd