

Community Commitments Handbook

2023-2024



WATERSHED
SCHOOL

Last revised: July 2023

DEAR WATERSHED SCHOOL STUDENTS AND FAMILIES,

Since our founding, Watershed School has been focused on both intellectual development and community warmth. We believe that the best learning and growth happen in an environment where all community members can be their authentic selves. And the best communities are those that welcome diverse individuals as we come together with respect and support. This handbook is designed to help us build a great community.

Sometimes I wish we could have a very short community handbook -- perhaps just three lines:

- Be kind.
- Be curious.
- Do great work.

However, I know it can be helpful to have a bit more detail. So that is what you will find within this handbook. The details of community expectations can often be overwhelming -- attempting to list every possible situation. To mitigate this, we take a three part approach to this handbook.

1. **Our Community Commitments:** A short overview of the community commitments that flow from our Mission and Design Principles.
2. **The Details:** A more detailed look at each of the commitments (the fine print!). This includes language about some specific expectations that flow from the commitments.
3. **Administrative Responses:** Information about how we will respond to situations when students do not meet the commitments.

Note: it is impossible to cover every potential situation that could lead to an administrative response, and just because something is not explicitly listed, does not mean it is allowed. We will use our judgment in all cases, and base these judgments on the basic commitments listed in the first part.

Our policies are intended to support families, maintain clear boundaries, and support students as they grow in character and ability. I welcome your feedback and your insight along the way. After reviewing this handbook, we ask that all parents and students sign the last page ("Acknowledgment and Receipt of Community Commitments Handbook") and return it to the school.

Watershed is a special place. This is because we know that young people learn by doing challenging, meaningful, real-world work. At Watershed, we give them the chance to do so. We are so glad that you have joined us on this journey.

Tim Breen, Ph.D.
Head of School

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUR COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS

Our Mission	3
Our Design Principles	3
Community Commitments	4

THE DETAILS

<u>Commitment 1</u> : To build a school culture that inspires and educates students to become highly capable, healthy, wise, and engaged citizens.	5
<u>Commitment 2</u> : To build a school community that values diversity and is actively inclusive.	6
<u>Commitment 3</u> : To create a climate of warmth, acceptance, unconditional respect, and fun.	8
<u>Commitment 4</u> : To build strong relationships among educators and students.	9
<u>Commitment 5</u> : To take responsibility for our own education.	10
<u>Commitment 6</u> : To hold ourselves to a high level of integrity.	11

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSES

Concerns about Commitments and Expectations	13
Concerns about Academic Work	14
Roles with regard to Community and Academic Contracts	15
Leave of Absence Policies	16
Policy of Non-Discrimination	17
Grievances	18
Re-enrollment	18

Acknowledgment and Receipt of Community Commitments 19

(Please sign and return this page to Watershed)

OUR COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS

Our Mission

To spark adventure and wonder, foster inquiry and community, and build the character and ability of students to take on the world's greatest challenges.

Our Design Principles

Our Design Principles are the foundation of the Watershed experience. They celebrate our commitment to a program and school culture that inspires and educates students to become highly capable, healthy, wise, and engaged citizens prepared to take on the world's great challenges. In keeping with the founders' intentions, Watershed periodically reviews, updates, and re-affirms its Design Principles. The seven Design Principles below were adopted in 2019 and serve to focus our vision, remind us of what is important, and inform our decisions.

Adventure And Wonder

Education at its best is an adventure full of wonder and discovery for students, for educators, and for schools.

We build a culture of curiosity and inquiry to nurture and develop the wonder, wisdom, and insight we all have within. We embrace adventure with the understanding that transformative learning and growth involves risk. Our work together remains fresh and dynamic because we are all committed to the continuous evolution of learning opportunities—for it is in the unknown that the greatest learning lies.

Real-World Learning

Deep, enduring learning happens first-hand – directly from the people, ecosystems, cultures, and challenges of the “real world.”

We explore important questions with a transdisciplinary approach that draws on real-world experiences and experts. The world is our classroom, as we travel locally, regionally, and internationally to explore and learn. Students build the capacity to solve problems by integrating their knowledge, seeking multiple perspectives, and understanding the complexity of our world. The curriculum is flexible in order to respond to real needs and learning opportunities as they arise.

Depth Over Breadth

Exploration of real-world topics and questions leads to deep understandings.

Students develop rich understandings of the complexity and connections in our world through deep study of real-world topics. Through these explorations, students discover and develop their own interests and passions. We know that success in the future does not depend on remembering a broad collection of content; success depends on having the skills of effective learners: critical thinking, creative problem-solving, communication, collaboration, craft, and the broad perspective of a global citizen.

Student Agency

We honor students as architects of their own learning.

To develop lifelong learners, we help students learn to ask important questions and pursue them well. Learning is personalized because students have diverse interests and needs. Every aspect of the school encourages students to become increasingly responsible for directing their learning and supporting others. Students and educators collaborate to set goals, help plan expeditions, participate in committees, and participate in school-wide decision-making.

Educators As Learners And Mentors

To best help students learn and grow, educators' most important roles are as expert learners and trusted mentors.

Watershed educators model the skills and habits of deep learning for students. They actively engage in professional learning by remaining current with educational research, attending and presenting at professional conferences, and visiting other schools. Educators become effective mentors by knowing students well and having excellent rapport with them. To truly realize these roles, the student:teacher ratio is low, teachers work with students for extended lengths of time, and individual and group advisory meetings occur every week.

Our Community Ethos

A strong community is the foundation of great student learning and growth.

At Watershed, we respect the inherent dignity and worth of all people, and strive to build a world that is more just, more collaborative, and more sustainable. Therefore we all work together to create a school community that values diversity, equity, and inclusion and that fosters a climate of warmth, acceptance, unconditional respect, and fun. We connect our students with the communities beyond our school, cultivating awareness of social justice and sustainability so students are empowered to take thoughtful action to address issues that matter. In our community, students learn that all people can, and should, make a difference.

Work That Matters

Learning focused on the previous six Design Principles culminates in work that matters. Students learn best when engaged in work that matters – to themselves and to the world.

Our students engage in work that matters for two reasons: because schools should be of service to their human and ecological communities, and because motivation is higher and learning is deeper when the work has meaning. Students pursue answers to questions essential to their own lives. Students also work on projects that make a difference beyond the walls of the school, improving the communities in which we live. These projects serve as authentic assessments of student learning.

Watershed inspires and empowers students and educators to bring out the best in each other, to contribute to our communities, and to be active leaders helping to take on the world's greatest challenges.

Community Commitments

As noted in our Design Principles, we know that the best learning and growth happens within a strong, healthy community. And we know that the work of community-building is shared work; we do this together. As members of the Watershed community, we agree to participate fully in this work.

Our community commitments flow from our Mission and Design Principles:

1. To build a school culture that inspires and educates students to become highly capable, healthy, wise, and engaged citizens (Preamble).
2. To build a school community that values diversity, equity, and inclusion (Our Community Ethos).
3. To create a climate of warmth, acceptance, unconditional respect, and fun (Our Community Ethos).

4. To build strong relationships among educators and students (Educators as Learners and Mentors).
5. To take responsibility for our own education (Student Agency).
6. To hold ourselves to a high level of personal integrity so we can engage in real-world learning outside the walls of the school. (Real-World Learning).

By choosing to be part of the Watershed community, we agree to uphold these commitments. Of course we all balance the tensions between individual freedom and acting in the context of a community -- indeed we do this not just at Watershed, but throughout our lives. This handbook is our way of clarifying some of the lines between individual freedom and community commitments.

THE DETAILS

Commitment 1: To build a school culture that inspires and educates students to become highly capable, healthy, wise, and engaged citizens.

We work together to support safe and healthy lifestyles. We help students take appropriate risks for learning and adventure. And we seek to engage positively in our own community, and in our communities beyond Watershed.

Expectations

Stewardship

Students are expected to take responsibility for keeping common areas clean and safe, and recognize that all of us have a role to play in building the Watershed community. We clean up our messes and help clean up messes that we didn't make. We follow the principle of leaving a space better than we found it. Together, we endeavor to steward our school and the environments in which we learn, travel, and live.

Van and Bus Behavior

Transportation for expedition travel and community activities is provided in Watershed School vehicles. Riding in Watershed School vehicles is a privilege and benefit for Watershed students. All passengers in the vehicles are required to wear their seatbelts at all times when riding in school vehicles. Students are expected to behave in a way that is safe at all times and that is respectful towards the driver and other passengers, as deemed by the staff in the vehicle. In addition, we are all responsible for the condition of our vehicles and commit to treating them well.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Drugs

Watershed School is committed to providing an alcohol and drug-free environment for students, both on- and off-campus. Students who possess, distribute, sell, or give evidence of having consumed or used alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs not prescribed for that student, or marijuana during or prior to a school activity shall be subject to both professional assessment of their use and appropriate discipline and may result in dismissal from Watershed School. This applies while students are involved in any event including all academic or community related activities, all school-sponsored trips, athletic events and school business functions. Additionally, any behavior that endangers or puts into question the well-being of another

Watershed School student (e.g. off-campus parties, driving while intoxicated) may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the school. Watershed School holds the physical, mental and emotional safety and security of our students as a top priority. We recognize that involvement with alcohol and other drugs can interfere with a student's academic, physical, emotional, and social development. We also have an obligation to abide by state and federal law and to require our students to do the same. Watershed School reserves the right to require drug testing if there is reason to believe that a student may be abusing alcohol or other drugs.

If the school community is affected by a student's alcohol or drug use, we consider it within our purview to act to protect the community. Violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary consequences and could include suspension or expulsion.

Skateboarding and Bicycling (and other wheeled transportation)

Skateboarding is not allowed on campus without express permission of a member of the administrative team. Bicycles or other wheeled methods of transportation may be ridden to/from school, but should not be ridden during the school day otherwise. When riding to/from school, students should follow the "one-way" direction of traffic, and all students are required to wear helmets while bicycling or skateboarding on school property and during any school-sponsored activities. Watershed strongly encourages the use of helmets at all times when using any wheeled method of transportation.

Commitment 2: To build a school culture that values diversity and is actively inclusive.

We honor each community member as an individual, celebrating their gifts and contributions. We lead with curiosity about one another, rather than leading with assumptions. And to ensure that all are included, we do not tolerate harassment, bullying or cyber-bullying.

Expectations

Harassment Policy

Members of the Watershed School community are expected to treat one another with respect. Watershed School will not tolerate harassment of any student or employee by anyone at any time, on-campus or off-campus.

Harassment occurs when an individual is continually subjected to treatment or any environment that is hostile and intimidating because of such factors as the individual's race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, marital status, religion, political views, age, gender or gender identity, sex or sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, or medical condition. Harassment can be written, nonverbal, verbal, physical, or sexual. It can occur at school, at home, or via the Internet. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Intentional and unprovoked attempts by one or more individuals to inflict psychological or physical harm on one or more victims.
- Threats against another individual.
- Racial/ethnic stereotyped remarks.
- Insensitive comments or offensive "jokes."
- Repeated cruel teasing, put-downs or name-calling directed toward another person.
- Sending offensive or mean messages to another individual via note, email, text, or any social

media platform.

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual attention that makes a person uncomfortable or causes problems in school, work, or social settings. Applicable law prohibits the sexual harassment of all employees and students at schools. The term “sexual harassment” refers to any unwelcome sexual attention, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and similar conduct, reasonably considered offensive, when:

- Submission to, or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting the individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unduly interfering with an individual’s work or education; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.

Watershed School will treat all allegations of any kind of harassment seriously. A student who believes they are being harassed should report it immediately to a staff member. All complaints will be reviewed and investigated promptly and thoroughly. Throughout the process of investigating harassment, the school will preserve confidentiality to the extent practical. At the discretion of the school, a student or educator who has been accused of harassment may be required to be separated from the school until the investigation is completed. During this separation students will be supported academically to the extent possible.

If harassment is established, the offender will be appropriately disciplined. Depending on the severity or repetition of the offense, the response may range from reprimand up to and including dismissal for a student, or termination of employment for an employee.

Any person who directs any form of retaliation towards someone making a complaint about harassment will also be subject to disciplinary action.

Bullying Policy

Members of The Watershed School are expected to treat one another with respect and care. The school will not tolerate discriminating comments, treatment or conduct, particularly, but not only, if the harassment and or bullying relates to religion, race, ethnicity, gender, physical disability or sexual orientation. Because the relationships between adults, between adults and students, and between students are central to Watershed’s philosophy, the definitions and policies set out below apply to us all—faculty, administration, staff, students, volunteers and anyone providing services to Watershed.

According to stopbullying.gov: “Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances

- can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.”

At Watershed, we don't tolerate bullying or harassment. Whether the actions occur with students on campus, or in cyber space off-campus, Watershed actively seeks to stop bullying behavior and promote pro-social relationships. The majority of our work surrounding bullying is bullying prevention in the form of the creation of a positive social-emotional environment that is welcoming to all students. We use our community curriculum to support social and emotional growth, and actively work to create an open and welcoming environment for all of our students.

Students are expected not just to 'not bully' at Watershed, but to actively work to create a positive social environment. However, when and if bullying or harassment does occur, Watershed will seek to work with all parties involved, resolve underlying issues, and seek appropriate disciplinary consequences and/or remediation plans. Students and parents are prohibited from retaliating against or making false accusations against a victim, witness or anyone else who in good faith provides information about an alleged act of bullying or cyberbullying. Students or parents who engage in bullying or cyberbullying may be subject to discipline, including potential dismissal from the school. At the discretion of the School, a student or educator who has been accused of bullying may be required to be separated from the school until the investigation into the matter is completed. During this separation students will be supported academically to the extent possible.

Commitment 3: To create a climate of warmth, acceptance, unconditional respect, and fun.

To build a climate of warmth and acceptance, we begin with kindness and compassion. We are aware of the effect of our actions and words, and we protect the physical and emotional safety of all community members.

Expectations

Physical and Emotional Safety

Students are expected to avoid acts that cause physical or emotional harm to others, whether or not that harm was intentional. This includes their behavior in the digital and social media realms.

Respectful Speech

In speech and writing (including electronic messages), students will show respect for other people and take responsibility for the impact of their words on others. All members of the school community should speak and write without using profanity while on campus or participating in school activities.

School Property

Students are expected to show respect for our campus, vehicles, and furniture by leaving the things around us as good or better than we found them.

Technology

Students should not use technology to access hate speech, pornography, or other material that may be offensive or harmful to other members of the community. Further, students should not use social media outlets in any ways that degrade, embarrass, or harm other individuals or groups either within or beyond the Watershed community.

Theft

Students are expected to respect other people's property. We don't steal or damage other people's property, and we don't "borrow" property without asking. Theft or vandalism will result in disciplinary action, possibly including dismissal.

Weapons

Any item that could be construed as a weapon is not allowed at school. This includes guns and knives (including pocket knives), real and toy, martial arts paraphernalia, fireworks, etc. Any items perceived or viewed by staff to be used in a threatening way will be confiscated and held by a staff member to be returned to parents at the end of the day or, if necessary, turned over to law enforcement. Bringing weapons to school may result in disciplinary action or dismissal from the school.

Destructive Behavior

Any behavior that threatens the emotional or physical safety of Watershed School students or staff or interferes with other students' ability to learn may result in disciplinary action or dismissal from the school. This includes behavior both at school and beyond, including online in any and all social media contexts.

Commitment 4: To build strong relationships among educators and students. One of the cornerstones of Watershed's success is the strong, caring relationships among all community members. We actively demonstrate care and concern for each other -- within and across ages and roles. Especially notable are the deep relationships between staff members and students. Our educators know that one of their central roles is that of mentor. And students who experience the most success know that the staff members at Watershed are "on their side" and focused on their learning and growth.

Expectations

Openness and Curiosity

All community members are expected to actively demonstrate an openness to others by being curious about and kind to one another. We assume we have something to learn from each community member, and know that our Watershed experience is richer when we embrace all members of the community.

Interpersonal Conflict

Students who have interpersonal conflict are expected to "go to the source" when possible, using constructive approaches to resolve the conflict directly with the person involved. When this is difficult, students should seek support from an adult or peer mediator in the community to do so,

rather than talking to others about the person. At Watershed, we talk with each other, not about each other.

Commitment 5: To take responsibility for our own education.

We know that the best learning happens when we are engaged in exploring questions that matter to us. Our program allows for a high level of student agency -- and this works best when students engage fully in their learning.

Expectations

Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive on time for class, community events, and other school activities. When students are allowed off campus for lunch or other activities, they should respect that freedom by returning punctually.

Focus

When working independently, students are expected to stay focused, whether or not a teacher is in the area. Students should not use social media during class time, whether or not they're in the classroom.

Cell Phones

During class or community time, phones should be silent and away unless specifically requested by teachers as part of a class activity (e.g.using a camera in a photography class). During breaks, high school students may use phones outside the classroom. Cell phone use by middle school students is allowed only with teacher permission. Phones being used inappropriately will be taken away and returned to students (or parents) later that day.

Academic Integrity

At Watershed School, students are expected to be honest in all academic matters. Students may never claim credit for ideas, writing, or content creation that they have borrowed from other sources. Issues of academic dishonesty include using words that are not a student's own (i.e., copying all or part of an assignment, test or homework from a friend, a book or other sources, including the Internet or AI), failure to properly footnote, and all cases of plagiarism. Students must fully understand the concepts of cheating and plagiarism and how to avoid them. When in doubt, students should ask. Educators will take all issues or suspected issues of academic dishonesty seriously, and appropriate staff will be called in for involvement. The issue will be resolved through discussions with the student, educator, advisor, parent(s), and other appropriate individuals. Plagiarism often leads to students receiving no credit for the plagiarized work. Additionally, issues of academic dishonesty are dealt with according to the disciplinary policies of Watershed School. In instances of academic dishonesty, a student may be placed on an academic concern or probation contract or suspended or dismissed from the school. Allowing others to copy your own work is also a violation of academic integrity. If you are pressured into this situation, seek help and support from a trusted adult.

Commitment 6: To hold ourselves to a high level of personal integrity so we can engage in real-world learning outside the walls of the school.

At Watershed School, we expect a high level of personal integrity from all community members. This is essential for the creation of a strong community, and it is especially important at Watershed because of the extensive travel and work we do beyond the walls of the school. Our expectations about honesty, dress, and use of technology are necessary for us to keep a programmatic focus on real-world learning.

Expectations

Honesty

Students are expected to tell the truth, admit mistakes, and take responsibility for their actions, even when the consequences may be uncomfortable.

Representing Watershed School

Because Watershed School invites a variety of community members to the school and students spend a significant amount of time away from school in the broader community, it is imperative that all students positively represent the school. Appropriate clothing, language, manners, and respect of others' property are imperative, both on-campus and off. All school expectations apply in the building, as well as outside of the building. Any student who is not adhering to Watershed School's student expectations and not representing the school in a positive way may be required to be picked up by a parent or may be asked to return to school. Additional consequences may follow as deemed necessary by staff.

Dress Expectations

At Watershed we do not have an overly detailed dress code. We understand that dressing for school is a negotiation between a student's emerging identity and what's socially intelligent for a learning environment. Watershed's expectations for appropriate dress encompasses the understanding that gender expression is not binary and that racial and cultural influences may inform students' choices. Students have the responsibility for dressing in such a manner that is not a health and safety hazard, obscene, offensive, sexually explicit or suggestive, discriminatory or associated with threat/hate groups, or that promotes drugs or alcohol. In addition, due to the active nature of our classes, shorts, skirts, and dresses must be long enough to allow for regular and comfortable movement including sitting on the floor or ground.

We expect that our students will choose to dress in a way that is consistent with the work of our school and the work of our mission. On any day we may be out in the community representing the school, and so we expect students to take seriously the fact that how we dress is part of how we present ourselves to others. For better or worse, how we dress often communicates respect or lack thereof for others. During fieldwork, there may be additional requirements based on what is socially intelligent in a given context. For example, students visiting a house of worship may be asked to cover their hair or students working in a business setting may be expected to wear business attire.

Because the intention of the dress code is to help maintain a safe, productive learning environment for all, students who violate the dress code will be asked to change and parents may be notified. Multiple violations will result in discussions among the student, parents, advisor, Middle School Dean of Student Life, and/or the Assistant Head of School and may result in disciplinary action.

Responsible Use of the Internet

Students are to act with integrity regarding all online and computer-based behavior, including but not limited to:

- Respecting the private ownership of works produced by others. Students will not copy, modify, destroy, or read the private works of others without their permission.
- Respecting copyrights and plagiarism: When using information obtained over the internet, students must acknowledge copyrights and other legal protections. Failure to list an internet source in a submitted assignment is the same as plagiarizing from a book.
- Understanding that Watershed School reserves the right to invoke disciplinary procedures for any online behavior, including blogs and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Tiktok), that reflects poorly on the school, on fellow students, or on the individual as a Watershed School student.
- Understanding that Watershed School reserves the right to invoke disciplinary procedures if a student is involved with a website, app, or blog that depicts illegal behavior.
- Not impersonating or using the identity or computer credentials of another person.

The Internet is a public place, and students are expected to act with all of the same high standards of expeditionary behavior observed in any off-campus outing. In this spirit, students should never intentionally or unintentionally compromise the safety and privacy of themselves and their fellow students. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Accessing websites of a pornographic nature or sites containing egregiously unsavory materials.
- Agreeing to physically meet someone they have contacted, or who has contacted them online, without parental consent.
- Using full names, students' email addresses, or likenesses of students on a website without express parental and teacher permission.

Additionally, students should tell a trusted adult, whether a teacher or other Watershed School employee, if they receive any messages that are inappropriate or that make them feel uncomfortable.

During classes and community times, all use of electronics should be for school-related purposes.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSES

There are three different aspects of student life that lead to administrative responses:

1. When students do not live up to our commitments and expectations
2. When students are struggling with the academic work
3. When students are experiencing health or other issues that interfere with their participation in our program and may necessitate a leave of absence

In each case we strive to provide a response that is supportive of both the student and the community, and helps us all learn and grow.

Concerns about Commitments and Expectations

All students should be aware of the above expectations. Generally, if a student makes a mistake (which we all do at one point or another), they will initially be reminded of the expectations. At a certain point, generally after several occurrences of not meeting expectations, an email from the Dean will be sent to the student and parents including a warning that if they continue to fail to meet our commitments in their behavior or their academic coursework, we will draw up a concern or probation contract. There may be some circumstances where students are immediately put onto a concern contract or probation. Concern and probation contracts will involve conversations with the student and their parent(s)/ guardian(s) followed by written notification. A student may, at any time, be placed on one of the following support statuses:

Community Concern Contract

Examples of situations that warrant a Community Concern Contract include, but are not limited to: jeopardizing the safety of oneself or another student; being unsupportive of other students; showing disrespect towards other community members; violating the drug or alcohol policy; being disruptive during class; inappropriate computer use; not fulfilling stewardship responsibilities; signing in for a commitment but not staying the whole time. If the situation fails to improve, then the student may be placed on Community Probation.

Community Probation Contract

Examples of situations that warrant community probation include but are not limited to: lack of success with a Community Concern Contract; blatant disregard for others in the community; a pattern of dishonesty or disrespect. Significant non-compliance with Community Commitments and expectations will result in Community Probation. This contract will outline the actions and obligations necessary to continue enrollment at Watershed School. Should the student not uphold the terms of the contract, then suspension or dismissal from the school is likely. Failure or refusal by the student to sign the contract indicates an unwillingness to work with the school, and could result in immediate dismissal from the school.

Because different disciplinary situations may require consequences other than a concern or probation contract, families should understand that additional consequences for violations of student expectations may include: parent/guardian phone call, a meeting with the Middle School Dean of Student Life, Assistant Head of School, or Head of School, an announcement of the transgression to the community, meeting with staff and parents, required counseling, academic

testing, psychological testing, at-school suspension, suspension away from school, and/or dismissal.

Notes on Technology Use

Due to the importance of maintaining a safe and productive learning environment, Watershed School staff and faculty may:

- Take possession of and/or search any computer or cell phone brought into the school building by a student. Any inappropriate use of phones or smart watches during class or community times will result in the device being taken away. These items will be returned to either the student and/or a parent at the discretion of the staff member who confiscated the item or the Assistant Head of School.
- Enter a student's Watershed School Google account, including email, docs, calendars, websites, or any additional Google-based Watershed School programs.
- Change this technology policy. If there is a new policy to which the student or parent objects, they should express their disagreements in written form addressed to the Head of School.

Incidences of abuse or violations of the expectations listed above may result in confiscation of the device, a meeting with the student's advisor and parents, or a Community or Academic Concern contract that would likely highlight restriction of technology access for a period of time.

Concerns about Academic Work

If a student is struggling with academic work at Watershed, we will work to provide support and clarify expectations through an Academic Concern Contract or an Academic Probation Contract. In these situations, written notification will be provided to the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s), indicating the reason(s) for being placed on this status, the duration of the status, and may include conditions for being removed from the status. A student may, at any time, be placed on one of the following support statuses:

Academic Concern Contract

Examples of situations that may warrant an Academic Concern Contract include, but are not limited to: a continuous pattern of missing work; consistently turning in work with a low level of craftsmanship; repeated tardiness. If the situation fails to improve, then the student may be placed on Academic Probation.

Academic Probation Contract

Examples of situations that warrant Academic Probation include but are not limited to: lack of success with an Academic Support Plan; plagiarism; repeated failure to complete academic work on time or up to standards. A probationary contract will outline the actions and obligations necessary to continue enrollment at Watershed School. Should the student not uphold the terms of the contract dismissal from the school is likely. If the terms of the contract are successfully met by the student, then a student may be placed on Academic Concern Contract, or removed from a contract altogether. Failure or refusal by the student to sign the contract indicates an unwillingness to work with the school, and could result in immediate dismissal from the school.

Roles with regard to Community and Academic Support Plans and Probation Contracts

Advisor and Educator Roles

Advisors or Educators will identify areas of concern in their students' educational experiences and, when appropriate, will initiate communication with additional staff members and/or parents/guardians to further address the issue. Advisors will work with advisees who are on a support plan or contract – addressing the issues together.

Student Role

Students are expected to fully engage – honestly and openly – in the process of thinking through their behaviors and needs for support. This is essential since the student often knows best what kinds of support they may need, and how they can best be held accountable. Engagement in this process is also a clear sign of a student's belief in our Community Commitments. Failure to fully engage in this process could lead to dismissal.

Parent/Guardian Role

In most cases that involve a concern contract, probationary status, or dismissal, members of the administration will meet with the student, their parents, and other relevant individuals to discuss the case. Parents are expected to be in a constructive partnership with Watershed School staff in support of upholding the student expectations outlined in this handbook. Inappropriate behavior from parents during the discipline process, or during any interactions with the school, may result in the termination of the discipline process and student dismissal from the school.

Administrative Role

The Assistant Head of School and the Middle School Dean of Student Life are responsible for managing the discipline process, including investigations when needed. Students are expected to cooperate fully in investigations conducted by the School. If a student refuses to participate or cooperate at any stage of an investigation for whatever reason, the School reserves the right to take action, including proceeding without a statement from the student, asking the student to leave school while the investigation is underway, or requiring the student to withdraw. If Concern or Probation Contracts are initiated, the Assistant Head or MS Dean of Student Life will in most cases be the one to do so. Decisions about major disciplinary situations rest with the Head of School whose decision is final.

THE ADMINISTRATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE FINAL DECISIONS REGARDING DISCIPLINE AND TO DISMISS A STUDENT IMMEDIATELY, WITHOUT RESORTING TO LESSER FORMS OF DISCIPLINE.

For the purpose of the education of our students and our school community, in certain circumstances Watershed School reserves the right to raise an issue of discipline regarding a student at a school meeting or in a school communication.

In certain circumstances, Watershed School will report disciplinary actions, with cause, to third parties (such as colleges or other secondary schools to which a student applies).

Leave of Absence Policies

General Leave of Absence

Should a student's extended absence from school be necessary or desired, a leave of absence may be appropriate. A leave for medical reasons will be handled in accordance with the school's Medical Leave policy (see below). The school may recommend or grant a request for a voluntary leave of absence for other compelling reasons. The initial request for a voluntary leave of absence should be made to the Assistant Head of School. The school requires sufficient supporting documentation prior to the approval of any leave. The sufficiency of any supporting documentation will be determined by the School in its sole discretion.

The school makes the final determination as to whether to grant or require a leave of absence, as well as the duration of the leave and the conditions necessary for a student's return (including, but not limited to, whether the student must reapply for admission). Whether the period of leave is counted towards academic requirements for promotion and graduation will be determined by the school in its sole discretion.

Leaves of absence may be noted in the student's educational record, including on the student's transcript. A leave of absence will not be used in lieu of disciplinary action to address violations of the school's expectations, rules, or policies. Additionally, a student granted a leave of absence while on academic and/or disciplinary status may return on that same status.

Families remain financially responsible for tuition and other fees while the student is on a leave of absence.

Medical Leave of Absence

A medical leave from school may be appropriate in case of serious illness, bodily injury, or mental health condition, as determined in accordance with this policy. Decisions about granting or requiring a medical leave, or reinstating a student who has been on leave, rest with the senior administrators and the School Counselor; they will be guided by the principal goal of a medical leave: to give the student the opportunity to regain health and thereby function consistently, productively, and safely at school. In the absence of a treatment plan that, in the school's opinion, meets these needs, the school may decline to grant a medical leave request and instead require the student to withdraw.

A student's family may request medical leave. The School requires that any request for medical leave be accompanied by sufficient supporting documentation (as determined by the school at its sole discretion) to allow the school to evaluate the leave request, including, but not limited to, the following information: (a) a recommendation from the student's treating medical professionals that the student would benefit from taking a medical leave; (b) a description of how the student's medical condition limits the student's ability to participate in required academic or extracurricular activities; (c) the plan for treatment of the student's medical condition; and (d) an anticipated date for the student's return.

Additionally, if in the school's judgment, a student is exhibiting symptoms or behavior that make the student unable to participate appropriately in academic or extracurricular activities without imposing an undue burden on the school's resources, the school may recommend or require that

the student be evaluated and subsequently placed on a medical leave. The school may initiate a discussion of a leave of absence in circumstances including, but not limited to:

- when mental health or physical symptoms are or may be impeding a student from functioning appropriately academically;
- when a physical or mental health condition interferes with a student's attendance at school;
- when a student behaves in ways that may be self-destructive or dangerous to others;
- when a student is not engaged in treatment that the school has made a condition of attendance, after the student has been evaluated by medical and/or mental health professionals, who have deemed such treatment appropriate; or
- when a student exhibits symptoms or behavior that are of concern to the school.

This initial discussion may include, at the school's sole discretion, the student's advisor, senior administrators, the School Counselor, the parents, or the student, as deemed appropriate. The purpose of this initial discussion is to establish the steps that the family is taking to ensure that the student is well enough to participate fully in life at school; and the further steps that the school may require if the situation does not improve.

The school may require the family (parents and student) to enter into a medical leave agreement detailing the parameters of any leave. The medical leave agreement may include conditions and requirements for the student's return to school. While a student on leave is excused from attending class, the student must make arrangements to make up missed work either while on leave (if possible) or upon return. While the school will strive to minimize academic disruption, the school may require that a student withdraw from a course or courses if a prolonged absence will make it difficult for the student to satisfactorily complete the requirements of the course. To return to school from a medical leave, a student must provide a thorough, written professional evaluation of the student's current mental health and/or medical condition from the physician, psychiatrist, or other professional who treated the student during the medical leave. The school may require additional evaluation by a physician or mental health consultant of its choosing. The guiding principle of re-admission from a medical leave is the school's confidence that the student can return safely; and that the student's return will not compromise the student's continued recovery, interfere with the school's ability to serve other students' needs, or place an undue burden on the school. The decision regarding any student's return to the school from a medical leave remains at the sole discretion of the school. As a corollary to this principle, a student whom the school determines can safely participate in the regular school day may nevertheless be restricted from participation in overnight field trips or other residential-style school activities.

Families remain financially responsible for tuition and other fees while the student is on a medical leave of absence.

Policy of Non-Discrimination

Watershed School is strongly committed to a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity, without regard to race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, sex, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, or age in administration of its educational admission,

employment, and scholarship policies in accordance with existing state and federal laws or regulations. All students and employees are protected from coercion, intimidation, interference or retaliation from filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation under any of the following policies.

Grievances

Watershed School encourages honest, open dialogue between all members of the Watershed School community. Should your family have a grievance with the school that cannot be settled by going to the source, matters of concern may be addressed directly with the Head of School.

Re-enrollment

The school believes that a positive and constructive working relationship between the school and the student's parent (or guardian) is essential to the fulfillment of the school's mission. Thus, the school reserves the right not to continue enrollment or not to re-enroll a student if the school reasonably concludes that the actions of the student and/or the student's parent (or guardian) make such a positive and constructive relationship impossible or seriously interfere with Watershed School's accomplishment of its educational purposes. The decision of the school in these regards is final.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to our colleagues at Catlin Gabel School, Calhoun School, Logan School, and the Sage School for inspiration and text for some portions of this handbook

Acknowledgment and Receipt of Community Commitments Handbook

This document must be signed by the student and by the parent(s)/guardian and returned to Watershed School. Families with multiple children at the school can use one form.

We have read and understood the Community Hommitments handbook, and commit to supporting the Watershed School community by honoring the rules and guidelines outlined throughout.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____